

# DOINGWHATWORKS



Audio

FULL DETAILS AND TRANSCRIPT

## Planning an Expanded Learning Day

Jacob Hiatt Magnet School, Massachusetts • January 2010

Topic: Increased Learning Time: Beyond the Regular School Day  
Practice: Structure Time

### Highlights

- Jacob Hiatt Magnet School took up the opportunity to expand the school day and calibrate it according to identified student needs.
- Mary Labuski, an assistant principal at the school, describes the process of redesigning school practices and schedules based on student-level assessment data.
- The program focuses on continual improvement using multiple forms of data and professional development for staff.

### About the Site

Jacob Hiatt Magnet School  
Worcester, MA

#### Demographics

50% Hispanic

24% White

19% Black

3% Asian  
67% Free or Reduced-Price Lunch

Jacob Hiatt's nearly eight-hour expanded school day has led to visible student academic growth. Its 2009 scores showed Adequate Yearly Progress in all subjects for the first time since 2002. The pillars of the school day redesign approach taken by the school include:

- Implementation of school day redesign based on student assessment data,
- Individualizing and differentiating instruction based on student needs,
- Incorporating enrichment activities in academically classes,
- Facilitating collaborative planning meetings for teachers and program instructors,
- Fostering partnerships with local groups and organizations to provide extracurricular opportunities and resources.

## Full Transcript

My name is Mary Labuski, and I am the assistant principal at Jacob Hiatt Magnet School, in Worcester, Massachusetts.

In 2006, we had the opportunity to prepare a proposal to the Massachusetts Department of Education for a redesigned school day. They were offering two hours of additional instructional time, and we knew that we needed to use that time just as efficiently as possible.

The original proposals, request for proposals from the Massachusetts Department of Education had kind of three core areas that they were looking for schools that were going to plan a redesign to keep in the forefront of their minds, and that was strengthening core instruction, increasing the amount of time for teachers to meet collaboratively as well as professional development for teachers, and incorporating enrichments into the school day.

This initiative, this expanded learning time initiative in our school, has been developed and refined for four years. The dedication of an individual person on your staff to facilitate the expanded learning time work is key to the success of this initiative. We knew immediately, when we went into this with our original redesign four years ago, that this was going to require lots of support for our teachers and was going to require someone to work with the community, our district office, our state leaders, and our own staff here to coordinate. This wasn't just two hours of additional time, we weren't just adding on two hours of additional time; this was an entire restructuring of our day and the way we looked at educating our children.

And one of the wonderful pieces of that and one of the greatest opportunities of expanded learning time is the opportunity to bring the community into the school to enrich the curriculum for children. Our expanded learning time facilitator had been a classroom teacher, here in our building. We wrote a job description,

rough as it was at the time, for what we saw as the fundamental responsibilities of this position, and we offered it to our entire staff. We had three or four people that expressed an interest, went through an interviewing process with the committee that designed our redesign day, and we did choose a former sixth-grade teacher who is and has been for the four years our expanded learning time facilitator. This young lady's responsibilities go from coverage of classrooms in the absence of teachers, coordinating all of the enrichment opportunities—we have artists in the classroom, we have musical productions in the building, we have approximately four field trips for every one of our 22 classes each year, we have a museum of product that our children share with parents and the community that we conduct three times each year, we have athletes from local colleges that come in to mentor students. The additional programs and again the coordination of those programs are really what make this such a rich opportunity for children, but you could not add it on to someone's responsibility, not my responsibility as an assistant principal or the principal's responsibility, and certainly not a person that had instructional responsibility. A person that's dedicated to the success of the expanded learning time initiative is key to a school considering this work.