



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 14, 2014

CONTACT
Blair Brown
(978) 853-8045
bbrown@timeandlearning.org

As Demands on Teachers Mount, More Time in School Helps Strengthen Instruction
New Report Features Effective Practices of 17 High-Performing Expanded-Time Schools

(Washington, D.C.) As demands on teachers increase, schools across the country are expanding their calendars to give teachers more time to collaborate and build new skills. This emphasis on teacher time is particularly important as states implement the more rigorous Common Core State Standards, new teacher evaluation systems, and strategies to turn around persistently low-performing schools. A new report by the National Center on Time & Learning (NCTL) highlighting effective practices of these schools was unveiled today at an event in Washington, D.C. The event was co-hosted by Teach Plus, a national non-profit that puts teacher leaders at the center of school and system-level reform. Roberto Rodriguez, Special Assistant to the President for Education at the White House Domestic Policy Council, was a featured speaker at the event.

Time for Teachers: Leveraging Time to Strengthen Instruction and Empower Teachers examines 17 high-performing and rapidly-improving schools around the country that have taken advantage of expanded school schedules to provide students with more time for engaging academic and enrichment classes and teachers with more time to collaborate with colleagues, analyze student data, create new lesson plans, and develop new skills. On average, U.S. teachers spend approximately 80 percent of their time on instruction, while the international average for countries reporting data to the OECD is 67 percent. Meanwhile, teachers in the schools featured in *Time for Teachers* spend 60 percent of their expanded school schedule on direct instruction with 40 percent of their time on collaboration, coaching, one-on-one support, and other activities.

"Teachers at the schools we studied have twice as much time as teachers in schools with traditional schedules to spend on activities that are crucial to strengthening teaching and improving student achievement," said **Jennifer Davis, NCTL's co-founder and president**. "Teachers need more time to develop new teaching approaches and individualize their instruction. This is particularly important for teachers working in high-poverty schools."

"Teachers have a profound impact on their students and teacher effectiveness is the most important factor when it comes to student success," said **Dr. Celine Coggins, CEO of Teach Plus**. "That's why it's so important that schools have the time they need to provide teachers with meaningful opportunities to develop professionally and collaborate with each other." Dr. Coggins moderated a panel discussion at today's event with teachers, principals, and union leaders currently benefitting from expanded learning time.

Across the 17 schools it examined, *Time for Teachers* identified six effective practices that have led to teacher and school success. The six practices are:

- **Collaborative lesson planning.** Nearly all of the featured schools provide structured opportunities for teachers – who have varying and often complementary skills – to work together in teams to plan lessons, thereby strengthening each lesson's quality and rigor.

- **Embedded professional development.** Through workshops and professional learning communities, teachers at the featured schools spend substantial time with colleagues in active, peer-to-peer learning.
- **Summer training.** Seven of the 17 schools convene their faculty for two to three weeks every summer before the school year begins for intensive planning and professional development, including to build a common understanding of their school's vision and to learn new tools and systems.
- **Data analysis.** Through the systematic collection and analysis of data on student performance, teachers at the featured schools identify gaps in students' learning and create action plans to address those gaps.
- **Individualized coaching.** Many of the schools in the report pair teachers with instructional coaches who provide ongoing development, including reviewing lesson plans, observing classroom instruction, and meeting to offer feedback and recommendations.
- **Peer observation.** Many of the schools in the report also create opportunities for teachers to observe their peers. These non-evaluative observations help both the observer and the observed to identify ways to improve instruction.

The report also includes a series of recommendations for practitioners interested in implementing the strategies outlined in the report, along with recommendations for policymakers looking to support teacher excellence. Three of the recommendations for policymakers include:

- **Advance policies that enable schools to implement an expanded school schedule that offers teachers more time for professional learning.**
- **Incentivize and fund high-quality, school-embedded professional learning communities.**
- **Support job-embedded professional development as part of the training for the Common Core.**

"High-quality expanded learning time brings incredible benefits for both students and teachers," said Davis. "An expanded school calendar that means more time for the development of teachers does not have to—and should not—come at the expense of instructional time."

To read an Executive Summary or the full report, go to www.timeandlearning.org/timeforteachers.

###

About National Center on Time & Learning

*The National Center on Time & Learning (NCTL) (www.timeandlearning.org) is dedicated to expanding learning time to improve student achievement and enable a well-rounded education. NCTL's report, *Time for Teachers*, was made possible through the leadership support of The Joyce Foundation. NCTL also gratefully acknowledges Carnegie Corporation of New York, The Eli and Edythe Broad Foundation, the Ford Foundation, and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation for supporting NCTL's knowledge management work.*

About Teach Plus

Teach Plus (www.teachplus.org) aims to improve outcomes for urban children by ensuring that a greater proportion of students have access to effective, experienced teachers. Teach Plus runs four programs designed to place teacher leaders at the center of reform: Teaching Policy Fellows; the Teach Plus Network; T3: Turnaround Teacher Teams; and C2: The Core Collaborative. The programs focus on demonstrably effective teachers who want to continue classroom teaching while also expanding their impact as leaders in their schools and in district, state and national policy. Since its inception in August 2009, Teach Plus has grown to a network of more than 14,000 solutions-oriented teachers in six major cities across the country.