

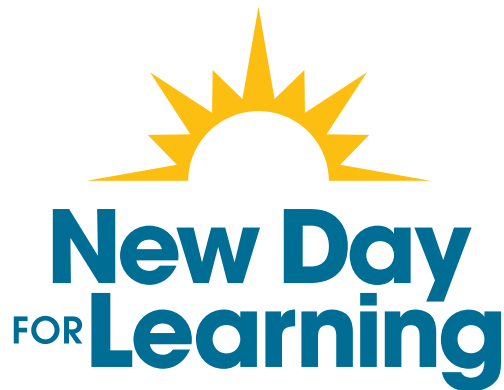
## Making the Case for *New Day for Learning*

Research Supporting Why We  
Must Act Now to Re-Imagine How,  
When and Where Students Learn

2009

Funded by the C.S. Mott Foundation





## **Making the Case for *New Day for Learning***

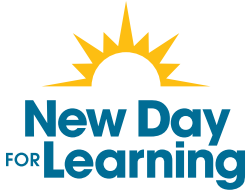
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In 2007, the *New Day for Learning* Advisory Board, funded by the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, released the publication *New Day for Learning* which seeks to re-imagine how, when and where young people learn.

This document outlines why creating *New Day for Learning* is critical by discussing the realities facing education today from a variety of viewpoints. It also looks at the economic impact of not engaging our students and failing to stem the dropout crisis, and examines research pointing to effective programs and ideas for how we can work together to create this *New Day* for all students, everywhere.

### **Elements of *New Day for Learning***

- Expands the definition of student success
- Uses research-based knowledge about how students learn best
- Integrates various learning approaches and places
- Fosters intentional collaboration across all sectors
- Provides new opportunities for leadership and professional development



## Today's Educational Reality

The achievement levels of American students lag behind those of students in the most competitive economies.

According to the 2006 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA),<sup>1</sup> U.S. students did not stack up well to the competition:

In science: the U.S. ranks 21<sup>st</sup> out of the 30 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries, down from 19<sup>th</sup> in 2003, and 14<sup>th</sup> in 2000.

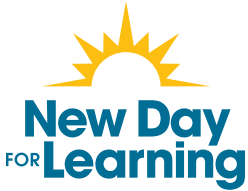
In math: the U.S. scores remained basically unchanged from 2003, though its ranking dropped to 25<sup>th</sup> (from 23<sup>rd</sup> in 2003, and 18<sup>th</sup> in 2000), indicating that other nations improved their performance.

Wealth-creation in an economy of ideas is derived far less than we imagine from the technological hardware and infrastructure, since eventually most nations, such as China, will make investments in large-scale infrastructure technologies. Rather, it is dependent upon the capacity of a nation to continually create content, or new forms of widely distributed expression, for which they will need to invest in creative human capital throughout the economy and not merely in gadgets and hardware.

## Gauging the Will for Change

Included below is research from a variety of different groups (business groups, think tanks, the government, etc.), which points to the need to look critically at how we educate our students and potentially a will to approach things differently. In addition, the Mott Foundation commissioned Peter D. Hart Research Associates to survey parents and policymakers to inform and guide their work on *New Day for Learning*. Conducted in 2007, the public opinion research project, which included both qualitative and quantitative components, found significant support for re-imagining how, when and where our young people learn.





## PARENTS

Parents and opinion leaders articulate a wide variety of educational goals for our students that go beyond core academics and college preparation.

Educational Goals	Critical or Important Goal
Providing a strong academic education that leads to success in college	94%
Developing critical thinking, problem-solving and teamwork skills	94%
Developing strong morals and ethics	93%
Learning practical skills that will help in the real world	92%
Becoming truly engaged and interested in the learning process	91%
Providing a well-rounded education which includes art, music, etc.	84%
Learning specific skills for a desired job or career	80%

In the national survey conducted by Peter D. Hart Research Associates,<sup>2</sup> parents rate several educational goals as equally or nearly as important as “providing a strong academic education that will lead to success in college.”

Nearly half of parents rate a strong academic education as an absolutely critical goal.

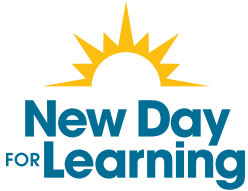
91 percent of parents believe that the education system should make problem-solving, teamwork and critical thinking as high a priority as reading, writing, math and science.

However, 54 percent of parents said programs that build these skills (problem-solving, critical thinking and teamwork) are either not available or available but difficult to afford.

Parents also point to other objectives, such as learning practical skills that will help in the real world, developing skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving and teamwork and becoming truly engaged and interested in the learning process as top-tier goals, as well.

Providing a well-rounded education that includes music and arts (37 percent) and learning job or career skills (31 percent), though certainly important to parents, fall on to a second tier.





Parents want to improve virtually every aspect of the educational system, including increasing the amount of:

- Project-based or hands-on learning (81 percent)
- Real world learning opportunities: internships, out-of-classroom learning (76 percent)

Specific to afterschool activities, parents see these programs as valuable opportunities for students to learn different things than they do during the school day, yet these programs are not readily available.

64 percent of parents see afterschool programs as an opportunity to let children try different activities, learn about different things and develop different types of skills than they get during the regular school day.

Only 14 percent of parents said there were plenty of educational and enrichment opportunities available.

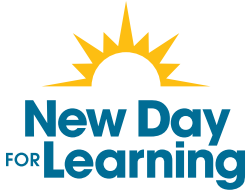
### EMPLOYERS

In a separate poll which surveyed 400 employers,<sup>3</sup> it is clear that employers and parents are on the same page. While the 3R's are still important for doing the job, employers cited applied skills as critical to success.

The Grades Are In	
Professionalism/Work Ethic	Deficient (70.3%)
Written Communications	Deficient (80.9%)
Teamwork/Collaboration	Adequate (60.9%)
Critical Thinking/Problem-Solving	Deficient (69.6%)

Our economy has gone through rapid change – going from the information age, to the knowledge economy, to conversations now of a creative economy. The question is do we have the people with the kinds of creative skills, the ability to work as teams, to continue to drive the economy around the world?





## EDUCATORS

In 2006, Public Agenda released a survey of educators which revealed optimism on behalf of affluent educators.<sup>4</sup> However, superintendents, principals and teachers in mainly-minority/low-income schools acknowledged serious problems with dropouts, school climate and low standards.

### Principals:

78 percent worry that too many of their students drop out

62 percent worry that too many pass through the system without learning

### Teachers:

28 percent are “very confident” that their students will learn the skills they need by the end of the year

40 percent believe their students will have the skills they need to succeed in college

For those students that do go on to college, according to a recent publication by Achieve:<sup>5</sup>

30 percent of first-year students in postsecondary education are required to take remedial courses

Faculty estimate 42 percent of first-year students in credit-bearing courses are academically unprepared

## STUDENTS

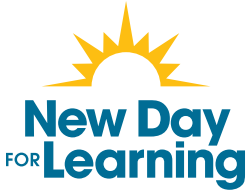
According to the abovementioned Achieve report, 40 to 45 percent of recent high school graduates report significant gaps in their skills, both in college and the workplace.

According to research released in 2007, disadvantaged students lose tremendous academic ground during the summer months compared to their more advantaged peers. Approximately “two-thirds of the academic achievement gap between disadvantaged youngsters and their more advantaged peers can be explained by what happens over the summer.”<sup>6</sup>

## Disengagement, Under-Performance and Dropping Out

What about those that do not graduate? Nationally, approximately 70 percent of students graduate from high school on time with a regular diploma, but little more than half of African-American and Hispanic students earn diplomas with their peers. In many states the difference between white and minority graduation rates is stunning; in several cases there is a gap of as much as 40 or 50 percentage points.<sup>7</sup>





The economic impact of not engaging these students and having them drop out of school is staggering. Research released in 2007 showed that among 20-year-olds in the U.S. today, more than 700,000 of them dropped out of high school.<sup>8</sup>

If we had engaged and retained just half of those students and guided them to graduation, the government would collect “\$45 billion via extra tax revenues and reduced costs of public health, of crime and justice, and in welfare payments” (Levin, Belfield, Muennig and Rouse).

According to *The Silent Epidemic*,<sup>9</sup> a report released by the Center for Civic Enterprises, the top reasons dropouts identify for leaving school are:

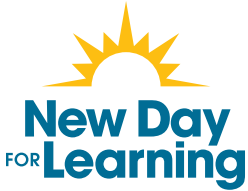
- Classes were not interesting
- Missed too many days and could not catch up
- Spent time with people not interested in school
- Had too much freedom and not enough rules
- Was failing school

The National Dropout Prevention Center<sup>10</sup> has identified 15 effective strategies that have the most positive impact on the dropout rate. These strategies have been implemented successfully at all education levels and environments throughout the nation. Some of the strategies include:

- Active Learning
- Professional Development
- After-School Opportunities
- Service-Learning
- Mentoring/Tutoring
- Family Engagement
- Educational Technology
- Individualized Instruction

Creating engaging, relevant and effective learning is at the heart of *New Day for Learning*.





## *New Day for Success*

High-quality afterschool programs are one example of many of the programs/initiatives that incorporate *New Day for Learning* concepts.

### NATIONWIDE STUDY ON AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS

Deborah Lowe Vandell at the University of California<sup>11</sup> and others conducted a two-year national research study on elementary and middle school afterschool programs. The study showed that regular participation in high-quality programs resulted in:

- Gains in standardized math test scores for elementary and middle school students
- Gains in social skills with peers and pro-social behavior, and reductions in aggression for elementary school students
- Reductions in misconduct were reported by both elementary and middle school program participants
- Reductions in the use of drugs and alcohol were reported for middle school students

## *New Day for All Students Everywhere*

Act Now!

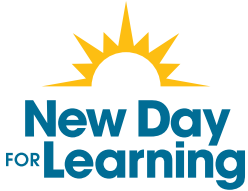
Collaboration across sectors is critical and must be focused and intentional. There must be community-wide responsibility to ensure students have the ability to thrive in a global economy and to function as citizens of a progressive nation.

Local, state and national leaders must:

- Establish working groups
- Redefine student success to include academic and developmental outcomes
- Go to the public with student outcomes and the impact on local, state and national economic and social prospects
- Seek different perspectives and garner shared support
- Develop an action plan that leverages resources across sectors
- Develop a strong and flexible infrastructure
- Assess available resources to change student learning environments
- Identify and break through obstacles (such as policies or lack of resources)
- Embed *New Day for Learning* at all levels to ensure continuity
- Monitor and publically report action plan progress and expand collaborations
- Inspire public engagement by showcasing successful students
- Disseminate information through networks about *New Day for Learning*

Visit [NewDayforLearning.org](http://NewDayforLearning.org) for more information.





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