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Iowa Extended Learning Time Pilot Project Model

House File 215

Division XV

Section 109

Iowa Department of Education

Iowa Department of Education

Grimes State Office Building
Des Moines, IA 50319-0146

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Executive Summary

In Division XV, Section 109 of House File 215, enacted in 2013, the Iowa General Assembly charged the Iowa Department of Education with developing recommendations for an extended learning pilot. Recommendations must address impact on student achievement; overall cost; governance structure; transportation issues; recommended age of students; potential use of teacher preparation candidates; 21st Century Learning Center guidelines as applicable; potential collaboration with area education agencies and other public and private partners for cost effectiveness, efficiency, and community involvement; recommended staffing levels; licensure for staff; involvement of nonprofit organizations; collaboration with the staff in the existing school district; whether all or some students in a district should participate; and use of best practices and latest research in the field.

To develop recommendations to better support Iowa students, the Iowa Department of Education sought the input of Iowans across the state through in-person discussions, an online survey, and research on best practices. This report provides summaries of the stakeholder outreach alongside recommendations for possible extended learning models to be tested in Iowa communities to identify the most effective components of additional learning time that will make the most impact on student achievement in the classroom and out.

This report proposes three possible models for extended learning that address each component of the charge. The first model of extended learning follows the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21CCLC) model that targets additional learning time throughout the school year and during the summer to the highest-needs schools in the state. Students served through the 21CCLC model receive targeted interventions and enrichment that supports their learning with the support of community partners that make learning more real and hands-on. The second model targets students at the end of third grade who are not proficient in reading by offering summer school with a focus on literacy. Finally, the third model extends the school day significantly for middle school students to improve their skills in reading and other core subjects.

Legislative Charge

In Division XV, Section 109 of House File 215, enacted in 2013, the Iowa General Assembly laid out the following charge:

> The department of education shall develop a proposed model for an extended learning time pilot project. In developing the model, the department shall consider the recommendations submitted in the final report of the instructional time task force, as well as existing, successful extended time learning opportunities offered within and outside of the state. Three program proposals representing school districts of varied sizes, geographical locations, and socioeconomic status shall be included in the model. Component measures, criteria, and associated benchmarks for selecting participants and gauging success for the model shall include but not be limited to the following considerations: impact on student achievement; overall cost; governance structure; transportation issues; recommended age of students; potential use of teacher preparation candidates; 21st century learning center guidelines as applicable; potential collaboration with area education agencies and other public and private partners for cost effectiveness, efficiency, and community involvement: recommended staffing levels; licensure for staff; involvement of nonprofit organizations; collaboration with the staff in the existing school district; whether all or some students in a district should participate; and use of best practices and latest research in the field. The department shall also recommend potential funding sources for the full implementation of the proposed model for extended learning time pilot projects and of future sustained extended time learning efforts.[1]

This legislative provision stems directly from the recommendations of the Instructional Time Task Force, convened by the Iowa Department of Education in the fall of 2012. This particular task force, one of several called for in Senate File 2284, discussed issues relating to the amount of instructional time mandated by year and day, as well as school start date and alternative calendar policies.

The Iowa Department of Education submits these recommendations, as directed, to the State Board of Education, the Office of the Governor, and the Iowa Legislature on December 17, 2013.

[1] Iowa General Assembly, House File 215, 2013.

Report Development

IOWA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP

Much like the collaborative models of extended learning detailed in this report, the Iowa Department of Education has collaborated with partners to undertake best practices research and conduct statewide outreach to inform the development of recommendations. The Department contracted with State Public Policy Group (SPPG) to compile and analyze the research included in this report and to conduct statewide outreach on behalf of the Department. SPPG is a Des Moines-based company working statewide on issues of importance to Iowans and is staff to the Iowa Afterschool Alliance. Additionally, the Iowa Department of Education engaged a number of stakeholders with a diversity of expertise representing various communities across the state to provide high-level guidance to the project.

BEST PRACTICES RESEARCH

Comprehensive extended learning time is not a new concept in education policy and practice, but evidence of impact is new. Schools and community partners have long offered supplemental services and interventions and traditional child care before and after school, as well as summer school over summer break. Intentional provision of seamless learning opportunities in non-traditional environments has been developing as a singular, comprehensive strategy only over the past 15 years.[2] As noted in the recent research compendium on expanded learning time, *Expanding Minds and Opportunities: The Power of Afterschool and Summer Learning for Student Success*, such programs were "once regarded as mere add-ons, and often disconnected from the regular school day...These approaches have evolved into intentional strategies for providing comprehensive educational and development learning opportunities."[3]

Only relatively recently, longitudinal data studies have been published by experts in the field and there now exists a wealth of evidence to identify best practices in extended learning opportunities. Again from *Expanding Minds and Opportunities*, Editor Terry K. Peterson of the College of Charleston prefaces the research collection by noting that "…we can boldly state that there is now a solid base of research and best practices clearly showing that quality afterschool and summer learning programs make a positive difference for students, families, schools, and communities."[4] Deborah Lowe Vandell, a veteran researcher in the field of expanded learning and afterschool and Founding Dean of the School of Education, University of California, Irvine, remarks:

> I am heartened by the growth in our understanding of the effects of out-of-school time from a virtually unstudied area to abundant and solid evidence on the positive impacts of high quality programs. Whether they are called afterschool, expanded learning opportunities, out-of-school time, or something else, we know from research that these types of opportunities

[2] Terry K. Peterson, "Introduction: The Importance of and New Opportunities for Leveraging Afterschool and Summer Learning and School-Community Partnerships for Student Success," in *Expanding Minds and Opportunities,* ed. Terry K. Peterson (Washington, D.C.: Collaborative Communications Group, 2013).
[3] Ibid.
[4] Ibid.

can lead to positive outcomes for children and youth, as well as families, communities, and schools.[5]

In Massachusetts, policymakers have invested significant resources in extended learning time through extension of the school day for all students in targeted schools. The Massachusetts Expanded Learning Time (ELT) initiative was established in 2005 with planning grants that allowed a limited number of schools to explore a redesign of their respective schedules and add time to their school day or year – at least 300 hours per academic year – to improve student outcomes in core academic subjects, broaden enrichment opportunities, and improve instruction by adding more planning and professional development time for teachers.[6] In state fiscal year 2013, $14 million was appropriated to the Massachusetts ELT initiative. While evidence of improvement of student outcomes is mixed, the Massachusetts ELT initiative provides an opportunity for Iowa to build upon a statewide approach to extending learning time for students.

COMMUNITY INPUT SESSIONS

The Iowa Department of Education sought statewide input on extended learning – on voluntary participation, not mandatory, school-wide extended learning initiatives – and utilized this approach as a complementary strategy to an online survey that sought broader input across the state. Six different communities were visited to ask key stakeholders – youth, school administrators and teachers, and parents and community partners – how they think extended learning time before school, after school and during summer should be used to help our students.

The communities visited by the Iowa Department of Education differed on many characteristics. The intent was to reach Iowans across the state to truly reflect all the types of communities in which students are educated. Sessions also drew from surrounding areas, so participation was not limited strictly to individuals from the community in which the session was located.

Michelle Rich of the Iowa Afterschool Alliance talks with stakeholders in Waukon, Iowa, on October 3, 2013.

[5] Deborah Lowe Vandell, "Afterschool Program Quality and Student Outcomes: Reflections on Positive Key Findings on Learning and Development from Recent Research," in *Expanding Minds and Opportunities*, 180.
[6] Amy Checkoway et al., *Evaluation of the Massachusetts Expanded Learning Time (ELT) Initiative Year Five Final Report: 2010-2011,* Abt Associates Inc., 2012.

The format at each session was determined by the local site host. Staff worked with the local host to identify the best times and specific locations for optimal participation. A general framework for discussion was developed for consistency across input sessions. The framework was as follows:

1. *What are your greatest student needs in the community?*
2. *What are the learning opportunities students need to succeed – both in and outside of school?*
3. *What are some of those opportunities that schools can't provide currently?*
4. *How can the state of Iowa encourage schools and communities to partner to provide high-quality learning opportunities?*

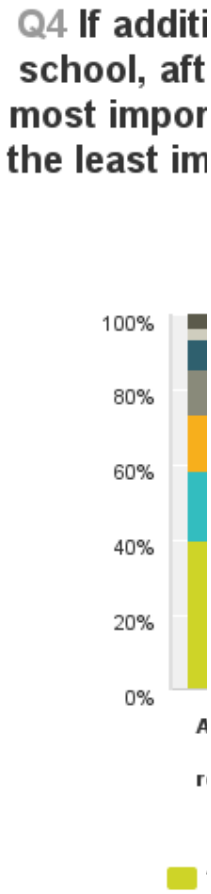
Input Session Schedule, Locations, and Participation

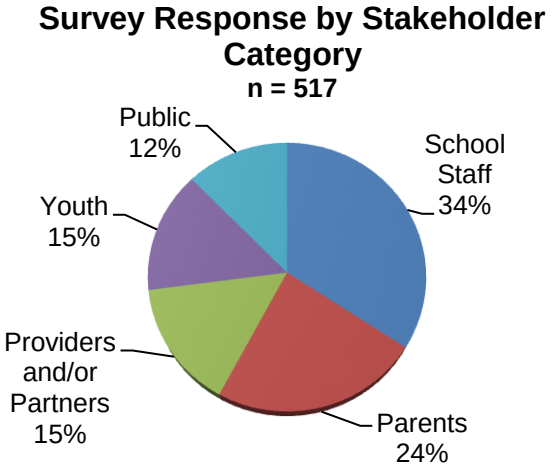
Date	Location(s)	Participation by Stakeholder Category			
		Youth	School Staff	Parents and Other	All
Wednesday, Oct. 2, 2013	Aldo Leopold Middle School Burlington, Iowa	15	13	80	108
Thursday, Oct. 3	Vets Club and West Elementary School Waukon, Iowa	11	8	39	58
Thursday, Oct. 10	Liberty Elementary School Sioux City, Iowa	8	1	14	23
Thursday, Oct. 17	Amos Hiatt Middle School Des Moines, Iowa	NA	2	12	14
Tuesday, Oct. 22	Educational Service Center, Hoover Elementary, and Wilson Middle School Council Bluffs, Iowa	24	4	22	50
Tuesday, Oct. 29	Holmes Junior High School Cedar Falls, Iowa	50	10	4	64
Total Participation in all Sessions by Stakeholder Category		**108**	**38**	**171**	**317**

Elementary students are asked what they think about extended learning in Sioux City, Iowa, on October 10, 2013.

STATEWIDE SURVEY

To cast a wider net to elicit stakeholder input, an online survey was developed and disseminated statewide through provider and partner networks, school administrators, and social media. The survey was disseminated in two languages: English and Spanish. A total of 517 responses were received; 34 percent of respondents identified themselves as school staff, and 24 percent identified themselves as parents of at least one school-age child or youth.





ADVISORY GROUP

On behalf of the Iowa Department of Education, the Iowa Afterschool Alliance (IAA) engaged a group of high-level stakeholders to provide guidance to the development of recommendations for the Extended Learning Pilot Project Model. While not required in the legislative charge as written in House File 215, the IAA desired the focused input of a small group of individuals with first-hand expertise in extended learning in Iowa communities and historical knowledge of the discussions of the Instructional Time Task Force convened in the fall of 2012. This group included school principals, both school-based and community-based out-of-school time program directors, business representatives, teachers, and legislators, among others. Members served voluntarily in an advisory capacity.

Kate Bennett, United Way of Central Iowa, Des Moines

Angela Cardamon, Out-of-School Time Literacy Coach, Des Moines

Mike Cormack, Iowa Department of Education, Des Moines

Linda Fandel, Office of the Governor, Des Moines

Crystal Hale, Earlham Community Schools, Earlham

Emily Hesse, Out-of-School Time Literacy Coach, Des Moines

Senator Hubert Houser, Iowa General Assembly, Carson

Representative Dave Jacoby, Iowa General Assembly, Coralville

Vic Jaras, Iowa Department of Education, Des Moines

Dr. Mick Jurgensen, Marshalltown Community Schools, Marshalltown

Sandy Klaus, Starmont Schools, Arlington

Representative Kevin Koester, Iowa General Assembly, Ankeny

Jenna Meyer, Beyond the Bell, Sioux City

Shirley Phillips, Western Iowa Tourism Region, Sac City

Senator Herman Quirmbach, Iowa General Assembly, Ames

Frank Spillers, Global Horizons, Atlantic

Kay Stork, CAM Community Schools, Anita

Jacalyn Swink, Burlington Community Schools, Burlington

Jodie Warth, Boys and Girls Clubs of Central Iowa, Des Moines

David Welter, Cedar Falls Community Schools, Cedar Falls

Barb Winters, Allamakee Community Schools, Waukon

Iowa's Vision for Extended Learning Time

For the purposes of this report, "Extended Learning Time" is broadly defined as learning opportunities that provide students chances beyond the traditional 180-day or 1,080-hour school year or six-hour school day that reinforce core concepts in different settings and develop critical social, emotional, and 21st century skills for improved academic success. This report provides three possible models through which to pilot the provision of extended learning time. These different models vary in several components, including staffing structure and cost, but also have common components that are intrinsic to effective extended learning and, thus, are foundational to all three models. This section synthesizes the research on extended learning, generally, and any research unique to the proposed models.

All stakeholder input regarding extended learning was collected under the assumption that programming would be voluntary and would not be implemented school-wide. Rather, stakeholders were asked for their opinions regarding how time should be used if learning time were extended before school, after school, or during the summer with the goal of improving student achievement. This premise is in alignment with recommendations of the Iowa Instructional Time Task Force convened in 2012 and the intent of the legislative charge.

WHAT THE EVIDENCE TELLS US ABOUT EXTENDED LEARNING

All evidence points to the same foundational principle of extended learning: more instructional time, alone, is not effective in improving student outcomes, so extended learning time, regardless of how it is implemented, must offer students opportunities to apply their knowledge and build skills through methods different from traditional instruction. According to *Time Well Spent: Eight Powerful Practices of Successful Expanded-Time Schools*, a publication of the National Center on Time and Learning, high-performing expanded time schools use the following framework for additional learning time:[7]

[7] Claire Kaplan et al., *Time Well Spent: Eight Powerful Practices of Successful Expanded-Time Schools*, National Center on Time and Learning.

High-Performing Expanded-Time Schools…

Optimize Time for Student Learning	*Use Time to Help Students Thrive in School and Beyond*	*Dedicate Time to Improve Teacher Effectiveness*
• Make every minute count. • Prioritize time according to focused learning goals. • Individualize learning time and instruction based on student needs.	• Use time to build a school culture of high expectations and mutual accountability. • Use time to provide a well-rounded education. • Use time to prepare students for college and career.	• Use time to continuously strengthen instruction. • Use time to relentlessly assess, analyze, and respond to student data.

To have the most impact, extended learning must offer students:

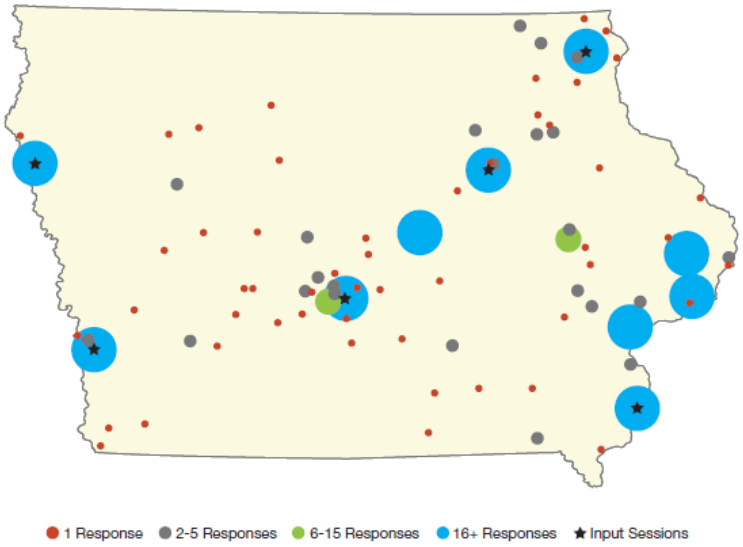
- Regular and ongoing structured activities aligned with the school day and individualized
- Opportunities to learn skills, such as reading and math efficacy, task persistence, social competencies, work habits and career readiness
- Relationships with supportive nonfamilial adults and with peers

Source: Deborah Lowe Vandell, *The Achievement Gap is Real* (Irvine: University of California, 2013).

Given that only about 20 percent of a student's day is spent in school, there is plenty of time in the day to build in opportunities for structured learning – opportunities to which many children and youth in poverty have less direct access.

WHAT IOWANS THINK ABOUT EXTENDED LEARNING

In October and November 2013, the Iowa Department of Education, supported by the Iowa Afterschool Alliance, hosted a series of input sessions in six communities of varying sizes across the state and disseminated an online survey to gather stakeholder input on extended learning. Based on the legislative guidance and recommendations of the Iowa Instructional Time Task Force,



stakeholder input was elicited regarding additional time before school, after school, and during the summer, not as school-wide extended school day. Input sessions were held in Burlington, Cedar Falls, Council Bluffs, Des Moines, Sioux City, and Waukon. More than 300 people, including parents, youth, and teachers, attended the sessions. The statewide survey received more than 500 responses from across the state.

Iowans are extremely supportive of extended learning. Based on discussions at the input sessions and responses to the survey, the following themes characterize what Iowans think about extended learning.

Teachers and administrators in Burlington, Iowa, share their thoughts on extended learning on October 2, 2013.

1. *Extended learning through high-quality after-school and summer learning programs can make a significant difference in the lives and achievement of our students, and stakeholders agree that access to such programming should be expanded.*

A significant majority of non-youth respondents to the survey, nearly 90 percent, agreed that learning time should be extended beyond the current school day before school, after school, and during the summer. Parents, teachers, school principals, youth and community members all agreed that high-quality programs can have a positive impact on student achievement, behavior, study habits, and engagement with school, among other areas. Even in communities visited that had no coordinated program available to students at their schools, parents and youth recognized the value of having productive activities for youth available to explore new things, develop critical social skills, or spend additional time in areas in which they struggle.

In one Iowa district, school administrators attributed much of their proficiency achievements to the high-quality extended learning programs operated through the district with community and 21st Century Community Learning Centers support. A principal with the district said of the power of these opportunities: “Poverty has grown here, and this year the students are close to being 100 percent proficient [according to standardized test scores]. [We] have had afterschool homework assistance and tutoring for the last 10 years, and afterschool is a part of why we have been so successful.”

2. *Stakeholders support a balance of enrichment and academics in extended time. This allows programs to individualize the learning time to meet students’ unique needs and build on their individual strengths.*

Schools are recognizing the need to better engage students in their learning through additional time in structured, school-linked activities that balance academic assistance and enrichment. As one western Iowa school administrator noted:

> "At [the] high school level [the school is] creating clubs, activities, groups with teachers to sponsor to engage kids. [We] have full athletics and fine arts, but [are] adding peripheral clubs to engage kids. [Our] push is to get kids engaged before, after school – whenever. We know engaged kids are more likely to stay in school."

In many communities, community-based organizations are well-positioned to support schools to better serve the whole student and offer more diverse, real-world programming. Community, business, and school partnerships are critical to providing extended learning that looks and feels dramatically different from the school day. A survey respondent explained:

> "Students that are not very involved, enthusiastic, and/or engaged in the classroom have found a more engaging interest after school, such as in drama club, gaming club, and/or music/arts/dance activities after school. They have learned social skills and been able to fine-tune skills and express their talents."

When asked about program content in the statewide survey, reading and writing and STEM rose to the top of the priorities ranked by respondents. This may be due to the broader efforts spearheaded at the state level to improve these curricular areas, but it is important to note, nonetheless. Fewer stakeholders prioritized snacks and the unique needs of English Language Learners as top areas of focus.

Community partners and school staff share their views on what students need to be successful in Sioux City, Iowa, on October 10, 2013.

3. *There is a current need for extended learning time specifically for middle school-age youth. Students in this grade span have fewer options for coordinated programming after school and can significantly benefit from productive time. This is a time period of transition for students, and a time they need additional support to succeed.*

Many stakeholders see the value of extended learning for all students. However, when discussing greatest need and potential for impact, a theme emerged focusing on middle school youth. In a few of the communities visited, elementary students had access to extended learning, while such services were not available at the middle schools within the district. While students may have had opportunities to join clubs, an infrastructure to ensure coordinated access to structured programming was lacking. One input session participant noted:

> "Middle school afterschool [is a need here]. [Our community] doesn't have a rich history of middle school sports, but that's about all there is for middle school kids. [Our organization has] talked about expanding services for middle school."

An especially poignant comment was made by a parent of a middle school student at an input session when asked what she values in the extended learning programming her child attends. She stated:

> "I am a single working parent. I know she is safe, having fun. The part I love about it, in middle school, there is a common interest where she can develop a friendship group. It helps her enjoy her days more. It helps me because I don't have to scurry around and find something for her to do from 3 to 5 [p.m.]."

4. *Coordination of services and access is critical to getting youth to participate. Someone must be responsible for holding partners accountable in collaborating, positively supporting children and youth, and getting students and families to take advantage of available opportunities.*

When visiting high-quality extended learning programs, it is apparent that the quality of the program is dependent upon an entity taking the lead and nurturing collaborative relationships within and between the community and schools. This coordination is critical not just to ensure varied, high-interest programming, but also to ensure basic access to the program. Without exception, every site visited for the input sessions noted that transportation was a critical issue to getting students to take advantage of activities – something that requires considerable coordination and resources. Also noted as a barrier to participation was cost, a barrier that can be mitigated by state investment in extended learning.

Extended Learning Time Pilot Project Models

Based on research regarding student and broader school impacts of extended learning, best practices in implementing additional learning time, and stakeholder input on the benefits of extended learning, the Iowa Department of Education proposes three possible models.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR PILOT PROJECTS

A pilot study is a small-scale, preliminary study conducted in order to evaluate feasibility, time, cost, challenges to implementation, and impact in an attempt to improve program design for replication and to determine appropriate scale-up.[8] The goal of a pilot is to test components and evaluate each individually and in total to determine the most effective and feasible model to replicate more broadly.

[8] Stephen B. Hulley et al., *Designing Clinical Research* (Philadelphia: Lippincott Williams & Wilkins, 2007), 168-169.

Ultimately, pilot testing of an idea or program, if effective, sets the stage for future investment. The components of the legislative charge provide a good foundation upon which to track those elements of extended learning that will build a replicable model. If given flexibility, there may be some additional program elements that can provide further guidance for high-quality extended learning at the local level. Rightfully, the legislative charge is ultimately concerned with developing a body of evidence for implementing effective extended learning in the various types of communities in Iowa: urban, rural, and suburban. State-level extended learning policy must be responsive enough to meet locally identified student needs through local resources. This was reinforced through stakeholder input and is well-suited to extended learning because of the prioritization of community and school partnerships and the greater opportunity provided in this additional time. Clear accountability measures ensure that student outcomes are achieved through locally determined programming.

> *"[Extended learning] has helped me know how to do my school work correctly and doing my work. It has improved my grades and by doing that I am now able to go on the honor roll."*
>
> – Survey Respondent

EXTENDED LEARNING TIME GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The underlying factors contributing to student academic achievement are many. As noted in the section "What the Evidence Tells Us About Extended Learning," non-cognitive skill development is just as important to student success as academic support. One without the other will not provide the full experience necessary for our students to truly be successful as they progress through the PK-12 system and into post-secondary training and education. Extended learning time must offer students a broad experience where they receive the interventions they need to be brought to grade level, if necessary, and also chances to engage in fun, intentional enrichment that builds skills and positive relationships with peers and adults. Regardless of the model, any additional learning time should be comprehensive of cognitive and non-cognitive learning. Through high-quality extended learning, there must be multiple student outcomes expected. These student outcomes are based not only in research such as Vandell et al. and Durlak and Weissberg et al., but have also been vetted by program providers currently offering extended learning opportunities in Iowa communities.

Iowa Extended Learning Time Expected Student Outcomes

Short-Term ***6 Months to 1 Year*** →	***Mid-Term*** ***1 to 2 Years or Summer*** →	***Long-Term*** ***2+ Years of Regular Attendance***
• Program attendance • Homework completion • Social relationships • Self-efficacy (*extent to which a person believes in their own ability to complete tasks and reach goals*) • Math and reading proficiency	• Classroom engagement *(multiple measures, including class participation, etc.)* • School attendance • School grades • Interest and attitude • Math and reading proficiency	• Self-regulation (*ability to emotionally respond appropriately to experiences*) • Math and reading proficiency • Statewide assessment • Skill acquisition (*21st century skills, employability skills, etc.)*

Additional non-student goals may focus on partnerships, school climate and culture, or community attitudes toward the school. These broader measures of impact reflect the broader investments encouraged through strengthening community and school partnerships.

Regardless of the specific measures used to assess impact, formative and summative data analysis will be necessary to ensure that programming is responsive to local needs and is having the intended impact. In the "Evaluation of Program Effectiveness" subsection under Core Model Components, specific recommendations related to data collection and tracking will be provided.

CORE MODEL COMPONENTS

Regardless of which proposed model is followed, there are components common to all that are intrinsic to extended learning. These components are summarized in this section.

Community Partnerships

Community partnerships are the bedrock of extended learning. They make learning more dynamic and real-world. They link students with their community and community with students and schools, and they can drive robust community development.

Iowa has a wealth of resources, but access to partners differs remarkably depending on geography. Specific partnerships should not be mandated, but rather encouraged through local program goals and objectives.

The research is clear that an effective element of extended learning programs is intentional, overt community partnerships.
It is also more likely that programming will be in place beyond the pilot funding through these local supports.

Governance

Program governance refers to policies, procedures, leadership, and clarification of roles and responsibilities for the sustainable operation of effective organizations and programs. For all proposed models, governance practices should set a priority on engaging stakeholders in decision-making, implementation, and evaluation.

Program Appeal and Access

When developing programming for students, especially if it is voluntary, and even more especially if it is voluntary for older youth, appeal and access are critical factors to achieving good program attendance.

"If we can create a sense of belonging outside of academics then kids will want to be in school and afterschool to tie them to school and their interests."

– Input Session Attendee

Research suggests that programs that engage youth in decision-making are often more successful than traditional counterparts. Giving them a voice in activities encourages investment in the program, engages their increasing sense of independence, and contributes to their development as citizens and

leaders in their programs at school and beyond. Giving students a voice in program planning and implementation also develops critical skills, including communication, resiliency, and leadership.

> *"I have met so many people from many backgrounds. I have learned how to take leadership."*
>
> – Youth Input Session Attendee

School Day Alignment

Extended learning programming is an intentional extension of school-day learning in a different setting through different strategies to reinforce key concepts and delve further into topics that can spark a student's interest or passion in a subject.

Thus, school-day alignment is absolutely critical to a high-quality extended learning program. Iowa has many good examples of strong school and community alignment, and it is often building-level relationships that make collaborations most successful.

> *"[Our extended learning] program is so wonderful and unique. It is tailored to the developmental level of each child…That's the beauty of the program. It allows the kids to do what the teachers cannot do during the school day. They are able to find what our children's strengths are and tap into that."*

Evaluation of Program Effectiveness

Effective services are dependent upon a continuous process of assessment and program improvement. Formative assessment ensures that services are meeting student needs and benchmarks of progress are being met.

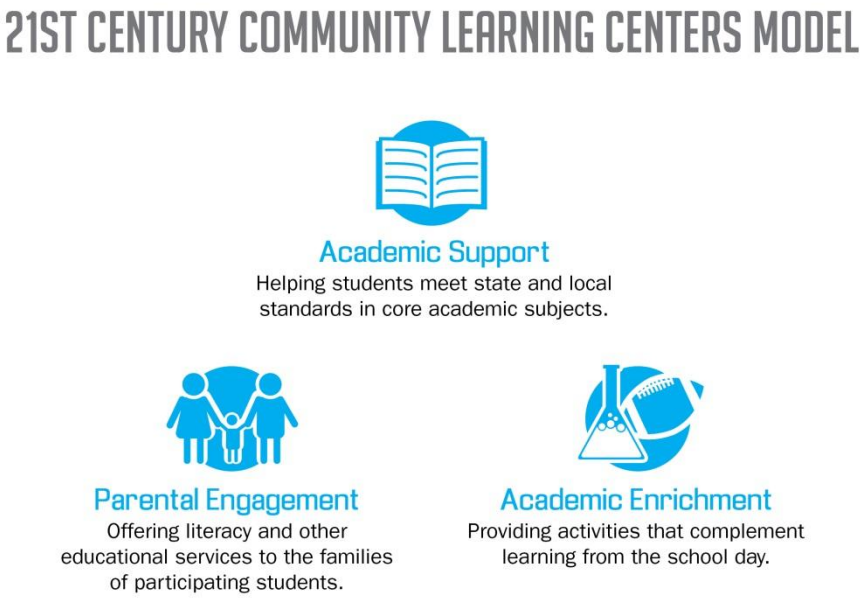
Summative evaluation is a critical component to program development that allows the program to share its successes with stakeholders. The evaluation process is not meant to take place in a vacuum; rather, it is intended to be a whole-program or school-wide effort where results and necessary responses are shared widely both internally and externally.

> **Good program evaluation design includes both quantitative and qualitative data collection. Each student impacted and partner involved deserves a story, not just a number.**

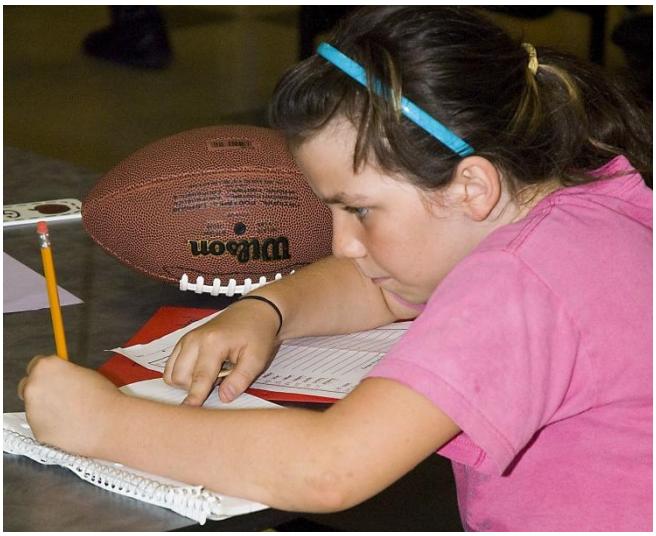
Iowa Extended Learning Time Expected Student Outcomes		
Short-Term 6 Months to 1 Year	***Mid-Term 1 to 2 Years or Summer***	***Long-Term 2+ Years of Regular Attendance***
• Program attendance • Homework completion • Social relationships • Self-efficacy (*extent to which a person believes in his/her own ability to complete tasks and reach goals*) • Math and reading proficiency	• Classroom engagement *(multiple measures, including class participation, etc.)* • School attendance • School grades • Interest and attitude • Math and reading proficiency	• Self-regulation (*ability to emotionally respond appropriately to experiences*) • Math and reading proficiency • Statewide assessment • Skill acquisition (*21st century skills, employability skills, etc.)*

21ST CENTURY COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTERS MODEL

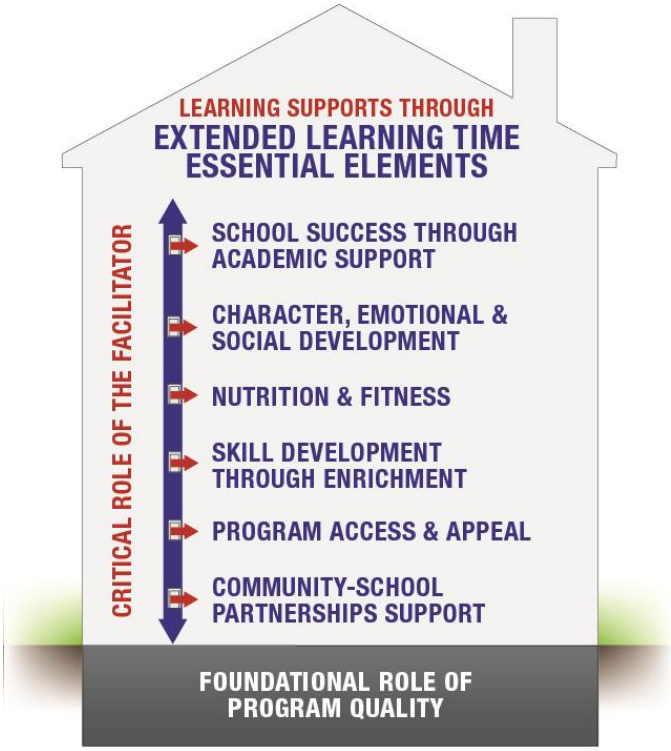
The federal 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21CCLC) program is administered by the Iowa Department of Education. Iowa currently administers 26 grants to local school districts and community-based organizations serving over 50 sites to provide high-quality before-school, after-school, and summer programming for students in high-poverty, low-achieving schools. The 21CCLC model includes three major components: 1) student academic support, such as academic intervention, tutoring, homework help and time to complete assignments; 2) academic enrichment that reinforces their school-day learning and supports the whole child, including physical exercise, nutrition, and social activities; and 3) parent and/or guardian supports to ensure an enriching family environment and support system.



Programming options are flexible to serve varied student needs and interests. In addition, because communities have different resources available for partnerships, requiring certain programming and collaborations would not be equitable. The general program goals provide a framework upon which to scaffold more specific themes and supporting activities based on the district curriculum, agency goals, and individual student needs and interests. Literacy skill building is often integrated throughout programming, regardless of topic area or activity. All activities are intentional and have student goals and objectives. Programming is engaging, hands-on when possible, and gives students a voice in planning and implementation.



Site-specific programming looks very different from community to community. While all programs are held accountable to the general 21CCLC goals, how each program gets to the goals is flexible. Literacy is a critical element of all programs; however, the specific literacy supports offered varies at each site based on the level of interventions needed, district curriculum, and student interest. In extended learning time for a majority of students, a balanced literacy approach that includes read-alouds, book discussion, writing, vocabulary, and independent reading is sufficient to build good, sustainable literacy skills.



Research shows that programs that support both the cognitive and non-cognitive needs of students are effective at improving a number of outcomes. In a 2009 research paper on behalf of the Harvard Family Research Project, Priscilla Little summarizes:

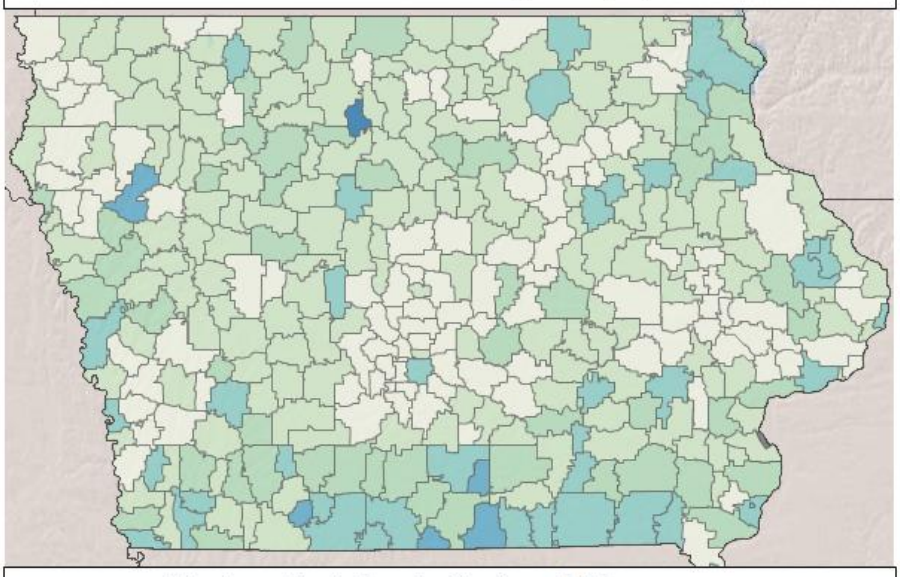
> Evidence developed over the past 10 years makes it clear that effective out-of-school learning environments, such as those proposed in ELOs [extended learning opportunities], complement, rather than replicate, in-school learning and development. In fact, a common thread among recent studies demonstrating the academic impact of afterschool programs is that the programs not only intentionally tried to improve academic performance by offering academic support but combined this support with other

enrichment activities to achieve positive academic outcomes. Thus, extra time for academics by itself may be necessary but not sufficient to improve academic outcomes. However, balancing academic support with a variety of engaging, fun, and structured extracurricular or co-curricular activities that promote youth development in a variety of real-world contexts appears to support and improve academic performance.[9]

Student Targeting

The 21st Century Community Learning Centers program is restricted to serving students attending high-poverty schools under federal No Child Left Behind Title IVB. This limits the eligibility of some schools and organizations if they are not serving students who attend schools where at least 40 percent of students are eligible for Free and Reduced Price Lunch (FRPL). Many 21CCLC programs in Iowa serve elementary school students, although the program does not target a certain grade span in Iowa. This is for a variety of reasons, including the demand for after-school care in the elementary grades and the higher number of students eligible for FRPL at elementary buildings. As students move to middle and high school, they are less likely to request eligibility with the school for free or reduced-price meals. Thus, FRPL eligibility is not necessarily accurately reflected in district feeder patterns. There remains a need for programming for older youth, but various systemic and local challenges to serving older youth persist. The following graphic shows the variability in poverty across the state based on the 2010 U.S. Census.

Iowa 2010 Census Data showing Poverty by District



Districts with darker shading have higher poverty

[9] Priscilla M.Little, *Supporting Student Outcomes Through Expanded Learning Opportunities,* 2009.

Iowa 21CCLC Program Spotlights

Allamakee Community School District

Allamakee Community School District (ACSD) operates 21st Century Community Learning Centers programming in multiple elementary, middle, and high school sites in Postville, Waukon, and Waterville, Iowa. ACSD reported success. Students with regular attendance in the 21CCLC program improved their reading, math and science scores on the Iowa Assessment/ITBS standardized tests from 2010-2011 to 2011-2012. As can be seen in the table below, the mean gain scores increased significantly as shown by a p-value of less than 0.5.

SUMMARY STATISTICS FOR IOWA ASSESSMENT/ITBS GAIN SCORES IN READING, MATHEMATICS, AND SCIENCE FROM 2010-11 TO 2011-12

Subject	N	Mean (Gain Score)	SD (Gain Score)	p-value	Effect size (d)
Reading	175	9.943	16.383	.000	0.607
Mathematics	213	9.793	12.644	.000	0.775
Science	130	11.908	23.637	.000	0.504

Allamakee Schools also measures the improvement in community and school partnerships through qualitative and quantitative data collection. Using a validated rubric, partners come together and evaluate the impact the 21st Century Community Learning Centers programming has had on the quality of relationships among the different organizations involved. These measures reflect the greater impact extended learning can have on the entire community, especially in those that prioritize collaboration among a variety of partners like Allamakee Schools. Collaboration is critically important to districts like Allamakee Schools where education is approached as a community responsibility and the schools are a partner among many working to support student success.

Siouxland Human Investment Partnership – Beyond the Bell, Sioux City

In Sioux City, Iowa, a community-based organization, Siouxland Human Investment Partnership, serves most Sioux City Community School District elementary schools and also serves preschool and middle school students through 21st Century Community Learning Centers funding. The Beyond the Bell program has seen good outcomes for youth who participate regularly and receive academic support with certified teachers. According to the program's most recent published evaluation, by the third and fourth quarters, children participating in Beyond the Bell (BTB) had significantly higher math grades than other children. By the fourth quarter, BTB children had significantly higher reading grades, as well. Over the year, children who attended more days of BTB increased their math grades significantly. Given that the children served by Beyond the Bell were found to have significantly lower grades than non-participating children, these improvements are significant.

EXTENDED LEARNING IN SUMMER – UPPER ELEMENTARY

Summer is a critical time that can make or break student success in school. According to research on summer learning loss, most students lose about two months of grade-level equivalency in mathematical computation skills over the summer months. Low-income students also lose more than two months in reading achievement, despite the fact that their middle-class peers make slight gains.[10] Often a student's income is a determinant of how significantly they will lose in school-year proficiency gains due to the lack of exposure to cognitively stimulating and positive non-cognitive experiences over summer. It is estimated that more than half of the achievement gap between lower- and higher-income youth can be explained by unequal access to summer learning opportunities.[11] Summer vacation, summer camps, and other opportunities are an unaffordable luxury for many of Iowa's low- and middle-income students.

Parents' work schedules don't generally change in the summertime, thus the same challenge of aligning school and work schedules still persists over the summer months. Seasonal employment may cause some families to work even more hours over the break. Regardless, programming offered in the summer must still consider family work schedules. Like extended learning during the school year, programming accessibility is likely to be an issue of both cost and scheduling.

This model focuses solely on an intensive summer reading program for children who do not read proficiently at the end of third grade with the goal of significantly improving literacy skills of participating students.

Programming should include targeted, intensive interventions for those students below proficient in reading, and all participants should receive at least two to three hours of academic support designed to maintain reading proficiency. The remainder of the program should include enrichment that supports literacy skill-building, including read-alouds, book discussion, writing activities, independent reading, and vocabulary. Supporting hands-on activities should align with the instructional supports and may include field trips, media, and technology. Students also must be fed a meal and allowed time for physical activity.

Student Targeting

This proposal targets students going into fourth grade to align with the state priority to ensure all students are reading at grade level by the end of third grade. This intensive summer reading program should not target just students below proficient in reading, but all students in order to test the impact of this specific intervention. Academic supports for those students reading below proficient would be individualized to meet their needs. Students not reading below proficient can still benefit from intentional learning activities that support reading and writing skills.

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[10] Harris Cooper et al., "The Effects of Summer Vacation on Achievement Test Scores: A Narrative and Meta-Analytic Review," *Review of Educational Research* 66 (Autumn 1996): 227-268.

[11] Karl L. Alexander, Doris R. Entwisle, and Linda Steffel Olson, "Lasting Consequences of the Summer Learning Gap," *American Sociological Review* 72 (April 2007): 167-180.

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT:
Rogers University at Rogers Elementary, Marshalltown, Iowa

Marshalltown Mid-Iowa Community Action runs a full-day, six-week program at Rogers Elementary School in Marshalltown under federal 21st Century Community Learning Centers and Promise Neighborhoods grants. Students spend mornings working on academics, specifically math and reading, in groups of no more than five with a licensed teacher in each group. After just four weeks in the program, students were maintaining their end-of-school levels or making vast improvements. Afternoons are spent engaging in enrichment activities, with schedules switching every two weeks.

Outcome data was not available as of December 11, 2013, but anecdotal evidence of positive impact on student performance is promising. Based on the program's success as a 21st Century Community Learning Center site serving lower elementary grades, Mid-Iowa Community Action was successful in obtaining a federal Promise Neighborhoods grant to expand programming to the upper elementary grades.

EXTENDING THE SCHOOL DAY BUILDING- OR DISTRICT-WIDE

The last proposal for pilot-testing extended learning is the model originating out of Massachusetts that extends the mandatory school day for all students. The replication of this model would require the most extensive systemic changes of all proposals presented in this report. Research shows that *how* time is spent is the most critical element of all models of extended learning and that simply adding extra time to the mandatory school day does not improve student achievement and may even lower student and teacher morale. Thus, it is very important that program content and environment are closely monitored to ensure the most effective practices are being implemented.

Student Targeting

This proposal seeks to target eighth grade to increase overall reading proficiency of Iowa middle school students. Currently, nearly 35 percent of Iowa eighth graders do not score proficient in reading on the state standardized test.[12] The newly created Iowa Reading Research Center is focusing its initial efforts on third-grade reading proficiency and plans to expand support to upper grades in the coming years. While research shows the critical need to ensure students are reading on grade level by the end of third grade, it is still important to support students as they progress through the PK-12 education system.

Middle school is a critical time in youths' lives, and one in which extended learning programs can have great impact. As the national Afterschool Alliance explains:

> Middle school is the time in children's lives when they are experiencing rapid growth physically, emotionally and mentally. It is when youth begin to develop the skills, attitudes and behaviors that will shepherd them through their high school careers and into their adult

[12] Iowa Department of Education.

lives, and it is the point in time when youth can greatly benefit from the guidance, support and resources that quality afterschool programs have to offer.[13]

While individual developmental stages are diverse, middle school students, in general, are "more autonomous, busier, better able and more likely to articulate specific needs, and less appeased by activities designed for a general audience."[14] Adolescents in this transitional period of development have needs that can be difficult to address during the school day, when educators have to fit ever-increasing core content into finite hours. Extended learning time can serve as an ideal support to schools and students. What's more, students can pursue individualized interests and work at their own pace with additional learning time. Such programs can make a difference in helping middle school youth thrive and set the stage for future success.

Middle school is an inherently challenging grade span to target. Extended learning for middle school youth, even if mandatory, has the challenge of offering programming that is both academically supportive and fun. Looking nationally at programs serving middle school students, there are common characteristics of effective programming for this particular age group. All extended learning targeting middle school students must offer participants opportunities for the following:

- Competence and achievement – youth are self-conscious and need opportunities to do something well, prove themselves, and feel valued by others whom they respect (self-efficacy)
- Physical activity – opportunities to exercise growing bodies, as well as downtime to relax
- Self-definition – opportunities to explore their place in society and as a member of a group
- Creative expression – opportunities to creatively express thoughts, feelings, interests, and abilities so they can understand and accept themselves
- Positive social interactions with peers and adults
- Structure and clear limits – should be developed in collaboration with youth to give them another opportunity for engagement
- Meaningful participation – activities planned in collaboration with youth that let them use their new talents and skills, practice responsibility, and contribute to their programs and communities[15]

Participants at input sessions consistently identified student-driven programming as a key element of effective extended learning; research shows that this is particularly important for middle school-age youth. One expert in the field writes, "Quality afterschool programs for middle school youth often focus attention on students' psychological development and support an age-appropriate sense of independence."[16] Middle school students "vote with their feet" by deciding

[13] Afterschool Alliance and MetLife Foundation, *Afterschool in Action: Innovative Afterschool Programs Supporting Middle School Youth* (2013), 6.
[14] Afterschool Alliance and MetLife Foundation, *Afterschool in Action: Innovative Afterschool Programs Supporting Middle School Youth* (2011), 7.
[15] Ibid., 7-8.
[16] Wendy Jones, "Motivating Middle School Students to Attend Afterschool Programs," *SEDL Letter Volume XX, Number 1, Making the Most of Middle School,* 2008.

for themselves whether to attend. Giving them a voice in activities encourages investment in the program, engages their increasing sense of independence, and contributes to their development as citizens and leaders in their programs, at school, and beyond.

Program Content

The Massachusetts extended learning model has three major components: 1) optimizing time for student learning; 2) using time to help students thrive in school and beyond; and 3) dedicating time to improve teacher effectiveness.[17]

High-Performing Expanded-Time Schools…

Optimize Time for Student Learning	*Use Time to Help Students Thrive in School and Beyond*	*Dedicate Time to Improve Teacher Effectiveness*
• Make every minute count. • Prioritize time according to focused learning goals. • Individualize learning time and instruction based on student needs.	• Use time to build a school culture of high expectations and mutual accountability. • Use time to provide a well-rounded education. • Use time to prepare students for college and career.	• Use time to continuously strengthen instruction. • Use time to relentlessly assess, analyze, and respond to student data.

According to a 2005 report by Massachusetts 2020 based on a selection of school site visits, "Principals, parents and students alike believe that one of the advantages of an extended-time school is the wide range of activities that can be offered without compromising time spent on core academic subjects. These schools average roughly nine hours per week of enrichment programming compared to approximately four hours per week at most schools."[18] This is an extremely positive benefit that has also been recognized by Iowa stakeholders and should be encouraged in any model implemented in Iowa.

An initial focus on reading will help implementing schools focus additional time on instruction and supporting enrichment that build skills for reading success. Especially since community partnerships will be required in this additional time, there are significant opportunities to take reading out into the "real world" to increase the number of chances students get to see the relevancy of their learning. Reading is a good overarching subject on which to build a program because of its easy integration into other core subject areas, from math and science to social studies and financial literacy. If done well, extended learning can be a showcase for curriculum integration across subjects, much like what is being tested in STEM initiatives across the state.

Recommendations for Pilot Implementation

The Iowa Department of Education has done due diligence to identify how pilots will be selected and how to ensure effective administration and oversight of the program. The intent of the pilot

[17] Kaplan et al., *Time Well Spent.*
[18] David Farbman and Claire Kaplan, *Time for a Change: The Promise of Extended-Time Schools for Promoting Student Achievement*, Massachusetts 2020, 2005.

project should be to expand access to high-quality extended learning time in Iowa. To that end, highest priority should be given to high-need schools that lack existing extended learning programming. Applications for funding as a pilot site should address the program's linkage to curriculum to ensure any experiences offered will align directly to the students' classroom learning. Sites seeking consideration as a pilot must provide a plan for alignment that includes curricular documentation and a cross walk with extended learning program elements.

Although curricular alignment is required, it is not the intent of the pilot funding to simply utilize the same school-day strategies to improve academic achievement. This includes the prioritization of community partnerships both on and off site. The research is clear that an effective element of extended learning programs is intentional, overt community partnerships. It is also more likely that the programming will be in place beyond the pilot funding through local supports. This support may be financial, mentors, or other resources that will advantage the students and/or staff members supporting them. Applications for pilot sites should include a plan for program sustainability that addresses these local supports.

Pilots will be carefully monitored and supported throughout the implementation timeline to ensure appropriate expenditure of funds, fidelity to the proposed models, and good data collection and reporting. Pilot sites will be required to report data at least annually. The Department will develop a framework for pilots that clearly lays out expectations for data tracking and reporting. Funding will be contingent upon agreement with data and other terms.

Assuming funds are allocated to support pilots in 2014, the following timeline is recommended for pilot implementation, oversight, and reporting.

Extended Learning Pilot Development, Selection, and Planning Summer 2014 – Summer 2015	
Summer 2014	Request for Proposals for pilot sites is developed.
Fall 2014	Proposals for pilot sites submitted to the Department by December 15, 2014.
Winter 2014-2015	Applicants notified of approval by March 1, 2015. Department develops detailed plan for pilot support, monitoring, data reporting, and program evaluation.
Spring 2015	Selected sites refine plans for extended learning for implementation beginning in the summer or fall of 2015 (2015-2016 school year).
Extended Learning Programming Piloted 3 Years Summer 2015 – Spring 2018	
Summer 2015	Summer pilots begin. Non-summer pilots prepare for implementation beginning fall 2015. Baseline data collected.
Winter 2016-2017	First pilot reporting. Legislative update completed for 2016 session.

Winter 2017-2018	Second pilot reporting. Legislative update completed for 2017 session.
Winter 2018-2019	Third pilot reporting. Legislative update completed for 2018 session.
Fall 2018	Final data collection and reporting completed. Model recommendations based on pilot data released.

Costs and Funding

The Iowa Department of Education believes the costs will be driven by the proposals put forward by the pilot schools. These costs will be dependent on many of the factors described in this report, including the number of students served, the length of the program, and the specific supports provided by the program.

Following implementation of a pilot or pilots, if evidence of program effectiveness in Iowa is clear, the Iowa General Assembly may want to consider an appropriation for expanding extended learning time programs in Iowa. It is anticipated that this pilot program will require new funding to be allocated to this program beginning in state fiscal year 2015.

Regardless of authorizing legislation and appropriations, grantees receiving funding to pilot and possibly fully implement extended learning will require significant support from the Iowa Department of Education and other partners because this strategy is so new to Iowa. It will also require staff support to administer and monitor grants to local education agencies and partners, even initially in the pilot phase.