



Who says more time with teachers doesn't improve student success? Isn't that just logical?

A. Research has shown that improving teacher's practice is one of the most effective ways to improve student learning. The research results are somewhat mixed with regards to the relationship between higher instructional times and student achievement. However, the most robust and comprehensive studies show a weak relationship, or no significant relationship between higher instructional times and student achievement. This can be understood as a question of quantity versus quality.

Is this type of thing happening in other places?

A. Educational change is happening across the world as education systems adjust to new research, developments (e.g. the Internet) and trends in society. Many jurisdictions are trying new things in order to improve student engagement in school, school completion rates and the quality of their graduates. This change will bring the NWT student/teacher instructional hours to the average number of student/teacher instructional hours across Canadian provinces/territories.

How can students being in school less be good for them? Isn't attendance in school always said to be very important?

A. Attendance is indeed very important! A change to the number of instructional hours does not take away from the importance of attendance during class time.

Several comprehensive studies and reports, which investigated the relationship between student achievement and instructional time, show that there is no strong relationship between these variables. The main conclusion drawn in the research is that more attention should be given to improving instructional quality, such as teaching practice and curriculum, rather than instructional quantity.

Can the GNWT ensure that schools only take these hours at the beginning/end of school days in order to avoid entire days of school closure?

A. No, school teams know best when these hours will work most efficiently in their specific context.

Can the school organize activities for students while teachers are having their redirected instructional time?

A. There is no expectation that schools will do this. Their focus during this time must be on strengthening teaching and learning. This is, however, a great opportunity for community organizations, parent groups, and local leadership to organize activities for the students. Any such activities would not involve teaching staff.

Can't this be a pilot just for elementary and even junior high schools? Aren't the stakes a lot higher in high schools where a pilot gone wrong can really affect students?

A. No, all NWTTA teachers were represented in the negotiations which led to the ratification of the new Collective Agreement. Therefore, all teachers in all schools must be given the option to participate in the pilot.

Will this not compromise grade 12 students who have diploma exams from Alberta where there is more instructional time?

A. Research provides no strong evidence to support the claim that increasing instructional time leads to better student outcomes. By allowing teachers time to strengthen their instructional practices, they will be better able to provide quality instruction during class time.

With all the concerns around social passing and Inclusive Schooling, shouldn't students be spending more time in school, not less?

A. The quality of students' programming in school is more important than the number of hours spent there. This pilot is aimed at exactly that - Strengthening Teacher Instructional Practice. The time teachers will have to dedicate to professional duties and learning will enable them to better meet the needs of students.

What happens if (my) students' grades start to decline because of these changes?

A. Student achievement is linked to many factors. If a student's grades decline, the school team will investigate the causes at play and, in collaboration with the family, will provide the necessary supports for that student just as they would now.