



More & Better
Learning Time

EXPANDING
LEARNING
•
INCREASING
OPPORTUNITIES





All children can succeed
if given the
right opportunities
and the
necessary support.

Providing Opportunities and Increasing Achievement

Students in the Rochester City School District have to overcome enormous challenges.

- Rochester has the fifth-highest poverty level in the United States (Rochester Area Community Foundation and ACT Rochester report).
- Eighty-four percent of our students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunches.
- Until the 2013-14 school year, Rochester students received among the least classroom time in the nation, and the lowest of any students in Monroe County (RCSD Action Plan, 2014-18).
- “Summer learning loss,” in which students lose critical skills and knowledge over summer break, has a greater impact on younger children from lower-income backgrounds.

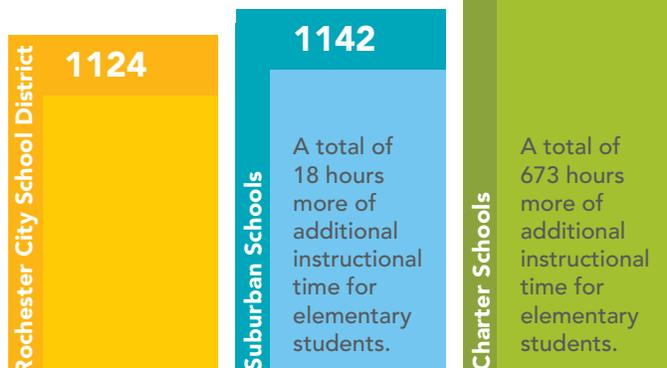
Though these challenges contribute significantly to an opportunity gap and an achievement gap, our community is coming together to provide a collective impact. Closing the opportunity gap and improving student achievement are key RCSD priorities. Our belief is that **all children can succeed if given the right opportunities and the necessary support.**

To help close these gaps, the District is adjusting classroom time to enhance learning and academic growth, and equipping schools with every available tool and resource to engage students.

One key academic priority is **More & Better Learning Time.**



Elementary School Hours
Per Year: RCSD vs.
Suburban Districts
and Charter Schools





More Learning Time

If you ask most students if they would like a longer school day and a longer school year, the answer – not surprisingly – is “No.” However, if you offer them the opportunity to spend more time learning about things that they have a particular interest in, the response is an enthusiastic “Yes.”

That’s the aim of Rochester City School District’s More & Better Learning Time, part of an innovative national program that expands learning time beyond the traditional school calendar. Working with the National Center on Time & Learning (NCTL), the District is part of the TIME Collaborative (a Ford Foundation national initiative) to provide high-quality learning time, within an expanded school day.

Through this effort, participating schools utilize more classroom time to empower students with the skills, knowledge, and experiences needed for college, career, and life success. We have increased learning time by adding 300 hours to the expanded learning school schedules.

- **Students receive additional academic support for acceleration and intervention, as well as opportunities for engaging enrichment, provided by their teachers or community partners.**
- **Teachers have more time to collaborate with other teachers and for lesson planning, embedded professional development, and analyzing student work and data.**

Participating schools engaged in a collaborative process to redesign and strengthen their schedules around a longer school day — involving teachers, administrators, community members, union officials, and parents. Our More & Better Learning Time initiative was developed in collaboration with several national partners, including the NCTL, The After-School Corporation (TASC) and Generation Schools.





Better Learning Time

More time in the classroom by itself does not guarantee better academic outcomes. Success depends upon how the additional time is used. RCSD’s expanded learning time schools offer an array of elective courses and hands-on learning experiences, in addition to required core courses.

So, besides the standard Math, Science, English and Social Studies classes, students can choose from fun and engaging electives like Technology and Computers, Dance, Drama and Performing Arts, Cooking, Step and Fitness, Cardio Blast (walking, dancing, jumping rope), STEM, eBooks, Music Maker, Mock Trial, Game Design, and many more.

One expanded learning school even offers Minecraft and Zombie Geography classes. (See individual school Fact Sheets for details of sample class offerings.)

A Day in the Life: Sample Schedule



Enrichment Elective

Students at RCSD expanded learning schools can take elective courses that supplement traditional core classes. Options have included:

- Blogging
- Book Publishing
- Cardio Blast
- Computers
- Cooking/Nutrition
- Dance
- Drama and Performing Arts
- Game Design
- Leadership
- Minecraft
- Mock Trial
- STEM
- Step and Fitness
- Technology
- Zombie Geography
- Many more

Expanded learning is designed to give students classroom instruction tailored to meet their individual needs and interests. Taking these elective classes within the school day also eases the burden on parents, who don’t have to adjust their work or daily schedules to drive children to other programs outside of school. **And it makes children excited about going to school (really!).**



Seven Essential Elements for Success

RCSD's expanded learning schools are incorporating Seven Essential Elements for success into their expanded schedule, as outlined by the NCTL:

1	Focused School-Wide Priorities 	New school day/year driven by a small set of priorities to improve student achievement
2	Rigorous Academics 	All student schedules include challenging ELA, Math, Science, and Social Studies courses
3	Differentiated Supports 	All student schedules include academic intervention or acceleration taught primarily by certified teachers
4	Frequent Data Cycles 	Systemic approach to analyzing and responding to data to improve instruction
5	Targeted Teacher Development 	All teacher schedules include weekly opportunities to collaborate with peers to strengthen instruction
6	Engaging Enrichment 	All student schedules include enrichment courses beyond traditional district offerings
7	Enhanced School Culture 	School-wide plan to build a culture of high academic and behavioral expectations



Why Expanded Learning?

The traditional public school day, which has been around for decades, has become outdated. Today's school calendar does not give schools the time they need to prepare students for college and careers. Rather than making school time the constant, and allowing learning to be a variable outcome, expanded learning ensures better learning through flexibility in time and supports, based on an individual student's strengths and needs.

Additional learning time is especially important in high-poverty school districts like Rochester, where students need more time and support in school than students in higher-income school districts, where families are able to provide higher levels of support at home.

National evidence shows that more and better learning time boosts achievement. Currently, more than 1,500 schools across the country are demonstrating how more and better classroom time improves outcomes. In Massachusetts, students who attend early learning time schools are improving in math and reading at a much higher rate than students in schools without early learning time.

Early RCSD expanded learning results indicate accelerated student growth rates, improved attendance, better student-teacher relationships, and fewer behavior problems.

RCSD's More & Better Learning schools will serve as national models for effectively expanding the typical school calendar to improve student outcomes. Expanded learning time will open up new opportunities for our students and help create an environment where school becomes much more interesting than the streets.



Early Results of RCSD Expanded Learning

- Accelerated student growth rates
- Improved attendance
- Better student-teacher relationships
- Less behavior issues



More & Better Learning Time

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