No Time to Wait
Creating Contemporary School Structures for All Students Today and Tomorrow

The Report of the NASBE Study Group on the Structure of Schools: Time and Technology in 21st Century Learning

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Key Report Takeaways

No Time to Wait—Recommendations Framework

1. Introduction and Background

2. Design Principles for Next Generation Learning

3. Recommendations

Appendix. Resources

Endnotes
The current education model in the United States, a relic of the Industrial Age, is increasingly out of touch with the needs of society and the students it serves.

The traditional model of education—where a teacher imparts knowledge to students through lecture and students recite memorized facts and solve fundamental math and science problems to illustrate comprehension of the information—is no longer appropriate given the context of today’s continually changing society.

The Internet and efficient global communications have fundamentally changed how individuals access information. Today’s generation of students is growing up in an environment where information is available anywhere and anytime on any topic imaginable. They find the methods used by schools in stark contrast with how they learn and interact outside of the classroom.

In today’s Knowledge Age, there is an emphasis on service and the creation and use of information. Students need to be able to synthesize, analyze, and create information to participate effectively in this era.

While the advent of the Internet has greatly increased the urgency for a restructured education system, the Internet along with other technological advances and changes to society also provide unprecedented opportunities to move beyond the Industrial Age model of schooling.

Preparing all young people to succeed requires a comprehensive approach to the multiple factors influencing young people’s educational, professional, and personal paths.

It takes a LOT of extra effort to bring struggling students up to a standard of excellence. There is no single strategy or mix of two or three approaches that will always work. This makes it all the more important that schools are structured to allow and encourage a multitude of extra resources and supports, from both within and outside the school system.

School structures must continually adapt to evolving technology and how technology is affecting students and the culture at large.

Education must break out of traditional seven-hour-a-day scheduling and its focus on the learning that takes place in a physical classroom in order not to ignore the “information at any time, any place” mind set of students who grew up with the Internet.

Because students learn differently, each student needs different things from an instructional setting, which affirms that teaching requires personalized instruction in order to reach all students.

For all students to thrive in the classroom or along any post-secondary pathway they choose, the education system must continuously develop and embrace the very best practices, policies, and
ideas that promotes innovation and increases student engagement.

➤ Technology is not only a relevant and potentially engaging tool for students, it has the additional capacity to improve the culture and practice of professional staff.

Chapter 3. Recommendations

➤ Eliminate barriers for student learning based on the agrarian calendar, seat time, and fixed physical boundaries. Create environment that actively promotes and supports innovation within and beyond the school walls (e.g., in the school community, students’ homes, and school building).

• Allow and support flexibility and innovation for districts, schools, and teachers in developing schedules/calendars.
• Allow students more flexibility in accumulating credits in order to break away from restrictive Carnegie Unit and seat time requirements.
• Require school improvement plans to include a broader range of adequate yearly progress metrics, such as health, science and technology, arts, and safety goals.
• Address all needs of the individual learner through a holistic approach that, in addition to specific academic skills, also includes supporting psycho-social, physical health, moral-ethical, and developmental needs.
• Support dual credit/dual enrollment and other opportunities for students to learn outside of the traditional classroom.
• Allow districts to create alternative pathways to student graduation such as service learning and apprenticeships.
• Allow districts flexibility to add their own measures to state assessments.

➤ Allow technology to facilitate student learning that transcends the traditional building and school day.

• Rather than being a tool that separates people from each other or just views students as “data,” technology should serve as a 24/7 resource that helps educators and students connect to other communities of educators and learners, as well as to vast stores of resources and tools.
• Policymakers should develop and implement digital citizenship competencies.
• States should ensure that instructional materials policies allow schools to use technology to provide access to the most effective teaching and learning resources.
• Competency standards for educators should ensure that educators can effectively use technology for student engagement and achievement. Professional development should be offered to support the standards to ensure educator success.
• Technology should be used to provide real-time assessment and immediate support for student learning.

➤ Create human capital policies that support effective teaching and leadership leading to next generation student learning. Eliminate barriers based on certification and professional training.

• The focus for student learning must shift from emphasizing only the lower half of Bloom’s revised taxonomy of learning (remembering, understanding, applying) to fully including the upper half (analyzing, evaluating, and creating). Students should be expected to develop these skills in preparation for careers in today’s—and tomorrow’s—workforce.
• Educators need to be given the flexibility to use and innovate with a wide range of technology in the learning environment.
• State boards of education need to work with higher education institutions and accrediting entities to reexamine preparation programs to ensure that future educators are entering the workforce with 21st century skills and have the ability to transfer those skills to today’s learning environment.
• State educator licensing boards need to redefine licensure and certification to include the demonstration of 21st century skills and broaden the role of professionals and paraprofessionals in the learning environment.
No Time to Wait—Recommendations

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Today’s students are different from those that our public education system was built to serve. Students today are bombarded with ever-growing quantities of information and live with blurred boundaries of when and where learning occurs and from whom learning is delivered from and created by. Schools can no longer prepare a select few for higher education—they must elevate all students to function and work in a diverse, global society. Today public education must prepare Americans for citizenship, post secondary education and careers in a period when the fields in question haven’t yet been conceived. The traditional content schools are structured to deliver is still relevant, but if left unchallenged and unchanged, public education will not meet the obligation of building a culture of expectation and excitement for learning and graduating all students with the levels of competency needed for success in a contemporary society.

School structure must empower learning as an evolving lifetime process that transcends time and space. Schools must support students’ social, emotional, and physical well being as much as academic growth. The ability to learn over one’s lifetime through analysis, problem solving, collaboration, and communication leading to innovative and creative conclusions with practical applicability to the workplace is a marketable skill of the 21st century and is a hallmark of the American genius for innovation. Schools must foster constructive family and community involvement to encourage students to take responsibility and initiative for their own learning. This includes the ability to intelligently assess learning resources for quality and validity.

We must approach these changes with the clear understanding that the financial resources available to design and implement school structures will not change drastically. We must use available funding and resources to reallocate and innovate to deliver education very differently and much more efficiently than in the past.

1. Set high expectations and foster excellence rather than focusing on meeting minimum standards.

2. Focus on the long-term growth of the learner, ensuring that the entire K–12 system is oriented and structured to prepare all students to become productive citizens in any post-secondary pathways.

3. Celebrate learning as a 24/7 endeavor that cuts across time and space.

4. Be flexible and supportive of the need for public education to provide balanced and equitable—but not identical—opportunities for students.

5. Commit to collaboration and alignment of goals between tiers of the education system and across other sectors invested in children’s health and happiness.

6. Encourage all tiers of the education system to foster innovation, participation, and engagement and avoid being risk adverse.

7. Invest in ongoing research and development and adapting successful innovative solutions to improve and personalize student learning.

Design Principles

Inputs and Assumptions
TIME/ENVIRONMENT
Eliminate barriers for student learning based on the agrarian calendar, seat time, and fixed physical boundaries. Create a policy environment that actively promotes and supports innovation.

TECHNOLOGY
Allow technology to facilitate student learning to transcend the traditional building and school day.

PEOPLE
Create human capital policies that support effective teaching and leadership leading to next generation student learning. Eliminate barriers based on certification and professional training.

Policy Goals
- Ensure all decisions are student based as opposed to adult accommodations.
- Allow and support flexibility and innovation for districts, schools, and teachers in developing schedules/calendars.
- Add expanded learning time for applied learning experiences that is not just “more of the same.”
- Allow students more flexibility in accumulating credits in order to break away from restrictive Carnegie Unit and seat time requirements.
- Require evidence-based research to serve as the basis for investing in innovations. Such policies must be made within reason, however, as some innovations do not yet have evidence-based support.
- Require school improvement plans to include holistic adequate yearly progress metrics, such as STEM, health, arts, and safety goals.
- Address all needs of the individual learner through a holistic approach that, in addition to academics, includes supporting psycho-social, physical health, moral-ethical, and developmental needs.
- Support dual credit/dual enrollment and other opportunities for students to learn outside of the traditional classroom.
- Remove state and local barriers that inhibit collaboration between schools and communities.
- Require schools/districts/post-secondary institutions to share aggregated student data.
- Allow districts flexibility to add their own measures to state assessments.
- Develop flexible credit plans outside of traditional seat time requirements.

Every student will graduate from our public schools having demonstrated competencies required for life-long learning, meaningful work, and citizenship.

Mission

Recommendations