# Extended School Days

In The U.S., there is a crisis in public education. Basically, American public education stands somewhere in the middle of country rankings in terms of testing in reading, mathematics, and science (DeSilver, Drew). Even though we have the largest economy in the world (Smith, Rob), we seem to not be able to develop great standard education. Knowing that education is the foundation of any major nation, it seems plausible that to increase our students’ test scores, pupils should spend more days at school, or at least engage in more hours of study. There are already about 520,000 students who study at school for extended hours (“Raise Achievement”), and below is a discussion about why this educational revolution needs to happen.

Though we have as many or more instructional hours put into a school year than most countries, the amount of days our students spend at school is quite low compared to competing nations. **This method seems like a formula for failure, as the countries with more school days but less instructional hours do better on test scores** (Drehle, David Von). Though there has been a proposal in the U.S. called “Extended school time,” so far, it has only been implemented in some states, showing excellent results (“Raise Achievement”). This demonstrates that since individual states are achieving better test results, then the entire nation would benefit from such an initiative.

Besides great improvement on test scores, more days of study in public education can better reflect the working schedule of parents and guardians. Catherine Brown, Vice President of Education Policy at the Center for American Progress, says that, “Schools make it really hard for working parents—and particularly, working moms—to fulfill all their responsibilities. Better aligning school and work schedules ought to be a core component of a progressive agenda to help working families” (“A 9 To 5 School Day: Are Longer Hours Better for Students and Educators?”). And another note: many families are single-parent units that have trouble keeping their children’s lives organized and adapting their schedules to their children’s school times.

There is also the fact of adapting to other interests. Many subjects are simply not covered because of a lack of time and a strong focus on receiving good test scores in mandatory subjects. According to the Seattle PI, “A longer school day would allow schools to spend more time on art, music, social studies, science and physical education. These subjects have been cut back through the years to focus on English and math in the hopes of boosting test scores. Yet test scores have remained stagnant, and students have missed out on a more well-rounded education” (Bean-Mellinger, Barbara). A more comprehensive education commonly develops mandatory classwork. Children who are better at music, art, and other creative activities have been shown to increase their intelligence and diligence.

Unfortunately, the United States stands only about average in world rankings for mathematics reading, and science testing, despite it being an economic and political superpower. This means that our standard education needs to be changed. It seems that the main issue is that students do not spend enough days at school, as countries that spend more days at school as compared to the U.S. generally outperform in terms of test scores. Adding more days to the public educational calendar would increase test scores, make it easier for parents to align their schedules with their children, and also allow the school system to focus on more creative and neglected studies that are essential for a growing child. Thus, we should make this initiative a nationwide phenomenon.