



# Leveraging Time for School Equity: Indicators to Measure More and Better Learning Time



Annenberg  
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School Reform

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Leveraging Time for Equity: Indicators to Measure More and Better Learning Time

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## Introduction

**T**he More and Better Learning Time (MBLT) initiative seeks “to reinvent public schools through more and better learning time in neighborhoods of concentrated poverty, so that students are prepared equitably for college, career, and civic participation.”<sup>1</sup> The initiative goes beyond simply adding time to the school day and year to ensure that the use of time (new and existing) becomes a lever for improving educational opportunities for students in the nation’s most underserved school systems. The MBLT initiative defines a set of guiding principles that ensures that equity is central to implementation.

The Ford Foundation envisions this approach becoming the “new normal” for schools across the nation. To support these goals, Ford funds efforts to develop scalable program designs, build a body of powerful evidence, strengthen system conditions, and leverage community capacity in six urban centers that make up the MBLT sites – Los Angeles, Denver, Detroit, Chicago, Newark, and Rochester – as well as statewide and national initiatives.

<sup>1</sup> See [www.fordfoundation.org/issues/educational-opportunity-and-scholarship/more-and-better-learning-time](http://www.fordfoundation.org/issues/educational-opportunity-and-scholarship/more-and-better-learning-time).

The Annenberg Institute for School Reform (AISR) at Brown University, with support from the Institute for Democracy, Education, and Access (IDEA) at the University of California, Los Angeles, has developed an indicators framework that captures the complexity of implementing such an ambitious initiative. With input from model developers, community organizers, and other stakeholders working with the MBLT sites, we developed a multi-layered framework of MBLT indicators to track multiple measures of progress toward increasing educational opportunity and improving outcomes for students and communities.

The indicators are organized into four major categories:

1. Creating and Sustaining the Conditions for More and Better Learning Time
2. Ensuring Equitable Access to and Implementation of More and Better Learning Time
3. Preparing Students for College, Career, and Civic Life
4. Scaling Up: Making More and Better Learning Time the “New Normal”

### Why Develop a Framework of Indicators?

Education indicators are “yardsticks” that can inform a system by highlighting areas in need of development as well as areas that have experienced growth and improvements. According to Shavelson, McDonnell, and Oakes (1991), “A good education indicator system is expected to provide accurate and precise information to illuminate the condition of education and contribute to its improvement.” Creating such measures and collecting the relevant data across the MBLT initiative has these benefits:

- Indicators help illustrate the **core values and goals** of the initiative to grantees and the education field as a whole.

- Indicators help **define, clarify, and measure** a broad range of educational conditions and outcomes that are possible in the implementation of MBLT.
- Indicators can offer timely information that educators, leaders, and community members can use to **understand and improve practice**.
- Indicators provide key stakeholders and the public with an understanding of whether and **how the initiative is effecting change** across several important dimensions.

### **Beyond Standardized Test Scores: An Evolving, Formative Tool**

Schools and student learning are complex. Using standardized student test scores as the sole measure of the impact of policies and practices is not enough to capture that complexity: understanding school and student achievement requires multiple measures that take into account many dimensions of students' learning and preparedness to learn.

The indicators framework described in this report intentionally confronts the notion that a student's or school's needs, challenges, and successes can be relegated to a single numerical statistic – or even a handful of narrowly defined statistics. Instead, by looking across multiple indicators, this framework aims to provide a deeper understanding of how the MBLT initiative influences students' lives, school policy, and public opinion.

By providing new and alternative ways of measuring what matters for student learning and taking a reform to scale (Coburn 2003), these multi-layered indicators will allow sites to broaden their understanding of what makes more and better learning time programs effective and will inform and influence the design of

research and evaluation of their improvement efforts. Rather than create a traditional summative evaluation and externally imposed monitoring plan, we built a living framework that can evolve as grantees learn, improve, and share. Where possible, we built on existing work – both from indicators of MBLT already being collected and from reliable indicators created for other complex, multi-sector education initiatives.

Together, these indicators offer a comprehensive, rich, and meaningful look into the complex work of educating youth in high-poverty communities. They provide a way for MBLT systems and programs to chart their successes and determine areas for improvement, as well as a way for school models to determine if they are meeting their goals in line with the MBLT principles.

While the primary goal of the MBLT indicator project is to help document the work and progress of districts, schools, and community groups currently at work to implement the MBLT initiative, the indicators can also contribute to the work of a wide range of practitioners, community members, and policymakers.

### **About This Report**

*Leveraging Time for Equity* is grounded in the work of the MBLT field, extensive research on education reform and indicators, and a commitment to social and educational equity for all. The report begins with an introduction to the goals and design of the MBLT initiative in the section “About the More and Better Learning Time Initiative.”

The section “Building a Shared Theory of Action” discusses what factors guided the development of the indicator framework. In particular, we share an approach that highlights the collaborative efforts of multiple actors that need to engage in the work to reach scale. This sec-

tion includes a review of existing research supporting the use of multiple educational measurements and evaluations in place of the traditional single assessments.

The “MBLT Indicators Framework” section introduces the indicators. The section outlines our process for producing a parsimonious list of useful MBLT indicators and discusses why indicators are needed at three levels – student, school, and system. The section continues with the heart of this report: a description of indicators that align with MBLT principles and goals. This report will be accompanied by a website, due to launch in fall 2014, that will offer additional information, tools, and resources.

*Leveraging Time for Equity* is a collaborative project and is the result of successful efforts in engaging different entities involved in the implementation of MBLT – researchers, school designers, community organizers, and local funding partners – to reflect on and refine MBLT indicators. The report has evolved as those involved in implementing and supporting the MBLT initiative have reviewed the framework, offered feedback, and demonstrated how it can be adapted or augmented to make it most useful to the field.



## About the More and Better Learning Time Initiative

**T**he MBLT initiative is grounded in the belief that an expanded and redesigned school day and year can provide students from low-income backgrounds with an opportunity to master the core academic subjects, engage and access a broad and well-rounded curriculum, and receive needed individualized supports and attention. This approach can also provide teachers, school leaders, and staff with additional time to collaborate, learn, and improve school structures and curriculum.

Providing “more and better learning time” can include increasing the time for learning at schools by adding days to the school year or time to each school day or both. Equally important, the MBLT initiative also attends to the quality of how new and existing time is spent. As one veteran teacher who is participating in an MBLT program said, “Quantity is great, if you have the quality to back it up” (Rich 2012). MBLT approaches restructure how time is used during the school day through innovative structures like off-campus student internships, a second shift for teachers, or strategic partnerships with other public agencies or community organizations to create high-quality teaching and learning opportunities.

## Educational Equity at the Center

Educational and social equity are central to the MBLT initiative. Minimizing disparities in educational opportunities at both the school and system levels is critical to minimizing disparities in academic achievement between different groups of students and among schools (Oakes & Lipton 2006).

Inadequate access to learning time can negatively impact student achievement. For example, low-income students who do not participate in educational programs during the summer months can experience “summer learning loss” – their achievement test scores decline between June and September (Alexander, Entwisle & Olson 2001; Alexander 2007). However, these gaps can be reduced dramatically through access to quality summer school programs (Borman & Dowling 2006; Allington & McGill-Franzen 2009). Learning time during the school year is also important; though more studies on this topic are needed, one study found that schools offering more instructional minutes had higher average test scores than other schools serving similar student populations (Jin Jez & Wassmer 2011). Further, research on the use of class time indicates that it is as important as the amount of

class time (Aronson et al. 1998; Borg 1980; Brown & Saks 1986; Cotton & Savard 1981).

The MBLT vision of equity and social change, however, also demands looking beyond test scores to understand and measure student learning and access to educational opportunities. Recent research conducted by Putnam (2012) confirms that the opportunity gap in accessing learning time has grown in recent decades as upper-income parents have invested increasing time and resources in their children’s futures, while less-affluent parents have been unable to keep up. More-affluent children are approximately twice as likely to participate in after-school activities or enrichment activities like music, drama, and art lessons.<sup>2</sup> Putnam also finds that students from less-affluent families are less likely to participate in voluntary service work that can provide a sense of purpose and responsibility. These differences show up in traditional achievement measures – and they also become evident when we compare and examine students’ acquisition of critical twenty-first-century skills that ready students for adult success.

With the support of research, the MBLT initiative advances a broad view of student learning that includes youth development, highlights access to diverse learning opportunities, and envisions a complex array of stakeholders participating as both producers and supporters of the initiative. For example, research has found that social-emotional learning programs yield positive effects on a range of social and emotional skills. A recent research synthesis found that Integrated Support Service (ISS) approaches, for example, decrease grade retention and dropout and increase student attendance (Moore & Emig 2014). More and better learning time encourages the provision of support strategies that target the range of students’ needs – achievement and cognitive attainment, as well as health, social, and emotional well-being and behaviors – with the recognition that these multiple domains

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, Berliner 1990 and 2007. Also, Alexander (2007), using longitudinal data, showed that almost all of the variance in student achievement between low-income students and more affluent peers can be explained by the cumulative effects of this summer learning loss from early elementary school through high school. Marcotte and Hansen (2010) reported that students attending schools that lose a large number of instructional days due to inclement weather underperform on state standardized tests relative to students who did not experience the loss of snow days. Jin Jez and Wassmer (2011) found the California elementary schools that offer more instructional minutes had higher average test scores than schools serving similar student populations.

are interrelated and that success in one domain can contribute to success in another (Moore & Emig 2014).

The MBLT indicator framework encompasses this broader understanding and captures the role of schools and community partners in ensuring that students have access to the high-quality learning opportunities they need to become well-rounded young adults ready for college, well-paid careers, and civic life. When schools include more and better time for students to learn and for teachers to teach, they can achieve their mission of providing all students with an engaging and relevant education.

## Guiding Principles: A Cross-Sector Ecosystem for Equitable Reform

The MBLT initiative is designed around the assumption that while each state, district, and school is unique, MBLT programs should be guided by a set of clear principles that ensure that equity is central to the effort:

- School days are redesigned to provide students with significantly more and better learning time.
- Schools provide students with well-rounded learning and development opportunities.
- Educators' time is reinvented in and out of schools.

## THE LINKED LEARNING APPROACH

Linked Learning high schools integrate college and career preparation. They connect strong academics with a technical or career-based curriculum in a broad range of fields such as engineering, arts and media, and biomedical and health sciences. Partnering with local businesses and industry, two- or four-year colleges, arts agencies, and community-based organizations, the schools blend academic instruction with real-world experiences such as apprenticeships and internships. Linked Learning pathways also provide personalized support that ensures students succeed in a challenging program of study. The expansion and reimagined use of time is a guiding and supporting strategy for making these schools work.

Using strategies such as block schedules, co-teaching, integrated instruction, and off-site learning, Linked Learning provides an alternative to the usual formal and informal divisions found in high schools based on subject matter, student proficiency and skills, and estimates of students' postsecondary prospects. These strategies allow students to make connections across the curriculum and to the real world and meaningfully engage in their learning.

At Construction Tech Academy in San Diego, students are introduced to three career strands: construction, engineering, and architecture. All students must complete a sequence of four classes in one of the strands. Students must also complete a college preparatory curriculum. Students work on integrated group projects through collaboratively taught "advisories" and present results to industry experts. Students are also encouraged to learn outside of the classroom by taking college-level courses at the nearby community college and through internships and mentorships with partnering businesses and industries.

This cross-disciplinary approach demands a high level of collaboration between schools, the district, and partnering organizations; among school staff; between teachers and students; and among students. Meaningful collaboration requires trusting relationships, commitment, and time – time for teachers to identify and meet the needs of students and for common planning and reflection on their practice. One Linked Learning teacher commented:

[In] the traditional approach . . . there isn't enough time for planning or reflec-

tion. You end up, as all teachers do, carrying home lots of work, and when you have to coordinate that work with a partner, it's pretty demanding. If [Linked Learning] is going to be developed, the school day has to be restructured and the expectations revised. . . . You're supposed to be a professional, engaged in this intellectual process, reflecting on your teaching practice, analyzing your students. You're supposed to be fine-tuning things constantly. Complex work, but the [traditional] school day doesn't support that at all.

– Saunders, M., E. Hamilton, S. Fanelli, J. Moya, and E. Cain. 2012. *Linked Learning: A Guide to Making High School Work*. Los Angeles, CA: Institute for Democracy, Education and Access at UCLA.

Research conducted in schools implementing Linked Learning demonstrates how test scores alone do not tell the full story of student achievement. Students' learning in Linked Learning pathways is measured by a range of indicators including the acquisition of the skills, knowledge, and abilities that will ready them for the adult world (Saunders et al. 2013).



- Programs use a whole-school/every-child approach.
- Schools engage families and integrate community partnerships.

To apply these principles, multiple stakeholders work together in an ecosystem that ensures equitable implementation of MBLT. School designers develop and implement effective and scalable school designs; researchers and journalists develop and communicate compelling ideas and evidence; support and advocacy from grassroots and grassroots organizations create public support and political will; and policymakers and elected officials remove systemic barriers to change.

This ecosystem of equity reform reflects the understanding that schools do not operate in a vacuum, but rather exist and coexist within the local, state, and national policies and practices that impact how students learn and grow (Simmons 2007). To move toward educational equity, the components of the ecosystem must work together in a principled and coordinated way across sectors and issues. Building and sustaining capacity goes beyond securing additional funding for schools or supporting new policies and practices; it also entails revitalizing communities so that families and entire neighborhoods can offer necessary supports to ensure student success (Anyon 2005).

## THE GENERATION SCHOOLS NETWORK APPROACH

The Generation Schools Network in New York City and Denver staggers teacher vacations to provide more learning time for students and for teacher collaboration, planning, and instructional personalization. The result is a 200-day school year – 20 more than the national average – without increasing teachers’ total work time. In addition to their “regular” courses, all students take rigorous, month-long, credit-bearing “intensive” courses twice a year, taught by a team of teachers. The city becomes the classroom: students explore college campuses, corporate boardrooms, community organizations, and public services. In New York, this approach costs the same as other New York City public schools, demonstrating its cost-effectiveness.

Each day, students experience learning time in the following ways:\*

- An 85-minute “foundation course,” which serves as the core of the instructional program. Courses are taught by a team of teachers including content area experts and experts in special needs or EL instruction. Teachers share fewer than sixteen students on average (in a fully scaled school), and teachers have common preparation time every day.

- Three hour-long “studio courses” daily. Studio courses are additional required courses, electives or mandated services (e.g., arts and music, foreign language, fitness, advanced sciences and technology, remediation, or enrichment). Studio courses last six to eight weeks. This allows students to take many types of courses throughout the year and allows staff to plan courses that adapt to student needs and interests.
- Two month-long “intersession courses.” Courses focus on critical English and math instruction and are taught by a team of certified teachers and guidance counselor who rotate to each grade throughout the year. The courses provide college guidance, and through off-campus learning experiences, all students graduate with the knowledge and skills they need for postsecondary success.

The goal is to meet the needs of all students by providing a range of learning experiences including semi-independent or independent practice; intensive and interactive skill instruction; interactive guidance and social support; ongoing exploration of an interest area; and deep-dive, inquiry-based learning

that require and enable student-to-student and student-to-adult interaction. As shared by the co-founder, the school works to meet its goal of preparing all students for life responsibilities, challenges, and opportunities, in contrast to traditional notions of success:

What often happens is we’ll have a ninth-grade student, for example, who takes integrated algebra, passes the New York state regions, but only gets a 65. While most schools would then move on to geometry, we sit down with the kids and we have conversations about the fact that, “You know, you might have passed but . . . there’s good research that if you got a 65 in integrated algebra, you’re not going to pass geometry and trig. If you pass, you’re going to have to pay for a remedial class when you get to college.

– Excerpt of interview with Jonathan Spear, Co-Founder, Generation Schools Network, Sept. 25, 2013

Together, students and caring adults develop a plan that will best meet the long-term academic and social needs of each student.

\* See [www.generationschools.org/about/model](http://www.generationschools.org/about/model).

The wide range of approaches working toward providing students with more and better learning time reflects the depth of this approach. These approaches – Linked Learning, the Promise Neighborhoods Initiative, Community Schools, Generation Schools Network, Citizen Schools, the TIME Collaborative of the National Center on Time and Learning, and ExpandEd Schools by TASC (The After-School Corporation) – operate in different regions of the country and are creating scalable, effective school designs in “regular” public school systems. (See pages – for a brief description of two of these approaches.) The work of these schools and organizations demonstrates that there is not one “fix,” but rather a multitude of solutions that must be applied to systems and schools to help reduce the opportunity gap between affluent and less-affluent families (Putnam 2012).



## Building a Shared Theory of Action

**B**ased on the literature, the MBLT guiding principles, and extensive input from MBLT implementers, we developed a theory of action to guide the construction of an indicator framework. At the center of the approach are educated, well-rounded, and healthy students, families, and communities participating in strong and equitable schools and school systems, surrounded by the multiple actors that need to engage in the work to reach scale. Together, these stakeholders create an ecosystem of MBLT equity reform, as seen in Figure 1 on the next page.

This approach includes internal and external stakeholder groups, each of which provides a unique and essential contribution for the success of the MBLT initiative. The theory of action also captures cross-sector collaboration across the stakeholder groups. As demonstrated in Figure 1, internal and external stakeholder groups work together across the ecosystem to create and use MBLT to improve schools so that they can better support all students. We highlight this cross-sector work because it only happens when it is intentional and resourced; it takes significant time to meet and build a shared vision and goals and to work across sectors.

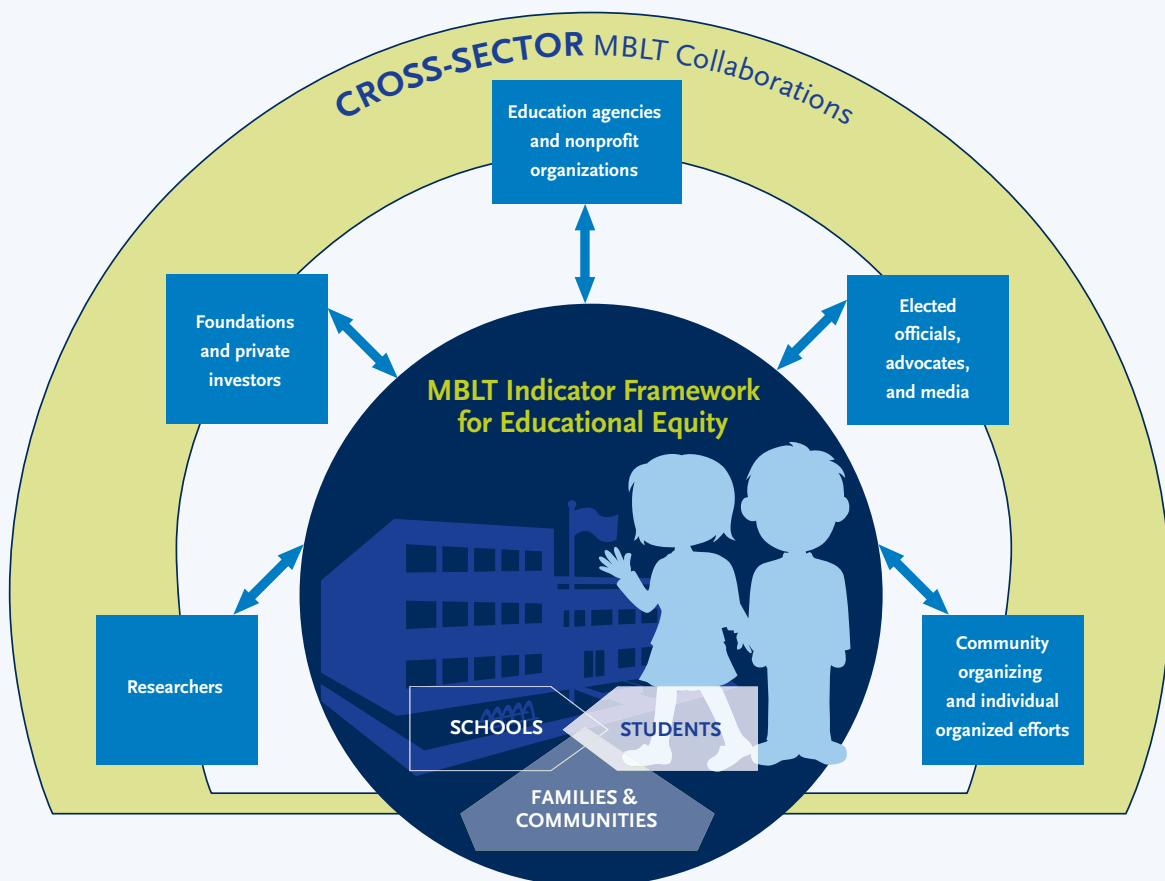
The approach identifies the following internal and external stakeholder groups:

- **Students** are afforded every opportunity possible that will help them succeed, become more academically and civically engaged, and develop critical-thinking skills. The MBLT approach emphasizes that all students, regardless of income, race, language, immigration status, or ability, should have access to schools that are safe and that promote their health and well-being. They should also play an active role in determining how MBLT is implemented in their schools. Students belong at the center of reform efforts, along with families and communities.
- **Families and communities** are at the center of our framework, along with students and schools. These stakeholders understand the

needs of their children firsthand and are deeply invested in meeting those needs. The MBLT initiative cannot be successful or sustainable unless schools engage families and communities in the design and implementation of MBLT approaches.

- **Schools** that adopt an MBLT approach are working toward creating more and better time to teach and learn. These schools fulfill their critical role in the communities they are located in by building strong relationships with students, families, and communities.
- **Foundations and private investors** provide additional financial resources and support that spark the practical and intellectual work needed to create the best chances of national, state, and local support of the MBLT initiative. Key to these efforts is the foundation's or

FIGURE 1 THEORY OF ACTION FOR THE MBLT INDICATORS FRAMEWORK



investor's commitment to changing existing inequities across schools and improving conditions.

- **Education agencies** (LEAs, SEAs, and the U.S. Department of Education) and **nonprofit organizations** (e.g., service providers and reform support organizations) redirect and readjust policies or remove barriers toward full MBLT implementation in schools and systems.
- **Researchers**, including people from academia, institutes, and think tanks, provide an intellectual space to generate new ideas or document ongoing work. Researchers can push partners to think about the possibilities and potential of the MBLT initiative and document or disseminate evidence of best practices.
- **Community organizing and individual organized efforts** create the public knowledge and political will to ensure that the MBLT initiative is driven by and stays focused on the real social and educational inequities that exist in schools and communities. Community organizers can help develop and pass policies, identify implementation problems and solutions, monitor access to MBLT programs, and ensure that all stages of work are informed by meaningful community engagement.
- **Elected officials, advocates, and media** leverage their resources to help implement MBLT strategies. These two areas are combined, as each entity influences and informs the other.

As much as the external stakeholders influence schools and students, schools and students do and should affect the decisions and direction of these stakeholders. Figure 1 is not a static snapshot; it represents a dynamic system that influences and is influenced by the social, political,

cultural, and normative context of its own educational ecosystem. This theory of action is grounded in the knowledge that:

- Student academic success cannot be measured by one instrument or through one single moment of engagement. The diverse range of students' needs and growth requires **various forms of measurements and of engagement**. This framework provides a structure that can serve these multiple needs at various levels of an educational system.
- Schools are impacted by societal failings of inequality. Thus, **increasing education and social equity are primary goals** of the MBLT initiative. The indicators framework focuses on the many ways in which equity can be measured across sites and by those implementing MBLT strategies.
- An **educational ecosystem** like MBLT works best when external and internal stakeholders maintain open lines of communication, when they practice mutual respect, and when there is a shared commitment to improve their schools and communities.

## The Limits of Traditional Education Indicators: What the Research Says

Grounded in the theory of action outlined in the previous section, this section provides a brief review of relevant research and an overview of current efforts to move beyond a single assessment ideology to a multi-dimensional approach. There are many reasons to move beyond single assessments. Current reform efforts to close the achievement gap through test-based accountability systems have had untold negative effects on students and schools, including a narrowing of the curriculum and instruction (Au 2009; Mora 2011). Furthermore, there is growing recognition that since the problems that impact learning are complex and multi-dimensional, standardized test scores alone do not adequately capture student learning and growth. For example, considerable research documents how the lack of access to a rich learning environment and opportunities impacts students' achievement, including students' acquisition of a whole range of skills, knowledge, and abilities that affect readiness for the adult world (Carter 2013). Despite this evidence, education reform efforts have paid little attention to identifying inputs and opportunities (such as time) as a lever for equity-based reform.

## *Measuring What Matters*

Education stakeholders increasingly agree that in our twenty-first-century society, success is dependent on the ability to use a range of skills and behaviors to solve problems. The University of Chicago Consortium on Chicago School Research (CCSR) demonstrated that “noncognitive factors” (academic behaviors, academic perseverance, academic mindsets, learning strategies, and social skills) impact students' school performance and educational attainment. This research indicates that academic behaviors like school attendance, doing homework, and organizing materials impact academic achievement, while noncognitive factors work through academic behaviors to affect performance (Farrington et al. 2012).

A recent report by the National Bureau of Economic Research (Heckman & Kautz 2012) strengthens these findings. The authors establish that important “character” skills (e.g., conscientiousness, perseverance, sociability, and curiosity) are deeply valued in the labor market, school, and other domains. However, many of these skills cannot be captured by achievement tests. Indeed, many have argued that high-stakes standardized testing cannot adequately measure a quality education or capture important life skills (Bransford, Brown & Cocking 2003; Darling-Hammond 1995, 2003; Heckman & Kautz 2013; Rogoff 2003).

Recognizing these shortcomings of standardized test data taken alone, some current reform efforts have sought to advance a broader approach to documenting student achievement and development. For example, the Common Core State Standards and movement toward Common Core assessments are intended to benefit students by providing clear and consistent

expectations for success in college and the workplace. The standards suggest using time in different ways, including the integration of academic subject areas and the use of extended research projects. While the standards are “designed to be robust and relevant to the real world, reflecting the knowledge and skills that our young people need for success in college and careers,”<sup>3</sup> it is unclear how assessments based on these standards can or will capture students’ growth and development.

### *Measuring Inequities*

A myopic focus on test preparation can undermine the goals of preparing students for the adult world, particularly for students in low-performing schools. Both large-scale teacher surveys (Clarke et al. 2003; Tracey 2005) and ethnographic research in schools (McNeil 2000; Valli & Buese 2007) show that high-stakes accountability testing has pushed many to teach to tests and focus on basic skills even when these practices conflict with teachers’ beliefs about the best approaches for student learning. This effect has been particularly notable for teachers in low-performing schools, where pressures to raise tests and avoid sanctions are highest (Hursh 2008; Sunderman, Kim & Orfield 2005; Valenzuela 2005; White & Rosenbaum 2008; Wood 2004).

Research also shows that a single measure cannot capture the complexity of assessing educational systems that serve students in high-poverty communities. Rather than preparing students solely to be good test-takers as the way

to remedy the problems of failing schools, educators should be permitted to “create learning environments informed by both action and reflection” (Bartolomé 1994, p. 177) that assess the multiple dimensions of student learning and needs. If the goal of education is creating this dynamic system of teaching and learning, it follows that the measures of that system should be equally robust and not narrowed to a single numeric value attached to test scores.

Research (Oakes 1989) demonstrates that it is important to consider students’ learning *opportunities* in addition to traditional outcome measures like standardized test scores. A focus on *outcomes* measures must be combined with an examination of critical inputs and capacity building. Indeed, the conceptualization of an “achievement gap,” according to Ladson-Billings (2013), that is based on test scores must be reconceptualized to consider the “education debt” the nation has accumulated. Rather than focusing on “catching up” or raising the test scores of disadvantaged students, we must begin to pay down this debt (2013). No real academic improvements can be made unless we address, as a nation, the disparate levels of resources, support, and opportunities provided to those who continue to be disadvantaged due to a historical legacy of discrimination (Ladson-Billings 2013). This history produces negative perceptions of African American and Latino communities and privileges middle-class, White communities, thus producing and maintaining cultural inequality in our society and in our schools (Carter 2013).

Understanding this historical and societal context is crucial if we are to truly transform our education systems. This is especially evident when creating educational indicators that seek to change school conditions for some of our country’s most marginalized students.

<sup>3</sup> See [www.corestandards.org](http://www.corestandards.org).

It is also critical to capture stakeholder action and influence on educational initiatives at all levels of the education system. This attention to all stakeholders ensures equity consciousness – or an “awareness of the level of equity and inequity present in behaviors, policies, settings, organizations, and outcomes” (McKenzie & Skrla 2011, p.12). In particular, our commitment to neighborhoods of concentrated poverty emphasizes the critical importance of measuring school success and progress in a way that captures this political, social, and cultural reality.

### A Multi-dimensional Framework as a Solution

Based on the research discussed in the previous section, the indicator framework measures a range of critical inputs and outcomes at the student, school, and system levels. Both inputs and outputs are needed to bring this initiative to scale. The outputs involve traditional indicators that measure evidence of student learning, as well as non-traditional indicators that highlight the range of skills and abilities students need for success in the twenty-first century. The inputs include external stakeholders’ actions that help shape the MBLT initiative and the student outcomes. The fluid relationship among these inputs and outputs allows us to document the interactions that lead to the creation and sustaining of ecosystems of equity.

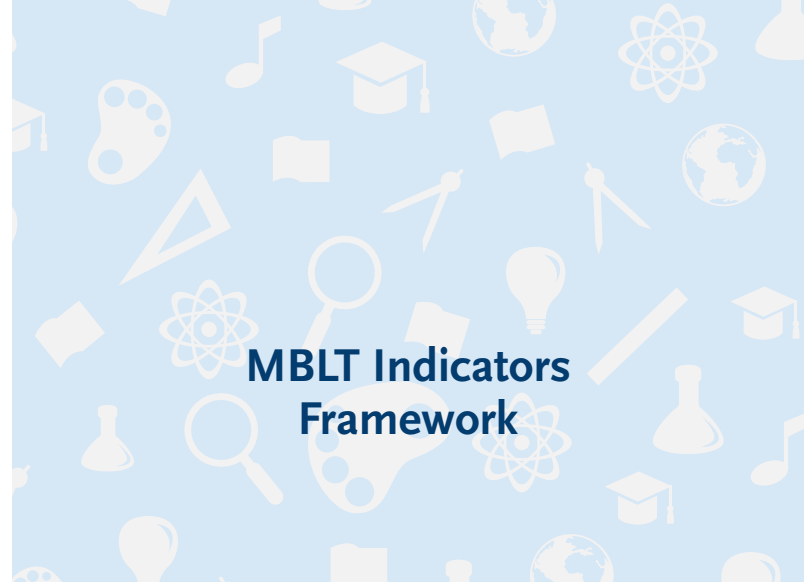
<sup>4</sup> See <http://annenberginstitute.org/about/smart-education-systems>.

Critical to any reform is that once solutions are developed and implemented the ideas spread and are taken to scale. Coburn’s (2003) conceptualization of scale is useful in understanding what is required to make MBLT the “new normal” across America’s schools. Coburn explains that getting to scale “must include attention to the nature of change in classroom instruction; issues of sustainability; spread of norms, principles, and beliefs; and a shift in ownership such that a reform can become self-generative” (p. 2). These four concepts of depth, sustainability, spread, and ownership are important to winning over the hearts and minds of the teachers, schools, and districts that will learn, teach, and, hopefully, come to own MBLT.

Similarly, successful reform efforts must be linked to the health and well-being of the surrounding community. Linking school *and* community improvement can ensure students come to school ready to learn, work to transform the culture of schools and the practice of schooling, and help build a political constituency for public education to support the delivery of necessary resources and address inequalities (Warren 2005). AISR’s theory of *smart education systems* (SES) offers insight into what ownership of the MBLT initiative may look like.<sup>4</sup> In an SES, a high-functioning district partners with a range of community and civic partners to provide a broad web of supports and opportunities for students, both inside and outside of schools (Foley et al. 2008; Mishook 2012). In other words, all aspects of an ecosystem move toward a wide array of positive results while ensuring mutual accountability across the different sectors. By

establishing higher levels of trust between all sectors of the SES, issues relating to racial and/or economic disparities are handled more honestly and effectively.

Like a smart education system, the MBLT initiative acknowledges that technical solutions to school reform must be anchored to a theory of equity to provide better academic outcomes and a more just society. Mutual respect must exist between the community and those committed to its improvement in a smart education system. The school reforms that are a result of this approach should work towards empowering communities with greater social, cultural, and political capital (Hubbard & Stein 2006; Oakes et al. 1998; Welner 2001).



**T**here is a strong need to document and understand strategies that develop students into successful learners, create better schools, and help establish strong relationships between communities and schools. Stakeholders need guidance about how to best use time, build classroom environments, and apply appropriate pedagogy to leverage the body of research on these factors. The More and Better Learning Time (MBLT) initiative proposes a set of guiding principles for developing these strategies: redesign school days to provide students with significantly more and better learning time; provide well-rounded learning and development opportunities; reinvent how teachers/educators spend their time in schools; include all students; and engage families and the community (see the section “Guiding Principles: A Cross-Sector Ecosystem for Equitable Reform” for more on the principles).

The MBLT indicators framework offers a way to transform MBLT principles into practice. The indicators identified in this framework aim to measure the extent to which more and better learning time can impact students’ preparation for school success, culminating in graduating from high school ready for the adult world of



learning, work, and civic engagement. The indicators also identify the extent to which schools, districts, and communities provide the support needed for students to reach these ambitious goals.

## Levels of Analysis: Student, School, System

The MBLT indicators framework identifies indicators that document the impact of the guiding principles at three levels of analysis – student, school, and system – with some indicators falling under more than one level. Each level of analysis provides crucial information about the most effective strategies to implement more and better learning time.

### *Why Student-Level Indicators?*

Changing the opportunities and lives of young people is at the heart of our education system. The current education policy climate emphasizes holding systems accountable for serving students well, and AISR supports that goal. But, as established, students' readiness for success in college, career, and civic life can't be captured through a single test. The indicators in the framework explore and broaden existing indicators of students' comprehensive academic success and development. They also measure the impact of educational opportunities made possible through more and better learning time.

### *Why School-Level Indicators?*

Viewing an approach through school-level indicators is useful in many ways. This more “macro-level” approach provides different feedback than can be gleaned from student-level data (although there is clearly overlap, as some

school-level data are based on aggregated student-level data). School-level indicators can demonstrate how a school structures, supports, organizes, and reflects on MBLT priorities. Analysis of school-level data provides information on how more and better learning time can transform entire school structures.

School-level data can also serve as a starting point for sharing effective, equitable implementation strategies by illuminating the strengths of particular schools and organizations. School-level indicators provide insight into how students, teachers, administrators, and partner organizations interact with each other and how time can influence these relationships. Furthermore, school-level indicators provide opportunities to highlight the important role of teachers and other adults who interact with students and directly impact their educational experiences. Finally, examining disaggregated student-level data provides an important opportunity to analyze differences in access to more and better learning time opportunities and outcomes between subgroups.

### *Why System-Level Indicators?*

Education research has historically held a deficit bias – that is, students and teachers are often blamed for educational outcomes that are actually the result of inadequate opportunities or resources (Valencia 2010). Most traditional measures of success reinforce this bias by focusing almost exclusively on student and school outcomes, without capturing the impact of the ecosystem of practices, policies, and resources that schools operate in – the district, community, state, and federal contexts.

Schools are not isolated entities, and many factors that affect how students learn and grow are outside of the control of schools. MBLT external

stakeholders are viewed as the context of people, processes, and structures surrounding a school that influence the development, adoption, and implementation of MBLT at the local, state, or national level. System-level indicators provide a new way for understanding student and school performance in the larger social and political context.

## Criteria for Selecting Indicators

In addition to ensuring indicators capture change at the student, school, and system levels, it is also important to consider the characteristics of each indicator and how each indicator contributes to the framework as a whole. We developed a set of criteria for selecting indicators. We also limited the number of indicators included to allow for greater ease and more widespread use of the framework, and, therefore, to have a greater influence on educational improvement. Oakes (1989) supports this concept: “The trick is to design systems that provide the most essential information with a parsimonious set of indicators.”

The MBLT indicator framework includes indicators that meet the following criteria:

- are measurable by data that **can be collected and analyzed**;
- provide information on an issue or set of issues **affecting students and schools**, but need not necessarily explain causality;
- are **easy to understand**;
- are **unique** enough to stand alone, but also relate to other indicators;
- lead to **improvement in student outcomes** that include academic, social, and emotional development;

- lead to clear implications for the **improvement of policy and practice** among multiple layers of the education system; and
- are **currently measured** by MBLT grantees or noted as something they **would like to measure**.

## Getting to This Framework

Throughout the research process, we identified hundreds of possible indicators with the potential to document the MBLT principles at the three levels of impact. However, our goal is not to provide an exhaustive list, but rather to help prioritize a series of indicators that align with the goals of the MBLT initiative and MBLT implementers, and that can be shared across multiple sites, organizations, and efforts. In particular, the framework captures the complexity involved in assessing programs that serve students in high-poverty communities.

We engaged in a participatory process with MBLT supporters and implementers to systematically prioritize these indicators. The process started by engaging deeply with colleagues at the Institute for Democracy, Education, and Access at the University of California, Los Angeles, and at the National Center for Time and Learning, to consider existing research and indicators currently collected nationally.

We synthesized knowledge from these conversations, reviewed relevant literature, and developed a draft document that we shared with school designers, researchers, community organizers, and local grant-makers to gather critical feedback (please see the Acknowledgments for a list of the participating organizations). The process of gathering feedback occurred over an entire year, during which the framework was extensively revised. We conducted site visits to three of the MBLT cities, had one-on-one con-

versations with many individuals in each sector, and held four separate in-person meetings. Meetings with school designers and with community organizers each took place over a two-day period and included interviews to learn about their MBLT implementation efforts. Participants held small- and large-group conversations that focused on details of the framework, the collection of indicators, the development of data tools, and ways to ensure that the framework best supports the field as a whole. We are humbled by the time and efforts our colleagues made to improve this work. The MBLT indicators framework that follows is a shared product of our collective work.

As we listened to the field, we were urged to find a simple, intuitive, and useful way of organizing the twenty-four final indicators. Our efforts attempted to capture the way practitioners and policymakers understand the reality of implementation – through constant adjustments and improvements based on access to inputs and the outcomes they are seeing. Fluid, strategic, collaborative planning – not a reaction to a single moment or score – are the true constant of MBLT development and implementation.

As a result, we have included MBLT indicators that measure opportunity alongside outcomes. This intentional focus on both opportunity and outcomes attempts to capture one of the core values of the MBLT initiative: that we cannot understand changes in student or school outcomes without understanding changes in the

ecosystem and supports surrounding those schools and students. This more fluid way of measuring more and better learning time can provide a more sustainable approach of documenting education initiatives.

In the pages that follow, we provide a list of twenty-four indicators at the student, school, or system level that follow the logic of implementation:

1. Creating and Sustaining the Conditions for More and Better Learning Time
2. Ensuring Equitable Access to and Implementation of More and Better Learning Time
3. Preparing Students for College, Career, and Civic Life
4. Scaling Up: Making More and Better Learning Time the “New Normal”

We do not imagine that data will be collected on every indicator, but rather that a narrow subset of indicators will be collected across the MBLT initiative to tell a national story. The indicator framework is designed to help districts, schools, community-based organizations, and other school partners design internal or external evaluation systems that can emphasize the inputs, outcomes, and levels of analysis (student, school, system) most relevant to their work. The hope is that this comprehensive framework will provide examples of a holistic assessment of more and better learning time.

We recognize that some of the indicators may not have existing methods of measurement. However, we include these indicators because this framework aims both to build upon existing work and to help build future work. We hope that researchers will design studies to try and develop new ways to measure particularly challenging but important indicators.

# More and Better Learning Time Indicators: Summary

## 1. Creating and Sustaining the Conditions for More and Better Learning Time

SCHOOL	<b>TEACHER OWNERSHIP, KNOWLEDGE &amp; LEADERSHIP</b> To what extent do teachers and school leaders demonstrate ownership, learn about, and exercise leadership with regard to MBLT implementation strategies?
	<b>SCHOOL CLIMATE</b> To what extent does the school focus on the quality and character of school life through the establishment of norms, values, and interpersonal relationships that foster youth development and learning, along with a positive approach to racial diversity on campus?
SCHOOL/SYSTEM	<b>SCHOOL-COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS</b> To what extent are there opportunities for school-community partnerships and for the community to engage/support student learning?
	<b>STUDENT, FAMILY &amp; COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT</b> To what extent do students, families, and communities share in the development of the school's goals, mission, or vision? To what extent does the school create space for meaningful student, family, and community engagement about program design, curriculum, or budgeting priorities?
	<b>STUDENT, FAMILY &amp; COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP</b> To what extent is the MBLT initiative responsive to and owned by students, families, and communities, locally and broadly? Do schools work with communities (individually or as organized groups) to remove system barriers to MBLT implementation?
SYSTEM	<b>SUPPORTIVE DISTRICT POLICY &amp; STRUCTURES</b> To what extent does the district create and implement policies and structures that provide critical resources and support for MBLT?
	<b>LEADERSHIP SUPPORT &amp; COMMUNICATION</b> To what extent does district leadership provide support and communicate information about the MBLT initiative to those involved in implementation?
	<b>TARGETED FISCAL RESOURCES</b> To what extent are resources reallocated and/or targeted to support local MBLT ecosystems? What necessary resources do stakeholders provide to support the MBLT initiative?

## 2. Ensuring Equitable Access to and Implementation of More and Better Learning Time

STUDENT / STUDENT	<b>STUDENT AGENCY</b> To what extent do students shape and determine how they spend their in-school and out-of school time?
	<b>SCHOOL RELATIONSHIPS</b> To what extent do students have the opportunity to develop relationships with teachers and educators?
SCHOOL	<b>ACCESS TO MORE TIME</b> To what extent is time used to provide students with an opportunity to experience a broad range of teaching and learning?
	<b>ACCESS TO BETTER TIME</b> To what extent is time used successfully, and how does it provide opportunity for a broad range of teaching and learning?
	<b>IDENTIFYING &amp; MINIMIZING TIME DISTRACTORS</b> To what extent does the school work to minimize the amount of learning time lost during each school day, week, and year?
	<b>TEACHER ENGAGEMENT &amp; SATISFACTION</b> To what extent do teachers demonstrate engagement in their students' learning and satisfaction with MBLT implementation?
	<b>COLLABORATION</b> To what extent do teachers and community educators have the opportunity to collaborate with colleagues?
	<b>INCLUSIVITY &amp; PERSISTENCE</b> To what extent do schools provide all students with the services and support they need to ensure student growth, success, and persistence?
	<b>SUPPORT SERVICES</b> How and to what extent do schools, districts, and community partners work together to provide students with quality services and programs that support their learning needs and school experience?
SYSTEM	

## 3. Preparing Students for College, Career, and Civic Life

STUDENT	<b>STUDENT ACADEMIC KNOWLEDGE</b> To what extent are students acquiring and applying the knowledge they need for future success in school, career, and civic life? How are students performing across multiple academic measures?
	<b>SKILLS &amp; ABILITIES</b> To what extent are students acquiring the twenty-first-century skills required for success in school, career, and civic life?
	<b>STUDENT ENGAGED LEARNING</b> To what extent are students engaged in their learning within and outside of school?
	<b>STUDENT HEALTH &amp; WELLNESS</b> Are students engaged in activities and behaviors that ensure their health and well-being?
	<b>CIVIC LIFE</b> To what extent are students building the knowledge and skills they need to positively shape their communities? How are they effecting social change in their communities?

## 4. Scaling Up: Making More and Better Learning Time the “New Normal”

SYSTEM	<b>STRONG &amp; SUSTAINABLE MBLT ECOSYSTEM</b> Are viable MBLT ecosystems present?
	<b>WIDESPREAD ADOPTION</b> Is there evidence of the MBLT becoming the “new normal” across systems?

# 1. Creating and Sustaining the Conditions for More and Better Learning Time

This set of indicators focuses on understanding how schools and systems create and sustain the conditions that allow more and better learning time to take root and develop. These indicators measure the commitment and actions of a range of groups, organizations, and individuals responsible for ensuring that the MBLT initiative meets the needs of students and their families. Together, the indicators measure cross-sector presence, commitment, co-ownership, and collaboration across the MBLT ecosystem. This set of indicators looks at factors ranging from evidence of shared goals and plans within and across schools

and partners to the resources and policies that support MBLT implementation.

A shared vision and co-ownership is critical for external partners, school leaders, students, and teachers engaged in the reform. When students and families take part in establishing the vision and purpose of the school, ownership follows. Similarly, teachers must be given opportunities to learn about and lead a movement toward more and better learning time. These actions contribute to a positive school climate and provide the right conditions for student success.

<b>SCHOOL LEVEL</b>	<b>TEACHER OWNERSHIP, KNOWLEDGE &amp; LEADERSHIP</b>
	To what extent do teachers and school leaders demonstrate ownership of, learn about, and exercise leadership with regard to MBLT implementation strategies?
	<p><b>Why does this matter?</b></p> <p>Successful implementation of MBLT is dependent on the ownership and leadership of teacher-led efforts throughout the MBLT implementation process. Teachers' expertise, experience, and on-the-ground understanding of effective implementation strategies are key to learning and development. Teachers are professionals and scholars who require time and space to develop their own learning and practice. This can be achieved through collaboration among colleagues and other educational providers, within and outside their schools.</p> <p><b>What are some possible ways to measure this indicator?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Teachers have the opportunity to learn about MBLT and develop understanding of the issues MBLT seeks to address.</li><li>• Teachers lead and implement MBLT efforts at their schools.</li><li>• Teachers understand alignment between MBLT and other reforms/initiatives (e.g., Common Core State Standards).</li><li>• Teachers use MBLT as a strategy to improve learning for their students.</li><li>• Teachers have the opportunity to share their knowledge and to learn from others through professional development in and out of the school and/or district.</li></ul>

<b>SCHOOL LEVEL</b>	<p><b>SCHOOL CLIMATE</b></p> <hr/> <p>To what extent does the school focus on the quality and character of school life through the establishment of norms, values, and interpersonal relationships that foster youth development and learning, along with a positive approach to racial diversity on campus?</p> <p><b>Why does this matter?</b></p> <p>Schools must be safe learning spaces for students. Taking stock of the campus climate, including racial climate, among its students, faculty, and staff is an important part of promoting an accepting, safe learning environment for all who enter their school. A school's vision/mission that includes a commitment to pluralism; a curriculum that is inclusive of everyone's contributions; and deliberative action to ensure the inclusivity of students, faculty, and administrators (with attention paid to race, ethnicity, immigration status, gender, and sexual orientation) are concrete steps in promoting a positive campus climate.</p> <p><b>What are some possible ways to measure this indicator?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A school's mission statement/vision includes a commitment to diversity, healthy relationships, engaged student learning, and student safety.</li> <li>• Schools take measures to ensure that they are inclusive of all students, faculty, and administrators.</li> <li>• A school's curriculum reflects the experiences of all students.</li> <li>• Programs support the needs and progress of all students.</li> <li>• Students and adults feel safe and respected.</li> <li>• Adults model positive behaviors and respect for learning.</li> <li>• Rules about physical violence, verbal abuse, harassment, and bullying are clearly communicated.</li> <li>• The school tracks discipline data and uses proactive strategies for reducing racial disparities in suspension, expulsion, and other exclusionary strategies.</li> </ul>
<b>SCHOOL/SYSTEM LEVEL</b>	<p><b>SCHOOL-COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS</b></p> <hr/> <p>To what extent are there opportunities for the development of school-community partnerships and for the community to engage/support student learning?</p> <p><b>Why does this matter?</b></p> <p>MBLT approaches are explicit about engaging a broad range of partners in supporting student learning and growth at the school site. Local businesses, industry, and organizations can provide support through internship or mentoring opportunities; postsecondary institutions can expand learning opportunities; social service agencies, nonprofits, and healthcare providers in the community can create formal relationships with schools, using the additional time to provide needed services to students. Many MBLT designs are explicit in using the additional time to increase the communities' agency or role in making decisions and building relationships with school personnel, students, and families. This indicator aims to measure both the breadth and depth of these kinds of relationships.</p> <p><b>What are some possible ways to measure this indicator?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schools invite community involvement and leadership (e.g., community advisory board).</li> <li>• The range of organizations and activities offered to students by community partners reflects the needs of students, the school, and the community.</li> <li>• There is a school-community coordinator/liaison.</li> <li>• There is evidence that school faculty and/or staff are working directly with faculty and/or staff of community programs offered to students.</li> <li>• Information is shared between schools and service providers.</li> <li>• Quantity, quality, and coherence is evident across community partners engaged in schools, including community organizing groups, health service organizations, before- and after-school providers, community, business and industry organizations, postsecondary institutions, technical support organizations, and funders.</li> <li>• Community partners are distributed equitably across schools in a district.</li> </ul>

## STUDENT, FAMILY & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

To what extent do students, families, and communities share in the development of the school's goals, mission, or vision? To what extent does the school create space for meaningful student, family, and community engagement about program design, curriculum, or budgeting priorities?

### Why does this matter?

Successful MBLT implementation requires families to understand and help shape MBLT approaches and activities. Schools must develop strategies and structures that engage youth and their families in decision making at the school and district levels. Schools must also work to remove the barriers parents experience that keep them from being involved and attending events at their child's schools (e.g., language barriers, transportation, or childcare needs).

### What are some possible ways to measure this indicator?

- School faculty and staff work with families as equals and recognize the strengths they bring to their school/family partnerships.
- Strategies are in place to increase family attendance and community participation at school events.
- Schools are accessible to families: materials are provided in families' native language; translation is available at conferences and meetings; transportation and childcare are provided.
- Family attendance is high at school events/student exhibitions.
- There is evidence that parents have meaningful roles in decision making and governance of the school and district.
- Students, families, and community members give positive reviews of the school and/or initiative.
- Families and community members are provided with tools and strategies to support children outside of school.
- Students, families, and community members are given an opportunity to choose MBLT designs, help guide curriculum, and engage in implementation to support student learning in meaningful ways.

## STUDENT, FAMILY & COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP

To what extent is the MBLT initiative responsive to and owned by students, families, and communities, locally and broadly? Do schools work with communities (individually or as organized groups) to remove system barriers to MBLT implementation?

### Why does this matter?

Creating equity in our schools requires the participation of a broad cross-sector coalition. This includes youth, parents, and community organizing groups. As stakeholders of MBLT approaches, these groups are uniquely situated to ground education issues within larger social and economic systems, directly address issues of power, and build the democratic capacity to sustain MBLT programs over time. Communities must be informed and politically organized to participate as equal partners in decision making about the initiative.

### What are some possible ways to measure this indicator?

- Students, parents, and community members are given meaningful opportunities to choose MBLT designs, help guide curriculum, and engage in and help govern implementation (authentic surveying of community needs, ongoing advisory boards, decision-making power).
- There is evidence of public accountability and democratic participation in MBLT design and implementation.
- Students use learning time to identify and address education and social problems in their schools and communities.
- There is evidence of a broad representative base of people and organizations invested in creating and sustaining MBLT programs at the school and system levels.
- There is evidence of co-ownership across the initiative, including explicit vision, strategy, and action plans; streamlined policies for school community partnerships; and regular cross-sector meetings, projects, and campaigns.
- There is evidence that the school works to identify power dynamics and create norms, procedures, and processes that maximize democratic participation and enable meaningful engagement of all partners.



## SUPPORTIVE DISTRICT POLICY & STRUCTURES

To what extent does the district create and implement policies and structures that provide critical resources and support for MBLT?

### Why does this matter?

The vision and actions of district leaders determine the extent to which MBLT is implemented. Districts must build capacity, create the conditions, and provide the necessary resources and support that allow for more and better learning time across the system. District action must include the establishment of accountability structures, data-informed decision making, and a commitment to developing shared outcomes and goals with schools and other stakeholders.

### What are some possible ways to measure this indicator?

- Policies provide resources to support more and better learning time.
- Policies provide personnel with time to engage in MBLT and collaborate and learn about the initiative within contracted time.
- District initiatives and policies show alignment and coherence.
- Accountability structures are in place to ensure student access to more and better learning time opportunities and academic progress and growth.
- Policies and practices support the MBLT guiding principles.
- Policies allow for provision of data and data analysis support.

## LEADERSHIP SUPPORT & COMMUNICATION

To what extent does district leadership provide support and communicate information about the MBLT initiative to those involved in implementation?

### Why does this matter?

District leadership must have the capacity to both develop and articulate a vision and a set of practices that support more and better learning time. Leadership should send a clear message to schools and practitioners that affirms a commitment to establish the conditions necessary to implement MBLT, including different staffing models, the assignment of a designated staff person to lead the initiative, and the provision of transportation.

### What are some possible ways to measure this indicator?

- Leadership supports different staffing and workday models.
- Strong partnership exists between the teachers union and management to support MBLT.
- There are high-quality district MBLT vision and action plans at the cabinet/leadership level.
- An MBLT lead staff person is assigned at the district level, and staff are designated at school sites.
- The district provides necessary support such as transportation to allow for off-campus activities.

## TARGETED FISCAL RESOURCES

To what extent are resources reallocated and/or targeted to support local MBLT ecosystems? What necessary resources do stakeholders provide to support the MBLT initiative?

### Why does this matter?

Adequate education funding is critical to any reform – particularly reforms that aim to improve the educational opportunities offered to students in neighborhoods of concentrated poverty. Thus, a key part of understanding how an ecosystem is creating and sustaining more and better learning time is measuring whether a school, district, or state is working to increase education funding through legislative initiatives and seeking additional funds through external sources (e.g., foundations).

### What are some possible ways to measure this indicator?

- Public funds are reallocated, targeted, or increased to support the provision of more and better learning time, in particular to schools serving neighborhoods of concentrated poverty.
- Effective and sustainable funding from external sources, including foundations, is in place.
- District and/or funder initiatives that may be in conflict with the implementation of MBLT have been identified and are being addressed.

## 2. Ensuring Equitable Access to and Implementation of More and Better Learning Time

This second set of indicators focuses on the extent to which all students have the opportunity to access extended and reimagined learning opportunities. These indicators do not directly measure the impact of the initiative on students' readiness for college, career, and civic life, but they are vital in understanding how structures and strategies can facilitate (or impede) student opportunity, development, and agency and, ultimately, the effectiveness of MBLT.

More and better learning time means that students are provided the opportunity to extend their learning time (sometimes by adding time to the school day or year) and improve how their time is spent in school. The curriculum is broadened to provide students with access to an enriched and engaging curriculum (e.g., arts, off-site learning experiences, project-based learning, etc.). Teachers strive to create varied

learning environments that help meet the needs of all students. It is also important to identify and measure those activities and/or behaviors that can distract from students' time to learn and the initiative's long-term goals.

While MBLT is delivered in myriad ways, all designs require educators to move away from isolated classrooms and open their practice. Creating a collaborative environment and building relationships is challenging, and doing so effectively requires practice, training, and opportunity. As such, structured time for collaboration among grade-level teachers, across disciplines, and across grade levels is a must. A restructuring of how time is used can avert adding more work to a teacher's already full day through collaboration and partnerships within and across sectors to increase and maximize the capacity of the school system.

### STUDENT AGENCY

To what extent do students shape and determine how they spend their in-school and out-of school time?

#### Why does this matter?

Student agency requires students to think, question, pursue, and create their own learning and determine how they will use this knowledge to make sense and engage in the world. By developing critical understanding and skills, students become more competent learners in and out of school and are better prepared to succeed in school, postsecondary learning, the workplace, and life. Student agency provides students with opportunities to shape their schooling experience, feel connected to school life and community, and develop positive and caring relationships with all members of the school and community.

#### What are some possible ways to measure this indicator?

- Students have access to MBLT schools with curriculum and structures that reflect and are responsive to their lives and interests.
- Students value the knowledge and skills that they are working to acquire and find them relevant and interesting.
- Students are motivated to engage in their learning and believe that their efforts will pay off.
- Students believe they can achieve their goals.
- Students feel confident and safe to explore new things and ask questions.
- Students have the opportunity to apply new understandings to different contexts.

STUDENT/SCHOOL LEVEL	<p><b>SCHOOL RELATIONSHIPS</b></p> <hr/> <p>To what extent do students have the opportunity to develop relationships with teachers and other caring adults?</p> <p><b>Why does this matter?</b></p> <p>Positive adult role models and relationships can have a lasting impact on youth by increasing their trust and willingness to explore new topics, engaging them in their learning, and increasing their support system. Unfortunately, many under-served youth feel that teachers and other adults don't care about them, and they lack access to mentorship opportunities often available to more affluent students. It's important to provide all students with access to positive adult role models who can respond to their academic and social needs.</p> <p><b>What are some possible ways to measure this indicator?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students feel that teachers and other caring adults know and respond to their individualized academic and socio-emotional needs.</li> <li>• Students have access to mentorship opportunities (within or outside of the school).</li> <li>• Students feel that mentors work to increase their knowledge of career and college preparation and opportunities.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>ACCESS TO MORE TIME</b></p> <hr/> <p>To what extent do schools expand learning time and opportunities to ensure student success?</p> <p><b>Why does this matter?</b></p> <p>There is an unequal and growing gap in students' access to expanded learning time and opportunity. Students from affluent families often benefit from expanded learning time opportunities (e.g., music lessons, summer camps, travel, paid tutors), while students from less-affluent families do not have similar opportunities. Expanded learning opportunities can enrich a student's learning and development and provide a productive environment for more hours of the day, or more days of the year. The traditional school calendar is a relic of the agrarian age; expanding the school calendar can increase students' educational opportunities and help move our school system into the twenty-first century.</p> <p><b>What are some possible ways to measure this indicator?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is evidence that learning time supports MBLT goals through the following measures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Number of days students are in school per year</li> <li>– Number of hours in the school day</li> <li>– Number of hours spent in math and reading per day</li> <li>– Number of hours spent in electives and non-traditional experiences per week</li> <li>– Number of hours spent in after- or before-school activities per week</li> <li>– Number of hours (per week) spent in intervention or acceleration activities</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
SCHOOL LEVEL	<p><b>ACCESS TO BETTER TIME</b></p> <hr/> <p>To what extent is time used to provide students with an opportunity to experience a broad range of teaching and learning?</p> <p><b>Why does this matter?</b></p> <p>Additional learning time is effective only if that time is well spent. Broadening the curriculum to include an array of learning opportunities (beyond those academic areas that are subject to accountability assessments) and the use of a variety of pedagogies and curriculums that meet the needs of students is key to the MBLT initiative. Time well spent can improve learning conditions and academic outcomes for students.</p> <p><b>What are some possible ways to measure this indicator?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence exists of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Teacher-centered learning</li> <li>– Student-centered learning</li> <li>– Relevant non-instructional tasks</li> <li>– Project-based learning</li> <li>– Opportunities for self-directed learning</li> <li>– Individualized support/remediation/tutoring</li> <li>– A culturally relevant curriculum</li> <li>– A broader curriculum (arts, science, physical education, history, etc.)</li> <li>– Work-based learning opportunities</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## IDENTIFYING & MINIMIZING TIME DISTRACTORS

To what extent does the school work to minimize the amount of learning time lost during each school day, week, and year?

### Why does this matter?

Expanding and improving students' learning time and opportunity means addressing those policies, practices, and structures that can distract teachers and students from teaching and learning. For example, to what extent is learning time lost to discipline policies and practices such as suspensions and expulsions? Other aspects of the school day that can be improved to allow for more and better learning time include minimizing transitions between classes, ensuring that students are accurately scheduled in appropriate classes, and minimizing school closures.

### What are some possible ways to measure this indicator?

- School closures are minimized.
- Disparities by subgroups in retentions, suspensions, and expulsion rates decrease.
- Transitions within and between classes are minimized.
- Mis-scheduling of students decreases.

## TEACHER ENGAGEMENT & SATISFACTION

To what extent do teachers demonstrate engagement in their students' learning and satisfaction with MBLT implementation?

### Why does this matter?

An empowering, satisfying work environment for teachers can translate into an enriching, successful learning environment for students. Schools that provide opportunities for teachers to continue developing their craft, contribute to their school as partners, and hear and respond to the recommendations and critiques of colleagues can increase their satisfaction (and hence, minimize teacher mobility and absenteeism). Examining the causes for teacher departures from the school (e.g., exit interviews) and taking action in remedying any recurring problems at the school can increase learning time.

### What are some possible ways to measure this indicator?

- Teachers support different staffing and work-day approaches.
- Teachers are involved in designing and implementing MBLT.
- Teacher mobility rates are low.
- Teacher retention rates are high.
- Teacher attendance rates are high.

## COLLABORATION

To what extent do teachers and community educators have the opportunity to collaborate with colleagues?

### Why does this matter?

Compensated, scheduled time for teachers and educators to collaborate is key to keeping lessons interesting, relevant, and dynamic for students. Time for collaboration allows teachers to integrate subject areas and plan cross-curricular projects. Further, time for collaboration provides an opportunity for teachers to learn from each other, build trust and respect, and work together to identify students' needs and strategies to meet those needs. Extending this collaboration time to other professionals, stakeholders, and allies provides teachers with opportunities to keep their pedagogy current and useful to their students' communities.

### What are some possible ways to measure this indicator?

- The master schedule ensures collaborative planning time and student data analysis per week among:
  - Grade-level teachers within the school
  - Content-area teachers within the school
  - Teachers with similar interests
  - Professionals, experts, community partners, and MBLT providers outside of the classroom or school
- There is evidence of a culture of trust and shared responsibility among faculty.

<b>SCHOOL LEVEL</b>	<p><b>INCLUSIVITY &amp; PERSISTENCE</b></p> <hr/> <p>To what extent do schools provide all students with the services and support they need to ensure student growth, success, and persistence?</p> <p><b>Why does this matter?</b>  All students, regardless of income, race, language, or ability must have access to more and better learning time opportunities. The design of MBLT approaches and strategies must guarantee the inclusion of all groups and monitor their success and persistence in these programs. Ensuring the success of all students requires school partners to work together to document the progress of students and identify necessary resources or modifications that could improve outcomes.</p> <p><b>What are some possible ways to measure this indicator?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student data is analyzed by subgroup in the MBLT initiative, including disaggregating data by race, gender, English language learner status, and special education status.</li> <li>• Partners work with schools and use data to identify needed services.</li> <li>• The following data is analyzed by subgroups (race, socio-economic status, language, immigration status, etc.): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Attendance rates</li> <li>– Four-year graduation rates</li> <li>– Dropout rates</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>SYSTEM LEVEL</b>	<p><b>SUPPORT SERVICES</b></p> <hr/> <p>How and to what extent do schools, districts, and community partners work together to provide students with quality services and programs that support their learning needs and school experience?</p> <p><b>Why does this matter?</b>  In line with MBLT’s whole-school/every-child approach, support services are key to ensuring that MBLT is implemented successfully. Support services that address the needs of all students, especially those from underserved communities, are best achieved through strong, high-quality relationships between schools and community organizations.</p> <p><b>What are some possible ways to measure this indicator?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The following services are in place at the school site and there is evidence that students from the highest-need sub-groups are accessing the services: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Mental health services</li> <li>– Health/wellness programs</li> <li>– Easily available, nutritious meals</li> <li>– Transportation services</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

### 3. Preparing Students for College, Career, and Civic Life

In our twenty-first-century society, it is critical that students develop a broad range of academic, social-emotional, and professional skills. While we have become quite familiar with measures of academic attainment such as students' grades, course enrollments, and test scores, it is equally important to identify and measure students' ability to use a range of skills and behaviors to solve problems. These important skills (often referred to as soft skills, social-emotional skills, character skills, or noncognitive skills) are essential for success in college, career, and civic life. Yet, the acquisition of these skills cannot be assessed by standardized achievement tests alone. Clearly, a shift to preparing students for life after high school requires a corresponding shift in how we assess students' learning and their attainment of critical skills.

In addition to students' acquisition of critical knowledge, skills, and abilities, it is also important to measure the extent to which students are engaged in and in charge of their learning and behaviors both in and out of school. Possible

measures of engagement could include school attendance, as well as students' participation in and completion of a project or activity that demonstrates deep engagement in an interest area. Behaviors and practices include students' engagement in activities that safeguard their health and well-being, such as spending after-school hours in an adult supervised environment and making good choices regarding health and nutritional practices.

Another crucial aspect of the indicators in this section is that they measure the extent to which students are gaining the skills and knowledge they need to positively impact their communities: the acquisition of leadership and relationship-building skills, an awareness of issues that impact their communities, and a belief that they can take action.

The indicators that follow aim to ensure that all students are progressing toward responsible adulthood and preparation for college, career, and civic life.

#### STUDENT ACADEMIC KNOWLEDGE

To what extent are students acquiring and applying the knowledge they need for future success in college and career?

##### Why does this matter?

Course completion, GPA, college knowledge, and college-going rates should be measured alongside standardized test scores to determine acquisition of critical content knowledge. All of these measures should be calculated by school, district, and subgroup to ensure that all students are being equally prepared for college and careers.

##### What are some possible ways to measure this indicator?

- Students understand postsecondary requirements and acquire the knowledge they need to navigate their path toward their postsecondary goals.
- Students complete college prep requirements and/or a comprehensive curriculum that includes arts, the sciences, and history along with English and math.
- Students are on track for high school graduation.
- Students achieve a grade point average that meets graduation and college entrance requirements.
- Students demonstrate mastery of Common Core State Standards (CCSS) on CCSS-based assessments.
- Benchmark assessments take place throughout the year.
- Students register for and complete postsecondary entrance examinations (e.g., PSAT, SAT, ACT).

STUDENT LEVEL

## SKILLS & ABILITIES

To what extent are students acquiring the twenty-first-century skills required for success in school, career, and civic life?

### Why does this matter?

Preparing all students to successfully transition from K–12 to postsecondary institutions, careers, and civic life is the goal of the MBLT initiative. In addition to acquiring content knowledge, students need to be able to work and share ideas with others, establish and maintain positive relationships, lead, think creatively, problem-solve, use and develop information and technology, make responsible decisions, and set and achieve positive goals for themselves. Students need these skills and abilities to be able to apply their knowledge and continue their learning beyond high school graduation.

### What are some possible ways to measure this indicator?

- Students demonstrate mastery of the following:
  - Communication skills
  - Leadership skills
  - Ability to work collaboratively
  - Relationship building
  - Creative expression
  - Technology skills
  - Information literacy
  - Civic involvement
  - Common Core standards
  - Social-emotional learning

## STUDENT ENGAGED LEARNING

To what extent are students engaged in their learning within and outside of school?

### Why does this matter?

The extent to which students feel positive about their learning can shape their school experience and school success. Students' engagement and investment in their learning is impacted when education is relevant and students can see a connection between their learning and their lives. Students who are engaged in their learning demonstrate persistence, curiosity, and improved student outcomes (as measured by attendance rates, an exploration of non-assigned learning opportunities, and involvement in activities that allow for a deep exploration in an area of interest).

### What are some possible ways to measure this indicator?

- Students attain high attendance rates.
- Students complete “deep engagement” performance or exhibition.
- Students participate in a range of learning opportunities that take place in various spaces and times (off- and on-campus; before and after school).
- Non-assigned learning opportunities are pursued by students.
- Students persist to high school graduation.

## STUDENT HEALTH & WELLNESS

Are students engaged in activities and behaviors that ensure their health and well-being?

### Why does this matter?

Student health and wellness in and out of school have a direct impact on students' academic and social outcomes. Students in communities of high poverty have more need for, but significantly less access to medical, mental health, and social services. Providing these services in schools, often through partnerships with health organizations, gives students the opportunity to learn about health and nutritional practices and gain access to health services; it also reduces absenteeism. Positive adult relationships and time spent in adult-supervised environments can also help shape well-being.

### What are some possible ways to measure this indicator?

- Students spend time in after-school hours in adult-supervised environments.
- Students learn general health practices.
- Nutritional practices are taught at school.
- Drug prevention and youth intervention programs are available, accessible, and viewed as safe spaces.
- Students have increased or streamlined access to mental health, medical, and social services.
- Students are rarely absent.

## CIVIC LIFE

To what extent are students building the knowledge and skills they need to positively shape their communities? How are they effecting social change in their communities?

### Why does this matter?

While it is important for schools to prepare students for success in college and the workplace, schools also need to ensure that they prepare students for positive civic contributions. This means that students must acquire the skills that allow them to shape and participate in the life of their community.

### What are some possible ways to measure this indicator?

- There is evidence that the curriculum increases a critical understanding of issues that impact the community.
- Students are provided an opportunity to identify and solve a problem in their community.
- Youth opportunities for positive action are developed, encouraged, and supported.
- Students feel they can shape the school environment.
- There is evidence that youth are acquiring the following:
  - Leadership skills
  - Collaboration skills
  - Ability to build relationships



## 4. Scaling Up: Making More and Better Learning Time the “New Normal”

The final set of indicators takes a closer look at the issue of scalability and the extent to which these designs can contribute to the spread of adoption. In keeping with Coburn’s (2003) conceptualization of scale, this final set of indicators highlights measures that signal a shift and spread in the norms, principles, and beliefs that undergird more and better learning time and identify it as a lever for providing all students with improved educational opportunities. Possible

measures of widespread adoption include the identification and implementation of MBLT approaches, as well as increased references to and greater understanding of the initiative (through media attention and research).

This final set of indicators aims to understand the extent to which communities, teachers, schools, and districts are working toward making more and better learning time the “new normal” in American public schools.

SYSTEM LEVEL	<p><b>STRONG &amp; SUSTAINABLE MBLT ECOSYSTEM</b></p> <p>Are viable MBLT ecosystems present?</p> <p><b>Why does this matter?</b></p> <p>To reach the systemic goal of the MBLT initiative, it is critical that rich learning opportunities are made available to all students. This indicator measures the breadth of MBLT implementation across the entire ecosystem, focusing on the number of schools and districts working toward the implementation of MBLT approaches and ensuring that students across the system graduate prepared to succeed in college, career, and civic life.</p> <p><b>What are some possible ways to measure this indicator?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A growing number of schools and districts are implementing sustainable MBLT approaches.</li> <li>• A growing number of school partners such as community-based organizations, outreach college programs, businesses and industries, city-sponsored community programs, and colleges and universities support implementation of MBLT across districts.</li> <li>• There is growing fiscal support for MBLT (through the reallocation of funds and/or other investments such as foundation support).</li> <li>• A growing number of research partners are in place, or a growing number of research projects focused on MBLT are published or under way.</li> <li>• There are a growing number of media, policy, and public references to more and better learning time.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>WIDESPREAD ADOPTION</b></p> <p>Is there evidence of MBLT becoming the “new normal” across systems?</p> <p><b>Why does this matter?</b></p> <p>It is important that sustainable approaches are documented, communicated, and scaled up in a way that the goal of systemic equity is reached. Creating districtwide, statewide, or nationwide change does not happen by accident – rather, it requires intentional effort, collective ownership, communication, and changes to policy structures. This indicator attempts to capture the depth and coherence of MBLT work across governance levels and sectors.</p> <p><b>What are some possible ways to measure this indicator?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Successful MBLT approaches are identified and studied, and findings are made accessible.</li> <li>• There is evidence of MBLT programs becoming institutionalized across a district or state education system (rather than specialized at one site).</li> <li>• MBLT policies that reduce barriers to districtwide, statewide, or federal implementation are formulated, developed, and implemented.</li> <li>• Cross-sector collaborations create coherency and shared ownership across a district, state, or the nation.</li> </ul>



## Conclusion

**T**he goal of the MBLT indicators framework is to support the identification and development of scalable designs that can provide students with more and better learning time. To that end, the indicators outlined in this report measure changes in the systems and supports surrounding schools and students alongside changes in student and school outcomes.

Staying true to Coburn's (2003) ideas on scale, the indicators pay close attention to issues of sustainability and the extent to which the design directly impacts change in the classroom and student learning. This framework is also attentive to the extent to which students, families, educators, and community partners share ownership of the initiative and adopt new norms, principles, and beliefs that support implementation of more and better learning time.

This framework is not the first step or the last step in using time as a lever to improve schools for all students. Educators, school designers, and community organizations have been engaged in this work for years. Our hope is that the framework can serve as a useful tool and resource to advance this work, engage those interested in implementing MBLT designs in their communities, and help ensure equity and excellence across schools.



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