
Expanded Learning Time:

Making Every Minute Matter at Boston Preparatory Charter
Public School and Other Charter Schools in Massachusetts

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“Learning in America is a prisoner of time. For the past 150 years, American public schools have held time constant and let learning vary . . . Our time-bound mentality has fooled us all into believing that schools can educate all of the people all of the time in a school year of 180 six-hour days.”

~ Prisoners of Time

INTRODUCTION

The 1994 landmark report *Prisoners of Time*, released by the National Education Commission on Time and Learning, pushed us to reconsider time in our schools. A number of schools in Massachusetts have taken this message seriously and have broken with tradition. For over a decade, a significant number of charter public schools in Massachusetts have provided more learning time for their students. What’s more, in 2006, Massachusetts became the first state in the nation to implement a statewide effort to expand learning time in multiple public district schools (Rocha 2008). Now, as current thinking suggests that 180 six-hour days is not enough time to educate our students, Massachusetts is well positioned to share its experience in expanding learning time for students in public schools.

A key catalyst for the education reform movement of the last twenty-five years was the 1983 report *A Nation at Risk* and its stark assessment of the erosion of our education system by a “rising tide of mediocrity that threatens our very future as a nation and a people” (National Commission on Excellence in Education 1983). Its recommendations included increasing the rigor of the required curriculum, raising standards and expectations, providing training and opportunities for teachers, increasing the amount of time for schooling, and strengthening leadership and fiscal support to enact these recommendations.

Many would argue that over the last fifteen years progress has been made on most of these recommendations, given the growth of a nationwide movement toward rigorous standards, higher expectations, and accountability for students and teachers. However, the amount of time the majority of today’s students spend in school mastering rigorous standards has, with few exceptions, remained essentially equal to time spent in school a hundred years ago when the school calendar was designed to meet the needs of an agrarian culture; that is, about six to six and a half hours a day for 180 days a year, or the equivalent of 20 percent of a student’s waking hours.

The reforms of the standards and accountability movement correspond with modest improvements in academic achievement, but they have not resulted in dramatic and consistent increases in test scores and graduation rates across the nation.¹ Moreover, the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) requires that all students in the nation demonstrate proficiency on statewide assessments by 2014, a requirement we are not on track to meet. In Massachusetts, for example, overall proficiency in English language arts and mathematics, as measured by the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS), has increased only a few points at best in the last three years (see figures 1 and 2). At the current rate of improvement, an alarming number of students, especially at the elementary and middle school levels, will not demonstrate proficiency by 2014.

Fig. 1. MA Math MCAS Proficiency 2006–2008

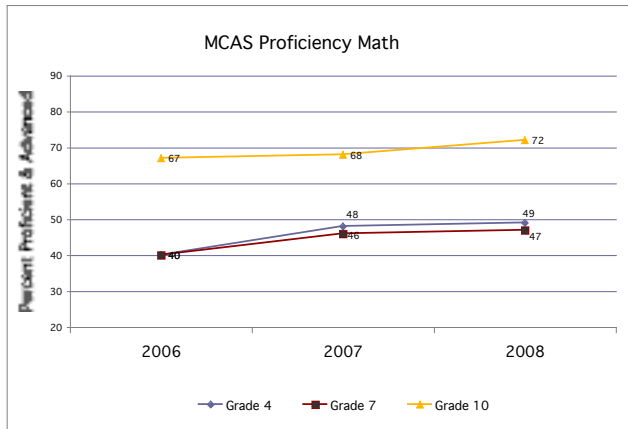
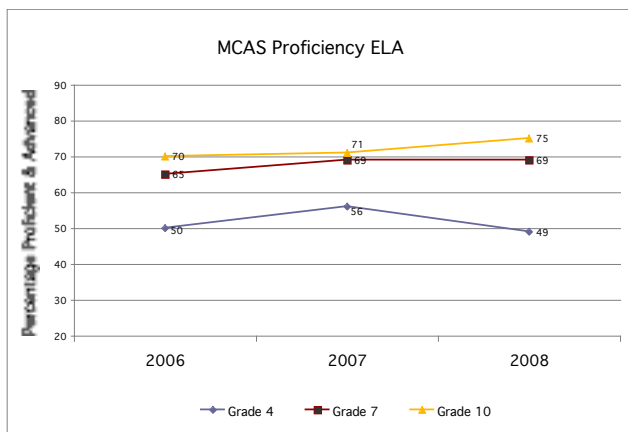


Fig. 2. MA ELA MCAS Proficiency 2006–2008



Note: MCAS results for figures 1–4 are from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Retrieved January 20, 2009, from <http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/results.htm>

What’s more, the achievement gap on the MCAS is pronounced. The 2008 MCAS results in tenth grade demonstrate that achievement gaps between 20 to 30 percentage points persist between students of color and White students as well as those living below the poverty line and their more affluent peers (see figures 3 and 4). Massachusetts students overall will likely fall short of the federal target, and low-income and minority students are almost certain to do so. Too many of our students are not yet demonstrating the essential literacy and numeracy skills they need to be successful when they graduate.

Beyond demonstrating proficiency on state academic assessments, our students have so much to learn. Most would agree that to be well-rounded, students should study the arts and music, participate in physical education, and pursue extracurricular interests. Some students may need additional academic support programs to master standards, and all students can benefit from structures and

programs that help build strong and safe school cultures. Today’s students must also be prepared to succeed in the global economy. To this end, businesses (Apple, Microsoft, and others) and advocacy organizations (such as the National Education Association) promote teaching “twenty-first century skills,” which they argue are critical to students’ success. These skills include mastery of content in academic subjects as well as communication skills, technology skills, creativity, and critical thinking (Partnership for 21st Century Skills 2009).

Rigorous academics, training and support for teachers, enrichment opportunities, academic supports, and twenty-first century skills are difficult to incorporate into 180 six and a half hour school days a year. With the fast-approaching deadline by which 100 percent of our students need to demonstrate proficiency under NCLB and with the urgency that comes from the persistent achievement gap, newer reforms such as expanded learning time are being explored.

Fig. 3. MA 2008 MCAS by Race.

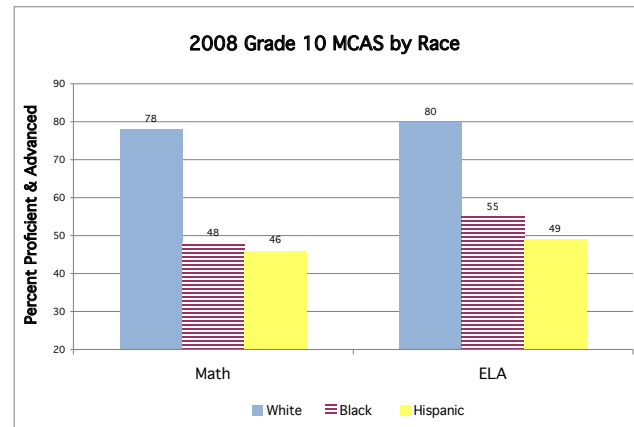
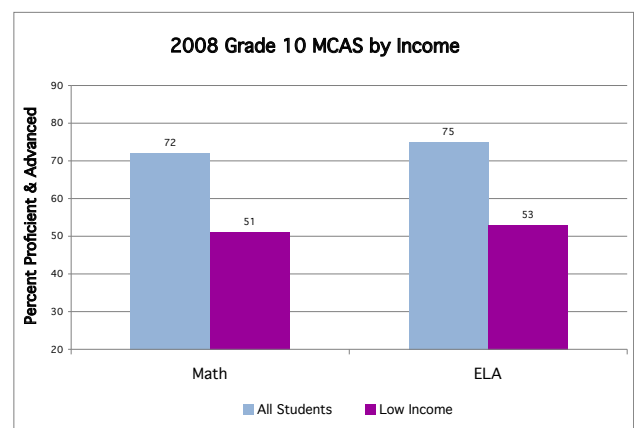


Fig. 4. MA 2008 MCAS by Income.



What specific opportunities can a longer school day and/or year offer? Current research and results from a number of public schools that already provide more learning time to their students indicate multiple benefits to a longer school day and year (Farbman & Kaplan 2005; Rocha 2008; Center for Education Research and Policy at MassInc 2003). In its report, *Time for a Change*, Mass 2020 outlines the following benefits:

- **More time on task.** With more time available through longer classes and days, students have more time to engage in material and work with the standards they need to master.
- **Increased depth and breadth of content.** More academic time gives students the chance to dig more deeply into the subject matter. It allows for multiple pedagogical approaches in the classroom as well as extension opportunities to reinforce and augment students' learning.
- **Additional planning and professional development for teachers.** Teaching in a traditional school day can be quite isolating for teachers because it typically does not provide for the planning time, collaboration, professional inquiry, and development that is essential to strong instruction. A longer day allows schools to build this time into every teacher's schedule.
- **Increased opportunities for enrichment activities.** With the focus on core academics in the NCLB era, many schools have had to cut or even eliminate enrichment opportunities for their students, and this has been most true in schools serving disadvantaged populations. Lengthening the day allows schools to bring back activities such as the arts, music, and sports that have been shown to increase students' investment in school overall.
- **More relationship building between teachers and students.** As anyone who has been a teacher knows, relationships are the foundation on which learning is built in schools. With more time, students and teachers have more opportunities to interact, potentially in a variety of settings; they can develop the bonds that can help lead to higher academic performance.

Of course, simply adding time to the day is not enough. To take full advantage of the benefits provided by more time, programs must be purposefully designed and effectively implemented; it is, after all, quality time on learning that

students need. Fortunately, there are both charter and district public schools that have longer days and years, and these schools provide existing models from which we can learn.

“Used wisely and well, time can be the academic equalizer.” ~ Prisoners of Time

A July 2008 report from the Center for American Progress identifies more than 300 current expanded learning time initiatives in schools across thirty states implemented between 1991 and 2007 (Rocha 2008). Most notably, in 2005, Massachusetts took a bold step and committed funding to district schools seeking to explore and potentially implement expanded learning time in order to provide more time for students to achieve the rigorous standards outlined in the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks. This ambitious effort, the Massachusetts Expanding Learning Time to Support Student Success Initiative, is based on the idea that because students are now expected to learn more and reach higher standards, they need to be provided more time to do so.

The Expanded Learning Time Initiative in Massachusetts developed from cooperation between policymakers; the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education; and Massachusetts 2020, a nonprofit advocacy and policy organization. Massachusetts 2020 conducted extensive research on schools in the state that provide expanded learning time and led the movement forward in Massachusetts, gradually earning the support of the state legislature. The Massachusetts Expanded Learning Time Initiative had ten key design elements, including the following four that focus on school programming:

- The provision of a substantial increase in the school day and/or year of at least 25–30 percent (typically about an additional 300 hours),
- The requirement that all enrolled students must attend the expanded schedule,
- A redesign of the entire school day rather than tacking on hours at the end of the day, and

- Allocation of the expanded time to three components: academics, enrichment, and teacher planning and professional development. (Pennington 2007)

There was strong interest in the Massachusetts initiative during the 2005–2006 school year: a total of forty-five districts explored the possibility of expanded learning time; twenty districts applied for state planning grants, and sixteen districts received them. Ultimately, ten schools across five districts implemented expanded learning time in September 2006. The pilot year programs were in urban schools, with three in Boston, three in Fall River, two in Cambridge, and one each in Worcester and Malden. The results of the seven middle schools that participated in the Expanded Learning Time Initiative in its pilot year are notable, with an average combined increase in student proficiency of 30 percent in English language arts and math on the MCAS (Bernier 2008, 18). Now, three years into the Expanded Learning Time Initiative, twenty-six schools in twelve Massachusetts districts are providing more time to learn for over 13,000 students.

It is, however, charter public schools that have most readily embraced a longer school day and year. Started in 1992, there are over 4,600 charter schools serving over 1.4 million children across forty states and the District of Columbia (National Alliance for Public Charter Schools 2008), and about 60 percent of these provide a longer day and/or year (Rocha 2007). Charter schools are independently operated public schools that have significant autonomy over their programs and budgets. In exchange for this autonomy, charter schools are held accountable for student results and can be closed if their students fail to achieve. Capitalizing on their opportunity to innovate, many charter public schools have chosen from the outset to operate a longer school day and year.

In Massachusetts, where charter schools were initiated as part of the Massachusetts Education Reform Act of 1993, 85 percent of the state's sixty-one charter public schools offer a school day and year longer than the traditional 180 six-hour day model (Farbman 2005), and results on state assessments from many of these schools, particularly those serving urban students, are very promising (Abdulkadiroglu 2009).

PURPOSE AND OVERVIEW OF THIS REPORT

The purpose of this report is to share key elements of a longer school day and/or year at a group of Massachusetts charter public schools in order to contribute to the practice of, and public dialogue on, expanded learning time. Throughout this report, we will refer to the longer day and year provided at these charter schools as “expanded learning time” rather than “ELT,” the acronym often used to refer to the Massachusetts Expanded Learning Time Initiative.

While there is no one generally accepted definition of expanded learning time in the nation, this report will utilize the central design elements of the Massachusetts Expanded Learning Time Initiative—the first statewide program of this type in the country—as key criteria. As outlined in the “ELT Overview” on the Mass 2020 Web site, schools must: “substantially increase their day and/or year (a minimum of 300 hours/year) for every student; redesign educational programming ‘tied to student needs, student goals, and a clear, school-wide academic focus;’ and focus on ‘improving academic outcomes and broadening opportunities in three key areas: (1) core academics, (2) enrichment opportunities, and (3) teacher planning and professional development’” (Mass 2020 n.d.).

With these guiding principals in mind, this project sought to examine Massachusetts charter schools that:

- Offer substantially more learning time than the traditional six-hour, 180-day school year provides
- Integrate the hours in the school day; make a longer school day and/or year part of the school's design rather than an “add on”
- Focus on the three primary areas indicated above in the Massachusetts Expanded Learning Time Initiative: “(1) core academics, (2) enrichment opportunities, and (3) teacher planning and professional development.” (Mass 2020 n.d.)

In addition, we sought to study Massachusetts charter schools that:

- Have offered longer school days and/or years for at least three years
- Demonstrate positive learning outcomes
- As a group, represent a variety of grade levels, geographic locations, and communities served

With their relatively extensive experience offering a longer school day and/or year, nine Massachusetts charter public schools are the focus of this report. The following section, “Expanded Learning Time: Making Every Minute Matter at Boston Preparatory Charter Public School,” provides a detailed case study of Boston Preparatory Charter Public School. “Expanded Learning Time: Making Every Minute Matter at Eight Additional Massachusetts Charter Public Schools,” provides a survey of how eight other charter schools use their longer day and/or school year. The nine Massachusetts charter public schools that participated in the study are:

- Boston Preparatory
- City on a Hill
- Codman Academy
- KIPP Academy Lynn
- Marblehead Community
- MATCH
- Neighborhood House
- Rising Tide
- Roxbury Preparatory

Two schools included in the study do not meet the criteria regarding the number of years a longer day and/or year have been offered, and they are still early in the process of school redesign. These schools opened with more traditional schedules and later added to the number of hours offered students. Neighborhood House, a PK–8 school, partnered with City Year and others to offer a longer day to its middle school students in 2008. The Rising Tide’s expanded learning time program began in 2007 with the primary goal of providing students with enrichment opportunities. In addition, one school, Marblehead Community, offered a longer school year, but it is newer to an extended school day. We include these schools because we believe there are lessons to learn from their work and because they provide examples of how expanded learning time might be implemented incrementally and in a variety of settings.

To conduct the survey component of this study, researcher Kim Wechtenhiser interviewed staff at each of the schools in the project, and she reviewed key documents pertaining to a longer school day and year as well as school performance data. For the focus section on Boston Preparatory (BPCPS), researcher Piel Hollingsworth interviewed BPCPS school leaders, teachers, students, and families. She reviewed key school documents, including performance data, and she observed academic, ethics, and enrichment classes as well as the BPCPS weekly town meeting.

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“Time guarantees nothing. But with it, all else is possible.” ~ Unlocking the Power of Time, 1995

It is important to note that all the schools in the study have changed their expanded learning time programs since the schools opened. No school’s program looks today as it did when first implemented. The survey section provides a snapshot of a longer school day and year as currently practiced in the eight schools studied. The case study of BPCPS provides a close look at one program, including how that program developed over time.

As the following profiles show, there is significant diversity in how schools have successfully implemented a longer school day and year, from how time is used to the individual programs offered. While no one program or model is right for every school, those profiled in this report can provide input for school level planning, which is critical to the success of expanded learning time. It is our hope that the broad range and specific details presented in the report will give practitioners a sense of possibility and even inspiration as they carry out the important work of redesigning their school day to provide more time and learning opportunities for their students and teachers.

“Boston Preparatory Charter Public School utilizes rigorous curriculum, extended academic time, and a range of supports for children and families to prepare sixth through twelfth grade students to succeed in college. An environment structured around scholarship and personal growth cultivates students’ virtues of courage, compassion, integrity, perseverance, and respect.”

~ Boston Preparatory Charter Public School Mission Statement

Expanding Learning Time:

Making Every Minute Matter at Boston Preparatory Charter Public School

BOSTON PREPARATORY CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOL

The mission of Boston Preparatory Charter Public School (BPCPS) has guided the school from the earliest phases of its design, and it continues to serve as a touchstone for students, teachers, and families as they work to achieve it every day. Clear and uncompromising, BPCPS’s mission is based on two equally important ideas: *all* students can achieve at the highest academic levels, and schools should support students’ ethical development. The school provides a rigorous college prep curriculum in order to prepare all its students to succeed in college.

Training in ethics is at the core of the school, forming the basis of its reflective ethos, and students spend formal class time focusing on the development of their moral principles.



Envisioned in 2002 by Scott McCue, a public school teacher, the school is now in its fifth year of operation, serving 280 students in grades six through ten. Drawing students from many Boston neighborhoods, BPCPS has a student population that is 71 percent African American, 22 percent Hispanic, and 7 percent White; 76 percent receive free or reduced price lunch; and 18 percent have individualized education plans

(Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education [MA DESE] 2008). In its short history, Boston Preparatory Charter Public School has become one of the highest performing public middle schools in the city and the state.

History

Guided by this mission and vision, a group of Boston community leaders and educators put their ideas on paper during the fall of 2002 and applied to the Massachusetts Department of Education for a charter to operate a public school. That winter, the group learned it had received one of five charters granted statewide out of more than twenty-five applicants; it would be the only new charter public school to serve the students of Boston. The founding group then took on the challenging work of starting a school: detailing its program, securing a facility, gathering resources, and recruiting students. Designed to reach students in the Boston neighborhoods of Dorchester and Mattapan, BPCPS found a suitable facility in Hyde Park and began an intensive campaign to attract students to a school that promised longer days, a longer year, lots of homework, and the support needed to prepare students for college. In March 2004, a public lottery was held, and in the fall of that year, the school began with 104 students in sixth grade. BPCPS plans to be fully enrolled in 2010 with 350 students in sixth through twelfth grade (see figure 5).

Key Design Elements

From the outset, BPCPS's program has included several key design elements, each stemming from its mission. The academic program for all students is a standards-driven, college preparatory curriculum, and every student is expected to achieve at high levels. Students study the major academic disciplines of English, history, mathematics, and science. In middle school, students receive support in academic skills and scholarly habits, and high school students study Latin as their foreign language. As part of their training in ethics, students study the school's virtues of courage, compassion, integrity, perseverance, and respect, and they read and discuss Socrates, Kant, and Nietzsche. Vital to the school's program is enrichment offered during the school day. Carefully linked to the school's ethical philosophy program, BPCPS's enrichment courses allow students to explore skills and interests beyond academics and develop strong relationships with their teachers. Finally, the school has a disciplined and scholarly school culture, with high behavioral standards and a full school uniform.

At BPCPS, students are offered more time and supports to achieve rigorous academic and behavioral expectations; they spend about eight hours a day and 190 days a year in school, which adds up to about one-third more time in school than their peers in most district public schools (Farbman & Kaplan 2005). Teachers also spend more time in school, with much of the additional time dedicated to planning, collaboration, and professional development.

While this report is focused on the school's use of time, time is just one of the many design elements that work in concert at BPCPS. According to the school's principal, Amanda Gardner, BPCPS's success is ultimately the result of its mission and vision guiding every aspect of the program. She states, "Having a clear mission and vision allows us to ensure we're all on the same page... college

Students must develop a sense of purpose greater than mere social or economic attainment. Schools have a responsibility to help students to understand their role in society and to shape their own moral principles.

~ BPCPS Charter Application

preparation and ethical growth. [We] align all of our classes to that mission; all the people we hire are on board with that mission, and in classes, kids are working to achieve that vision."

Fig. 5. Student Enrollment at Boston Preparatory Charter Public School

Academic Year	Grades Served	Total Enrollment
2004-2005	6	104
2005-2006	6-7	142
2006-2007	6-8	208
2007-2008	6-9	255
2008-2009	6-10	290
2009-2010	6-11	320*
2010-2011	6-12	350*

Note: Student enrollment figures for 2009–2010 and 2010–2011 are projected.

PLANNING FOR A LONGER SCHOOL DAY AND YEAR

Designing the Middle School

Providing more time for students to achieve high standards has been part of BPCPS's program since the school opened in the fall of 2004. Indeed, "extended academic time" is included in the school's mission as a means to help students achieve. But why? What need does a longer school day and year address?

When planning for the school in 2002, both academic data and the founding group's experience in Boston Public Schools indicated that the students the school would serve were underperforming. MCAS scores from 2002 showed that students in the Boston neighborhoods of Mattapan and Dorchester, the school's target neighborhoods, were performing below both the district and statewide average, with only about 40 percent of tenth grade students earning a passing score (McCue 2009). "When we laid out the concept for BPCPS in 2002, we wanted to replicate best practices... and one key characteristic was expanded learning time," says Scott McCue, the school's founder. "We are asking students to meet the most rigorous standards for content and skill and recognize that they're playing catch up. It's very hard to see how someone can do that without having more time... The average [sixth grade] student enters BPCPS reading at a third grade level, so no matter how well the reading curriculum is structured, they just need more of it."



From the beginning, BPCPS's vision included more than academic preparation; the school embraced the idea of doing whatever it took for students to achieve its mission. The founders planned to provide its students with more time on task in the critical areas of reading and math. They also planned to set aside time to cultivate students' moral development and teach the scholarly habits necessary for college success such as doing homework every night, staying organized, and making purposeful, ethical decisions. The founders believed that if they met students where they were and offered them an intensive and extensive school experience rich with supports, their students would excel.

“It’s not enough to have kids for extra time. If there’s not a sense of purpose, it can be corrosive.

~ Scott McCue, Head of School

Based on the needs of their incoming students and modeled after other successful urban public schools, BPCPS's sixth graders would have two math classes and two literacy classes each day. Science and history would be scaled back slightly to allow for this focus on essential academic skills. Students would spend five hours a week in enrichment classes; they would be provided time every day to work on their homework, under the guidance and support of their teachers; and they would meet weekly with an academic advisor who would help keep them on track. Lastly, students would be immersed in a school culture that celebrated scholarship, ethical decision making, and achievement.

Building the High School

As the BPCPS middle school students grew into high school students, school leaders re-entered the design phase. During the 2006–2007 academic year, the school was still small, with about 200 students and twenty-three teachers, when a group of teachers and administrators worked together to develop their new high school program. Meeting twice a month outside school time, the head of school, principal, math and literacy department chairs, special education coordinator, and development director read best practice research and conducted numerous school visits. The group identified high achieving schools serving populations similar to theirs and visited a total of fifteen schools across the country.

From this research, the team proposed a high school program that was modeled on its successful middle school program, but with some changes designed to make the program developmentally appropriate and college-prep intensive. All students would take five core academic classes each year—English, math, history, science, and Latin—which would culminate in Advanced Placement courses in the twelfth grade. Students would still have five hours a week of enrichment classes and one hour a week of ethical philosophy class. Further, “flex time” would be included in the schedule to provide students necessary academic and college preparatory support such as SAT prep. High school students would also be encouraged to pursue off-campus enrichment opportunities such as taking courses at a local college or joining a citywide arts program. With the ambitious goal of success in college for all its students, BPCPS never considered decreasing the amount of time its students would be in school. Despite the lack of national models for expanded learning time at the high school level, school leaders at BPCPS knew their high school students still needed more time and support to achieve the school's high expectations.

EXPANDED LEARNING TIME AT BPCPS: PRIMARY COMPONENTS

At 7:15 a.m., the front steps of the former Catholic school in Hyde Park are crowded. Almost 300 students file in, and after being greeted by the head of school, who makes sure they are in uniform and prepared for the day, students take their assigned seats in the cafetorium, most picking up breakfast as they settle in to read or quietly talk with friends. The airy space lined with college names and graduation dates will have a purposeful buzz until at least 4:15 p.m. when many students will line up to board their busses back home. Some of them will not descend the steps they used to enter the building until 5:30 p.m. or later, after they get extra help from a teacher or serve a detention.

The just over forty-one-hour school week for students at BPCPS is jam-packed. With no transitions between classes, students spend just three to five hours each week in unstructured time such as lunch and recess. In short, almost every minute of the 190-day year is used to propel students forward to college (see figures 6 and 7 for sample schedules). The schedule may sound extreme to those used to students being out of school in the early afternoon and all summer, but it's what school leaders feel is needed to move students who enter multiple grade levels behind to college. It's a lively, engaging place. Visitors see students focusing on academic work, laughing as they play basketball, and reminding each other to make good choices.

6th GRADE SCHEDULE, BPCPS		
Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays	Tuesdays	Fridays
7:45-8:10: Homeroom	7:45-8:10: Homeroom	7:45-8:10: Homeroom
8:10-9:05: Writing	8:10-9:00: Advisory: Ethics	8:10-9:00: Advisory: Academic Support
9:05-10:00: Reading	9:00-9:25: Community Meeting	9:00-9:50: Writing
10:00-10:20: Recess	9:25-9:45: Recess	9:50-10:10: Recess
10:20-11:15: Math Problem Solving	9:45-10:30: Writing	10:10-11:00: Reading
11:15-12:10: Math Procedures	10:30-11:15: Reading 11:15-12:00: Science	11:00-11:50: Math Procedures 11:50-12:15: Lunch
12:10-12:35: Lunch	12:00-12:25: Lunch	12:15-12:30: Independent Rdg
12:35-12:55: Recess or HWC	12:25-12:45: Recess or HWC	12:30-1:20: Science
12:55-1:10: Independent Rdg.	12:45-1:30: Math Prob. Solv.	
1:10-2:05: Science	1:30-2:15: Math Procedures	1:20-2:10: Academic Support
2:05-3:00: Academic Support	2:15-3:00: Academic Support	2:10-3:00: Academic Support
3:00-4:15: Enrichment	3:00-4:15: Enrichment	

Fig. 6. Sixth Grade Schedule

Note: Schedule outlines hours required of all students. Detention, which is required of some students, takes place Monday through Thursday 4:15 p.m. – 5:00 p.m., Friday 3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. "HWC" refers to homework center.

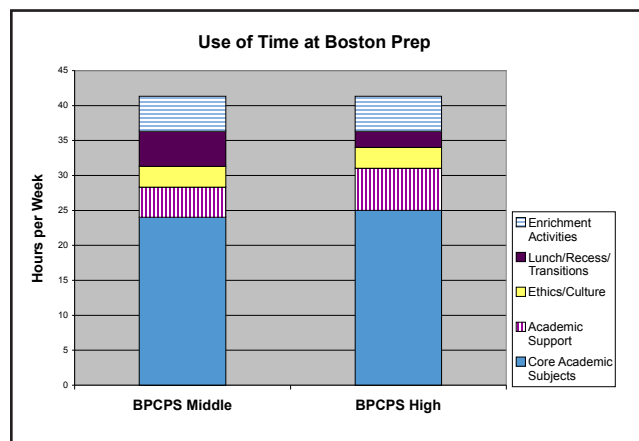
9th GRADE SCHEDULE, BPCPS		
Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays	Tuesdays	Fridays
7:45-8:05: Advisory	7:45-8:05: Advisory	7:45-8:05: Advisory
8:05-9:05: English	8:05-9:00: English	8:05-9:05: English
9:05-10:05: Geometry	9:00-9:25: Community Mtg.	9:05-10:05: Geometry
10:05-10:35: Typing	9:25-10:20: Geometry	10:05-10:35: Typing
10:35-11:35: Biology	10:20-10:50: Office Hours 10:50-11:45: Biology	10:35-11:35: Biology
11:35-12:35: Latin	11:45-12:40: Latin	11:35-12:35: Latin
12:35-1:00: Lunch	12:40-1:05: Lunch	12:35-1:00: Lunch
1:00-2:00: History	1:05-2:00: History	1:00-2:00: History
2:00-3:00: Study Hall	2:00-3:00: Ethics	2:00-3:00: Study Hall
3:00-4:15: Enrichment	3:00-4:15: Service Learning	

Fig. 7. Ninth Grade Schedule

Note: Schedule outlines hours required of all students. Detention and high school homework center, which are required of some students, take place Monday through Thursday 4:15 p.m. - 5:15 p.m.

The longer school day and year at BPCPS are carefully designed to help all students achieve the mission's dual goals of success in college and ethical development. From the rigorous core academic program and built-in supports to the ethics and enrichment courses, BPCPS strives to make every minute of its 41-hour week matter. How much time BPCPS students spend in school and the way they spend their time is strikingly different from their peers in traditional public schools (see figure 8). Not only do all students at BPCPS spend 20 to 25 percent more time on core academics, they are also provided the support they need *during the school day* to be academically successful in the challenging college preparatory curriculum. Further, every student has the opportunity to spend significant time exploring extracurricular interests and grappling with important ethical questions. Most important, BPCPS's results, which will be presented later in this report (see the "School Performance" section), show that the school's approach is working.

Fig. 8. Expanded Learning Time for Students at BPCPS



A traditional school week is about 32 hours.

Schools typically have about 20 hours of core academics per week.

*Note: The time presented for traditional public schools is based on the work of David Farbman and Claire Kaplan in *Time for a Change: The Promise of Extended Time Schools for Promoting Student Achievement*, 10.*

Carefully Designed Core Academic Program

With more time for academic classes and with classes that are purposefully designed, BPCPS is able to boost the skills of its youngest students and get them up to grade level. In sixth grade, students take five academic classes each day: reading, writing, math procedures, math problem solving, and science or history (one each semester). School leaders

feel that two classes each of literacy and numeracy daily are critical to get students up to speed, and they consider this doubling up one of the school's best uses of a longer school day. The intense focus on the essential academic skills of reading, writing, and math in the younger grades also helps prepare students for more rigorous work in the later middle and high school years.

Almost an hour each week is set aside for students to review their academic progress with an adult.

"Double literacy and double math blocks allow us to teach more in those areas, to reinforce and re-teach skills and concepts," says Principal Amanda Gardner. With more instructional time and careful attention to how that time is used, teachers can plan a variety of learning activities, spiral back to critical

skills, and provide opportunities for students to practice those skills. "We are not doing anything that innovative," continues Gardner. "We are just working really hard." Data analysis also is critical to the effective use of additional learning time. The work students do, whether it's essays, word problems, or extensive reading, provides data that teachers analyze to determine where their students are and to make decisions about future lessons.

Students in seventh and eighth grade have the same amount of core academic time as sixth graders. Seventh and eighth grade students take history and science every day, and the longer school day allows them to continue to attend two math and two literacy classes four days a week. In addition to core academic classes, the school has dedicated time for independent reading for all middle school students every school day.

When students arrive in the high school, they begin a course of study that will eventually culminate in Advanced Placement classes. High school students take five core academic classes each year, including Latin as the foreign language. Each academic class in the high school is sixty minutes long and meets five times a week for a total of twenty-five hours of core academics per week.

Beyond the Core Academic Program

Core academics are paramount, so the BPCPS schedule is built around these classes. But with a school week the length of the typical American work week, BPCPS students have time in school for activities beyond core academics. School leaders have carved out time to provide support and enrichment, teach ethical philosophy, include community-building activities, foster a culture of scholarship, and provide teachers time for planning and professional development.

Built-In Academic Supports

At 2:00 p.m., in an eighth grade classroom called Wellesley Class of 2017—classrooms that serve as homerooms are named after colleges and the year of that class’s college graduation—some of the twenty-six students pore over an article from the recent presidential campaign entitled “The Change We Need for the Economy,” using a T-chart to analyze its use of arguments and evidence. Several students focus on homework from their math problem solving class and are busy setting up equations.



These eighth graders are in **study hall** and eagerly use the time to complete their work independently. A teacher circulates to respond to students’ questions, and several students make use of this resource, while others silently begin the night’s homework. Students actively practice the skills and work habits BPCPS strives to instill in them, which the school’s founder describes as “the habits consistent with college success.” This daily practice stems from the school’s effort paradigm, embodied in the phrase visible

throughout the school, “Effort determines success.” With an average of two hours of homework a night in the middle school and three hours a night in the high school, on top of the longer school day, students readily utilize this time provided during the school day.

Of course, some middle school students need additional intensive academic support. Teams of grade-level teachers determine which students have the greatest academic needs, and these students receive **small group tutoring** with their teachers in lieu of enrichment. Currently, approximately one-third of BPCPS’s students receive this type of support for at least an academic quarter each year. With about six students per room and at times two teachers, students review concepts taught in class and get individual help on assignments. The benefits of providing more intensive academic support to these students are apparent to all stakeholders. But it was not an easy decision for school leaders to pull some students from enrichment, even for part of the school year (see “Evaluation and Evolution of Expanded Learning Time”). Even with a longer school day and year, BPCPS has had to make hard choices about its use of time.

Like students in BPCPS’s middle school, high school students also have academic support built into their day, during a period the school calls “flex time.”

Flex time provides an opening in the high school schedule for a study hall as well as office hours and supplemental programming. Office hours at BPCPS function similarly to college professors’ office hours, as students make appointments to meet with their teachers to review a difficult concept or get help in preparing for an exam. Office hours are purposefully designed to help students learn to identify for themselves when they need extra help and then seek it out, developing self-advocacy skills they will need in college. Flex time is also used to provide students with college counseling as well as instruction in specific skills essential for college success like typing and SAT preparation. Because students must be adept at these skills, in addition to having strong academic preparation, BPCPS intentionally makes teaching them a part of every student’s schedule.

BPCPS students are also provided academic support through the school's schoolwide **advisory** system. Every student at BPCPS has an advisor, most of whom are academic teachers. Each advisor meets at least twice a week with his or her group of about ten advisees. In addition to providing time for academic support, advisory plays other important roles at the school, offering an opportunity to build relationships among students, teachers, and families and a place for small group discussions as part of the school's ethical philosophy program (see "Strong Community, Positive School Culture" and "Ethical Philosophy").

Each advisory session focused on academic support begins with a discussion of a relevant academic topic; for middle school students, it may be how to get on the honor roll, while for those in high school, it might be sharing exam prep strategies. Both student and advisor record the student's grades, track progress, and calculate the student's grade point average. Often, students work with the advisor to set goals for the upcoming week. Beyond this weekly meeting, advisors are in close communication with their advisees' families, making frequent phone calls and sending e-mails to share students' successes and develop strategies for improvement. Advisory provides a system of intensive academic monitoring as well as support for both students and families, helping students achieve the high expectations the school has set for them.

A final academic support provided to all students is mandatory **homework center**. In middle school, teachers collect all homework each morning to determine if any students have not completed their assignments. Those



students then report to a classroom during the morning and afternoon recess to complete the work they did not do the night before. This immediate consequence has two benefits: it serves as a disincentive for incomplete homework, and it ensures that students who have missed the work actually complete it. In the high school, due to the more complex nature of homework assignments and the goal of having more developmentally appropriate, real-world consequences (such as lower grades in this case, for the older students who are preparing for college), students who consistently struggle to complete homework are required to stay for the entire academic quarter in a homework center that runs from 4:15 to 5:15 p.m.



Enrichment

BPCPS is committed to providing its students with enrichment opportunities and devotes an hour and fifteen minutes four days a week to the pursuit of them. Each quarter, students participate in a range of artistic and athletic courses. Courses offered during the 2008–2009 school year include digital photography, martial arts, swimming, service learning, visual and performing arts, varsity basketball, chorus, and more.

The majority of the enrichment classes at BPCPS are taught by BPCPS teachers, and that's intentional. Enrichment classes are designed to support the school's ethical philosophy program and to help develop strong relationships between teachers and students, which in turn support student learning. When developing curricula for enrichment, teachers articulate specific links they will make to the school's virtues such as focusing on compassion in a service learning experience or

showing respect when discussing the artwork of a peer in a photography class. Principal Amanda Gardner says, “Making the link between enrichment and virtues helps with student investment in the school. Some students are motivated more by the arts or sports, so making time for those and then connecting back to our virtues and culture of scholarship helps students be more successful.” Reflecting on the hours he spends with his students on the basketball court, one teacher notes an additional benefit: “Without enrichment, there wouldn’t be the same sense of joy in students’ lives every day.”

With the high school currently serving only two grades, enrichment at this level is still a work in progress. Currently, high school students in good academic standing can earn early dismissal three days a week during flex time and enrichment in order to engage in a meaningful experience outside of the school such as an internship at a law firm, museum, or local arts organization. School leaders want older students to take advantage of the numerous enrichment opportunities available to them in the city of Boston.

Ethical Philosophy

With the cultivation of virtues (courage, compassion, integrity, perseverance, and respect) a key component of the school’s mission, BPCPS spends time and human resources to help students develop these. Teaching ethical philosophy in a formal setting is in line with the school’s belief that if it wants students to learn something, time must be dedicated to teaching it. The school has a position of ethics coordinator, currently held by David Berkley, who is responsible for developing the schoolwide ethics curriculum, which begins in sixth grade with a survey of the school’s five key virtues and becomes progressively more complex, with tenth grade students focusing on the theme “Freedom” and grappling with such concepts as free will, “The Good,” and the virtuous life.

In the middle school, ethics is taught in advisory (see figure 6), where each Tuesday morning, small groups of students spend fifty minutes engaged in activities such as debating the meaning of justice or reading excerpts from Machiavelli. Several eighth grade students acknowledge the increasing sophistication of their study of ethics and are pleased to be studying what they view as important

topics. “Sixth grade [ethics class] was just to understand virtues,” observes Bermely, in her third year at BPCPS. “Seventh grade was to explain them and what they mean to you. Now, eighth grade is to take pieces and create your own.” Her friend Erikka nods and adds, “We’ve learned that respect isn’t just about how you want to be treated, but how the other person wants to be treated. We read Socrates and Machiavelli. It makes you feel good to know things in the world.”

The challenging content of the high school ethics classes demands that it be taught by the ethics coordinator as a separate class rather than through advisory (see figure 7). This hour-long class meets once per week; students read the works of various philosophers, create their own treatises, and build vocabulary in ethics.

In all grades, the school strives for the ethical philosophy and academic curricula to be mutually reinforcing. Teachers incorporate the school’s virtues and the vocabulary of ethics class into the lessons they offer during advisory, and they use common planning time to brainstorm ways to help students make connections. The ethics teacher puts it this way, “One of the purposes of the ethics course is to disseminate language that teachers can use with students in all sorts of situations with kids across the school. And it needs to be in the form of a curricular course for students to master the skills and bring them to bear outside of class.” Formal training in virtues and ethical decision making brings a seriousness of purpose to this aspect of the mission and reflects the school’s commitment to students’ personal growth. Teachers, leaders, and students at the school believe this formal training also contributes directly to the school’s scholarly culture, focused classrooms, quiet hallways, and academic achievement as well as good decision making both in and out of school.

Strong Community, Positive School Culture

Each morning, for twenty-five minutes in the middle school and twenty minutes in the high school, students spend time preparing for the day and building community. Middle school students are in **homeroom**, where they spend most of their day, and go through a routine that sets them up for a successful day at school. Each homeroom teacher can devise his or her own protocol, but it typically

involves the “A.M. 6”: preparing one’s desk for the day; putting away unneeded materials; turning in the day’s homework; sharpening pencils; and then checking one’s uniform and attitude. Students know this routine by heart, execute it silently and exactly, and then settle in for their first academic class. As evidenced by the productivity of the next eight hours, setting aside time to build organizational habits and establish a positive, purposeful tone for the day is a valuable investment.

Morning time is used a little differently in the high school, as students meet either in **advisory** or in their **House**—*Sinceritas, Animus, Benevolentia, and Constantia*—which are multi-grade groupings of students. Teachers and students spend this time checking in, independently preparing for the day, playing team-building games, and one morning a week, meeting as a high school. By the time they are in high school, BPCPS students have internalized basic organizational skills, so House/advisory time in the morning is designed more to build school culture and foster relationships than develop basic skills. “Teachers rotate [in the high school] so it’s harder for teachers to build relationships,” says Gardner. “We have purposely carved out time for that to happen.”

An important time of the week and a key means to building school culture is the schoolwide **community meeting** held every Tuesday morning for twenty-five minutes. Sitting cross-legged on the floor from youngest to oldest, 280 students listen, participate, and snap their fingers as everyone celebrates BPCPS. On a Tuesday morning in February, the meeting has a full agenda. Several students are recognized for their art achievements in a statewide contest; the word of the week—*improvise*—is acted out by a group of students and teachers; and there are announcements about the upcoming honor roll assembly and talent show. Capitalizing on the students’ interest in the newly elected President Obama, the dean of students also describes a new program he is initiating: 100 days of change. He describes how students can make their own commitment to change. When the dean affectionately mentions that one student might commit to coming to school on time *every day*, the student body nods knowingly and snaps its approval. Finally, the DuBois Award, which is given to a student who demonstrates the school’s virtues, is presented to a ninth grader who

was selected for her diligence and perseverance. After the award, everyone clasps hands and says in unison, “Effort determines success!”

Embedded Planning Time and Professional Development for Teachers

Teachers at BPCPS have significant time with students over the course of the day, from homeroom/advisory in the mornings to academic classes, recess, tutoring, and enrichment. As research on expanded learning time suggests (Farbman & Kaplan 2005; Rocha 2008), schools with a longer school day can provide teachers with more time during the day for planning, professional development, and collaboration with colleagues. At BPCPS this is certainly the case. The physical layout of the building supports this added time for teachers. There are faculty rooms at BPCPS in which each teacher has a desk, computer, and phone with his/her own extension and e-mail address. In contrast to typical public schools where teachers are isolated in their classrooms, these faculty rooms provide an individual and communal space for teachers. At any point during the day, several teachers work individually while others develop a lesson plan together. The space certainly helps foster both informal and formal professional collaboration.

Of course, physical space provided to teachers can only be put to good use if teachers have time built into their day and year to utilize it. Each teacher’s schedule includes approximately two hours of personal planning time per day. In addition, each week at BPCPS teachers, have one hour of common planning time with their department, and teachers meet individually with either their department chair or the principal to review lesson plans or debrief after a classroom observation (see also “People”).

Professional development for teachers at BPCPS has multiple components. Much of it is ongoing throughout the year via the department and planning meetings described above. In addition, high school teachers meet twice a month from 5:15–6:00 p.m. as they continue to build and refine the high school program. Regular professional development for all teachers takes place on Friday afternoons when students are dismissed early, at 3:00 p.m. Teachers either meet in grade levels to discuss students of concern or meet as a faculty for a session on

assessment or instructional strategies led by the principal. Friday sessions end with teacher shout outs and “middle school stories,” descriptions of humorous and endearing moments with students that week, which help teachers remember why they are working so hard.

A unique element of professional development at BPCPS is the intensive three and a half weeks teachers spend at the school before the students arrive. Every year, all teachers return at the end of the first week of August to prepare for the upcoming school year. This time is spent in workshops focused on mission-critical topics such as pedagogy, the ethics curriculum, and being an effective advisor. Of equal importance, is the time teachers spend developing and refining their curriculum and assessments for the year. The school administers comprehensive exams at the end of each quarter, and these assessments are created over the summer. From these “comps,” teachers plan backwards to design their standards-driven unit and lesson plans. Dedicating more than three full weeks of the summer to professional development is a significant commitment of time and human resources. According to Principal Amanda Gardner, “The time in the summer is essential for us not only to ensure that we are ready to teach what our students need to know, but also that we are ready to work together effectively as a team to advance the school’s mission.”

BPCPS creates time in their longer school day and year for carefully structured teacher training, team work, and collaboration, a practice supported by research, which shows a link between student achievement and school-based professional learning communities (Louis & Marks 1998).

KEY RESOURCES TO SUPPORT EXPANDED LEARNING TIME

For expanded learning time to work, schools need to marshal and orchestrate a variety of resources. To provide programming for a longer day and year can require more personnel, external partners, facilities, and financial resources. With more schools in Massachusetts planning to implement expanded learning time, it is useful to consider how BPCPS uses its limited resources.

Space

As a charter public school, BPCPS has had to find and finance its own building, and the school spends about 15 percent of its annual operating budget on facility. This fixed cost presents budgetary challenges, especially as the state’s per-pupil expenditure is expected to decline in the current economic climate. However, BPCPS has secured, renovated, and rented a facility, a former parochial school, which provides enough space for the school now and will, though it will be a tight squeeze, when BPCPS reaches its expected enrollment capacity of 350 students.

BPCPS also “stretches” its facility use by being creative and forming partnerships with community organizations such as the Hyde Park YMCA, Riverside Theatre Works, Boston University, and local parks. Through such collaborations, BPCPS students have access to a wealth of opportunities, including swimming facilities, a state-of-the-art digital photography studio, and numerous outdoor athletic fields. Most of these resources are within walking distance of the school, and every afternoon sees BPCPS students in their athletic uniforms walking to the Y for swimming or another enrichment course. These partnerships cost BPCPS about \$27,000 per year, less than 1 percent of its annual budget, and add significant value to the school.

Money

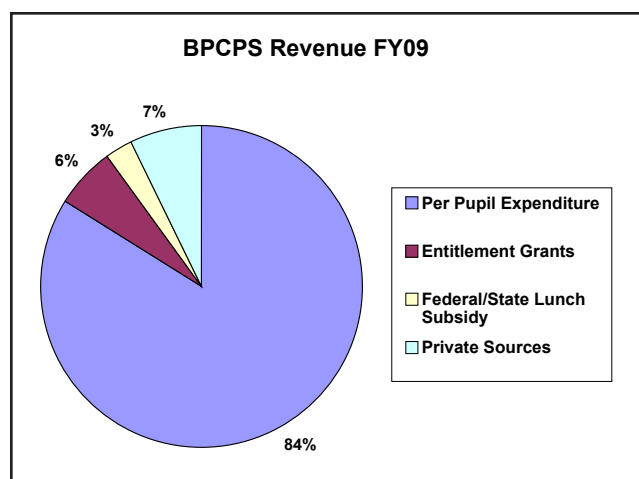
Financially, BPCPS operates a roughly \$4,000,000 budget, with the vast majority of its revenue coming from public sources. In Massachusetts, charter public schools receive the per-pupil expenditure of each enrolled student’s sending district. Similar to district public schools, charter schools also receive federal funds to support federal entitlement grants, such as Title I, special education, and federal and state lunch subsidies.

For BPCPS to make the programming in its longer school day and year sustainable in the long-term, Head of School Scott McCue and the school’s board of trustees have determined that they need to raise an additional \$1,000–\$1,500 per student, above the per-pupil allotment and other funds from the state. This figure is based on the school’s plans to establish a compensation structure better suited to recruiting and retaining master teachers in the long term as well as plans to acquire a facility more

consistent with the school's mission and goals—located in Mattapan or Dorchester and having space for more in-house enrichment activities.

During the 2009–2010 school year (FY09), BPCPS anticipates raising \$300,000 from private sources such as foundations and individual donors (see figure 9). Interestingly, this per-student dollar figure is very similar to the Massachusetts ELT Initiative financing, which provides district schools offering expanded learning time \$1,300 per student.

Fig. 9. BPCPS Revenue FY 09



Note: The source for this data is Boston Preparatory Charter Public School's FY09 budget, an unpublished document, prepared primarily by Scott McCue.

People

BPCPS is especially innovative in its use of human resources. As in the other charter public schools profiled in this report, teachers' responsibilities at BPCPS extend beyond the classroom. Indeed, all adults at the school are expected to feel ownership of, and responsibility for, every student and every aspect of the school's mission. "Mission fit" is essential in hiring; successful BPCPS teachers must not only be effective in the classroom, they must also embrace the school's commitment to preparing every student for college through high academic and behavioral expectations and more time to achieve them. While the school offers compensation competitive with other Boston charter public schools, its salaries are lower than those of the Boston Public Schools (BPS). Hiring people to do more for a bit less can be challenging, but the school is clear about its expectations and works to find the people who

are philosophically aligned and who not only want to meet expectations, but also exceed them. "What we're doing with our expanded time is mission-critical," says Head of School McCue, as he explains the hiring process. "Teachers come to BPCPS with the idea that a longer day is essential to what we're doing here."

At BPCPS, the typical teacher has a scheduled work week of about fifty hours, and general expectations are clearly articulated in the school's job description for a teacher (see figure 10).

In this multi-dimensional approach to the role, teachers are responsible on a daily basis not only for their classes, but also student support, frequent communication with families, and upholding school culture. This approach demands a significant time commitment from teachers, particularly when compared to teachers' schedules in the Boston Public Schools (see figure 11). Each teacher at BPCPS teaches between three and five academic or enrichment classes per day, tutors students two to four hours per week, supervises students during transitions, serves as an advisor to a small group of students, and participates in weekly common planning time by department and grade level. In addition, as noted earlier, teachers have about two hours of personal planning time per day. Of course, there are some trade-offs associated with this demanding schedule, most notably the challenge of balancing work responsibilities with life outside of school. Nonetheless, many teachers actively seek teaching positions at BPCPS, according to Principal Amanda Gardner, at the rate of roughly one hundred applicants per opening (see also "Teachers"), providing opportunities for BPCPS students and professional development.

"I do believe that good education includes expanded learning time. My previous school ended at 2:00 p.m., and students and teachers left at that time. There was so much time spent not learning."

~ BPCPS Teacher

Fig. 10. Teacher Job Description, Boston Preparatory Charter Public School



TEACHER JOB DESCRIPTION

Teachers at Boston Preparatory Charter Public School have the most immediate impact on the school's ability to realize its mission. Responsibilities include:

Curriculum Design, Instruction, and Student Assessment

- Articulating curricular standards aligned with state guidelines.
- Designing and frequently administering rigorous, standards-based assessments.
- Designing and implementing differentiated curriculum aligned with school standards.

- Teaching 3-5 classes per day.
- Assuming occasional substitute teaching responsibilities.
- Assuming 2-4 hours of weekly tutoring responsibilities.
- Supervising student study halls, if necessary.
- Assuming Saturday teaching responsibilities if desired, as negotiated with the Head of School.

Partnering with Students and Families

- Mentoring 10-15 students through bi-weekly advisory meetings.
- Communicating weekly with students, families, and school administrators around academic and behavioral concerns.
- Responding promptly by telephone or e-mail to parent questions and concerns.

- Attending occasional after-school events such as school dances, potluck dinners, and student performances.

Building of School Culture

- Frequently communicating the school's mission to children and families.
- Adhering to school academic and disciplinary protocols.
- Assuming extracurricular responsibilities if desired, as negotiated with the Head of School.

Maintenance of Organizational Culture

- Actively pursuing professional development, inside and outside of the school.
- Collaborating with other teachers and administrators to advance the school's mission.

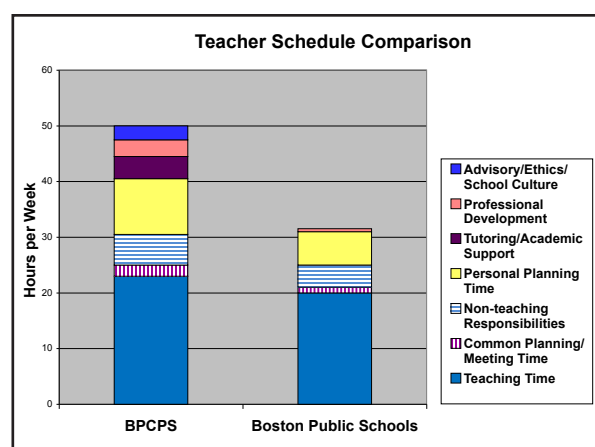
EVALUATION AND EVOLUTION OF EXPANDED LEARNING TIME

Expanded learning time is such an integral part of BPCPS that it is impossible to evaluate its effectiveness in isolation. The school regularly utilizes relevant data to evaluate each program that comprises its longer day. Each quarter, school leaders review students' grades and available external results, and they analyze trends. They also dissect data on discipline, examining the number of demerits students receive and how many students have been sent to see the dean of students. Then, they determine where students are struggling to meet expectations and consider what programmatic supports are in place to help them. When programs are not leading to student success, they are redesigned, and when they are insufficient, more are created.

Over the course of BPCPS's short history, there have been two significant changes in its programming. The first change came in the school's fourth year when detention and homework center were switched on the daily schedule. For the first three years of the school, students who did not do their homework were required to stay after school from 4:15 to 5:15 p.m. to complete it, and students who earned three demerits served detention during recess. Based on academic and behavioral data as well as observations from teachers and input from families, school

leaders determined that serving detention during school was not enough of a disincentive to change students' behavior. They also realized that doing the previous night's homework after school, in addition to that night's homework, was challenging for students and families. Now, students who earn three demerits stay for detention until 5:15 p.m., while students who did not complete their homework do so during recess and are dismissed at 4:15. This change was made through consensus and was easy to implement. It is also an example of the minor changes that regularly take place in schools committed to continuous improvement.

Fig. 11. Teacher Schedule Comparison, BPCPS.



Note: Hours for the Boston Public Schools are based on the Boston Teachers' Union current contract, available at <http://www.btu.org/leftnavbar/contracthigh.html>.

The other change in BPCPS's use of time was more fundamental and, for some, represents a shift in the school's priorities: the introduction of structured academic support for students in lieu of enrichment. As described earlier in the "Academic Support" section, students at BPCPS now participate in study hall and structured tutoring. For the first four years of the school, that was not the case. Based on a review of academic data during the 2007–2008 school year, which included the number of students being retained as well as the need to ensure that all students were making Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) on the MCAS, Principal Amanda Gardner began considering ways to provide more direct academic support to students who were struggling. Teachers and school leaders identified the need for some students to have small group tutoring, but they did not immediately see a place for it in the schedule, even though the school day was already eight hours long. Gardner visited other schools, researched how and when they provide intensive academic support, and discovered that many schools use enrichment time to tutor the neediest students. Gardner sought input from BPCPS teachers and then created a plan to implement academic support for students who were really struggling to meet standards.

While all the school's stakeholders are pleased with the change overall, there is still some ambivalence about the decision, particularly among the school leaders. They worry that students in academic support are missing out on key experiences that they want all their students to have: both the experience of enrichment courses themselves and the reinforcement of virtues that is embedded in the enrichment curriculum. "What that [newly implemented] academic support represents is that over time we have devalued enrichment to some degree," says McCue, "not because we're worried about MCAS test prep but because we have kids with serious deficits."

This change is more complex than the first and involves certain trade-offs with which the school is still wrestling. The school's leaders ultimately prioritized components of the mission, and academics came out on top. Even with its longer school day, Principal Amanda Gardner laments, "There's never enough time to do all we want to do!"

Stakeholders' Views

Beyond understanding how each program works at BPCPS, it is important to know what key stakeholders at the school think about the school's use of a longer school day and year. In February 2009, as part of the research for this report, focus groups of students, teachers, and families were convened at the school in order to hear their perspectives on the school's use of expanded learning time. Students were selected by Principal Amanda Gardner to represent both middle and high schools; teachers were selected based on their responsibilities at the school; and families were selected because of their attendance at the school's parent council meeting. Overall, people in all three groups expressed strong support for the longer day and the programming it allows the school to provide. While these groups were small and not necessarily representative of all views at the school, their opinions offer valuable insights into the benefits and challenges of a longer school day and year.



Students

Three middle school students and two high school students have plenty to say about their experiences at BPCPS (Focus Group: Students 2009). Most report that their families had chosen to enroll them at the school because of its structure, high expectations, and longer school day. All describe their first year at the school in sixth grade as one of adjustment and struggle, but these eighth and tenth graders also look back on that year as transformational. They say they had not expected the amount of homework, the close attention to their behavior, or the challenge of being in school long after their friends were out in the afternoons. Over time, they realized that the longer day and extra attention were for their benefit

and would help them achieve their dreams, which include becoming a lawyer, a youth worker, and a doctor. Evident from the comments of all of the students is the fact that the school, where students spend the vast majority of their waking hours five days a week, has a tremendous influence over what students do each day and how they think about themselves and their future.

The students say they are very appreciative of the safe environment at the school, and they value the work of their teachers. They like the individual attention they receive on their academic work, and they report making great progress since they've been at the school, from not knowing how to divide to now studying Algebra I. When asked what they liked best about the longer day, one student said, "[I like the] extra attention from the longer hours and keeping out of trouble. Last week, I didn't understand Algebra. I stayed after school and talked with the teacher, and she broke it down with me, and it was a one-on-one conversation, and I started to get it." Another added, "My friends tell me what they do when they're out of school, like stealing and other bad stuff. We're still learning. They're wasting their life."

All students interviewed say they value the access to individualized academic support and help staying on the right track in and out of school through the longer day and the school's ethical philosophy program. Brandon, a tenth grade student in his fifth year at the school, tells of a recent decision he made that he is very proud of and felt he would not have made before coming to BPCPS. Earlier this year, he found a Blackberry Storm outside the school on the street and picked it up and put it in his pocket. All day he thought about what to do with it, knowing its resale value but also remembering all that he had learned about ethics over the years at BPCPS. At the end of the day, he walked over to the police station across the street and turned it in. "I could tell the officer was impressed with what I was doing. But I didn't get a reward," he said, smiling.

While the students are overwhelmingly positive about their school experiences, particularly after their initial adjustment period, they acknowledge some of the challenges of being in school eight hours a day. "We come out of school late. In the winter, the sun is down when you come to school and when you go home," observes

Romario, an eighth grader. "You don't get to hang around with your friends in the neighborhood, and after you get home, you have to do your homework. Friends make fun of me, but when I think about it, I don't want to hang around on the street corner with them." The students are remarkably aware of the paths they feel their lives are taking now, as opposed to in the past, and those of some friends who left BPCPS to return to a district school. Despite the long days, fatigue, and hard work at BPCPS, these students say they are happy with their choice. As Bermely phrases it, "If you're not willing to sacrifice for your education, then get out of the kitchen."

Teachers

There are forty-six adults, twenty-eight of whom are classroom teachers, employed this year at BPCPS. The average teacher in the school has five years of teaching experience. The expanded learning time focus group included teachers who had worked in district schools, other charters, and a local nonprofit as well as a recent college graduate (Focus Group: Teachers 2009). They describe being attracted to the school for a number of reasons, expanded learning time among them, and they view the school's use of time as critical to their ability to achieve the school's mission. Equally important to all of them is the fact that they work in a school where they feel they have a voice, where collaboration among colleagues is the norm, and where they have time to interact meaningfully with students in and out of the classroom.

When they sought employment at BPCPS, these teachers wanted to work in a school where everyone was striving for excellence, setting ambitious goals around academics and ethics, and actually achieving these goals. They say they feel supported in their professional growth as well as their day-to-day work with students and families, and each agrees that this professional environment sustains them and keeps them invested in their job. "I love it," says Dean of Students Mike Lester, "The best part of this job is that I have the power to do what I'm supposed to do... and [I] get ongoing support and feedback on my work."

The teachers interviewed openly acknowledge that working at BPCPS is challenging; they describe putting in twelve-hour days, working on weekends, and having only a four-week summer. For BPCPS teachers, finding

time for a life outside of school is difficult, and they are always strategizing about how to be more efficient as they continue their teaching careers. One teacher, the ethics coordinator, has worked at the school for five years, and this year he is able to work part-time to be more available for his young family. This part-time position is not feasible for large numbers of BPCPS faculty nor is it currently being sought by many. BPCPS teachers report that while the amount of time and effort required to work at the school is exhausting, they feel it is essential to their professional growth and to their students' success, and they hope to be able to continue to do it for some time.

For these four educators, the opportunity to grow professionally and push themselves and their students outweighs the personal challenges presented by work at BPCPS. The intellectually challenging work environment, the school's commitment to collaboration and continuous improvement, the opportunity to help create an effective urban school, these rewards are evident and tangible to them. Ethics Coordinator David Berkley sums it up, "What's really sacred is the mission and students achieving academically and becoming more ethical, more virtuous people... more sacred than any means to those ends... We're willing to do what it takes, even if we don't exactly know what that is... We'll keep working until we figure it out."



Families

All families of BPCPS students have taken active steps to enroll their child(ren) in the school. This does not mean that all families fully support the school, but given that parents participate in an application process, it's a good bet that most of them had at least a general understanding of the program, including its longer day and year, before enrolling their children. And satisfaction levels are high. Each year, the school conducts a survey of families to gather their feedback on the program and assess their overall satisfaction with the school. Results of the 2007–2008 survey are very positive; 89 percent of respondents indicate being "satisfied" or "extremely satisfied" with the school.

The focus group of families convened for this report includes eleven parents/guardians of students in sixth through ninth grade (Focus Group: Families 2009). The individuals in this group express strong support for the school's longer day and year, and for some, it was a factor in their decision to enroll their child at BPCPS. Others cite the school's structure and discipline, mandatory uniform, academic supports for students, and communication with families as reasons for choosing BPCPS. In one session, many heads nodded in agreement as a parent said, "One reason I came to BPCPS is the duration of the day. I like the length of the day because BPS kids are out of school in the early afternoon, and I don't want to worry about where my daughter is while I'm at work. I also like what they're doing during that extra time, like getting help with their homework from a teacher, or doing enrichment like martial arts. And they're doing it all with their friends."

Families say they were looking for a school that would give their kids a good education and meaning, a school that would academically prepare their kids, give them help when they needed it, offer them experiences beyond academics, and let parents know how their kids are doing. And, of course, these parents say they want their children to be safe while they are at work. They discovered that with the longer school day all of that can happen under one roof.

When asked about struggles they face as parents of BPCPS students, it's clear that just as students face a period of adjustment to the expectations and culture of the school, so do parents. Several eighth grade families describe challenges faced when their students were in sixth

grade—coping with the homework load and earning many demerits. Says one parent, “It was a struggle at first, but now she’s doing well and is learning more than high school students are.” Several parents of sixth grade students appeared relieved to hear that other families had struggled. “I have a sixth grader here and... I couldn’t believe the amount of work at the beginning of the year,” she said. “We were doing homework until 10:00–11:00 p.m., while last year we were done at 5:30 p.m. We all want to go to bed. Now it’s getting better, and he is getting it done earlier. It’s a daily struggle, and he’s complaining about the strictness and homework, but it’s what I want for him.”

Interestingly, the group’s strongest advice to families of younger students at BPCPS, as well as families in schools planning to implement expanded learning time, is this: persevere! Having worked hard to support their students at BPCPS for three or four years, these families see that their children value the eight-hour school days and embrace the hard work that can lead to success. Their kids have made the crucial realization that the longer day, longer year, and high expectations are for their own good. The parents advise, “Don’t pull your kids out. You’ll see the benefits. It won’t be today, but it will come. Just hang in there.”

School Performance

During the writing of this report, the Massachusetts State Board of Education voted unanimously to renew BPCPS’s charter for another five years. This renewal was not surprising given the school’s impressive record of performance. BPCPS, with its mission-driven, rigorous academic program and expanded learning time model, is producing results that all schools strive for.

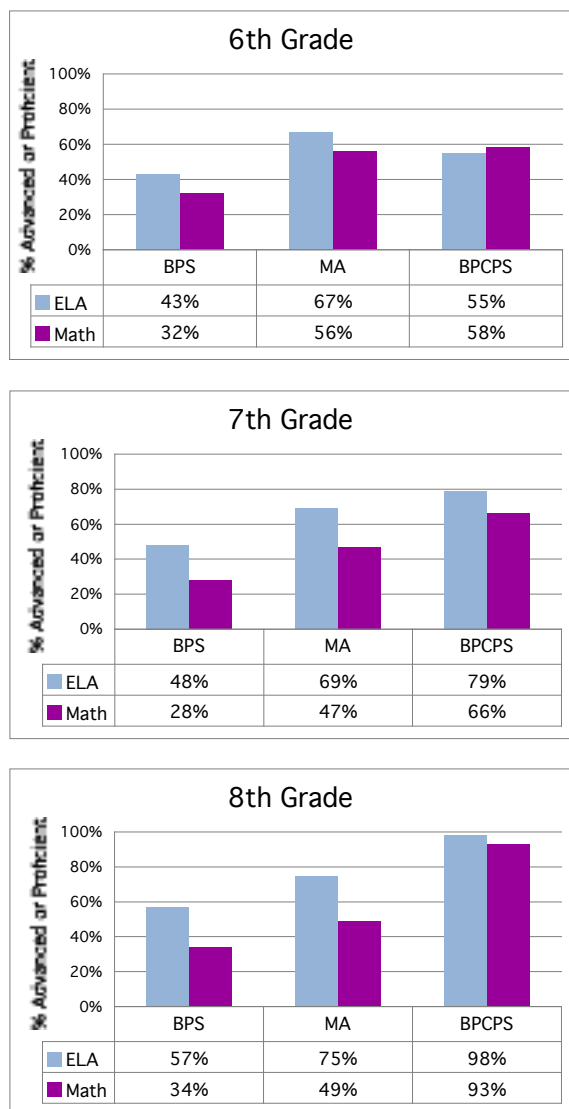
BPCPS’s scores on the MCAS have been strong throughout its five years, and the school continues, almost without exception, to outperform its sending district of Boston as well as the Massachusetts state average. The 2008

scores show that the performance of BPCPS’s sixth grade students is near the state average, but by the time BPCPS students are in eighth grade, their proficiency rates—those scoring Proficient or Advanced on the MCAS—are 20 to 40 percent higher than the state average (see figure 12). In fact, on the 2008 tests, BPCPS’s eighth graders had the highest math and the second highest ELA proficiency rates in the state. This remarkable accomplishment is even more impressive when one considers the existing statewide achievement gap and the fact that BPCPS’s predominately low-income and minority students are outperforming their White and more affluent peers across the state.

Certainly, when it comes to BPCPS’s academic performance, there are many factors at work other than having more time in the school day and year, most notably the key design elements described at the beginning of this chapter. Indeed, research suggests (Farbman & Kaplan 2005; Rocha 2008), and BPCPS leaders and stakeholders are clear in their view, that simply adding more time to the school day is not sufficient; to be effective, that additional time must be purposeful, high quality, and aligned with the school’s mission and goals.

When asked about her perspective on the impact of a longer school day and year at BPCPS, Principal Amanda Gardner describes links between academic achievement, ethical behavior, and the way the school utilizes its expanded schedule. “The primary reason we have the MCAS results that we do is [expanded learning time.] We have time, and we use it to provide what our students need academically.” She continues, “We also see the impact of ethics and enrichment in our school culture. Our kids are happy here, and they have a lot of attitude and spunk. Ethics class and enrichment are where they get to show it... they can argue about some of our rules, and we can develop a common language together around virtues... If you don’t have time for [students] to grapple with these issues, rule-following can be superficial.”

Fig. 12. MCAS Comparisons, BPCPS



Note: These MCAS results are from the school and district profiles by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and can be found at <http://profiles.doe.mass.edu>.

Reflections and Recommendations

Mistakes, Challenges, and Successes

School leaders at BPCPS are proud of the school they and their team have built. They also know they have learned much along the way, making mistakes and trying new approaches.

One of the biggest mistakes cited by Principal Amanda Gardner was not having more tutoring for the neediest students from the beginning. As described earlier in the report, the 2008–2009 school year was the first year in which students received tutoring during the school day, and based on the results of the program thus far, Gardner thinks the school should have implemented it sooner. She is now determined to figure out how to provide the right supports to boost students' skills in their first one or two years at the school, so they do not need intensive academic support in their later middle and high school years.

The greatest challenge of expanded learning time identified by Gardner is this: "It's a really long day for everyone." Because BPCPS does not use a partnership model, with a "second shift" of adults teaching in the afternoon, the long day does take a toll on the faculty. When asked what it's like to find and retain teachers to teach in this model, Gardner wryly comments that it would be easier if there were more money to dramatically increase teacher compensation. "Corporate lawyers work a lot," she says, "but they earn enough for someone to stay at home or hire a nanny." Still, school leaders say the benefits of having one set of teachers all day at the school and the consistency this model provides far outweigh the challenges. The most significant lessons BPCPS's leaders describe have to do with differentiation and flexibility. As noted earlier, the school began with built-in support structures for students, but it became clear that some students needed more support. School leaders then began to look at students individually, examining how each spent his or her day. This led to the decision to provide tutoring, rather than enrichment, to some students for part of the year. The new tutoring program then required revising the schedule slightly and retooling teachers' responsibilities. "The key has been flexibility," says Head of School Scott McCue. "I think we had good structures sketched in the charter application, but as we've become more flexible... we've become better at helping all to succeed." He adds that the change was positive only because teachers were on board with it. "Teachers have also been flexible from year to year, and within the year. People have got to be okay with having their jobs change to meet students' needs."

Recommendations for Practitioners

As district schools in Massachusetts design and implement a longer school day and year in their schools, it may be helpful to consider the following advice from BPCPS school leaders Scott McCue and Amanda Gardner:

- Determine students' academic needs and then use the longer school day to meet those needs. One size does not fit all, and expanded learning time programs need to be purposefully designed to meet the needs of the full range of students in each school. At BPCPS, for example, the schedule and program at each grade level is slightly different than the next, with students in lower grades having more structured academic supports in math and literacy and students in upper grades having more independent time, depending on those students' needs.
- Make time for non-academic learning. Even if students have skills deficits and need significant academic support, try to provide them some non-academic experiences. BPCPS is grappling with this as it provides the neediest students with more academic support in lieu of enrichment, but important learning, including new skill development and the opportunity to practice the school's virtues, happens in non-academic time.
- Ensure that all time is purposeful and standards-driven. Time for time's sake will not improve schools. BPCPS has found that having all its programming, including enrichment courses, be standards-driven imbues the school's offerings with a sense of purpose and helps foster a culture of scholarship. Enrichment courses should be a time to teach a set of skills and work toward a real-world purpose.
- Carve out time for kids and adults to build relationships and develop a common language for what is important in the school. For BPCPS, time for relationship building is incorporated in ethics class, advisory, and enrichment period. All schools are about academics, but every school should have something that makes it special. If that can be made explicit, it allows everyone to rally around a common theme or goal. When there is clarity of vision as well as consistency, student achievement and investment increases.

Plans for the Future

With its next five-year charter in hand, BPCPS is moving into a new phase. The use of expanded learning time in the middle school may change slightly, but overall, school leaders, students, and teachers feel that their current use of time works well. Because it is only the first year the school has provided structured tutoring to students in the middle school as part of the longer school day, school leaders say they will likely revise some aspects of the tutoring program, but they are committed to the approach.

As school leaders and teachers continue to build the high school and look forward to having BPCPS's first graduating class in two years, the way the school uses a longer school day and year in the upper grades will certainly develop further. The head of school asserts that he wants the students' time to be "highly programmed" but very different from time in the middle school. To complement the school's internal program, he envisions more flexible scheduling and more access to the resources of Boston.

In these challenging economic times, it is clear that budget issues will have some impact on BPCPS and other schools' ability to provide a longer school day and year. With the per-pupil expenditure expected to decrease for the 2009–2010 school year, school administrators across the state are making difficult decisions, and BPCPS is no exception. School leaders are adamant, however, that BPCPS's expanded learning time model is not at risk of being cut. Having more time and supports for students is the school's number one priority, and even in dire financial scenarios, BPCPS leaders say they would figure out a way to provide them. School leaders are thinking creatively about how to operate on a leaner budget. So far, ideas include increasing the student-teacher ratio, having teachers take on a little more, decreasing field trips, and providing slightly less tutoring. Embodying the solutions-oriented approach that has characterized BPCPS from the beginning, Head of School Scott McCue recognizes the challenges that lay ahead but focuses on the school's commitment to excellence and innovation when he says optimistically, "Maybe we'll respond to this crisis by being smarter and better."

Expanded Learning Time:

Making Every Minute Matter in Eight Additional Massachusetts Charter Public Schools

INFORMATION ON THIS REPORT

Like Boston Preparatory Charter Public School (BPCPS), other charter schools across the Commonwealth of Massachusetts offer a longer school day and/or year to their students. This section of our report provides an overview of expanded learning time programs at eight of those charter public schools: City on a Hill Charter Public School, Codman Academy Charter Public School, KIPP Academy Lynn Charter School, Marblehead Community Charter Public School, MATCH Public Charter School, Neighborhood House Charter School, Rising Tide Charter Public School, and Roxbury Preparatory Charter School.

This section provides information on *when* and *why* the participating schools decided to offer a longer school day and/or year. It also highlights practices across eight charter schools, particularly practices related to core academics and enrichment, as well as teacher planning and professional development. This section also explores the various ways in which some schools have secured and invested in human and financial resources necessary to implement expanded learning time. Finally, it includes brief segments with feedback from stakeholders, a review of school performance, and recommendations for implementation.

Information for this report was gathered through a review of key school-based documents (such as daily schedules and annual reports) and personal communications with representatives at each participating school. The author conducted interviews during January 2009 and sought further detail or clarification through the exchange of messages through April 2009.

SCHOOLS SURVEYED

Six of the charter schools in this study serve urban communities and enroll predominantly low-income students (67.2 percent to 87.4 percent free and reduced

lunch). Five of these are located in Boston—City on a Hill Charter Public School, Codman Academy Charter Public School, MATCH Public Charter School, Neighborhood House Charter School, and Roxbury Preparatory Charter School—while one (KIPP Academy Lynn Charter School) is located in Lynn. Two of the charter schools studied are located in suburban areas: Marblehead Community Charter Public School in Marblehead and Rising Tide Charter Public School in Plymouth. Like the communities they serve, these schools enroll fewer low-income students (8.7 percent to 13.6 percent) than those schools located in Boston and Lynn.

Some of the schools in this study opened their doors in 1995, when charter schools first began to operate in Massachusetts. Others opened in subsequent years. The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education conducts a rigorous review of each Massachusetts charter school every five years as part of a charter renewal process, which means all the schools in this study have had their charters renewed one to two times, with a third round of renewals coming up.

The schools studied are primarily middle and high schools; one elementary school is represented. They all share one characteristic: their size. Most enroll between 200 and 400 students. One of the schools, Codman Academy, enrolls just 116 students. Most of the schools require students to be in school over 180 days a year and well over forty hours a week.

See figure 13 for additional details on participating schools: locations, year opened, grades served, percentage of students enrolled who are eligible to receive free and reduced price lunch, the number of hours students are required to be in school each week, and the number of days in the school year. All data is from the 2008–2009 school year.

WHY EXPANDED LEARNING TIME?

Identifying the Need

Before analyzing the programmatic aspects of expanded learning time at each of the schools studied, it is essential to understand *why* these schools choose to offer more time to their students and teachers.

For some of the schools, an expanded school day and year has always been part of the vision for the school. Meg Campbell, founder and executive director of Codman Academy Charter Public School (Codman Academy), says, “Expanded learning time is so central to us and our program that we don’t think of it as expanded learning time . . .

We’ve offered a six-day-a-week program since the beginning . . . It’s always been a part of the core design of our school.”

Codman Academy students are required to be in classes either 7:30 a.m. through 4:15 p.m., or 9:00 a.m. through 5:30 p.m., though many stay for an optional study hall until 6:00 p.m., and also take a required physical education class either before or after their school day. In addition, Codman Academy requires incoming ninth graders to attend a two-

week, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. orientation and skill-building program, and the school requires all its students to attend a Saturday Academy offered for ten weeks in the fall and ten weeks in the spring from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Campbell indicates that the additional time in school allows students and teachers to engage in academic and social programming that is central to implementing the school’s Expeditionary Learning model. “The Saturday program builds in flexibility for our faculty and our adjunct faculty. That way, if a lawyer wants to teach a class for our students, it can happen on Saturday without interrupting that person’s work week. So can sailing class or tutoring at Simmons College.”

According to Campbell, there are other reasons why a longer school day and year are important to the school: “We don’t know how else to engage the students in academics. Our students enter in the ninth grade, and a powerful chance we have to catch them up is to turn on the motivation switch. We give them rich experiences to find out what they are passionate about—theatre, mock trial . . . Every child has a passion, and we use that to get them to school.”

Fig. 13. Profiles of Participating Charter Schools.

School Name	Location	Year Opened	Grades Served 2008-09	Student Enrollment 2008-09	% Free and Reduced Price Lunch 2008-09	Hours/week 2008-09	Days/year 2008-09
Boston Preparatory Charter Public School	Boston	2004	6-10	292	76.3	41.5	190
City on a Hill Charter Public School	Boston	1995	9-12	274	67.5	44.7	182
Codman Academy Charter Public School	Boston	2001	9-12	116	67.2	45	207
KIPP Academy Lynn Charter School	Lynn	2004	5-8	327	87.4	45.5	192
Marblehead Community Charter Public School	Marblehead	1995	4-8	230	8.7	45	184
MATCH Charter Public School	Boston	2000	6,* 9-12	308	77.9	43.8* 50.5	183
Neighborhood House Charter School	Boston	1995	PK-5 6-8*	400	77.8	35 39*	180
Rising Tide Charter Public School	Plymouth	1998	5-8	315	13.6	37.5	180
Roxbury Preparatory Charter School	Boston	1999	6-8	230	72.6	39.5	186

Sources: Data from Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education school and district profiles (<http://profiles.doe.mass.edu>), annual reports (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/charter/reports/default.html>), and personal communication with school representatives. Hours per week were calculated using daily start and dismissal times and do not include hours for detention. Hours for MATCH 6th grade retrieved from MATCH Web site, middle school curriculum page (<http://www.matcheschool.org/academicsms/curriculum.htm>).

*Notes: MATCH added a 6th grade in 2008. The grade 6-8 program at Neighborhood House is the subject of this study; expanded learning time is not offered in the school’s PK-5 program.

Principal and Founder of KIPP Academy Lynn Charter School (KIPP Academy Lynn), Josh Zoia, agrees. He came to Massachusetts as a former teacher at KIPP Academy in the Bronx, one of the original schools in the Knowledge is Power Program (KIPP). KIPP is nationally known for its success in preparing students for academic success through its key design elements—one of which is offering students expanded learning opportunities through a longer school day and school year. Zoia brought his experience as a KIPP teacher with him and replicated the expanded learning time program in Massachusetts. He says, “I had the advantage of coming into this with five years of KIPP experience. We didn’t create [the model] from scratch.”

We give [our students] rich experiences to find out what they are passionate about... Every child has a passion, and we use that to get them to school.

~ Meg Campbell, Executive Director
and Founder of Codman Academy

At KIPP Academy Lynn, the longer school day and year do offer more time for academics, but for Zoia, the real return on investment comes in the form of more institutional time to build relationships with the kids who attend KIPP Academy Lynn. “To us, we think that’s more important. It gets kids to buy into coming to school and gives them something besides the academics to be connected to. We do between an hour and a half to two and a half hours of non-academic things every day.” These include opportunities for character education, electives, and a weekly Songfest, where the school community comes together to celebrate success and other accomplishments.

Most of the schools studied envisioned a longer school day and year from the charter application stage. Some, however, have changed their programs considerably over time, and one added expanded learning time more recently.

Mike Larsson, deputy executive director at MATCH, notes that the mission of MATCH is to graduate students who are not just admitted to college, but who also have the skills they need to succeed in college. He explains, “Our seniors must pass Advanced Placement classes and classes at Boston University to graduate. MATCH students, all of

whom are chosen by lottery, on average enter ninth grade with sixth and seventh grade math and reading skills. There isn’t enough time in a traditional school day for students to accomplish what they need to do to meet the standard of college preparation.”

To get students ready to succeed in college, MATCH has offered a longer school day from the start, but it added an intensive tutoring program in 2004. Today MATCH high school students have the option of spending up to twelve hours a day at the school on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays. On those days, students enter the school for breakfast at 7:45 a.m., are in academic classes and tutoring groups from 8:30 a.m. until 5:15 p.m., and can choose to remain at school for additional tutoring and homework help until 7:15 p.m. The school even offers dinner from 7:15 p.m. to 7:45 p.m. for students who participate in afterschool tutoring and homework help.

Similarly, in 2004, City on a Hill Charter Public School (City on a Hill) decided to pilot an integrated and intensive tutoring program as part of its expanded learning time offerings, and they measured the impact it had on students’ MCAS scores. Principal and Executive Director Erica Jamison-Brown explains, “Tutorial started with a small cohort of students. After the first year, we compared the students’ tenth grade MCAS scores with their eighth grade scores to measure the academic growth of the students who were in tutorial against those who were not. In one year, there was such a substantial difference in growth that we decided we needed to do this schoolwide.”

Pam Miller, professional development coordinator at Marblehead Community Charter Public School (Marblehead), explains that the school has always offered a longer school year. In 1996, the school’s teachers decided to add additional time to the daily schedule in order to offer the school’s students a wealth of enrichment opportunities and still leave the school’s three academic blocks untouched. Marblehead’s students choose from forty-eight enrichment offerings, and they participate in a different enrichment opportunity each day of the week.

At Rising Tide, Assistant Head of School Michael O’Keefe says that a longer school day allows the school to help students meet the high expectations the school has set, without overscheduling its teachers during the school

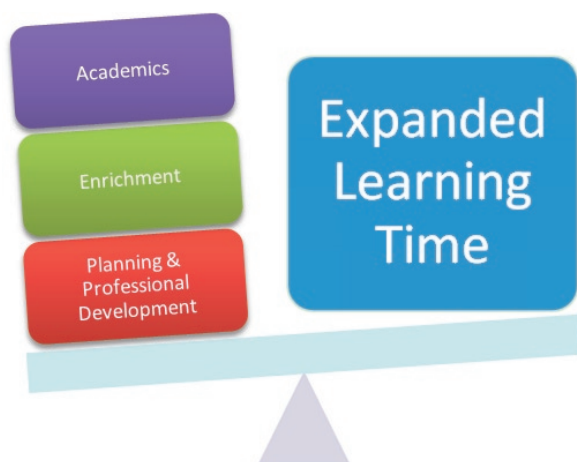
day: “We have high expectations for our faculty and our students... and we want to make sure we are supporting all of our students in meeting those expectations, especially those who don’t get a lot of support at home. The middle of the day was getting busy for teachers. They were giving up their prep times to work with kids. We wanted to give them back their planning time yet provide structured opportunities for them to continue working with kids. We also saw the value of exposing kids to lots of different learning opportunities, like those that fall outside of the core curriculum, such as enrichment activities.” In 2005, Rising Tide engaged their faculty in several discussions; in the fall of 2006, the school’s eighth year of operation, the school added a seventh period to the end of the school day for academic support and enrichment.

A BALANCED APPROACH TO EXPANDED LEARNING TIME

As noted in the introduction to this report, design elements key to expanded learning time include a substantial increase in the school day and/or year for all students, a redesign of the school day (rather than an “add-on”), and allocation of additional time to key components: core academics and enrichment as well as planning and professional development for teachers. The section focuses on how the schools studied allocate time to these three areas.

Increased Time on Core Academics

According to the schools surveyed for this report, additional time in the school day allows schools to do things they would not otherwise be able to do, with increased and carefully structured time on core academics foremost among them.



“There isn’t enough time in a traditional school day for students to accomplish what they need to do to meet the standard of college preparation.”

~ Mike Larsson, Deputy Executive Director, MATCH

At some schools, like Marblehead, a longer school day allows the school to offer its students longer class periods. Through more uninterrupted learning time, the charter school provides an interdisciplinary curriculum and a project-based learning model. It also allows the school to utilize community resources such as volunteers that come into the school or fieldtrips to local organizations and museums.

Marblehead’s Pam Miller explains that additional time in Marblehead’s daily schedule allows teachers at her school to take advantage of block scheduling:

“We have ninety-minute blocks, which gives us flexibility to use the time to meet our needs. We can have guest speakers; we can do science labs; and we can do project-based learning. In science class, our kids recently built bridges, bringing together math, science, and social studies. We couldn’t have done that in forty-five-minute periods, three times a week. The best projects are academically rich and are a direct result of having extended time on learning. The curriculum is carefully orchestrated and planned. It allows us to tap into a richness of resources and allows us to bring a richer curriculum to the kids.”

At Roxbury Preparatory Charter School (Roxbury Prep) and KIPP Academy Lynn, the increased time for academics allows for purposefully structured double periods in critically important academic subjects like English language arts and mathematics. Dana Lehman, codirector of Roxbury Prep, says, “Our students have double periods of math and English. In math, one of the periods is focused on problem solving, and the other is procedures-based. In English language arts, we offer separate classes for reading and writing.” Similarly, more time during the school day allows KIPPsters (students at KIPP Academy Lynn) to have double periods in both subjects—one math period focused on problem solving and one focused on procedures as well as separate classes for reading and

“Expanded learning time for us is about how we can impact kids’ learning opportunities while they are here during the day. It’s not just about reading and math... We do expanded learning time because it allows kids to explore different parts of their world.”

~ Ellie Rounds, Dean of Special Education & Student Support, Neighborhood House

writing. KIPP Academy Lynn’s Josh Zoia explains, “We originally tried to split our English language arts period into halves—thirty minutes of reading and thirty minutes of writing—but our students needed so much attention to reading that writing kept getting skipped. We recognized that our kids were not developing the writing skills they needed, so we started offering one full period devoted to writing instruction.”

Many of the schools emphasize that expanded learning time is not just time tacked on to the end of the school day; it is additional time spread throughout the day and utilized in specific ways in support of student learning. At City on a Hill, tutorial is a key component of expanded learning time, and it is “marbled throughout the school day,” according to Erica Jamison-Brown. Students receive academic instruction aligned with a standards-based curriculum in literacy and numeracy. Tutorial classes are scheduled between students’ “regular” classes, which helps ensure that students have the basic literacy and numeracy skills they need to succeed across all the content areas. When they struggle in their classes, students at City on a Hill also have class periods dedicated to additional academic support as well as targeted test prep for MCAS and the SAT.

The model at MATCH is similar. Mike Larsson explains, “Tutoring is built into the school day, so every student can receive the support he or she needs. As a result, students

take it seriously and don’t view it as an add-on or extra time.” MATCH offers its new middle school students two hours of skills-based instruction in English language arts and mathematics. At the high school level, the focus is on helping students understand concepts and practice skills from their coursework in addition to instruction in literacy and numeracy.

Whether it is longer class periods, double periods in English language arts and mathematics, or skills-based tutoring, the schools surveyed for this report design their expanded learning time programs around the learning needs of their students.

Increased Time for Enrichment Activities

Across the schools studied, opportunities for enrichment abound; they are central to the schools’ academic programs and help schools meet their missions.

Michael O’Keefe says that part of the value of a longer school day at Rising Tide is exposing kids to many different opportunities. “They learn skills and develop expertise beyond what is offered through the academic curriculum,” he explains. “We offer athletic opportunities like basketball and soccer as well as mural making, digital video, and other club-based activities like a student newspaper. It gives our kids a chance to discover these activities.”

Through a longer school day, Neighborhood House offers middle school students a range of enrichment programming as well. Students in sixth through eighth grade take enrichment classes in six-week intervals between 2:40 p.m. and 3:20 p.m. Enrichment opportunities there include classes in drums and rhythm, nutrition and fitness, necklace making, knitting, Latin dance, and songwriting. The school notes that students who are failing an academic class do not participate in

EXAMPLES OF ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES AVAILABLE TO STUDENTS AT RISING TIDE:

- | | | | |
|--|--|----------------------------|--|
| • scale modeling | • “ANIMAtion: An Exploration of Animation as a Tool of Expression” | • basketball | • “Finding the Solutions: Advanced Math” |
| • school newspaper | • chess | • junior classical league | • volleyball |
| • visual art: watercolor painting and recycled art | • photography | • aquariums and terrariums | • design challenges |
| • knitting for beginners and others | • creative writing | • music video making | • world drumming |
| • “Lights! Camera! Action!” | • aerobics | • yoga | |

enrichment activities; instead, they attend academic tutoring sessions until they are back on track.

To get a sense of how the schools studied allocate time over the course of a week, it's useful to examine sixth and ninth grade schedules. The schools studied report that the vast majority of each school day is allocated to core academics (approximately twenty to twenty-eight hours a week) and support to help students succeed in core academics, principally tutoring and homework help (just over eight hours each for those schools that specifically offer tutoring and homework help). Enrichment activities and other activities (e.g., advisory, community meetings, MCAS prep, and DEAR [Drop Everything and Read]) fill out the mix (an average of just over nine hours a week).

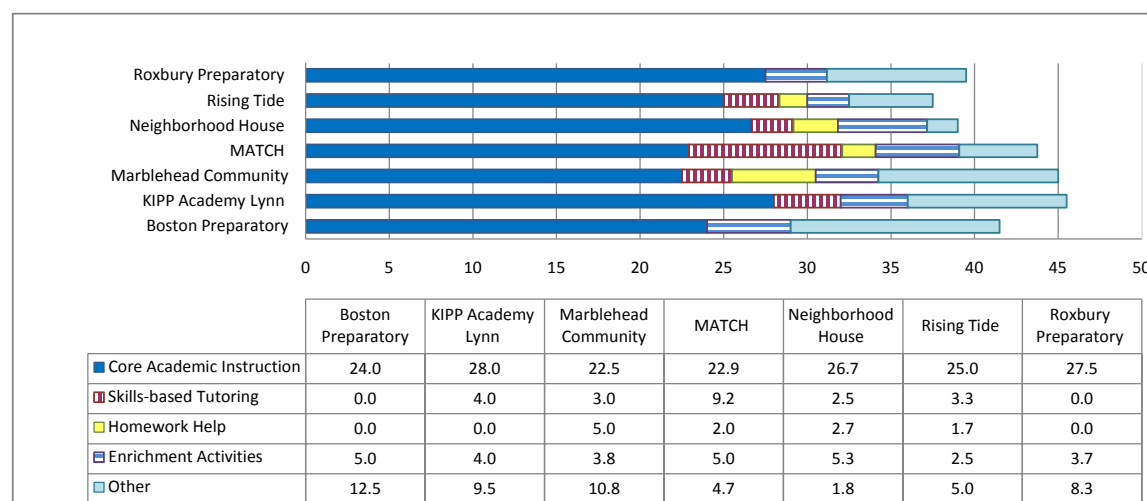
There is, however, considerable variation among the schools. At City on a Hill and MATCH, time spent in core academic instruction is supported by time spent in skills-based tutoring. At Codman Academy, students spend less time in skills-based tutoring and more time (up to six hours per week) in homework help. Ninth graders at City on a Hill spend approximately 7.3 hours a week in homework help and 4.3 in tutoring, while ninth graders at MATCH spend eight hours in tutoring and four in homework help.

It is difficult to pin down the precise number of hours each school spends on a given category in part because

participating schools classify the way students spend time differently. For example, some schools (like Codman Academy) consider subjects like art and music to be central to their academic programming. As a result, those schools count time spent on instruction in art, music, and similar subjects as time devoted to “core academic instruction.” Others (like City on a Hill) offer art and music as part of their electives program, which is optional. Finally, all the participating schools stress that time devoted to each type of activity varies student by student, grade by grade, and in some cases, day to day, depending on the needs of each student.

The majority of the schools participating in the study have schedules that include at least one day a week when students are released earlier, so teachers may engage in professional development activities and shared inquiry (reflection and dialogue on teaching and its impact on student learning). For example, many of the schools surveyed follow the same daily schedule Monday through Thursday and then release students earlier on Friday so that teachers can participate in whole-school faculty meetings. Because of this variation, when examining school schedules, it's useful to look at how time is spent over the course of a school week rather than day to day. See figures 14 and 15 for details on allocation of expanded learning time for sixth and ninth grade students at the schools studied.

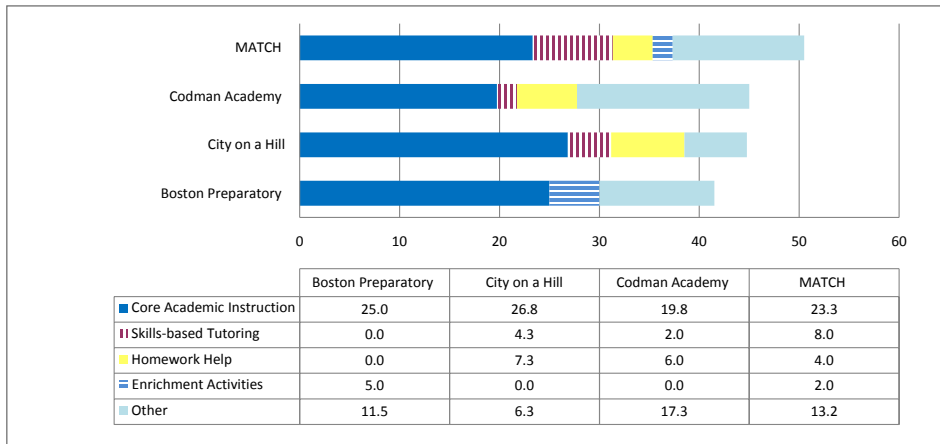
Fig. 14. Allocation of Expanded Learning Time for Sixth Grade Students, BPCPS



Source: Data included in this figure is self-reported by each school and extracted from daily school schedules.

Note: “Other” includes time for student advisory, community meetings, MCAS prep, and “Drop Everything and Read” (DEAR) time, among other activities.

Fig. 15. Allocation of Expanded Learning Time for Ninth Grade Students, BPCPS



Source: Data included in this figure is self-reported by each school and extracted from daily school schedules. Note: "Other" includes time for student advisory, community meetings, MCAS prep, and "Drop Everything and Read" (DEAR) time, among other activities.

Increased Time for Planning and Professional Development

Although the focus of expanded learning time is to provide increased academic and enrichment opportunities for students, current research (Farbman 2005) demonstrates that offering a longer day and year requires an investment in adults, too. The extra time allows schools to focus on planning, create professional development opportunities, and provide time for teachers to collaborate and engage in shared inquiry. These activities help create a professional community within a school, which research shows is linked to student achievement (Louis & Marks 1998).

The schools surveyed for this report found time within their schedules for planning and professional development by using various strategies, including scheduling early release days for students, using volunteers to teach enrichment, bringing in recent college graduates to provide academic tutoring during the school day, and leveraging teachers' time by hiring more instructors. In addition, school leaders indicate the importance of providing structure and purpose during shared planning periods, so teachers can maximize the value of the time provided.

Professional development is so essential to the expanded learning time model at KIPP Academy Lynn that for the 2008–2009 school year, Zoia modified the school's schedule to release students an hour earlier on Fridays than in previous years. "We used to end at 4:00 p.m., but now we end the day at 3:00 p.m. We learned that 'more' is not always better when it comes to spending time on academic subjects. We found that having an hour of staff

development resulted in a better experience for our kids than an extra hour of instruction." At KIPP Academy Lynn, teachers have an average of three hours for co-planning, professional development, or shared inquiry experiences and another three hours of prep time per week.

"The most important thing we can do is give teachers time ... but more time is only better if teachers know how to use it well," holds Dana Lehman of Roxbury Prep. "We are demanding about how teachers use expanded learning time, both with their students and among themselves." At Roxbury Prep, teachers spend a total of four hours a week participating in inquiry groups, department meetings, grade-level team meetings, and faculty meetings. This time allows teachers to refine the school's curriculum and examine the way it is implemented. As the instructional leader, Lehman says she monitors teachers' professional development closely, holding teachers to high expectations regarding how that time is used.

At Marblehead, teachers benefit from an extraordinary eight and a half hours of professional development time and shared inquiry each week. Miller says that this time is "sacred" and that the school and its teachers are dedicated to it. "You can't expect people to provide an integrated curriculum like ours, to be innovative, on their own," she says. "You have to give them the time to do it, to collaborate." At Marblehead, teachers use this time to co-plan, meet with the school's special education coordinator, and work in small groups or teams on curriculum planning and other activities. The school's teachers also have a faculty meeting once a week where the discussion focuses on identifying student needs and strategizing ways to meet them.

City on a Hill's longer school day enables the school to offer its teachers significant time for collaboration and planning. Teachers at City on a Hill teach four days a week and have one day without teaching responsibilities; this day, referred to as a "department day," is when teachers meet in grade-level teams as well as with others who teach the same subject area to co-plan curriculum and methodology. During each day of classroom teaching, teachers at City on a Hill used to teach all day, with just a daily thirty-minute lunch break and without a prep period. In 2008, City on a Hill introduced an intensive schoolwide tutorial program. As a result, the school is able to create space in the schedule for teachers to have a prep period each teaching day *and* still keep a department day every week. "Having the tutors in the building helps the teachers be better teachers," says Jamison-Brown. "We have found that teachers' sick days are down by 50 percent. They are less fatigued. They have time to correct student work and interact with other teachers."

City on a Hill's expanded learning time program design required that the school hire twenty-six tutors. "What can we accomplish with an additional twenty-six adults in the building?" Jamison-Brown asks rhetorically. "A lot."

Figures 16 and 17 illustrate the number of hours a week that teachers at the participating schools engage in planning, professional development, and shared inquiry activities. The data is self-reported by each school. Note that sixth grade teachers spend between three and four hours of planning, professional development, and shared inquiry activities across all the surveyed schools. At MATCH and Marblehead, teachers spend six and a half and eight and a half hours, respectively, on these professional activities. Across the participating high schools, teachers spend over three hours and twenty minutes weekly on planning, professional development, and shared inquiry. At City on a Hill, teachers spend nine hours weekly on planning, professional development, and shared inquiry activities.

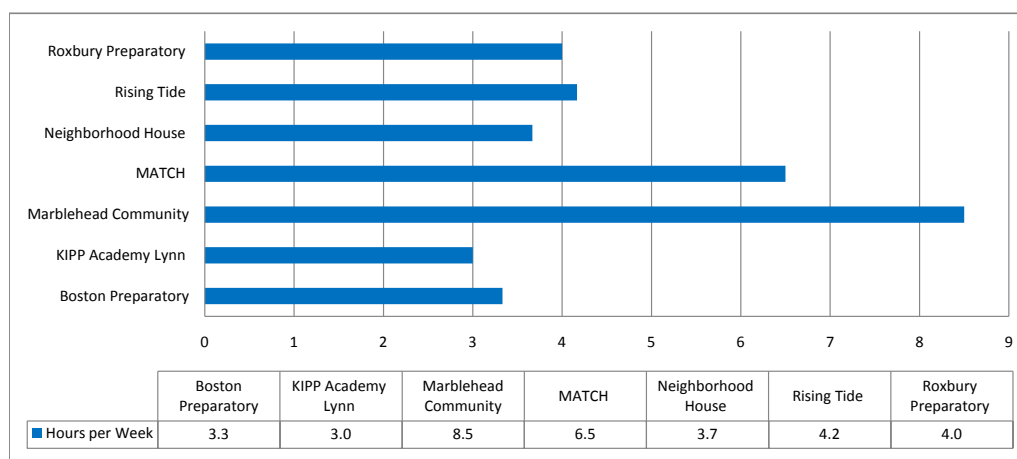


Fig. 16. Number of Hours Devoted to Professional Development and Shared Inquiry for Sixth Grade Teachers, BPCPS

Source: Data for this figure is self-reported by each school.

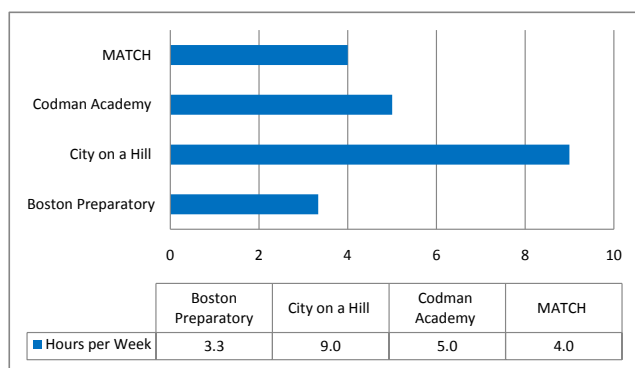


Fig. 17. Number of Hours Devoted to Professional Development and Shared Inquiry for Ninth Grade Teachers, BPCPS

Source: Data for this figure is self-reported by each school.

SECURING AND INVESTING IN THE NECESSARY HUMAN AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES

The ability to implement an effective longer school day and/or year requires an investment in both human and financial resources. Leaders at the schools studied utilize creative and varied means to obtain these resources in part because of differing philosophies and areas of emphasis.

Human Resources

The charter schools surveyed for this report staff their programs in three different ways. Some schools choose to hire and train additional individuals, along with the school's faculty, to implement programs that take place in the longer school day; others utilize existing staff; and some tap into partnerships.

MATCH's expanded learning time program is largely built around the efforts of its MATCH Corps, a fleet of tutors, most of whom are recent college graduates. MATCH Corps members tutor and provide academic support to the school's middle and high school students sixty hours a week in exchange for housing, health insurance, and a small stipend. To prepare MATCH Corps members for their duties, the Corps members receive three weeks of intense training before the start of the academic year. They participate in seminars, discuss professional readings on urban education, and hear from distinguished guest speakers. In addition, during the school year, MATCH Corps members at the middle school meet during the first period of each day to plan and coordinate their activities, while Corps members at the high school rely on daily and weekly e-mails to coordinate their efforts. Members of the MATCH Corps are often observed by and receive feedback from one of the MATCH Corps directors as well as the school's teachers.

At City on a Hill, leaders feel that hiring additional personnel in the form of full-time tutors is the only way to ensure that the school's academic standards and cultural norms are upheld. City on a Hill's twenty-six tutors each make about \$17,000 a year in exchange for a year of full-time service to the school and its students. To round out the financial stipend, the school offers its tutors intensive training and professional development, including three

weeks of training, which begins before the start of the school year. Jamison-Brown describes this training in greater detail:

“We have tutors attend the freshman orientation [Freshman Academy] with the incoming ninth graders. They go to English, study skills, civics, math, and culture classes. This teaches them the organizational systems that we require of the kids, with the kids. In the afternoon, after Freshman Academy has been dismissed, we teach the tutors what they need to know in order to be a successful educator at City on a Hill, including the literacy and numeracy curriculum that they will use. They get three weeks of targeted training during Freshman Academy, and then they attend the pre-service training for all staff at the school. This allows the tutors to hit the ground running.”

And the training doesn't stop there. As at MATCH, City on a Hill's teachers and administrators provide ongoing coaching and feedback to the school's tutors throughout the year. In addition, three times a year teachers evaluate tutors' performance against a defined set of standards that are based on the teacher licensure standards, including those related to professionalism, planning and preparation, and classroom management. Jamison-Brown reports that this system maintains the tutors' focus on school methods and standards.

Alternatively, some schools like Rising Tide and KIPP Academy Lynn rely on their own teachers to provide the majority of academic and enrichment programming for their students. These schools feel there are real benefits to providing opportunities for the school's teachers and students to interact with each other in non-academic ways.

At KIPP Academy Lynn, Josh Zoia expresses apprehension about bringing in outside individuals to supplement the school's work with its students. According to Zoia, “We're not big fans of outside help. We find that those individuals do not hold kids to the same behavioral and academic standards.” Although KIPP Academy Lynn does bring in additional staffing to support its music and art programs, all the academic support and enrichment opportunities at the school are taught by the school's teaching staff. Zoia himself even teaches a tae kwon do elective class,

and he affirms that engaging with the school's students in non-academic ways helps students and teachers build relationships with each other. At Rising Tide as well, it's largely classroom teachers who staff activities that take place within the longer school day. O'Keefe says, "We're really focused on brainstorming ideas of what people at our school can do, tapping into their talents, and encouraging them to get involved."

Somewhere between the two aforementioned models lies the approach to staffing and training employed by Neighborhood House and Codman Academy. In order to expand their capacity to provide additional academic and enrichment experiences for their students, both these schools have established relationships with external organizations.

.....
"The most important thing we can do is give teachers time... but more time is only better if teachers know how to use it well."

~ Dana Lehman, Co-Director, Roxbury Prep

Codman Academy's model relies upon two partnerships—one with the Codman Square Health Center and one with The Huntington Theatre Company. According to Campbell, the Codman Square Health Center supplements the school's offerings in a variety of ways: it provides the school's seniors with a two-week internship each December and supervises the school's mental health professional. In addition, Codman Academy's partnership with The Huntington Theatre Company significantly supplements the school's English language arts programming by linking its English curriculum with performances at the Huntington.

In the fall of 2008, Neighborhood House began a three-year pilot program with City Year in an effort to support student learning at the school. Ellie Rounds, dean of special education and student support, explains that ten Corps members spend their year of service in Neighborhood House's first through eighth grade classrooms. After a month of training from City Year officials and staff at Neighborhood House—during which Corps members are trained to teach literacy skills to young

readers and writers, administer formative assessments such as running records, and ask good questions—the Corps members are placed in first through fifth grade classrooms at the school, where they support teachers in the delivery of differentiated instruction in English language arts and mathematics. The Corps members also serve students in the middle school grades by assisting in morning reading classes, providing homework help in the afternoon, and teaching enrichment classes until 5:00 p.m. each day. Other duties include planning and supervising the school's organized recess, running Starfish Corps (an afterschool program provided on Mondays and Wednesdays for students in third through fifth grades), and serving as lunch buddies (mentors) for students in first through fifth grade.

Although Neighborhood House benefits from having ten additional adults to help with teaching and learning activities, considerable effort is required to ensure that Corps members have an appropriate level of training and Neighborhood House's own teachers are prepared to work with another adult in their classrooms. In addition, the program requires one school-based, on-site coordinator and another coordinator from City Year. Results from the program are not yet available, but both groups hope to share the model widely.

Financial Resources

None of the eight schools surveyed for this report create a separate budget for their expanded learning time programs, as the programmatic elements are interwoven into the school's day-to-day operations. This means increased time on core academics, enrichment, and teacher planning and professional development are funded as part of the school's regular budget and are paid for like any other program at the school. This presents a challenge to identifying true programmatic costs.

The author analyzed each participating school's 2007–2008 annual report and determined revenue per student by starting with each school's total reported revenue in 2007–2008, subtracting any reported philanthropic contributions raised by the school, and then dividing by the school's total enrollment in 2007–2008. Expenses per student were determined by dividing each school's total reported expenses in 2007–2008 by the school's total enrollment that year.

Findings indicate that to cover the costs of their school programming, including a longer school day and/or year, most of the schools studied need to raise additional money (through grants and philanthropic sources) beyond state allocations. Five of the charter schools surveyed for this report are able to provide their programs for an additional \$400 to \$1,000 per student: BPCPS, City on a Hill, KIPP Academy Lynn, MATCH, and Neighborhood House. Two schools—Codman Academy and Roxbury Prep—must raise over \$2,000 per student, which in both cases includes considerable support for graduates. At Roxbury Prep, for example, three full-time staff members are devoted to graduate services, including services to graduates now in high school and college. Rising Tide, on the other hand, is able to offer its program without relying on additional philanthropic contributions.

MATCH, in particular, has demonstrated creativity in its approach to securing additional financial resources. Currently, there are sixty-one MATCH Corps members, thirty-five of which are funded through an AmeriCorps grant. The grant also pays the salaries of two MATCH Corps directors—one for the high school and one for the new middle school. Additional revenue in support of the MATCH Corps program comes from the school's Annual Fund. Some students at MATCH also receive additional tutoring aimed at helping them prepare for the MCAS and SAT, and MATCH has demonstrated resourcefulness in funding those programs as well, engaging students from Boston University, Boston College, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and Harvard College to serve as work study tutors to the school's students (The Finance Project 2008).

Neighborhood House and Codman Academy benefit from resources secured through their institutional partners. These partners bring human and other in-kind resources that support the implementation of expanded learning time.

As noted earlier, a key partner at Neighborhood House is City Year, which received funding to do a three-year pilot program at the school. Ellie Rounds explains that the funding pays for ten City Year Corps members to be at the school between 7:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. each day as well as a City Year program manager to support the Corps members and serve as a central point of communication between the school and City Year. "The program is part

of City Year's 'Whole School, Whole Child Initiative,'" says Rounds; through it, the school has found a synergy between one of City Year's initiatives and student needs at Neighborhood House.

Among the eight charter schools reviewed for this study, Codman Academy's program is the most expensive per student. The school spends approximately \$3,500 above its revenue per student, and it raises significant funds—over \$720,000 from corporations, foundations, and individuals in Fiscal Year 08—to help offset the cost of its program, which includes a longer day and year as well as extensive alumni support. Still, Codman's relationships with its partners allow the school to significantly undercut the costs of a longer school day and year. Says Campbell, "We establish deep relationships with our partners. Our kids become their kids, in a sense. We start to get 'the friends and family rate.'"

All but one school in the study, Rising Tide, must raise funds in order to offer its full program, including a longer school day. When Rising Tide added an additional hour of learning time to its daily schedule, they were able to do so by "finding time" within the existing school day: shortening student transitions from five minutes to two minutes and shortening their advisory period by five minutes. "We added on a fifty-minute period to our day, but only needed to extend the school day by thirty minutes." This helps keep the school's costs down. "We were only asking teachers to work an extra thirty minutes, so the year we did this, we added an additional 3 percent to everyone's salary in addition to regular raises." He adds, "We are able to do this working within our budget," which is covered by per-pupil allotment and other public grant funds.

STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

Most schools surveyed for this report have experienced high levels of support for their expanded learning time programs from parents, students, and teachers. A few schools, however, have experienced some pushback from families regarding the long school day. In the end, to meet the concerns of some parents, these schools worked out compromises.

When Rising Tide extended its school day by just thirty minutes in the 2006–2007 school year, it experienced significant resistance from some parents. “One thing I didn’t anticipate when we made the change was the negative feedback we got from the school community. . . . A large percentage of our parents expressed concern. They felt that students were in school plenty long. The change led to some of our students being withdrawn from the school. It wasn’t expected. It was disappointing, and it gave us pause,” says O’Keefe. He also indicates that despite the year-long collaborative planning process that involved the school’s faculty, “Once we started doing it, some of the teachers’ stresses came out. They weren’t used to the new schedule.”

At Marblehead, Pam Miller notes that some parents sign up their children for extracurricular activities outside of the school such as community sports teams or Hebrew school. She explains, “The other schools in town get out at 2:25 p.m. On a case-by-case basis, we come to an agreement with the parents. They submit a request to us to release their student for participation in certain community extracurricular activities, and we approve that.”

At Roxbury Prep, a longer school day and year are a given, and leaders report that most parents come to expect and support that. Lehman says, “When we talk to prospective teachers or parents about our program, we find that people know what they are getting into. We have years of results that we can point to. We acknowledge that there are many ways to ‘do’ school, but this is the only way we know how to do it. For teachers, we can’t change the job. We can’t compromise the fact that to be a great urban teacher it’s a sixty-hour-a-week job. And we find that the families like the extra time. Parents are at work until 6:00 p.m., when we release our students . . . Sometimes we get pushback around that hour being too late or about our Saturday school program, but we just go back to the mission. We have an advantage in that every person in this community has chosen to be here, and we get a lot out of that.”

To help create buy-in at Neighborhood House, the school teaches parents about the new elements of a longer school day; this takes place during the school’s middle school orientation, prior to the start of the school year. “Most parents have been eager to have their students attend

homework club,” Rounds reports. “Some have even requested that they go to get all of their homework done. They like the idea of having their kids stay later at the school.”

Codman Academy’s Meg Campbell says her families actually pressure her to provide more programming for the school’s students. “Teenagers never want to be at home,” she says with a chuckle, describing the Codman Academy’s current plans to do mock trial activities on Sundays—because that is the only day and time not already scheduled with other school-related activities. She also highlights the public safety benefits to the school’s extended schedule. “We’ve spoken with the Boston Police Department, and they explained to us that there’s a shift change at 4:00 p.m. We know that the fifteen minutes before and after that there is a limited police presence. We also know that there are fewer adults using public transportation between the hours of 2:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. And the Boston Public School high schools get dismissed at 1:40 p.m. Providing programming for our kids until 6:00 p.m. is a huge safety enhancement for our kids and their families.”

SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

Additional time for academics, enrichment opportunities for students, and teacher planning and professional development—when it is used *well*—can result in increased levels of student learning and achievement. Although many of the school leaders interviewed recognize that multiple interrelated elements result in increased student learning and achievement, a longer school day is one of many pieces of the puzzle.

Although there are many ways to measure student learning and achievement (particularly those aspects of student development that result from increased exposure to enrichment activities and meaningful connections with adults), this section provides an overview of student performance at each participating school as measured by the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS). The source of the student achievement data presented below is the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education’s school and district profile for each school (MA DESE 2009).

Middle School Programs

Given that most participating middle schools enroll students in the fourth, fifth, or sixth grade (with the exception of Neighborhood House, which enrolls some of its students in prekindergarten), students taking the MCAS in the eighth grade will most likely have been enrolled at each school for multiple years. Therefore, student performance at the eighth grade level can be more closely attributed to the effectiveness of each school's program—as opposed to the effectiveness of other schools in which students were previously enrolled, as would be the case in analyzing student achievement data from the fifth or sixth grade, for example. School performance results for each school offering eighth grade in the 2007–2008 school year are presented below.

At the middle schools participating in this study, well over 75 percent of eighth graders earn advanced and proficient on the English language arts MCAS exam over time. While the schools' results on the mathematics MCAS exam are not quite as high, they are equally impressive at some schools. Notably, over 70 percent of eighth grade students earn Advanced and Proficient on the mathematics MCAS exam at KIPP Academy Lynn, Marblehead, and Roxbury Prep.

Although KIPP Academy Lynn only has one year of eighth grade student performance data to report, in 2008 the school's eighth grade students outperformed their peers enrolled in the Lynn Public Schools on both the English language arts and mathematics MCAS. There, 60 percent of eighth grade students scored Advanced and Proficient on the English language arts MCAS exam, and 29 percent of eighth grade students scored Advanced and Proficient on the mathematics exam.

At the charter middle schools located within Boston (Neighborhood House and Roxbury Prep), student performance on the eighth grade English language arts and mathematics exams exceed the performance of eighth grade students enrolled in Boston Public Schools. In 2007–2008, only 57 percent of eighth grade students in Boston Public Schools scored at the Advanced or Proficient level in English language arts compared to 84 percent of eighth grade students at Neighborhood House and 90 percent of eighth grade students at Roxbury Prep. In mathematics, 34

percent of eighth grade students in Boston Public Schools scored Advanced or Proficient on the mathematics MCAS exam, compared to 76 percent of eighth grade students at Neighborhood House and 86 percent of eighth grade students at Roxbury Prep.

High School Programs

All the high schools participating in this study are located in Boston and draw the majority of their students from the Boston Public School District. There, 58 percent of tenth grade students scored Advanced and Proficient on the tenth grade English language arts MCAS exam in 2007–2008. In mathematics, during the same year, 59 percent of tenth grade students scored Advanced and Proficient on the tenth grade MCAS. Over time, and most recently in 2007–2008, tenth graders at City on a Hill, Codman Academy, and MATCH have outscored their peers enrolled in the Boston Public Schools in both English language arts and mathematics. Comparatively, students at MATCH have done extremely well on the MCAS. In 2007–2008, 94 percent of the school's tenth graders earned Advanced and Proficient on the English language arts MCAS, and 93 percent of tenth grade students scored Advanced and Proficient on the mathematics MCAS.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Advice from Those Who Have Been There

During interviews with the author, representatives from the participating charter schools reflected on their experiences with expanded learning time programs at their schools. They were asked to share lessons learned along the way and advice for those who might consider implementing an expanded learning time program at their schools. Here are some of their reflections:

- “Do it a little bit at a time. Build buy-in for expanded learning time programs among your board members, staff, and families through the use of data. And build in assessment of both the kids' growth and staff performance before you start on Day One. Be able to measure and communicate how you will evaluate the success of the program.” ~ Erica Jamison-Brown, *City on a Hill*

- “The staff will need tools, adequate space, supplies, and time to figure out how to implement expanded learning time. The best things get done in collaboration with other teachers. That doesn’t happen automatically.”

~ Pam Miller, *Marblehead*

- “Expand on what the data tells you your school is doing well. Use the time you already have first. We critically analyze how every five-minute chunk in our school is used, and then we talk about how to improve upon that or extend the time if we need to. Expand the value of time by implementing programs that will leverage your success.”

~ Dana Lehman, *Roxbury Prep*

- “Don’t do more of the same. Be thoughtful about how you want to use your time. If you have a nine-and-a-half-hour school day, you have to ask yourself how you are going to engage kids throughout the day. Sometimes that means you have to use the time in non-instructional ways. Don’t devalue the importance of building relationship between students and teachers through enrichment opportunities and opportunities for character development.” ~ Josh Zoia, *KIPP Academy Lynn*

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Expanded learning time has been implemented in a number of charter schools in Massachusetts for close to fifteen years. While some schools have offered longer school days and/or years since their inception, others have adopted expanded learning time after years of operation. All the schools surveyed for this study have adapted their programs over time, including three key elements: increased time on academics, additional opportunities for student enrichment, and structured planning and professional development for teachers.

Much of the research for this report was conducted in early 2009, at a time when future funding levels for all public schools, and especially charter schools, is uncertain. Many of the schools surveyed for this report will likely face cuts in school spending. It’s difficult to know what impact reduced school spending might have on expanded learning time in upcoming years. But given how integral longer days and years are to the programs in the schools studied, it seems unlikely that expanded learning time will be cut from these schools.

KIPP Lynn’s Josh Zoia explains, “We’re trying to plan next year’s budget right now, and we’re unsure whether cuts to state funding will be made... but we won’t cut out programming. We may do some things differently, and we won’t add expenses (like an instructional coach), but we’re not going to cut either.” City on a Hill’s Erica Jamison-Brown continues. “For us, expanded learning time is just built into our overall budget. It’s a program within the school the same way English is a program... If our funding decreases, we will have to make overall budget decisions.” Like others in the schools studied, these charter school leaders consider a longer school day central to the design of their schools.

There’s so much to understand about the effective implementation of a longer school day and year, and a detailed description of the full set of key design elements at each of the nine schools studied exceeds the survey nature of this document. Nonetheless, it is our hope that the programs, ideas, and commitment of the schools in this report will inspire readers to contact participating schools and learn more about particular practices, program implementation, and school design.

Notes

INTRODUCTION

1. Results from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NEAP) show some academic gains in math but only modest gains—and even some decline—in reading during the last fifteen years. While proficiency rates in math increased from 1990–2007, still only 39 percent of fourth graders and 32 percent of eighth graders scored Proficient or above. The national average reading scores of fourth and eighth graders were slightly higher in 2007 than in 1992, but only 33 and 31 percent of students in these grades, respectively, scored Proficient or above. Finally, the reading score of twelfth graders was six points lower in 2005 than in 1992, with only 35 percent scoring proficient or above. More information on learner outcomes can be found at the National Center for Education Statistics at <http://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/2008/section2/index.asp>.

From 2000–2005, the average graduation rate in the United States increased only 3 percent, from 71.7 to 74.7 percent. Graduation rates in Massachusetts have actually declined during this time period. More information on graduation rates can be found at the National Center for Education Statistics under “Student Effort and Educational Progress” at <http://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/2008/section3/table.asp?tableID=896>.

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About the Project: *Expanded Learning Time: Making Every Minute Matter*

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LEAD SCHOOL: BOSTON PREPARATORY CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOL Boston Preparatory Charter Public School (BPCPS) received its charter from the Massachusetts Board of Education in February 2003 and opened its doors on September 7, 2004, with an inaugural class of 110 sixth graders. Today the school serves 285 sixth through tenth graders, each from the city of Boston. At full capacity, BPCPS will serve 350 sixth through twelfth graders.

The mission of BPCPS is to “utilize rigorous curriculum, extended academic time, and a range of supports for children and families to prepare sixth through twelfth grade students to succeed in college. An environment structured around scholarship and personal growth cultivates students’ virtues of courage, compassion, integrity, perseverance, and respect.”

In March 2009, the Effective Practice Incentive Community (EPIC), a national initiative of New Leaders for New Schools, awarded BPCPS its “Gold Band” EPIC status, recognizing BPCPS as one of five charter schools to make the highest achievement gains nationwide during the 2007–2008 school year. The EPIC model uses state test results in reading and math to measure the impact of a school on its students over time.

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SUPPORTING ORGANIZATION: MASSACHUSETTS CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOL ASSOCIATION The Massachusetts Charter Public School Association (MCPSA) is a nonprofit, school-based membership association representing charter schools operating in the Commonwealth. Its mission is “to serve, support, and advocate for Massachusetts charter schools as they strive to achieve the goals of their charters.” Project Manager for *Expanded Learning Time: Making Every Minute Matter* is MCPSA Director of Dissemination Cindy Snow. MCPSA is led by Executive Director Marc Kenen.

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