

# FULL SCHOOL DAY FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## Rationale for the Full School Day

### Why is the district implementing the Full School Day initiative?

Our goal is to ensure that every student – regardless of what school they go to and what neighborhood they live in – graduates from high school prepared for college and career. Sadly, the district is far from this goal. Currently, only 57% of our high school students graduate. An even smaller number of students are prepared for college; only 7.9% of our high school juniors met college benchmarks in core academic subjects.

To bridge this gap, we need to improve instruction in our classrooms. The district is in the midst of implementing three initiatives that together, ensure that we change **what** we teach, **how** we teach it, and ensure we have the proper **time** to teach. Specifically, the district is implementing:

- **Common Core State Standards (CCSS)** – these standards outline a higher bar for what our students need to know in order for them to succeed in college and career. The district will be implementing these standards across the next few years, fundamentally changing and improving “**what**” we teach in our classrooms.
- **Common framework for instruction** – this framework outlines what good teaching looks like. Our teachers will have a clear understanding of what good teacher looks like, where they stand compare to those standards, and how they can improve their skills. This will change “**how**” we teach in our classrooms.
- **Full School Day** – in order to change “what” and “how” we teach, our schools need more time. Our kids receive 22% less time than peers in other large urban districts. We cannot change “what” and “how” we teach without providing them with at least the same amount of time as other districts receive.

The Full School Day is not an isolated initiative. It is an integral part of a larger strategy to improve instruction throughout the district.

### Why does Chicago need more time? How do we compare to other large cities?

Of the 10 largest cities in the nation, Chicago ranks last in the amount of time students spend in the classroom. Our elementary school students are receiving 22% less instructional time than their peers across the country, and our high school students get 15% less time. We can’t expect the status quo to give them what they need.

### Has the shorter school day really impacted student achievement in Chicago?

Yes, the shorter school day has played a significant role in producing a system that does not prepare our students to succeed in college and career. Today,

- 123,000 students are in underperforming schools
- Only 57% of high school students graduate and only 7.9% of high school juniors tested college ready
- This achievement gap starts way before high school—at the critical 3<sup>rd</sup> grade level where only 17% of students exceeded state standards in reading. (Studies show that 3<sup>rd</sup> graders who do not read at grade level are four times more likely to drop out of high school)
- This is an issue that impacts all schools. No elementary school has 90% or more of their 8<sup>th</sup> graders meeting college readiness benchmarks in both math and reading (as measured by 8<sup>th</sup> grade Explore)

# FULL SCHOOL DAY

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **Will more time help boost achievement?**

There are many research studies that show that more time, if used well, lead to improved student achievement. One example of this is an analysis that showed that 14 of 15 studies found that extending the school day or year resulted in increases in student achievement.

- *“Extending the School Day or Year: A Systematic Review of Research (1985-2009).” Erika A. Patall, Harris Cooper and Ashley Batts Allen. Review of Educational Research. September 2010. Vol. 8, No. 3, pgs. 401-436.*

Parents who are interested in learning more about the research behind the Full School Day can go to our website at [www.cps.edu/fullday](http://www.cps.edu/fullday).

### **How will the district ensure that the additional time is time well spent?**

While time is critical, we recognize that it’s **how** we use the additional time that will ultimately impact the success of all students. Additional time must also be quality time.

To ensure that additional time is quality time, for the first time ever, the district has set minimum guidelines for the number of minutes each student should receive in core subjects like reading, math and science at each grade level. These guidelines are based on the expertise and experience of district content experts, an analysis of guidelines adopted by other districts, as well as the time needed for educational models that have a proven impact on student achievement.

Additionally, the district is implementing two other district-wide initiatives to complement the Full School Day initiative. First and foremost, the district is implementing the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). The CCSS are internationally-benchmarked, rigorous standards designed to more accurately reflect the knowledge and skills that our students need for success in college and career. The Common Core State Standards will dramatically improve “what” our teachers teach and “what” our students learn on a daily basis. In addition to the Common Core, the district is also implementing the common framework for instruction. The framework will outline “how” our teachers should teach, again improving the quality of instruction in our classrooms.

Combined with the implementation of the Common Core State Standards and the common framework for instruction, the Full Day provides both low and high performing schools with an invaluable tool to deliver a higher quality education and better prepare students for the future.

## **The Full School Day Plan**

### **How long is the Full School Day?**

Beginning next fall, all district schools will have a 7.5 hour day, eliminating the shortest school day among the nation’s largest cities and bringing Chicago on par with the national average for instructional time in both elementary and high school.

### **How is the Full School Day different from the current day?**

With the Full Day, elementary students will receive 82 additional minutes of instructional time while high school students receive 46 additional minutes of instructional time. Elementary students will also receive time for lunch and recess every day to relax, re-boot, and return to the classroom prepared to learn.

## FULL SCHOOL DAY FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Average minutes per day	Current Day*	Full School Day	Difference
<b>ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS</b>	<b>345</b>	<b>450</b>	<b>105</b>
Instruction	308	390	82
Student Lunch	20	45	25
Student Recess	0		
Passing Periods	17	15	-2
<b>HIGH SCHOOLS</b>	<b>414</b>	<b>450</b>	<b>36</b>
Instruction	322	368	46
Division	14	0	-14
Student Lunch	46	46	0
Passing Periods	32	36	4

\* For elementary schools, current day is reflective of the closed campus model.

### What will the Full Day look like?

The Full School Day will look different at every school; this is not a one-size-fits all approach. The additional time provided by the Full Day gives schools the opportunity to redesign their day to meet the unique needs of their student body with input from community, parents, students, and school staff.

### How did the district come up with the proposal for the Full Day?

Plans for the Full School Day have been made after months of input gathered from meetings with principals and network chiefs, parent focus groups, student focus groups and over 600 teachers through the VIVA Project, as well as guidance from the National Center for Time and Learning. Additionally, the Full School Day Advisory Committee, composed of representatives from parent and community organizations, faith leaders, elected officials, teachers and principals, met regularly to provide input and feedback throughout the process.

### Why are we moving to a 7.5 hour school day?

First and foremost, we are moving to a 7.5 hour school day because that is what is needed to bring Chicago on par with the national average for instructional time in both elementary and high schools among large school districts.

Secondly and more importantly, the move to a 7.5 hour school day ensures that we provide teachers and students with the time they need to provide students with ALL the opportunities that principals, teachers, parents, and students demanded be included in the Full School Day.

It is only with a 7.5 hour day that we are able to:

- Provide elementary school students with 45-minute period for recess and lunch **AND**
- Ensure elementary school students are taught science and social studies EVERY day **AND**
- Provide time for daily intervention so that struggling students are provided immediate supports **AND**
- Provide time for students to engage in arts education, physical education, technology, etc. **AND**
- Provide time for students to prepare for college & career opportunities

Anything less than a 7.5 hour day means schools will have to choose between all of these opportunities. Schools would have to choose between offering recess or intervention, between offering science and social studies each day.

## FULL SCHOOL DAY FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **Why do high-performing schools have to implement the Full School Day?**

We believe that all schools, regardless of their current performance level, would benefit from an instructional day that is equal to what schools in other large urban districts are providing their students. This is particularly important because even students who are in high performing schools will need to make adjustments once Common Core State Standards become the statewide standard in 2014. Children today who may test high on the ISAT may see their achievement levels drop on assessments more aligned to the common core. This additional time in the classroom will better prepare them for this more rigorous curriculum CPS is adopting this school year to provide the additional time needed in core subjects.

### **How will a Full School Day impact preschool and kindergarten programs?**

Preschool and kindergarten students will also benefit from a Full School Day. Specifically,

- Full-day preschool and kindergarten programs will adopt the same changes as other elementary school grades. Students will receive an additional 90 instructional (and 105 bell-to-bell) minutes.
- 4-hour kindergarten programs will remain 4 hours.
- Half-day preschool and kindergarten programs will run 2 hours 50 minutes each day.

## **Planning**

### **Will schools be prepared to implement the Full Day in the fall?**

Yes. To ensure schools are fully supported and communities are thoughtfully engaged, the district has launched a year-long planning process. The planning process is designed to foster creative and innovative ways for principals to re-structure their day to meet the unique needs of their student body. The district has provided a number of supports to schools throughout the planning process.

Specifically, the district has provided:

- A series of training sessions to all schools created and delivered by the national experts on expanded learning time schools – the National Center on Time & Learning.
- Ongoing series of principal webinars. These webinars provide a deep dive on specific Full School Day topics e.g., redesigning the day for early education students, redesigning the day for students with disabilities, integrating arts into the day
- Tools, templates, and best practices, including:
  - Principal guide
  - Recess guide
  - Programming strategies guide

### **Why are we planning now? Isn't everything going to change in negotiations with the teacher's union? You're wasting the principal's time on something that's absolutely a meaningless exercise.**

SB7, which represented some of the most sweeping education reform efforts passed in any state, was in part specifically designed to give school districts flexibility in setting the time of day and length of the year separate from union negotiations. The purpose of this change was to provide districts with the tools necessary to boost student achievement. The planning process is extremely valuable to all schools, and not only does it help principals add more time, but it also allows principals the opportunity to restructure their day to maximize student achievement.

## **FULL SCHOOL DAY FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **You haven't provided schools with their budgets and you're facing an enormous deficit, how can you fund this?**

As in years past, we face difficult fiscal times that will force us to ask tough questions and make tough decisions about how dollars are spent in the district. To ensure that we make decisions that best serve our students, we are committed to identifying any and all opportunities to drive more dollars to the classroom so that they can be invested in our students and their academic achievement. We will be taking every step possible to find dollars within our budget to fund this critical tool that can bring enormous returns on academic achievement. With our children being shortchanged on instructional time for as many years as they have, we can't afford not to do this.

We will be sharing the overall budget for schools, including the Full School Day budgets, later on this spring. Principals have asked us to present them with one comprehensive budgetary picture for their schools so that they can make appropriate decisions in collaboration with their staff, local school councils, and communities. This request is why we have not shared information about the Full School Day budgets to date; we want to respect principals' feedback for a complete budgetary picture.

### **Parent questions**

#### **Why does my kindergartner need to be in school as long as 8<sup>th</sup> graders? My child will be exhausted and won't be able to last throughout the day.**

First and foremost, it is critical that we provide all our students, even students in our earliest grades, with a Full Day. We know from looking at our test data that only 17% of third grade students are exceeding state standards in reading. This means that less than one out of every five students are on the track to graduate from high school prepared for college and career. We need to begin to provide students in preschool, kindergarten, and first grade with the time needed to ensure they are on track for college and career.

Second, we know from the experience of Pioneer schools, charter schools in Chicago, and other large school districts that students do have the stamina to attend a longer day. There are children of all ages throughout Chicago in charter schools and all across the country who are attending school 8-9 hours a day.

Lastly, the Full Day parameters and guidelines provide schools with the flexibility to structure the day based on specific needs of their students. This means that a kindergartner's day will look dramatically different than 9<sup>th</sup> grader's day. The early education department has pull together sample schedules that ensure young students receive multiple opportunities for play time and rest time so that they can be energized and engaged when they are in the classroom.

#### **How will a Full School Day impact students who receive bus transportation?**

Students who receive bus transportation will continue to receive transportation with the Full School Day although specific pick-up and drop-off times will likely be adjusted to accommodate the new school schedule. The district will also work with the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) to make adjustments to ensure students who ride public transportation are able to get to and from school. Specific information regarding CTA-related changes will be available in the future.

#### **What is the district doing to ensure the safety and security of students with a Full School Day?**

No schools will be ending their school day at a time when it's dark outside, especially during the winter months. In addition, we are working closely with our safety & security team as well as the Chicago Police Department to ensure students are safe not only during the school day but also before and after school day.

## **FULL SCHOOL DAY FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **How will a Full School Day impact afterschool activities, including sports, internships, and jobs?**

Since each school is redesigning their school day to meet the needs of their students, we anticipate that each school will need to revisit their afterschool strategy. The school's new afterschool strategy will depend largely on what they decided to include in the Full School Day. Parents, students, and communities should engage the school in a discussion about the school's specific afterschool plan.

To support schools, the district will be working with the Chicago Park District, community partners, internship providers, and other relevant parties to ensure the transition to Full Day is as seamless as possible. We have already started meeting with community organizations, city agencies, and others to begin the process of shifting programming.