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LABOR EDUCATION
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IT'S MORE THAN TEACHING

*A Report on the Actual Workday
of a Springfield, Massachusetts
Public School Teacher*



ILLINOIS
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

Labor Education Program – September 27, 2012

It's More Than Teaching:

A Report on the Actual Workday of a Springfield, Massachusetts
Public School Teacher

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The School of Labor and Employment Relations is dedicated to excellence in scholarly research, teaching, extension, and service advancing theory, policy, and practice in all aspects of employment relations.

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Executive Summary

The Labor Education Program of the School of Labor and Employment Relations at the University of Illinois conducted surveys of 608 Springfield Public School (SPS) teachers during the spring of 2012. This report details the typical school day workload for a Springfield educator and captures the time-consuming devotion that he or she dedicates to the profession.

The work of a teacher happens before, during, and after the school bell rings. The following are some key findings of the study:

- Teachers work 61 hours per week on average during the school year.
- Teachers on average work an 11 hour and 37 minute standard school day.
- Teachers are at school an average of almost nine and a half hours per day.
- A typical teacher spends more than 2 hours more working at home in the evening.
- Teachers set aside another 2 hours and 40 minutes to do school-related work each weekend.
- A teacher's role goes beyond merely instructing in the classroom. Teachers spend 3 hours and 28 minutes each day performing non-teaching related activities.
- Teachers also spend two full weeks on average during summer break doing at least one school-related activity.
- Teachers average 31 hours of professional development training while the school year is not in session.

From the analysis, several recommendations are made:

1. In order to maximize the value of the time committed to teams and grade level meetings, teachers need to be the primary contributors in developing the agendas and the work of the Professional Learning Communities.
2. If "effective evidence-based teaching practices" is to be a legitimate goal of the Springfield District, teachers are going to need to be released from other

non-instructional, time-consuming duties. Collaboration requires deliberation and, under the current conditions, teachers are literally not provided the time.

3. The demands for collecting, sorting and analyzing student data are substantial and a significant draw on teachers' school and personal time. However, the time currently dedicated during contractual school hours for teachers to manage and analyze data is inadequate. Unless different personnel or additional staff can be assigned to manage the data or the data collection streams can be reduced, the time allotted to teachers during the school day needs to be increased.
4. Teachers appear to be individually investing a lot of time in creating displays like "data-walls," which make student data publicly visible within the schools, and posting "daily curriculum agendas." The process of constructing these displays is time consuming. Since a portion of what is displayed is not randomly determined by the teachers and appears to be standard information, the district should consider withdrawing this task from the teachers and assigning it to central staff personnel.
5. Time used correcting bad behavior is likely coming at the expense of already limited instructional time, needed prep time, and opportunities for collegial collaboration. Providing teachers with the resources and support to reduce classroom interruptions would add precious minutes to instructional time.
6. District-wide mandated student assessments appear to be crowding out instructional and creative planning time. Therefore, scaling back on standardized testing would increase the time dedicated to student learning.
7. In order to ensure that the numerous and diverse school initiatives are implemented effectively in response to meeting district mandates, teachers should be provided more time to learn the program essentials. Teachers are being asked to do a great deal in many diverse areas and there is a high probability that teachers are not able to master new tasks and job requirements because they are provided too little time to learn.
8. The time demands on teachers threaten the opportunities they have to care for the social and emotional needs of students. Along with partnering with community organizations in a few schools to address social-emotional issues, bringing additional resources into the school (i.e., hiring more psychologists, counselors, and social workers) would relieve teachers from having to multitask while responding to a child's emotional needs.

Introduction

In a previous study (*Beyond the Classroom* 2012), we noted that “the role that time plays in the work of teachers is central to understanding and designing the architecture of the school day.” Citing scholarly works by Joseph Cambone and Andy Hargraves, we argued in that report that there is often a significant difference between how teachers and school administrators conceptualize the “school day.” The education profession is undergoing intense pressures to reorganize the school day. How the process is managed and what it produces is critical to attrition rates, student outcomes, and teacher job satisfaction. Contemporary community-level struggles unfolding across the country and previous research have further highlighted that “time usage” has become a deeply contentious matter in school reform efforts. Teacher workloads and the allocation of time have also severely strained local labor relations.

Understanding the parameters of a teacher’s construction of time would be greatly improved by knowing how teachers actually use their time. Unfortunately, there is very little comprehensively-collected and detailed data available. In an effort to expand our knowledge of the contours of school work time, we undertook a workload and time study of Springfield, Massachusetts, public school teachers.

The following report includes a methodological explanation of the study along with a brief summary of the survey respondents’ demographics. Survey findings are subsequently presented in three sections. The first examines teacher workload and time

allocation at work during a standard school day. The second focuses on similar workload and time allocations during a standard school day after the teacher leaves the school. The report also includes data regarding time spent on professional development.

A concluding section summarizes key findings and offers recommendations.

Methodology

In a continual effort to understand the actual workload faced by classroom teachers, a research team at the University of Illinois School of Labor and Employment Relations (LER) conducted a time-activity survey of Springfield Public School teachers. With the cooperation of the Springfield Education Association, beginning in May 2012 and continuing until early July 2012, over 2,000 SPS teachers were sent an invitation from the University of Illinois to complete a 55-item online teacher activity and time survey.

The survey was modeled off an inventive time-activity study published on April 9, 2012 by LER on Chicago Public School teachers.¹ The present edition of the survey was divided into the following three sections and sets of directions: (1) Respondents were asked to consider all of their teaching and non-teaching activities (i.e., instruction, behavioral management, sorting data,

¹ . The study, “Beyond the Classroom: An Analysis of a Chicago Public School Teacher’s Actual Workday,” by Bruno, Ashby, and Manzo (2012) is available online at [http://www.ler.illinois.edu/labor/images/Teachers%20ActivityTime%20Study%202012%20\(1\)Final.pdf](http://www.ler.illinois.edu/labor/images/Teachers%20ActivityTime%20Study%202012%20(1)Final.pdf).

assessing students' work, giving subject assessments, planning teaching lessons, communicating with parents, meeting with administrators and/or other teachers, creatively planning with colleagues, speaking to a student about a personal or family-related problem) during the "formal school day" (i.e., time spent while actually on school grounds) and assign a unit of time (minutes, hours, or days) to each activity; (2) Respondents were also asked to consider all of their teaching and non-teaching activities "outside of the formal school day" (i.e., activities done somewhere other than school) and assign a unit of time (minutes, hours, or days) to each activity; and finally (3) respondents were asked to answer a series of demographic questions about their age, gender, and ethnicity along with the age of students taught, grade or subject taught, the name of the school he or she teaches in, and the number of years teaching in the SPS system.

The survey was designed wholly by the LER research team. Surveys were anonymous and all data was collected, processed, and analyzed by LER faculty and staff. Respondents were also invited to contribute any thoughts on the survey itself, on their responses, and/or on their average workday. Included in this report are some of these individual viewpoints.

In addition to completing the survey items, teachers were solicited to volunteer for a brief interview. A randomly-selected number of teachers from the pool that volunteered were subsequently interviewed. A few of their comments were also included in this report, and are noted accordingly.

Survey Demographics

The survey yielded a sample size of 608 respondents, a 30.1 percent response rate, with a 3.35 percent margin of error at a confidence level of 95 percent.

As a proportion of the respondents, Caucasian teachers comprised 84.3 percent of the sample, while 15.7 percent self-identified as some other minority race or ethnicity (See Figure 1).

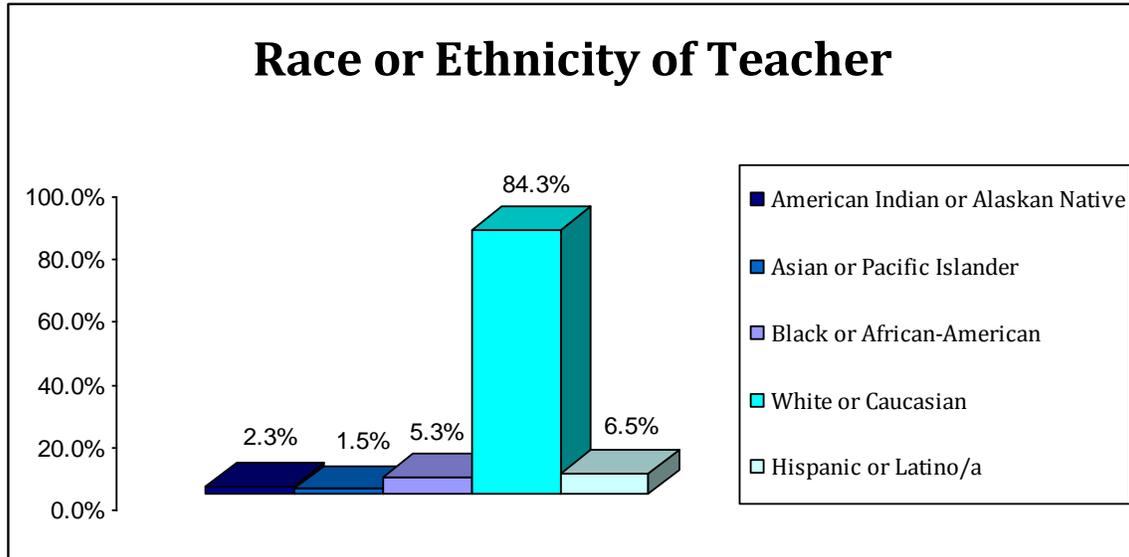
Just under two-thirds of survey respondents teach in elementary or middle schools, over one-quarter teach at the high school grade level, and 6 percent teach at the preschool or kindergarten levels (see Figure 2).

The average age of teachers is roughly 45 years, with a mean of nearly 11 years teaching experience in the Springfield Public School system. Slightly more than four-fifths of the respondents were female (See Table 1).

In addition, although only 358 respondents (58.9 percent) indicated the school in which they work, the study nevertheless incorporated responses from teachers in 49 of the 52 schools (94.2 percent) in the district. A noteworthy 167 respondents (27.4 percent) indicated that they work in a Level 4 school.²

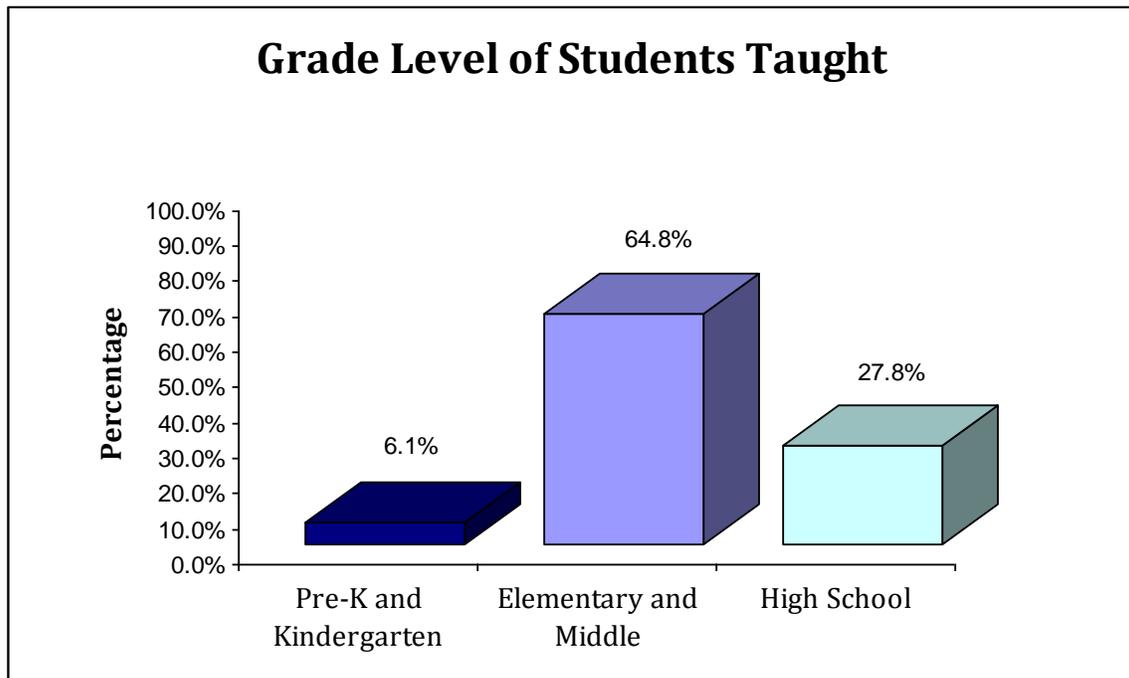
² . Level 4 schools are the lowest performing schools in the District and all have received federal School Improvement Grants.

FIGURE 1: RACE OR ETHNICITY OF SAMPLE



SOURCE: AUTHOR'S ANALYSIS OF TEACHERS TIME AND ACTIVITY STUDY (2012)

FIGURE 2: GRADE LEVEL TAUGHT BY SAMPLE



SOURCE: AUTHOR'S ANALYSIS OF TEACHERS TIME AND ACTIVITY STUDY (2012)

TABLE 1: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION OF SURVEYED TEACHERS

Demographic Information	Sample (n= 608)
Average Years Taught in SPS	10.9 years
Average Age	44.8 years
Male	17.2%
Female	82.8%

From a list of subjects, respondent teachers were allowed to select their individual areas of instruction. Teachers could indicate multiple subjects—indeed, most did—and could also check “other” to specify any unlisted subject area. Over one-quarter identified as Special Education teachers (26.3 percent). The primary subjects taught by teachers, in order beginning with most frequent, were English or Language Arts (50.6 percent), Math (43.0 percent), Science (39.2 percent), and History or Social Science (37.7 percent). Art, Physical Education, Health, Performing Art, Foreign Language, Economics or Business, and Library all followed, each with response rates less than 1 in 10 (See Table 2).³

Teachers on average work 11 hours and 37 minutes during a standard school day

³. Overall, responses to survey questions did not differ in statistically significant ways when controlling for subject area.

Survey Findings

Springfield teachers are working very long days. According to survey responses, teachers on average work 11 hours and 37 minutes during a standard school day (Monday-Friday). Teachers spend an average of 9 hours and 26 minutes at school performing school functions and another 2 hours and 11 minutes continuing to complete work tasks away from school.⁴ Note that this figure does not include time spent on weekends. On weekends, teachers reported spending an additional 2 hours and 40 minutes on average conducting school work, excluding time spent on extracurricular activities.

Cumulatively, an average SPS teacher’s standard workweek is 60 hours and 43 minutes.

An average SPS teacher’s standard work-week is 60 hours and 43 minutes

Many teachers offered comments that they are working long, difficult, and stressful hours, but also acknowledged that it is essential to do the job.

Below are a few common examples:

- *If I didn’t love teaching and working with challenging students I would not continue teaching. I work 65 hours a week. ... This is after 7 years of employment. To support [my*

⁴. Average time “performing school functions” was computed by adding the averages of time teachers spent on individual activities.

TABLE 2: SUBJECT TAUGHT BY SURVEYED TEACHERS

Subject Taught	Percentage (%)
Special Education	26.3
Math	43.0
English or Language Arts	50.9
Science	39.2
History or Social Science	37.7
Economics or Business	1.2
Foreign Language	2.0
Physical Education	4.5
Health	4.3
Art	7.6
Performing Art	2.6
Library	1.2
Other†	10.9

†Other subjects included: computers and technology, media, English as a second language, music, carpentry, and other vocational studies.

family] I have to work all summer too. ... Teaching is the hardest job but a very important job to our community.

- I average between 55 and 58 hours per week during the school year working.
- I work on average easily 60 to 70 hours per week.
- I switched to teaching after a successful career in business management. Teaching is by far the hardest and most time-consuming job I have ever held, but I love it.
- Hours and hours a year are spent on classroom related activities on my

own time taking time away from my own family. I do this because I love my job and genuinely care for my students. The public in general needs to be made aware of how much time we spend on school related activities.

Over one-third of a teacher's day at school is dedicated to non-teaching related activities

More than Instruction: Workload at School

Survey responses indicate that teachers arrive at school early and stay until late in the afternoon. Students are required to be at school for 6 hours and 45 minutes and teachers for 7 hours. However, respondents state that the mean school arrival time for an SPS teacher was 7:18 am and the mean departure time was 4:17 pm. Clearly, teachers are working well-beyond a traditional eight-hour day at work, investing on average an hour more while at school.

There is, however, a substantive void in the public discourse and understanding about what actually happens during the school day. So how do teachers spend their time at work?

On average, teachers indicated that they were scheduled to instruct for 5 hours and 3 minutes during the school day. Yet a multitude of tasks— both related and unrelated to actual instruction— prohibit teachers from instructing. Teachers actually spend a mean of 4 hours per day in front of the classroom instructing students. These 4 hours account for just 42.4 percent of an average teacher's time while at school.

Just 60.4% of a teacher's time at school is devoted to activities that directly relate to educating students

An additional 18.1 percent of a teacher's school day is occupied by activities related to teaching. Of this time, an average of 27 minutes is spent "providing extra help to students outside of scheduled classroom time." At a more administrative level, during

contractual school hours 27 minutes are spent "planning teaching lessons" and 29 minutes are put into "assessing students' work" each day. Finally, 20 minutes are devoted to "giving curriculum subject assessments (such as tests and quizzes)." Altogether, just 60.4 percent of a teacher's time at school is devoted to activities that directly relate to educating students. It is important to note, however, that our analysis does not account for time invested in district- or state-wide mandated high-stakes testing. For example, one such testing activity, the District Benchmark Assessment was first administered in 2010-11. The test is administered nine times during the school year. One estimate of the time teachers would be required to invest in order to conduct all test-related activities exceeded 6 hours for each test given.⁵

Over one-third (36.8 percent) of a teacher's day at school is dedicated to non-teaching related activities. As reported by respondents, the most time-consuming activity is "behavioral management," which takes up 1 hour and 16 minutes each day. In other caretaking duties, teachers also expend 21 minutes on average connecting with their students about a "personal or family-related problem." Finally, another 9 minutes of a teacher's day (45 minutes weekly) are set aside on average to "contact parents about

⁵ . Estimate was included in reports titled "District Benchmark Assessment Responsibilities" and "Time Tally for District Benchmark Assessments" that was presented to the Springfield Education Association's Board of Directors in the spring of 2012.

IT'S MORE THAN TEACHING

TABLE 3: STANDARD WORK DAY AT SCHOOL AS REPORTED BY RESPONDENTS

Time per day at school:	Mean Time	Share of Day
Teaching Related Activities		
Scheduled to teach	5 hr 03 min	--
Actually instructing	4 hr 00 min	42.4%
Assessing students' work during contractual hours	29 min	5.0%
Giving curriculum subject assessments (tests, quizzes, etc.)	20 min	3.5%
Planning teaching lessons	27 min	4.8%
Providing extra help to students	27 min	4.8%
Non-Teaching Related Activities		
On behavioral management	1 hr 16 min	13.5%
Speaking to a student about a personal or family-related problem	21 min	3.8%
Communicating with parents	09 min	1.5%
Inputting data	30 min	5.3%
Setting up or taking down classroom	31 min	5.4%
In meetings with administrators and/or other teachers	21 min	3.7%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Creatively planning with colleagues</i> 	08 min	1.4%
Other assigned non-teaching duties (hall duty, bus duty, cafeteria, detention, etc.)	21 min	3.7%
Lunch		
Free time at lunch*	16 min	2.7%
Total Reported Hours at School†	9 hr 26 min	100%
<i>Working On Teaching-Related Activities</i>	<i>5 hr 42 min</i>	<i>60.4%</i>
<i>Working On Non-Teaching Related Activities</i>	<i>3 hr 28 min</i>	<i>36.8%</i>
<i>Free Time at Lunch</i>	<i>16 min</i>	<i>2.7%</i>

*The average amount of time set aside for scheduled lunch is 30 minutes but 14 of those are devoted to the above activities.

†Minutes may not add up perfectly due to rounding.

student behavior or progress.” Each of these activities expands a teacher’s responsibilities and explains in part why teachers actually instruct a full hour less than their 5 hours and 3 minute allocation.

Accompanying classroom instruction are additional supportive, auxiliary, and administrative tasks. For example, a half hour each day is spent on average “inputting data (i.e., inputting grades and attendance and writing reports).” Moreover, an average of 1 hour and 45 minutes each week is committed to “meeting with administrators and other teachers,” or 21 minutes each day. Of these 21 minutes, just 8 are utilized to “creatively plan with colleagues.” Finally, 21 minutes of a teacher’s day are further used up performing other assigned non-teaching duties, including “hall duty, bus duty, cafeteria, and detention.”

Many teachers acknowledged great exasperation that activities, not directly related to the quality of instruction, are increasingly diverting their time away from students. The following are brief representative samples:

- *The district is constantly adding more responsibilities to our job yet doesn't compensate us for the time it takes to do these tasks. We are rarely acknowledged for the hard work we do on a daily basis.*
- *I've spent more time doing work to benefit administrators than to benefit students directly. I have spent countless hours [more] analyzing the data than planning ways to use the data to improve my direct instruction to the students. More and more of my personal time is wasted on doing paperwork for*

administration that does not directly benefit my students.

Teachers also take time setting up or taking down their classrooms. Over one-third (35.2 percent) of all SPS teachers share a classroom and they invest 31 minutes of their average day in classroom setup. Teachers spend time furnishing and arranging their work-space to facilitate a supportive and fun environment that is conducive to student learning, but the time allocation is amplified as a result of workspace sharing.

Rounding out the almost 9 and a half hours that teachers are actually on school grounds is an allotted “free time.” While the average amount set aside for lunch district-wide is 30 minutes, just 16 of those are, on average, available for a teacher to take a break from work. The remaining 14 minutes (47.2 percent of the scheduled lunch) are used to catch up or complete the aforementioned work assignments (i.e., behavioral management, sorting data, instruction, etc.). One teacher noted just how fleeting her free time can be:

- *During the school day, I rarely have a 30 minute lunch break (or a 40 minute prep time) because of behavioral issues, correcting papers, filling out paperwork, parent phone calls, or unexpected parent conferences.*

The implications from how teachers spend their days at school are illuminating. Teachers spend just 32 minutes less (3 hours and 28 minutes) on non-teaching related activities than on actual instruction (4 hours) throughout the workday. Springfield Public Schools are also organized such that teachers spend an average of 150

minutes each week inputting data, a full 275 percent more than the 40 weekly minutes spent creatively planning with colleagues. Finally, about as much time is devoted at school to behavioral management (1 hour and 16 minutes) as on assessing students' work, planning teaching lessons, and providing extra help to students *combined* (1 hour and 22 minutes). One teacher summed up these takeaways succinctly:

- *The district counts on teachers... and we will still stay because we love to teach. The funny thing is that teachers seem to be spending less and less time doing exactly that.*

Teachers spend an average of 150 minutes each week inputting data, a full 275% more than the 40 weekly minutes spent creatively planning with colleagues

Beyond the School Bell: Workload Outside of School

A Springfield Public School teacher's workday does not end once he or she leaves the school grounds. On average, teachers report that they spend over two additional hours working on school-related tasks after they leave school each day (i.e., Monday-Friday).

The plurality of the 2 hour and 11 minute workload at home is consumed by "assessing students' work" (57 minutes, or 43.5 percent of the nonschool day time). A considerable amount of time is also invested in "planning teaching lessons" (36 minutes or 27.2 percent of the nonschool day

time). Moreover, even beyond school grounds, teachers continue to provide "extra assistance" to students (12 minutes) and to "communicate with parents" (17 minutes) (see Table 4).

On average, teachers report that they spend over two additional hours working on school-related tasks after they leave school each day

Although not included in the 2 hour and 11 minute average, it must be noted that 397 respondents (65.6 percent of the sample) indicated that they participate in extracurricular activities. The average amount of time these participants spend per week on activities like coaching, club advising, and directing plays is 2 hours and 58 minutes, or 36 minutes per day during a five-day workweek. For these teachers, the workday expands even more for at least a portion of the school year.

Many teachers alluded to the large amount of time they must devote to their job at home, often expressing frustration that personal and family time must be forgone as a result. Here are three representative comments:

- *As teachers, we are working all the time. Even when I am at home, I spend hours working to make my lessons better as well as dealing with their individual needs and grading work... I sacrifice time away from my future husband and family, and even my friends, so that I am at my best when I am physically at work.*
- *Each year I work many hours especially at home to correct papers, go over data, prepare lessons, do*

report cards, and other things for the students in my classroom.

- *Hours and hours a year are spent on classroom-related activities on my own time taking time away from my own family. I do this because I love my job and genuinely care for my students.*

A teacher's workday away from school is not entirely a function of the need to complete and catch up on required work tasks. An array of professional development activities constitutes a considerable endowment of time as well. An average of 9 minutes each day is spent reading professional education magazines, journals, or other research on education. In addition, teachers annually average more than 70 hours outside of the contractual school day training or taking classes, earning an average of 4.7 course credits throughout the school year (typically towards a Master's degree) (Table 5).

Additionally, as has been previously mentioned, teachers commit a significant amount of time on the weekend to their job. On average, respondents set aside an additional 2 hours and 40 minutes of their weekends doing "school-related work." Note that this time excludes extracurricular activities and is not included in the standard (i.e., 5-day) workweek time assessment.

Stressed and Overworked: Total Hours Worked

Cumulatively, SPS teachers work on average 58 hours and 5 minutes in a standard week. However, when weekend work is included, the total

allocation of time dedicated by teachers to their job rises to 60 hours and 43 minutes.⁶

Numerous teachers, some cited below, expressed that their thoughts were endlessly consumed with their job:

- *During the school year, I never really stop working. Even when I am not at work, or specifically doing school work, I am thinking about work. I am thinking about the student that was struggling, or worrying about how a situation worked out. I was threatened by a student this year, and although that situation was handled appropriately, I later had to work with that student again, in a different setting, which I did willingly. As I take this survey, a former student is checking in with me via email, to let me know how she is doing, and I am glad she is, because I've been thinking of her and wondering how she's doing now that she's out of the school environment, without the supports that we make available to her.*
- *This job is in your thoughts 24/7.*

⁶. According to Linda Darling-Hammond and Velma Cobb, in 1991, "elementary teachers worked an average of 45 hours per week and secondary teachers spent an average of 50 hours per week on all duties" (See "The Teaching Profession and Teacher Education in the United States," in Linda Darling-Hammond, Velma Cobb, editors, *Teacher Preparation and Professional Development in APEC Members: A Comparative Study*, APEC Education Forum, U.S. Department of Education, May 1995: 221240).

TABLE 4: STANDARD WORKDAY OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL AS REPORTED BY RESPONDENTS

Time per day away from school:	Mean Time	Share of Evening
Assessing students' work	57 min	43.5%
Planning teaching lessons	36 min	27.2%
Reading professional education/teacher magazines, journals or other sources of educational information	9 min	7.2%
Communicating with parents	17 min	12.7%
Providing extra help to students	12 min	9.4%
Total Reported Hours Worked Away From School	2 hr 11 min	100%

TABLE 5: ANNUAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY DATA AS REPORTED BY RESPONDENTS

Professional development activities	Mean
Time set aside for professional development during the contractual school day per year	2.0 school days
Time spent on professional development outside of contractual hours per year	70.4 hours
Course credits earned this year	4.7 credits
Time spent on professional development when school year is not in session	31.0 hours

TABLE 6: STANDARD WORKING DAY FOR RESPONDENTS

Time per day:	Mean Time
Total Reported Hours at School	9 hr 26 min
Total Reported Hours Worked Away From School	2 hr 11 min
Total Time Worked Per Day	11 hr 37 min

Each of these activities expands a teacher's responsibilities

- *As with a parent's job, a teacher's job is never done. I wake up many nights realizing I have dreamed of how to implement a lesson or work with a struggling child.*

The cumulative debilitating effect of constantly being “on the job” is further heightened by the sense that teachers are subjects of ridicule. In the comments offered below from a personal interview, a middle school teacher shares this feeling:

“Our morale is so low given the constant onslaught. It’s incredible. ... We feel disrespect from school administration, the public, the legislators. ... It’s exhausting. The drop in morale makes it ever challenging to do our best at our work. We feel so devalued.”

Variations by Grade Level Taught

There is some variation in the reported average workday by respondents of different grade levels. Middle school teachers report the longest workday, at 12 hours and 4 minutes, followed in turn by high school, elementary, and kindergarten and pre-k respondents (see Table 7).

During the standard workweek, there are three noticeable differences in how time is allocated by grade level taught.

1. Middle school teachers devote 1 hour and 34 minutes on average to this behavioral management, well above the average. The comparable allocations for kindergarten and pre-k, elementary, and high school teachers are,

respectively, 1 hour and 18 minutes, 1 hour and 15 minutes, and 1 hour and 2 minutes.

2. High school teachers on average use up 37 minutes inputting and sorting data. Each of the three other classifications uses, on average, between 14 and 23 minutes.
3. Kindergarten and pre-k teachers devote on average 1 hour and 22 minutes to their job away from school. For comparison, on average teachers at the elementary school level work 2 hours and 10 minutes, middle school teachers work 2 hours and 24 minutes, and high school students work 2 hours and 15 minutes at home.

As a whole, kindergarten and preschool teachers typically spend more than 10 minutes less on each at-school activity during the day, with the exception of actual instruction (4 hours and 27 minutes) and behavioral management (1 hour and 18 minutes).

Teachers Exceed Expectations

Above and beyond working while the school year is in session, teachers also perform tasks related to their job when school is not in session. During summer break, teachers spend an average of 14 days doing at least one school-related activity, typically to prepare for the upcoming school year. With limited exceptions, this time is unpaid; teachers are “gifting” to their schools this uncompensated labor. What’s more, teachers spend an average of 12.1 hours

TABLE 7: STANDARD WORKING DAY FOR RESPONDENTS BY GRADE LEVEL TAUGHT

Aggregate mean time spent working per day:	Mean
Sample	11 hr 37 min
High School	11 hr 45 min
Middle School	12 hr 04 min
Elementary School	11 hr 32 min
Kindergarten & Pre-K	9 hr 54 min

outside of school shopping for school supplies, paying an average of \$581.73 out-of-pocket on school supplies. Some, like the interviewed science teacher commenting below, at times have incurred even larger personal costs for their students:

“When I started out I spent over \$1,000 a year of my own money on school supplies; now it’s probably \$500 to \$700 a year. I really don’t want to know how much I spend, because if I knew then I’d start feeling like I must be crazy. I try to have a classroom library. The kids really like the picture books on science.”

As Table 5 suggests, teachers also utilize school breaks to engage in additional professional development activities. Respondents indicated that they enrolled in an average of 31 hours of professional development while the school year is not in session. Combined with the 70 hours respondent teachers spent on professional development during the school year, teachers annually average over 100 hours of professional skill-building.

Accordingly, SPS teachers perform an enormous amount of labor. Excluding hours worked performing irregular or extracurricular activities and during the summer recess, teachers who are averaging 11 hour and 37 minute days, or 60 hours and 43 minutes per week, are contributing 2,091 productive hours (11 hours 37 minutes x 180 official school days) over a nine and half month period. But working a roughly six-hour and forty five-minute day over a standard full school year (6.75 hours x 180 school days) would produce 1,215 hours of productive labor. Therefore, SPS teachers are annually working, on a conservative basis, 876 hours above a standardized contract.

Teachers annually average over 100 hours of professional skill-building

As an elementary school teacher explains in one interview, the job demands an investment of working hours that the school system never acknowledges should be compensable:

“If teachers were ever paid for all the time they put in, their pay would be doubled, at least. The professional development, the courses, the preparation, it’s so much more than the hours in front of the students.”

Conclusions and Recommendations

As we noted in a previous teacher workload study, “The work of a teacher happens before, during, and after the school bell rings. Teachers work in densely packed classrooms, chaotic hallways, cafeterias, coffee shops, their

own and their colleagues' homes, administrators' offices, and on soccer fields. Work starts early, ends late, crowds out weekends, and fills up the calendar."

But a teacher's work is not only a collection of technical and emotional tasks; it is also a major commitment of professional and personal time. Further time demands imposed on teachers come with genuine risks.

One teacher summed up a feeling of exhaustion in the following way:

- *Tired of constant demands to teach a new way on a yearly basis. Much documentation is needed to prove you did x, y, and z method. Tired of filling out numerous surveys that we should be given school time to do. Never happens. Tired of getting minimum base hourly pay for workshop etc., when my hourly rate is much higher. Tired of teachers being blamed for students' poor performance.*

Here a respondent uses a "drowning" metaphor to signal how burdensome the teaching profession has become:

- *The time that was once spent on making manipulatives, games, etc., is now spent on correcting, analyzing data, and filling out reports. Often the same data has to be reported on several different forms, and all by hand, even though much of the information is available on the computer. I'm drowning in paperwork.*

Another respondent suggests that a dangerous tipping point is being reached by some teachers:

- *During the school year I feel unappreciated, overworked and*

stressed-out. Yet I am still expected to perform every request my building principal asks. Student behavior is so difficult and I feel unsupported in my building. Yet I am continually demanded to do more. I am at the breaking point. I have a family and my health suffers from the stress at my job.

Ironically, as teachers commit more time to their profession, they are frustrated with public misconceptions about their job:

- *Many people say 'teachers have it made.' What other profession requires workers to take home work to do at night, weekends, and vacations? My personal time is consumed with preparing lessons, making lesson materials including individual and small group hands-on-materials. This takes a lot of time.*
- *Most of the teachers in my building come in at least 45 minutes early each day. Many stay late. Many of us take work home. We have children, husbands, parents and other family commitments that stretch our free time to the limit. Teachers are by far the most resourceful and most adept at fitting everything in. It always distresses me to hear the public opinion of teachers as lazy and uncommitted.*
- *Teaching is one of the toughest jobs. It is a constant slap on our faces that we are not respected, by the district in providing us with the proper contract compared to the surrounding communities. We work extremely hard every day to provide quality education to the students in Springfield.*

- *[L]ack of respect for the profession and teachers, coupled with consistent unresolved discipline issues, teachers are worn down physically, mentally and emotionally.*

The time obligations induced another teacher to explain just how life-encompassing the teaching profession is:

- *I just want it to be known that as teachers, we are working all the time. Even when I am at home, I spend hours working to make my lessons better for my students as well as dealing with their individual needs and grading work. Even when on the scheduled breaks, there is always work to be done.*

The cumulative cost of piling additional demands upon a teacher's already-busy workday is the incalculable loss of an intangible good and a strong suspicion of employee manipulation:

- *Much of the joy of teaching is gone ...*
- *Most days in school I feel as if I have so many tasks to accomplish, but that there is never enough time to get it all done. Aside from teaching and behavior issues, most of my other responsibilities are done outside of the regular school day. Many nights I am up to 1:00 am trying to get caught up. The frenzied nature of my school day is very stressful and I have even had chest pains. I feel like I am being pulled in 100 different directions and being asked to do the work of two people. I love the teaching part of my job, but after eight years, I often find myself saying that I can't see myself doing this for 30 years. I can understand how teachers get burnt out. The feeling of being buried in work is often overwhelming. I feel like I have*

no time in my life for myself. If it weren't for the students, I would switch to a career where I could walk out the door and leave my job behind until the next day. On multiple occasions, I have been told that if I went to another district, I would feel like I'm on vacation. I've also been asked why I teach in Springfield and why I don't quit if it is so hard sometimes. My answer is that I care ... and that is the problem. The district counts on teachers like me so they can work us like dogs... and we will still stay because we love to teach. The funny thing is that teachers seem to be spending less and less time doing exactly that.

A teacher interviewed for this study, made the insightful point that excessive hours of work does not mean that students are being better served:

"I've always put in long hours, but the hours directly related to what I did for students, so it was worthwhile. Now I'm putting in long hours and not getting all the work done, and the work I'm putting in does not directly affect students. The workload is outrageous. There are a lot of mandates coming from the central office. I'm being bogged down with paperwork that should not be a classroom teacher's responsibility."

Using the survey responses of SPS teachers as a barometer, the following recommendations are made:

1. In order to maximize the value of the time committed to teams and grade level meetings, teachers need to be the primary contributors in developing the work of the Professional Learning Communities and other agendas.
2. If in fact "effective evidence-based teaching practices" is to be a

legitimate goal of the Springfield District, teachers are going to need to be released from other non-instructional, time-intensive duties.⁷ Collaboration requires deliberation and, under current conditions, teachers are literally not provided the time.

3. The demands for collecting, sorting and analyzing student data are of course substantial and a significant draw on teachers' school time *and* personal time. However, the time dedicated at present during contractual school hours for teachers to manage and analyze data is inadequate. Unless different personnel or additional staff can be assigned to manage the data or the data collection streams can be reduced, the time allotted to teachers during the school day needs to be increased.
4. Individually, teachers appear to be investing a lot of time in creating displays like "data-walls," which make student data publicly visible within schools, and posting "daily curriculum agendas." The process of constructing these displays is time-consuming. Since a portion of what is displayed is not randomly determined by the teachers and appears to be standard information, the district should consider withdrawing this

task from teachers and assigning it to central staff personnel.

5. Time used correcting disorderly behavior is likely coming at the expense of already limited instructional time, needed prep time, and opportunities for collegial collaboration. Providing teachers with the resources and support to reduce classroom interruptions would add precious minutes to instructional time.
6. District-wide mandated student assessments appear to be crowding out instructional and creative planning time. Therefore, scaling back on standardized testing would increase the time dedicated to student learning.
7. In order to ensure that the numerous and diverse school initiatives are implemented effectively in response to meeting district mandates, teachers should be provided more time to learn the program essentials. Teachers are being asked to do a great deal in many diverse areas and there is a high probability that teachers are not able to master new tasks and job requirements because they are provided too little time to learn.
8. The time demands on teachers threaten the opportunities they have to care for the social and emotional needs of students. Along with partnering with community organizations in a few schools to address social-emotional issues, bringing more resources into the school (i.e., by hiring additional counselors, psychologists, and social workers) would relieve teachers from

⁷ . *Effective evidence-based teaching practices* was included in the document "Creating A Culture of Educational Excellence: The Springfield Improvement Framework" on the Springfield School Board website at <http://www.sps.springfield.ma.us/webContent/SpringfieldImprovementFramework.pdf>.

having to multitask while responding to a child's emotional needs.

It is incumbent that school and union officials, as well as local and state policy makers, take full cognizance of the realities teachers face during the average school day. The implications of failing to address the issues identified in this report would be harmful for all of the stakeholders in the Springfield Public School system. As one teacher poignantly laments in a personal interview, the deteriorating working conditions in the schools is generating a rising tide of discontent:

"This past year I was shocked at the number of teachers who never complained in the past now saying they just can't deal with all the paperwork and administrative nonsense. No one hears our cries for help. Coupled with the increase in useless paperwork is the problem of teachers being bullied, and our School Committee and superintendent turn a deaf ear to the whole situation."

