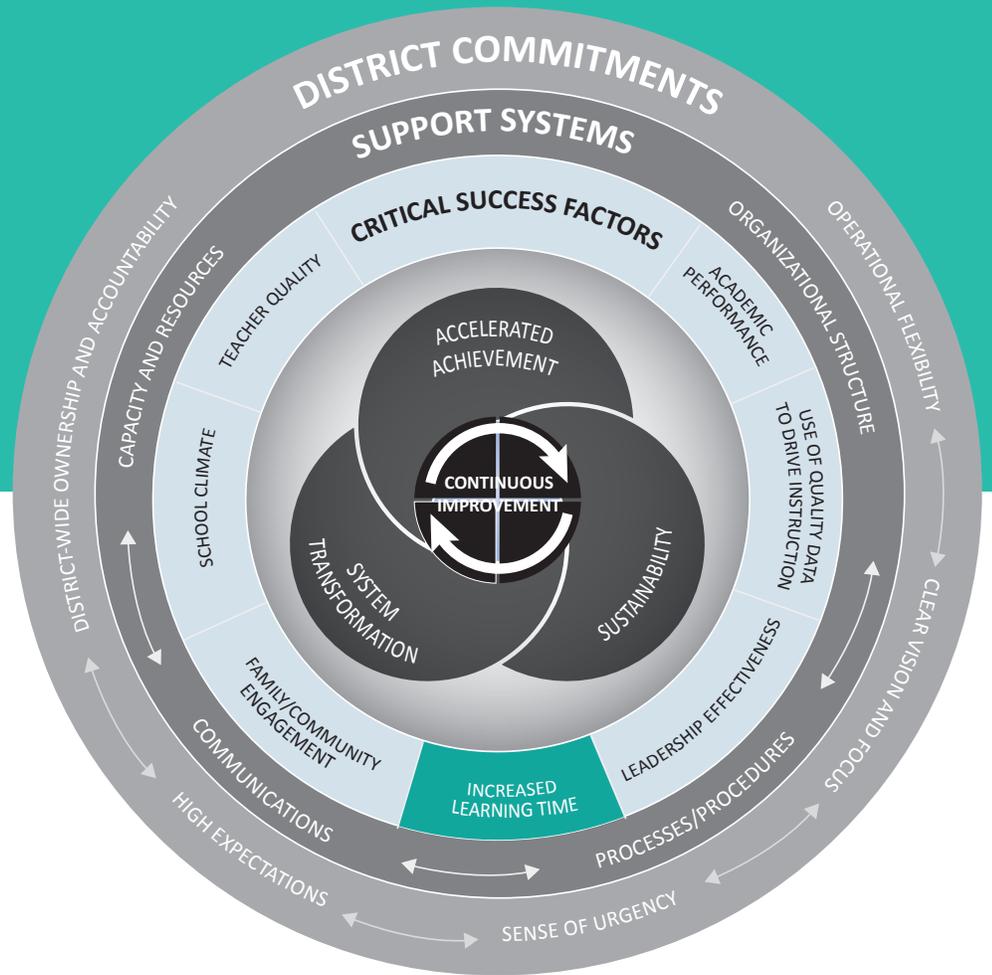


# CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTOR (CSF) PLANNING GUIDE

## INCREASED LEARNING TIME



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## CSF PLANNING GUIDES ARE INTENDED TO

- Present supporting research that strengthens your knowledge and understanding of the CSF.
- Provide examples of processes and/or strategies to support your implementation of the Texas Accountability and Intervention Strategies (TAIS) framework to strengthen the CSFs on your campus.
- Assist with strategies to determine your strengths and weaknesses for each CSF.
- Identify specific next steps to implement on your campus.

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## BEFORE GETTING STARTED

- If you are working as a group, designate someone to take notes during the discussions to collect ideas and thoughts for your next steps.
- Assign an individual to lead the action plan for increasing learning time.
- Use the activities in the Next Steps section to gather data, identify problems, and determine root causes.

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## AFTER REVIEWING THIS GUIDE, RESPOND TO THE FOLLOWING

- What new knowledge do I have about this CSF, and how does this information influence my thinking?
- In what ways are the practices at my district/school aligned with strengthening this CSF?
- What do we want to improve, and what plan of action is needed to improve it?

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## CALL TO ACTION

- Organize an instructional leadership team meeting.
- To understand the team's current understanding of this CSF, ask team members what they know about it and record their responses.
- Read this guide using a jigsaw or other text discussion protocol.
- Respond to questions or discussion prompts listed throughout the guide.
- Determine how you want to initiate learning more about the CSF in relation to the TAIS framework. For instance, you could assign team members to read and facilitate the discussions for the different sections of this guide.
- Utilize the TAIS Guidance Documents at [www.tcdss.net](http://www.tcdss.net) as a resource. They include details and specifics for the process.

# INCREASED LEARNING TIME

The TAIS framework for school improvement states: *Research promotes a three-pronged approach to increased learning time that includes the following elements: (a) increased academic learning time, (b) increased enrichment activities, and (c) increased teacher collaboration and professional development. Increased learning time necessitates strategies that maximize the number of sustained, engaging instructional minutes--the result of which is "higher academic achievement, especially for disadvantaged students."<sup>2,3</sup> To be utilized successfully, increased learning time must be applied strategically. Effective strategies include providing a rigorous, well-rounded education that prepares students for college, thus improving teacher training; improving and aligning the curriculum; reducing distractions, year-round schedules, and block scheduling; using the time for teachers to thoroughly analyze and respond to data; and setting aside time to coach and develop teachers in ways that continuously strengthen their instructional practices.*

"Common sense tells us that when it comes to learning, time matters. An individual simply cannot become more proficient in any given area without committing a certain amount of time to grasping new content, practicing and honing skills, and then applying knowledge and skills to realizing specific aims. Think of the chess master who plays match after match to improve his game or the scientist who toils long hours in her laboratory to unlock the mysteries of an intricate phenomenon. For them, becoming more adept in their chosen field is the result, in large part, of the time they invest."<sup>1</sup>

The past decades have witnessed the evolution of the standards movement from a focus on basic graduation requirements to a focus on robust curriculum efforts, standardized testing, new standards for teacher qualifications, and an emphasis on monitoring student learning. The national concern on the performance of public schools has triggered a growing interest in changing traditional school practices to meet the demands of the new standards. Mandates and standards from the federal and state levels are intensifying the pressures on schools for all students to learn at a high level.

Education policy has shifted. Now school and district leaders are expected to place less emphasis on personnel management and more on accountability and responsibility for student academic performance. These new expectations have transformed education. As noted by Levine, "This turns the world of schooling upside down: Universal standards

replace universal processes; learning becomes more important than instruction; and the student takes center stage from the teacher.”<sup>4</sup> In turn, these pressures are prompting schools and districts to consider how schools are organized and how to change policies and procedures to increase student achievement.<sup>5</sup>

As a result, learning time is now viewed in new ways and with new acronyms: extended learning opportunities (ELO), out of school time (OST), extended learning time (ELT) and increased learning time (ILT). Regardless of the acronym, the assertion behind extended learning time is simple: to improve student learning, you need to increase learning time for students and teachers.

School leaders may relate to Michael Altshuler, a motivational speaker, who said, “The bad news is time flies. The good news is you’re the pilot.” As a school leader, you are indeed flying the plane.

This planning guide addresses increasing learning time in these seven sections:

- Time as a focus for reform
- Research review
- Promising practices
- Utilizing time as a reform tool
- Assessing effectiveness
- Reflection
- Next steps

Although the focus of this document is increasing learning time, the seven CSFs overlap and intermingle as a school or district moves toward continuous improvement. For example, effective use of quality data is vital for determining how time is utilized. Effective leadership and teacher quality significantly influence the effectiveness of learning time, resulting in improving academic performance. A deeper understanding of the influence of each CSF will increase your awareness of how these factors work together.

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## SECTION 1

### TIME AS A FOCUS FOR REFORM

There is a growing body of research that supports what seems like common sense to most educators: the more time students spend on a topic, the more learning occurs. Well before *A Nation at Risk* was published in 1983, there was evidence that the traditional school calendar did not meet the needs of impoverished children.<sup>6</sup> There has been a rising interest nationwide in expanding learning time, particularly in schools with high rates of children living in poverty. Elena Silva identifies the current school calendar “as antiquated and limiting in providing the depth of learning students need to raise their level of achievement.”<sup>7</sup> In the 1960s, most US schools followed a schedule of 170–180 days and 6 ½ hours. The majority of schools adhere to this conventional schedule today. Children living in poverty often begin school with learning gaps that only widen over the years. According to Silva and Headden, we should not be surprised by the growing achievement gaps; the current design of the calendar almost guarantees a gap.<sup>8</sup>

Public school and district data have increased concerns about educational equity and accountability. Newer types of external accountability data (e.g., campus ratings by the state, graduation rates aligned to National Center for Educational Statistics standards and NCLB performance data) has furthered calls for change. A 1994 federal report, “Prisoners of Time,” triggered several learning time reform initiatives.<sup>9</sup> But these random efforts, adding tutoring time or extending time for various subjects, yielded little data that showed any difference had been made.

In 2009, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) brought “more time for learning” to the front of the national education reform agenda again. Increased learning time became an eligibility requirement for certain federal grants. Several states and cities are instituting different models for expanding time as a result. Although adding learning time appears to be simple, the relationship between time and learning is complex. Paramount to the time and learning relationship is addressing the following: quality (what we do with time) as well as quantity (how much time) and recognizing the educational and the political ramifications of using time as a reform tool.

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### CALL TO ACTION

Consider and discuss these questions:

- How can schools provide learning opportunities for children in poverty that replicate the experiences more privileged children receive?

## SECTION 2

### RESEARCH REVIEW

- How can time be used differently to serve the needs of impoverished students?
- Why are most states, districts, and schools resistant to changing school calendars?

The literature makes clear that just adding time will not make a difference in student learning.<sup>10</sup> Several researchers note that adding time only makes a difference if it is used to engage students in academic learning aligned to their needs. This section will highlight key research on efforts aimed at increasing both the quality and the quantity of learning time.

There is abundant research to support extended learning time. The following highlight the key research findings with the references provided for further examination.

- Targeting low-income students is the most cost-effective and beneficial focus for time reform. These students are in need of additional learning opportunities. Additionally, wealthy parents do not favor extended time in schools as do low-income parents.<sup>11</sup>
- A study of charter schools identified that 300 hours of additional instructional time and high-dosage tutoring were strong predictors for advancing student achievement.<sup>12</sup>
- Data from several studies demonstrated that the more time spent in reading and math classes, the higher the scores; Increased time spent engaged in learning predicted 36 percent of test score variance among the lowest performers.<sup>13</sup>
- Through focus groups, teachers in schools that extended learning time identified the following benefits:
  - Coverage of more material and examining topics in greater depth
  - Completing, reinforcing, and extending lessons
  - Setting context and repeating content, if necessary
  - Answering students' questions
  - Discussing and reflecting on lessons<sup>14</sup>

Despite the limitation on research to measure the effect of increasing time for learning, the examples above, as well as other studies, provide information that adding time has the potential to advance student learning.<sup>15, 16</sup>

Research and practice specify that adding time can benefit students if the following are in place:

- More time devoted to enrichment classes and activities that enhance students' educational experiences and engagement in school.
- More dedicated time for teacher collaboration and job-embedded professional development that enable educators to strengthen instruction and develop a shared commitment to high expectations. (Details are provided for increasing teacher learning time in the following CSFs resource planning guides: Increase Leadership Effectiveness, Increase Teacher Quality and Increase the Use of Quality Data to Drive Instruction.)

## SECTION 3

### PROMISING PRACTICES

The following examples, taken from Wallace Foundation National Forum's *Reimagining the School Day: More Time for Learning*, illustrate how several schools are increasing learning time in innovative ways:<sup>17</sup>

#### THE FIFTH QUARTER

By Memorial Day, most public school students are starting to wrap up their studies and looking forward to a summer break that can stretch beyond Labor Day. Not so in Cincinnati. To arrest learning loss and provide a seamless transition from one grade to the next, the school district has added four weeks to the school year. The Fifth Quarter, as the bonus time is known, runs for a full school day, from 7:45 a.m. to 2:15 p.m., but it's a very different kind of day. In the morning, students focus on core subjects like reading, language arts and math. The afternoon brings enrichment programs including art, music and environmental education, as well as activities that reinforce reading and math. The schools look to the community to help program the afternoons, often with outdoor activities like exploring neighborhoods or working in a community garden.

Cincinnati is jump-starting students on the other end of summer, too: Students in the district's four lowest-performing schools head back to the classrooms two weeks early in August. Teachers are paid extra for the work, and before school ends in June students are given plenty of reminders of the schedule, including T-shirts. "We have tried every gimmick we could think of to get them to show up," Cincinnati Public Schools Superintendent Mary Ronan said. By September, students are ready to go and already familiar with their teachers and with the goals they are expected to reach.

The Fifth Quarter program is taking place at 16 low-performing schools and unlike summer school, it isn't viewed as remediation. Rather, it's seen as a boost to learning, even an academic acceleration. Attendance, though voluntary, is strongly encouraged.

The Fifth Quarter was originally funded by the federal Title I program for high-poverty schools as well as by other federal, state and local programs, and donations from local businesses and community groups such as the United Way. Government funds pay for the morning program, and the private groups pay for the afternoon. In summer 2011, private funds were expected to pay for 40 percent of the program.

Although the district is still evaluating the Fifth Quarter, attendance numbers so far are encouraging. In recent years, generally no more than 750 students signed up for traditional summer school, Ronan said. Last year, the Fifth Quarter attracted 2,000 students.

#### SCHOOL OF ONE

Time has long been a constant in K-12 schools. Most follow a schedule that was designed 100 years ago and measures progress by the hours sitting in a classroom. An innovative middle school math program in New York City turns this concept on its head, making time a variable and pacing instruction around students' individual progress. At the School of One, each student gets his or her own lesson plan. Students are assessed every day, and based on the results, they either move ahead or spend more time mastering what they need to. Lessons are tailored to their strengths, weaknesses, interests and learning styles.

Joel Rose, the program's former CEO who is now leading an independent effort to spread the concept nationally, offers an example of how the concept works. Students report to a big open math lab and check for their names on overhead monitors that look like the screens displaying flight schedules at the airport. They then go to one of about 15 different stations, with locally inspired names like "Statue of Liberty" or "Staten Island" where, based on their individual progress, they might engage one-on-one with a teacher, do a worksheet, play a computer math game or be tutored in a group.

School of One's built-in efficiency results in costs that are not necessarily higher than a traditional classroom's. Now operating in three schools, the program is funded by nearly a dozen private and government funders, including a \$5 million Investing in Innovation grant from the United States Department of Education. A small 2010 evaluation comparing students who participated in School of One's after-school and in-school programs with those who did not, found that, on average, School of One students "significantly" outperformed the others.

#### BOOKS AND CYBERSPACE: UNCHAINING LEARNING FROM TRADITIONAL SCHEDULES

Not all designs for expanded learning are about stretching the school year and school day. Some involve learning unchained from scheduling or place. One such effort is Project READS (Reading Enhances Achievement During the Summer), which supplies disadvantaged elementary school children with summer reading books matched to their reading level and interests, along with end-of-the-school-year reading help from their teachers, with an emphasis on parental involvement and other features. Early research on this relatively low-cost program, developed at Harvard University, suggests it can help stave off summer learning loss in reading.

Digital technology holds promise as well. New York's pioneering School of One, now aiming for expansion with a \$5 million federal grant, customizes math instruction around students' individual progress. Students are assessed with a short online quiz every day, and based on the results and other factors, such as how individual students learn best, they either move ahead or are taught the same content the next day with a different method. They may be directed to engage one-on-one with a teacher, do a worksheet, play

a computer math game or be tutored in a group. “This is about changing what teaching looks like and what learning looks like,” said School of One founder Joel Rose, who is now leading a national organization to replicate the concept. “It’s about changing the whole design of delivery.”

Public television, long a player in education, has been expanding its reach by making the most of the latest technology. Ted Libbey of the PBS Foundation said the organization is creating games, iPad applications and other after-school-friendly materials that include videos, like one of former Beatle Ringo Starr offering a short history of drumming.

Whether they rely on old-fashioned books or the newest apps, expanded-time programs can rise or fall based on the content of their materials, so program leaders must choose their teaching tools well. One key to Project READS, for example, is the distribution of books that kids genuinely like to read.

Forum participants said that digital content in particular often disappoints, amounting to little more than textbooks put online. “We need to be more student-centered,” said Randy Barth, CEO of THINK Together, a leading California after-school program provider. “The power of technology is to flip that.” How do you decide on content? How do you match content to standards? And how do you know how well it’s working? These are all questions awaiting answers.

Gaberieli identifies ten strategies essential for successfully expanding learning time, particularly for students of poverty:<sup>18</sup>

1. Allot a sufficiently large amount of expanded time.
2. Integrate expanded time into a redesigned overall schedule.
3. Allocate expanded time to a balanced program.
4. Prioritize and focus expanded time.
5. Change the schedule for all students.
6. Engage in a school-wide planning process.
7. Focus on strengthening core instruction and personalizing learning.
8. Offer engaging enrichment and opportunities for both exposure and mastery.
9. Promote effective teacher collaboration and professional development.
10. Change student and teacher beliefs and behaviors.

For additional information, visit the National Center on Time and Learning at [www.timeandlearning.org](http://www.timeandlearning.org). The site offers information to bolster learning for school leaders, including videos, articles, school profiles, tools, and publications for assisting K–12 schools.

## SECTION 4

### UTILIZING TIME AS A REFORM TOOL

#### CALL TO ACTION

Organize the key stakeholders, teacher leaders, parents, and community members and use the following table to guide discussion, reflection, and thoughtful decision making. (Table retrieved July 23, 2013 from “Extended Learning and Time,” [www.mass2020.org](http://www.mass2020.org).)<sup>19</sup>

<p><b>HOW IS TIME CURRENTLY USED?</b></p>	<p>One common thread in increased learning time is that time in and of itself is not the solution. More time does not necessarily lead to more learning. What the program does with the time is the critical variable. This means that conversations about extended learning time should start with an introspective look at how time is used currently. (For example, how much time do students spend on tasks? How much time is spent on non instructional activities?)</p>
<p><b>WHAT DO STAKEHOLDERS THINK ABOUT INCREASING LEARNING TIME?</b></p>	<p>Different communities have different needs and preferences when it comes to increased learning time. National data suggests there are dramatic differences in what families from diverse income brackets want and need from extended learning time programs, particularly after school. Before implementing an extended learning time program, aim to learn more about what your school community needs/prefers by soliciting stakeholder feedback through surveys and focus groups.</p>
<p><b>WHAT IS THE DESIRED OUTCOME?</b></p>	<p>Before saying yes to increased learning time and starting program design, be sure the district’s goals and outcomes are clear. Why is increasing learning time a good fit for your school or district? What outcomes do you expect? Based on these goals and outcomes, what mix of students should participate? What metrics will be used to evaluate success?</p>

Frequently, cost is an obstacle for schools seeking to increase learning time. If this is the case for your school, consider exploring how new partnerships, technologies, and other resources might help overcome cost concerns. Some schools have managed to finance increased learning time initiatives by utilizing community and institutional resources.<sup>20</sup> Consider funding sources such as Title I, 21st Century Community Learning Centers, health or juvenile justice funding, the Child Care and Development Fund, and AmeriCorps.

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## SECTION 5

### ASSESSING EFFECTIVENESS

It is important to gather and document reliable information about innovative uses of time—and to learn from it. When schools increase learning time, they are often involved in other reform efforts. As a result, isolating the impact of extended learning time can be difficult. However, decades of research show that well-implemented and well-structured initiatives to increase learning time can deliver positive outcomes. Effective extended learning time programs have been shown to decrease the learning loss students might otherwise experience over the summer or after extended breaks and impact attitude and attendance.<sup>20, 21</sup>

A lukewarm response to increasing learning time may be due in part to the fact that some studies measuring its effectiveness have lacked control groups. This also makes it complicated to link positive outcomes specifically to extended learning time. These challenges do not mean that efforts to increase learning time should be abandoned, only that they should be thoughtfully planned, tailored to the needs of the students, and include metrics for measuring success built-in.

A purposeful focus at the school and district level for tracking time and assessing results could provide data on the effect of increased learning time. At the classroom level, teachers should analyze how time is spent on varying instructional methods and the corresponding academic results. This analysis will help identify the strengths and weaknesses in their pedagogy. Without explicit focus connecting the extended learning time to improvements in student learning, it will be difficult to establish causality.

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## SECTION 6

### REFLECTION

**“What matters most are those catalytic moments when students are absorbed in instructional activities that are adequately challenging, yet allow them to experience success. Only when time is used more effectively will adding more of it begin to result in improved learning outcomes.”<sup>22</sup>**

Consider the quote above, the research review, and the various ways to assess and use time, then discuss the following questions to further your thinking about how you will use increased learning time as a tool for improving student academic progress and teacher effectiveness:

- What systems or processes does your school or district have for determining the optimal learning time for students and teachers? How does your district or campus monitor their effectiveness?
- Is data used to inform decisions around learning time, instructional planning, and enrichment activities? What data are collected?
- How is your school or district maximizing instructional time? How does your school or district ensure these efforts are achieving the desired results? What impact have the actions had on improving student achievement?
- What enrichment activities are available at your district/campus? (Enrichment activities include instruction and programming in subjects other than the four core academic subjects.) How does your school or district ensure these activities are producing results?
- What is your system or process for providing staff collaborative planning time? How does your school or district ensure actions are achieving the desired results?
- What does your school or district perceive as strengths in its systems or processes for increasing learning time?
- What opportunities do you see for increasing learning time at your school or district?

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## SECTION 7

### NEXT STEPS

The UCLA famed basketball coach John Wooden exclaimed, "If you don't have time to do it right, when will you have time to do it over?"

*Use the TAIS continuous improvement process to identify problem statements and root causes. Establish a team or identify an individual leader for this process. Use the notes taken throughout your review of this planning guide and refer back to the Calls to Action to guide the following steps:*

- Determine how much time is spent on academic instruction in a given school day and in a given class period. Use these time categories, as identified by Silva, to determine how time is used in schools:<sup>23</sup>
  - Allocated school time: Time students are required to be in school
  - Allocated class time: Time students are required to be in class
  - Instructional time: Time spent on academic instruction
  - Academic learning time: Time students are actively engaged in learning

- Determine how much time is lost to: classroom distractions, interruptions from announcements, ineffective classroom management, pacing problems, poor quality teaching, field trips unrelated to the curriculum, testing schedules, extracurricular activities, and other distractions.
- Identify how well teachers are able to cover the curriculum within existing time constraints. Classroom walkthrough data, meeting with teachers to gather information, and benchmark and state assessments could provide data to determine the time available to cover the curriculum. You should also determine if the curriculum is aligned with the TEKS.
- Establish whether problems stem from ineffective teaching or poor curriculum coverage relative to state standards. Classroom walkthrough data, meeting with teachers to gather information, PLC planning protocols, lesson planning templates, and benchmark and state assessments could provide data to determine the problem.
- Determine how much time teachers have to plan high-quality, rigorous lessons aligned to the state standards and how this time is structured. If PLCs are in place, what data determines if they are effective? Who provides support and guidance for the PLC meetings? What student learning data do teachers utilize to inform their lesson planning?
- Establish or refine the process for ensuring that all students arrive in the morning on time. Create or strengthen the procedures and interventions for students who are not attending school.
- Communicate clear expectations for ensuring that all teachers have efficient instructional procedures and expectations for beginning and ending class.

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## MAKING CONNECTIONS TO OTHER CSFS

- Improve Academic Performance
- Increase the Use of Quality Data to Drive Instruction
- Increase Leadership Effectiveness
- Increase Family/Community Engagement
- **Increase Learning Time**
- Improve School Climate
- Increase Teacher Quality

As you review each of the CSF resource guides, notice how they intermingle, interact, and blend together. When the organization increases learning time, other factors are involved. Data is used to determine quality of learning time. Increased learning time influences how teachers work together (teacher quality, school climate, and leadership effectiveness). These factors are critical to improving academic performance. Discuss other examples that show how each factor affects the others. For example, how might increasing learning time also increase parent and community involvement? As you go through the TAIS process and take action on each of the CSFs, realize that these factors always affect one another.

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