

## Afterschool Alliance Extended Learning Time Talking Points

- If well designed and implemented, initiatives to extend the school day could help some of the more than 14 million children who are unsupervised after the school day ends and those who need additional academic support.
- But extended learning time programs that merely lengthen the school day are not likely to do all they could to help students learn, engage them in school, or reduce dropout rates.
- Extended learning time initiatives will benefit greatly by incorporating the lessons learned by the afterschool field. Numerous evaluations and studies have shown how to structure afterschool programs to provide the greatest academic, social and behavioral benefits to the most possible students. This same information can help ensure quality in extended learning time as well.
- Specifically, afterschool programs are most successful when they work with the whole child by: providing homework help and tutoring; involving community based, youth development and other partners; and giving students the chance to explore new interests and engage through service-learning and real-world experiences. Extended learning time initiatives that do not incorporate those elements are unlikely to succeed.
- A key benefit provided by afterschool programs is keeping students safe - out of trouble and off the streets - in the afternoons, until their parents get home from work. Lengthening the school day until 3:30 or even 4:30 PM will not solve that problem.
- Afterschool programs are voluntary. Parents and children choose to participate based on need, interest and availability of programs. Extended day programs are a mandatory extension of the school day for all the children enrolled in a particular school.
- Quality afterschool programs will remain essential, even where the school day expands. With more than 14 million kids unsupervised after schools close, we need to increase our investment in afterschool **AND** invest in other promising models that turn unused or poorly used time into an opportunity to help our children and youth succeed, socially, academically and professionally.
- We urge Members of Congress not to divert desperately needed afterschool dollars to lengthening the school day.