

Academic Calendar Time and Opportunity to Learn

Overarching Local Discussion Question: How do the schools currently structure their school day and school year to maximize academic learning opportunities for ALL children?

1. *What can the Board consider to “level the playing field” for learning needs of all children that makes sense, costs little, and can have transformational impact?**
2. Is modifying the calendar for learning something that should be discussed by schools in the district? How is the district addressing the challenge of summer learning loss for students? *If not, why not?**
3. What assessment procedures do the schools have in place to identify students in need of specific, targeted remediation?
4. What developmental, intervention, enrichment I learning opportunities do the schools currently provide during the school day, after school and in the summer? How are they staffed and are adequate resources targeted to those programs and strategies? What assessment data exists to show how successful these current programs are?
5. To what degree have new ways to increase academic learning time for students most in need been examined and implemented?
6. To what extent is the district providing extended learning opportunities for primary age students who are not reading at grade level?
7. What possibilities have been explored regarding modification of the existing K-12 school calendar for education purposes? Are the opportunities to learn for students in need of remediation placed at the most strategic times throughout the year? What would the most effective academic calendar look like?

Policy Recommendations

1. Develop and adopt policies that direct the resource of time to closing the achievement gap, including a clear focus on using *the academic calendar year and** extended time effectively based on assessment of students’ needs. Allocate resources for remediation and acceleration of students’ annual growth targeted to the students in the lowest quartile.
2. Ensure that policies and practices establish clear links between the extended time programs and the regular academic program.
3. Implement policies that develop and use collaboration among schools, parents, and communities to widen the pool of resources, expertise, and activities available to extended learning programs, such as recruiting parents and community members as individual tutors and mentors. Explore collaborations with traditional after school programs to provide extended academic learning opportunities.
4. Direct staff to search for outside funding to support extended learning opportunities, including state, federal and private sources.
5. In implementing new policies or practices to increase learning opportunities and time directed at closing the achievement gap, be sure to include a thoughtful evaluation plan to measure program effectiveness. Include assessments that measure rate of annual growth in reading and mathematics.

*** Suggested Italicized Edits from testimony by Phyllis Frank, panel chair and convener**

Text adapted from: Closing the Achievement Gap: A Policy Action Guide for Washington State’s School Directors, “Time and Opportunity to Learn”, November 2002, pp 30-33.

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