GETTING NARROWER AT THE BASE:

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THE AMERICAN CURRICULUM AFTER NCLB

GETTING NARROWER AT THE BASE: THE AMERICAN CURRICULUM AFTER NCLB

By Peter Levine, Mark Hugo Lopez, and Karlo Barrios Marcelo
CIRCLE (The Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning & Engagement)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

According to a recent Gallup poll, a majority of Americans believe that the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) has caused schools to cut time for science, health, social studies, and the arts to make more time for mathematics and reading.[1] The vast majority of Americans who observe this trend see it as a problem; they evidently do not want the curriculum to contract to a core of reading and math. Major organizations from the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation (generally seen as conservative) to the National Education Association (the nation's biggest teachers' union) have also lamented the narrowing of the curriculum since the passage of NCLB.

It is important to understand recent trends as objectively and comprehensively as possible. CIRCLE's analysis of five major federal datasets finds that the curriculum has indeed narrowed somewhat at the elementary level, especially at first grade and especially in rural public schools. But the curriculum has remained constant in middle school, even though NCLB requires tests at eighth grade.

There are few provisions in NCLB that address the high school curriculum. Nevertheless, we think it is important to note, as part of a comprehensive study, that high school students earn more credits in liberal arts subjects than their predecessors earned in the 1980s and 1990s. For students who stay enrolled through high school, the curriculum has broadened.

Further, we find that the narrowing in elementary school began well before NCLB and has affected private schools as much as public schools. Veteran teachers (trained before NCLB) are less likely than new teachers to offer a broad curriculum in their classrooms. These findings suggest that NCLB is *not* mainly responsible for the narrowing trend in elementary school. Instead, we believe, the elementary curriculum has narrowed because of a combination of local, state, and federal initiatives, changes in teacher training and textbooks, and perhaps the expectations of parents and other adults.

Thus we dissent from the theory that NCLB has directly caused a narrowing of the whole K-12 curriculum. Nevertheless, narrowing is a trend that deserves public attention as NCLB reauthorization is debated.

THE CURRICULUM IN AN ERA OF "HIGH-STAKES" TESTING

At least since the influential *A Nation at Risk* report was published in 1983, many Americans have been deeply concerned about how our educational system prepares young people for higher education and employment.[2] Americans are worried about the skills and knowledge of average young people and also about disparities in students' educational attainment depending on their race and family income.

One major strategy for addressing these concerns has been to require standardized, written, "high-stakes" examinations in a limited number of subjects. The goal is to motivate students, teachers, and school systems to perform better by directing their attention to specific, measurable outcomes and by imposing penalties for failure. This general strategy has been used by various districts and states and, most recently, by the federal government in the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001. NCLB requires states to test all students regularly in reading and mathematics (and, more recently, in science) and imposes penalties on schools, districts, and states that do not meet "adequate yearly progress" for all major demographic groups, as measured by the reading and mathematics tests.

Several prominent reports and articles have argued that teachers, schools, districts, and states have focused on the subjects that are tested, thereby dropping or shrinking other subjects that are not assessed. According to surveys by the Center on Education Policy, most school district leaders say that their own schools have shifted time away from social studies, arts, foreign languages, and science and toward reading/language arts and mathematics. In the CEP studies, more than half of school districts say they have increased time spent on reading/language arts (by an average of more than two hours per week); almost half say they have increased time spent on mathematics (by an average of more than one hour); and more than a third report cutting time spent on social studies.[3]

A survey of elementary and secondary principals conducted for the Council for Basic Education in 2003 found most schools increasing their allocations of time for reading, writing, mathematics, and science. More schools had cut time for the arts and foreign languages than had increased time in those subjects. Many schools with predominantly minority student bodies reported cutting time for civics, social studies, and geography, although these trends were not evident in majority-white schools.[4]

The studies by the Center on Education Policy and Council for Basic Education echo more anecdotal news reports with headlines like "Schools pile on English, Math Classes."[5] In Education Week, Judith L. Pace writes that social studies is being "squeezed" out of schools thanks to state laws enacted in the 1990s and then NCLB: "Some large school districts in California and other states have now virtually eliminated social studies instruction from all of their elementary schools, and some middle schools."[6]

A school's curriculum can broaden or narrow in at least two different ways. First, allocations of students' time can be changed, so that, for example, hours spent in school are shifted from art and science to reading. Second, those subjects can be taught in ways that are either broader or narrower. It is possible, for example, to reserve many hours for reading/language arts but to teach liberal arts subjects during those hours. The assigned or recommended readings can be rich in historical information and narrative or scientific facts and explanations. Students can even be assigned community service projects during time allocated for reading and math, if the service has a strong academic component.

In this report, we focus on time allocations to academic subjects (as teachers report them), because those statistics can be tracked most

reliably using historical data. We recognize that use of time in the classroom as reported by teachers is only part of the story; it also matters how each subject is taught. However, the evidence generally shows that instruction in reading and math is not broad and may actually have narrowed over the years. For example, in 2000, Nell Duke found that first graders spent less than three minutes per school day with texts that were rich in information about any topic, from dinosaurs to pilgrims.[7] At fourth grade, the ratio shifts somewhat from skills to content, yet just 23 percent of fourth-graders read weekly about social studies or history in books or magazines (and the rate declined slightly from 2002 to 2007).[8] Thus, as time has been reallocated from social studies and science to reading, the elementary curriculum has shifted from content in various subject areas to skills in reading. Unless the current trends stop or reverse themselves, the shift will be substantial.

Chester E. Finn, Jr. and Diane Ravitch write:

> NCLB, like most state-level efforts, brought unintended consequences. Notably, the law requires that academic gains be demonstrated only in reading and math, and its sanctions and interventions are triggered only by failure to make gains in those two areas. They're worthy skills, yes, but not the whole of a proper education. Yet states, local school systems, and educators, understandably loath to be found wanting, have significantly ramped up the time spent teaching these two subjects and preparing students to take tests in them, to the detriment of 'broad' and 'liberal' and 'arts.'[9]

Summarizing a large literature, Linda Darling-Hammond and Elle Rustique-Forrester write, "In settings where narrow measures are used with high stakes attached, schools and teachers experience strong temptations to reduce the curriculum to what is tested and the way it is tested, often undermining the quality of teaching, especially in schools where students struggle to pass the tests."[10]

A majority of Americans seem to share these concerns. In 2007, according to a Gallup poll, 52 percent of American adults believed that "NCLB's emphasis on English and math [had] reduced the amount of instructional time spent in the local public schools for science, health, social studies, and the arts." Thirty-six percent disagreed with that statement, with the rest being unsure. The proportion who agreed was higher among those who considered themselves well-informed about NCLB. Of those who believed that the curriculum had narrowed, 93 percent were either very concerned or somewhat concerned.[11]

WHY NARROWING IS AN IMPORTANT ISSUE

In general, students who have studied a given topic know more about it and use it more in their lives. Time spent on a topic in school correlates with mastery of it; that is "one of the most consistent findings in education research."[12] Therefore, cutting instruction in a particular subject area is likely to reduce students' knowledge and skills in that subject area.

Reading and mathematics are broad and foundational subjects than can encompass many topics. Nevertheless, time spent on subjects *other than* reading and mathematics is important for developing certain important skills, habits, areas of knowledge, and values. For instance, as Margit E. McGuire writes, "social studies is more than reading for comprehension. It is learning powerful ideas that demonstrate how social systems work, in the past and in other places, whether next door or around the world. It is about being committed to democratic values and their importance for personal, social, and civic decision making."[13]

Likewise, learning about history requires not only basic reading skills, but also historical information and methods of historical interpretation. Obtaining a second language requires studying that language: an accomplishment that 85 percent of Americans consider very or some-

what important.[14] There are genuine tradeoffs between focusing on "core" subjects and spending time on other subjects.

Policymakers and citizens may want to consider that there is *intrinsic value* to obtaining a broad or liberal education that includes experience with the arts, natural sciences, current events, civic issues, history, and foreign languages. Among adults, these interests correlate, so that, for example, those who read literature regularly are also disproportionately active as voters and volunteers.[15]

Policymakers and citizens should consider evidence that the best way to become literate is to acquire a base of factual information, vocabulary, and concepts that come from studying the liberal arts. E.D. Hirsch, for instance, argues that an essential component of reading instruction is to focus on a topic for an "extended time"—reading, listening to, and discussing facts and ideas to build knowledge of *words* and *the world*.[16]

There are also important *outcomes*, such as active and equitable political participation or public appreciation of the arts, that we risk overlooking if we focus only on test scores in reading and mathematics. For example, civics classes have been found to raise students' knowledge of government and politics, their skills for civic participation, and their interest in participating.[17] Volunteering or community service, when connected to academic experiences such as reading assignments, research, or structured discussions, has been found to increase students' commitment to civic engagement.[18] Participation in extracurricular groups such as student government and school newspapers has been found to improve students' odds of graduating from high school and attending college; it also teachers skills and habits of participation in civil society that last for many decades.[19]

At CIRCLE, we do not recommend a particular balance of subjects. But we maintain that it is the right of students, parents, and other citizens to understand and debate the breadth of the curriculum in public schools. In a democracy, what students learn is not a matter that can be left to the technical experts who write tests. It is an issue of values that should be publicly deliberated using the best available empirical evidence.

HAS THE CURRICULUM NARROWED?

As noted above, several important surveys of educational administrators and citizens find that the curriculum has narrowed, and the narrowing is harmful. It is important, however, to look beyond current opinions about changes in the curriculum and use data that are: (a) collected regularly over time and (b) collected from teachers and/or students as well as district leaders and parents. This report draws on five major federal datasets to capture changes over at least a decade as reported by students and teachers.

ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCHOOL

In the early grades, students do not take courses. Instead, their main or "homeroom" teachers devote time to various subjects, and students are offered "resource" or "special" classes such as art and music. Science can be treated either as a "special" or as a homeroom subject.

Homeroom

For homeroom classes, the best evidence about the breadth of the curriculum comes from surveys of how teachers allocate their time.

The Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) of the Department of Education allows us to estimate the time devoted to four broad subject areas, English, math, social studies, and science, by full-time teachers at each grade from one to five.[20] Our independent analysis of the SASS data confirms findings previously published by Martin West.[21] In all grades,

according to SASS, teachers devoted more time to English and math and less time to social studies in 2003-4 (after the passage of NCLB) than they had in 1987-8. If time spent on a subject is an accurate measure of how much it is taught, the narrowing of the curriculum problem is real in elementary schools.

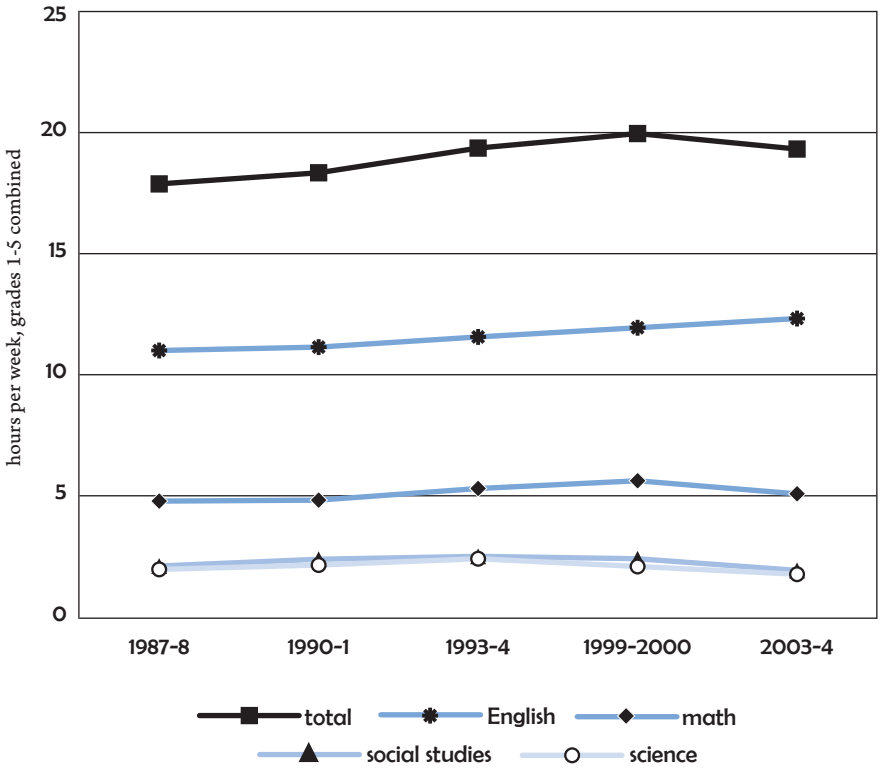
As graph 1 shows, the total amount of time devoted to all the major academic subjects (combined) rose after 1987 by about 86 minutes per average week. The amount of time devoted to English rose by more than one hour from the beginning to the end of this period. The increase in time devoted to mathematics was smaller: about 18 minutes per week. For social studies, there were declines of about 10 minutes per week on average. For science, there was an overall decline of about 12 minutes per week, although there were small increases in grades two and four.

The changes were greatest in the first grade (shown in graph 2). First-graders spent more than two hours more per week on the main academic subjects in 2003-4 than their predecessors had spent in 1987-8. The biggest contribution to that change was an extra 96 minutes per week of English in the first grade. Time spent on social studies declined by about 12 minutes.

Merely comparing 1987 and 2004 conceals a more complex pattern in the intervening years. Time devoted by teachers to all four major academic subjects—English, mathematics, social studies, and science—first rose between 1987-8 and 1993-4. This was a period in which the academic curriculum was generally tightened, and standards and high-stakes tests were widely introduced. Social studies and science received more, not less, time during the elementary years as a whole.

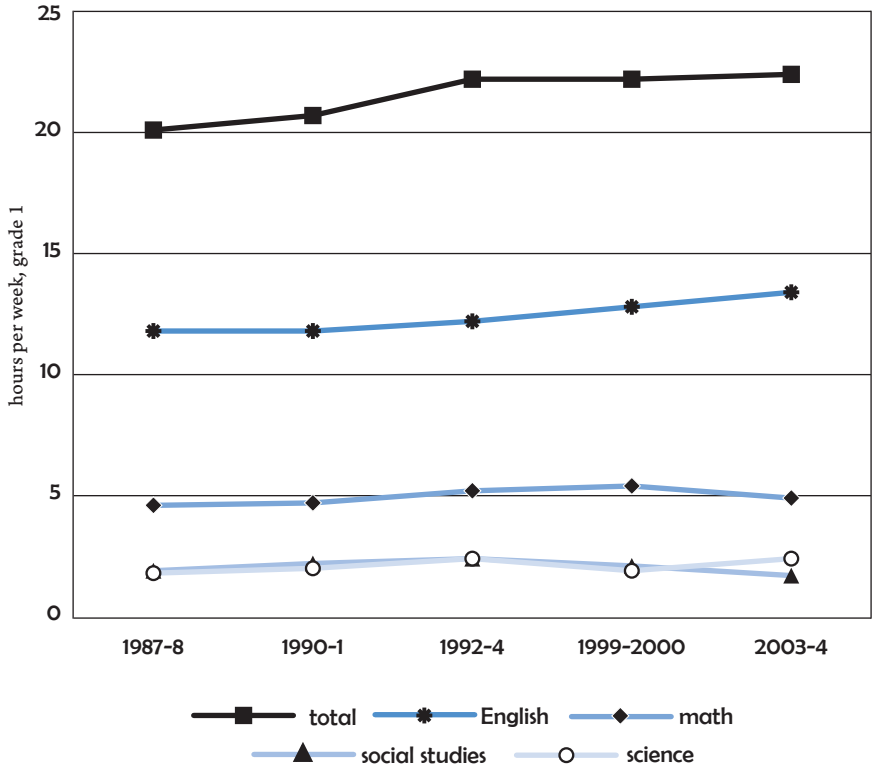
However, between 1993-4 and 2003-4, while time devoted to reading and mathematics expanded in all grades, time allocated by teachers to social studies and science generally shrank. This trend began before the

Graph 1: Time Allocated to Four Major Subjects in Public Schools, Grades 1 to 5



The trend lines for science and social studies overlap in this graph.
Federal Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS), analyzed by CIRCLE

Graph 2: Time Allocated to Four Major Subjects in Public Schools, First Grade



The trend lines for science and social studies overlap in this graph.
SASS, analyzed by CIRCLE

passage of NCLB and continued thereafter. As a result, time allocated to social studies and science in 2003-4 was slightly below where it had been in the mid-1980s. We hypothesize that increased attention to academic achievement first helped social studies and science; but then a tighter focus on reading and mathematics cut into time for these subjects.

These findings seem to contrast with current surveys of district leaders (by the Center for Education Policy) and citizens (by Gallup), who assert that the curriculum has narrowed significantly since NCLB and that social studies, in particular, has been cut. This is less a conflict than a difference in perspective. We find, for example, that fifth-grade teachers report spending only about six minutes per week less on social studies in 2003-4 than in 1987-8. This change seems small. However, the decline in fifth grade social studies between 1999-2000 and 2003-4 was fairly large, about 24 minutes per week, and happened fairly quickly after a period of slow growth in social studies. Thus observers are right to notice a troubling recent trend, even though taking a longer view seems to reduce its magnitude.

In sum, the evidence about time allocations in elementary school, as reported by teachers, shows some overall decline in attention to the liberal arts subjects of natural science and social studies/history. These data have limitations, including possibly inaccurate reporting by teachers, sampling bias, and the crudeness of using time allocations to measure the curriculum. However, since time allocations are reported by teachers rather than administrators or students, it is likely that the SASS provides a reliable estimate of how instructional time is allocated in elementary school classrooms.

The SASS data only measure the allocation of time to a subject area as reported by a teacher. SASS does not measure intensity of instruction or quality of instruction. It could be, for example, that less time is being allocated for social studies but that instruction has become more

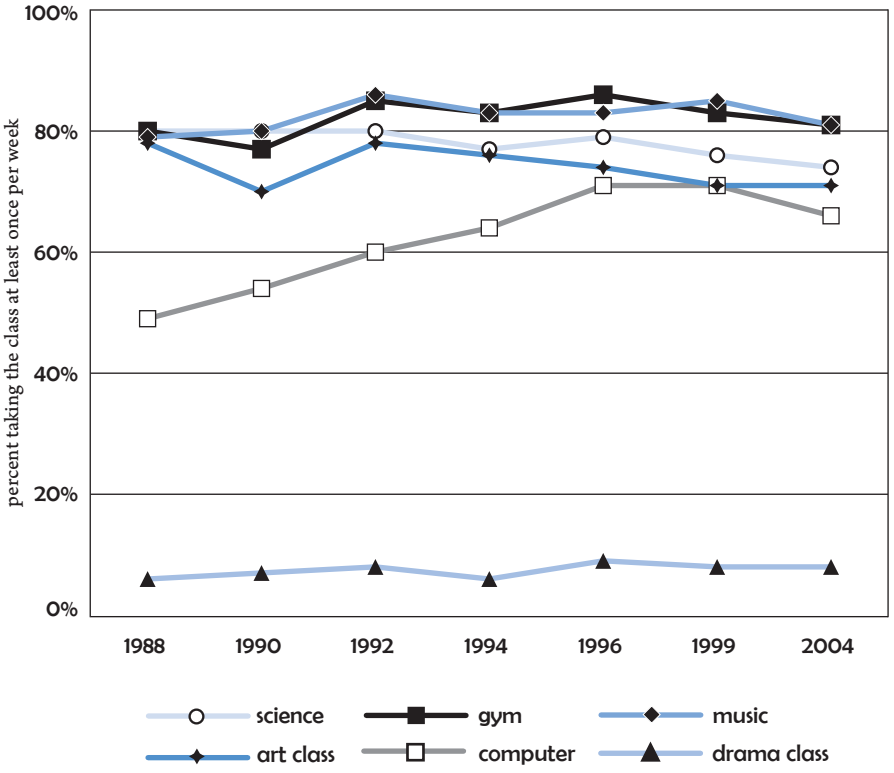
effective in recent years. However, data about instructional techniques in the social studies do not show marked changes over time. The 1998 and 2006 National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) Civics Assessment asked fourth-grade teachers about 13 methods and techniques that they might use when teaching social studies.[22] The most pronounced shifts in use of these methods were drops in the percentages of teachers who assigned reports and asked students to watch films or videos (perhaps a reflection of reduced time for the subject). Reading from textbooks remained the most common activity, at 75 percent in 1998 and 76 percent in 2006. Student outcomes—skills and knowledge—rose slightly at fourth grade according to the NAEP Civics Assessment.[23]

"Special" classes

An excellent source of data on participation in classes that NAEP designates as "specials" (such as art, music, gym, computer, and science) is the supplementary survey that students complete when they take the NAEP Reading Assessment.[24] Graph 3 shows that for 9-year-olds, self-reported participation in computer classes has become considerably more common since 1988, although there was a drop between 1999 and 2004, the era of NCLB. In contrast, art classes have become distinctly less common, drawing 78 percent of all students in 1992, but 71 percent in 2004. Science has become somewhat less common as a "special" class; this decline is statistically significant at six percent and reinforces a decline in science as a homeroom subject (noted earlier). The changes in the other "specials" are very small.

Overall, we find the student self-reports of changes in "specials" to be fairly modest but detrimental to the arts. These results, however, have several limitations: they rely on student self-reports and not school transcripts; they reveal only how many students take "special" classes, not how much time they spend in such classes; and we cannot see whether subjects such as art and music are taught in homeroom.

Graph 3: NAEP-Designated "Special" Classes at Age 9



NAEP Long-Term Trend Assessment in Reading

We do know that the proportion of 9-year-olds who wrote a story for reading/language arts rose from 44 percent in 1988 to 51 percent in 2004, which is evidence that one art form—fiction—is being used in the main classroom. (The proportion who wrote plays and who wrote poems remained basically unchanged over this period.)[25]

MIDDLE SCHOOL

We have not found evidence that the curriculum for grades 6-8 has been much affected by the narrowing problem.

The Center on Education Policy's surveys of school districts did not find evidence of curricular narrowing at the middle school level. In 2007, according to CEP, "Most districts reported that their middle schools devoted about the same amount of instructional time to subjects other than [English/language arts] and math as they did before NCLB took effect."[26]

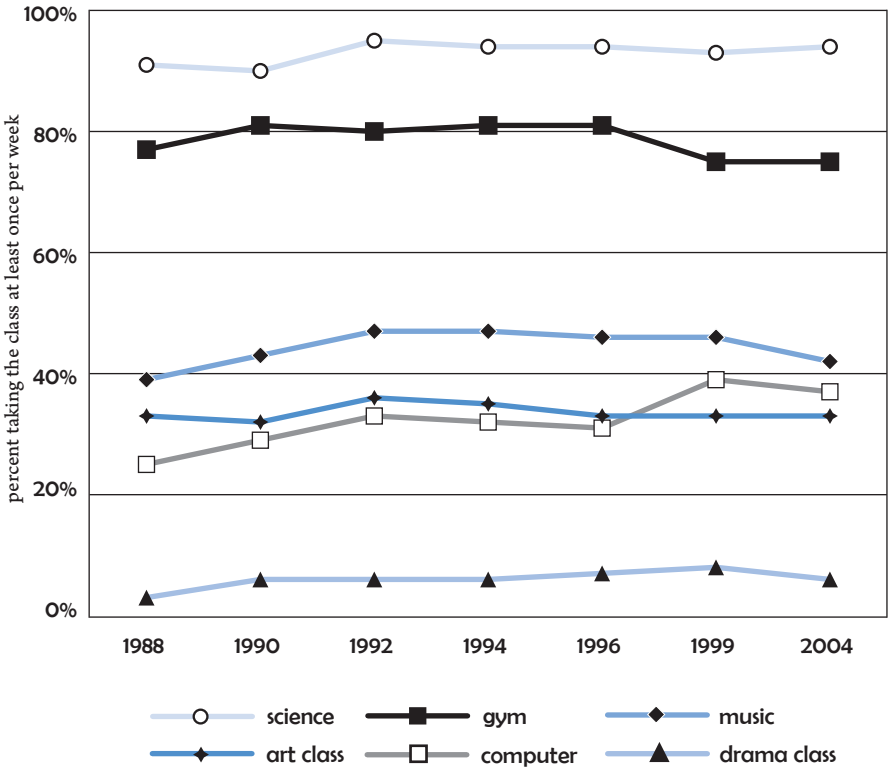
Using the supplemental survey administered with the NAEP Reading Assessment at age 13 (typically, eighth grade), we do not find dramatic changes in the "special" courses that students take.

We conclude that narrowing is not a major issue at the middle school level.

HIGH SCHOOL

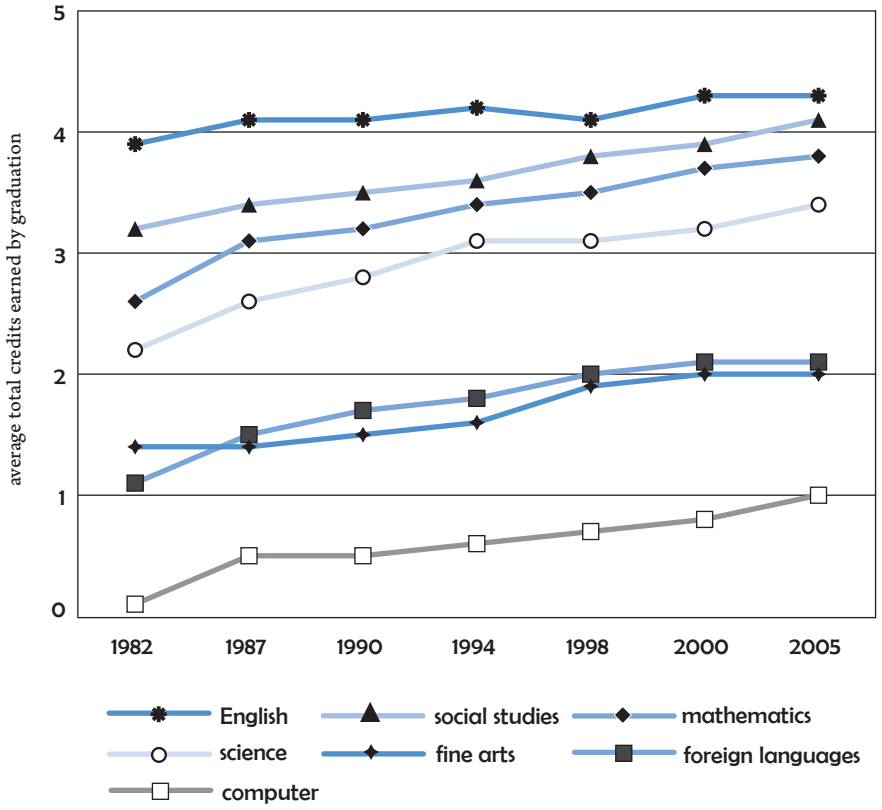
In high school, the main determinant of the curriculum is the range of courses that a student takes. The NAEP has conducted many transcript surveys of high school students, obtaining a sample of student transcripts and coding them to allow for broad comparisons across schools and time. Utilizing the NAEP transcript studies, we are able to track course completion.[27] Graph 5 shows a substantial increase in the total number of credits earned by graduation since 1982 (an average of five more credits per student). The number of credits earned in vocational and consumer-oriented courses has fallen over this period. The number of credits earned in all the major liberal arts courses, however, has grown. Students who graduate from high school obtain more credits in English, social studies, science, mathematics, foreign languages, and fine arts.

Graph 4: NAEP-Designated "Special" Classes at Age 13



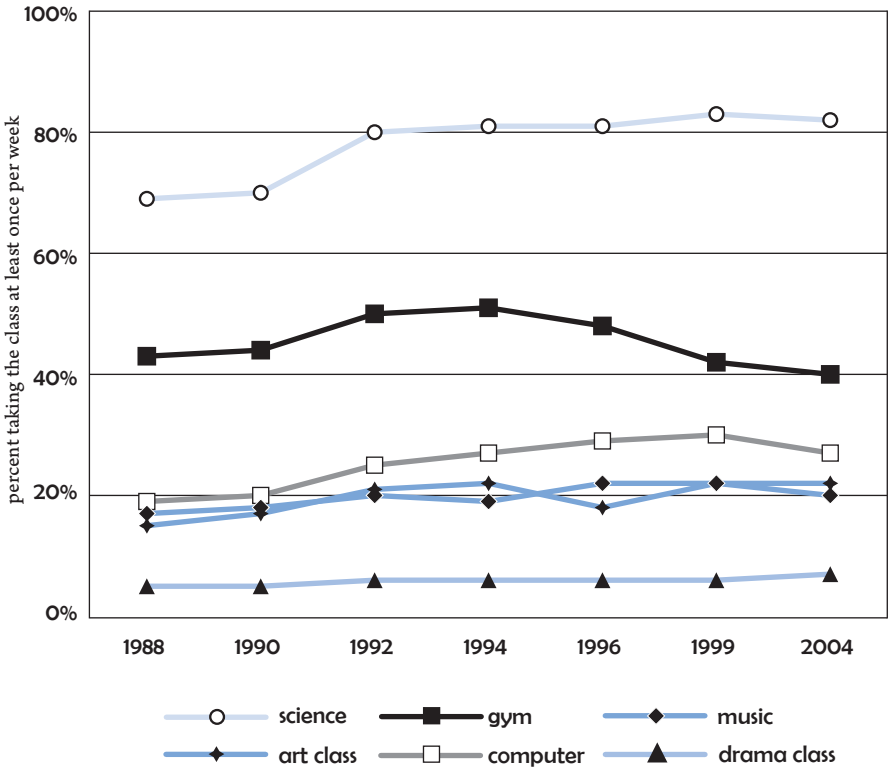
NAEP Long-Term Trend Assessment in Reading

Graph 5: Average Number of Credits Earned by High School Graduates



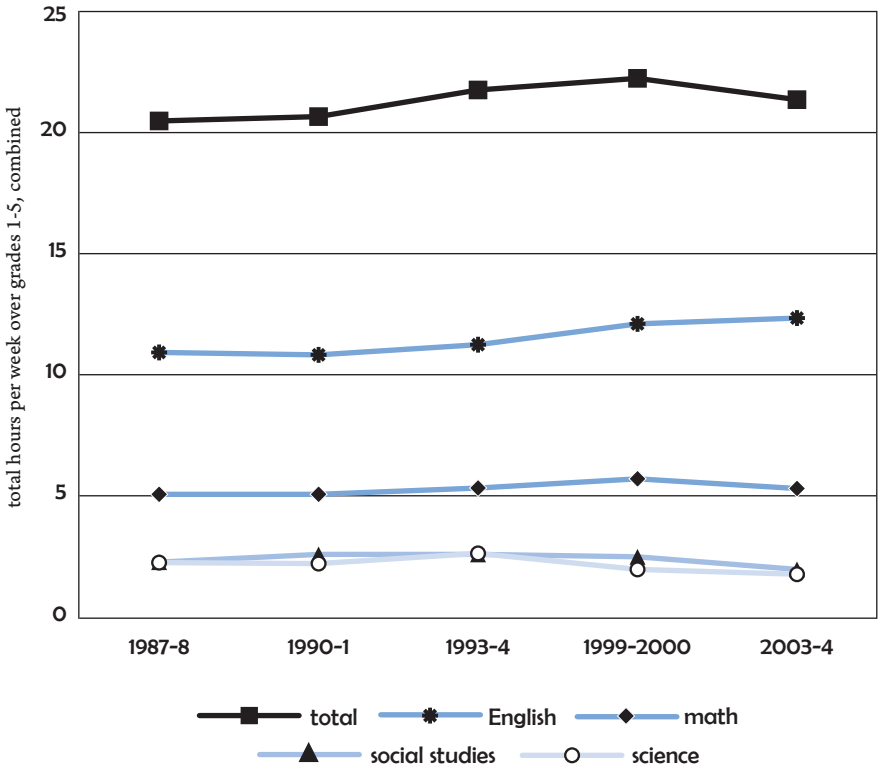
NAEP Transcript Study

Graph 6: NAEP-Designated "Special" Classes at Age 17



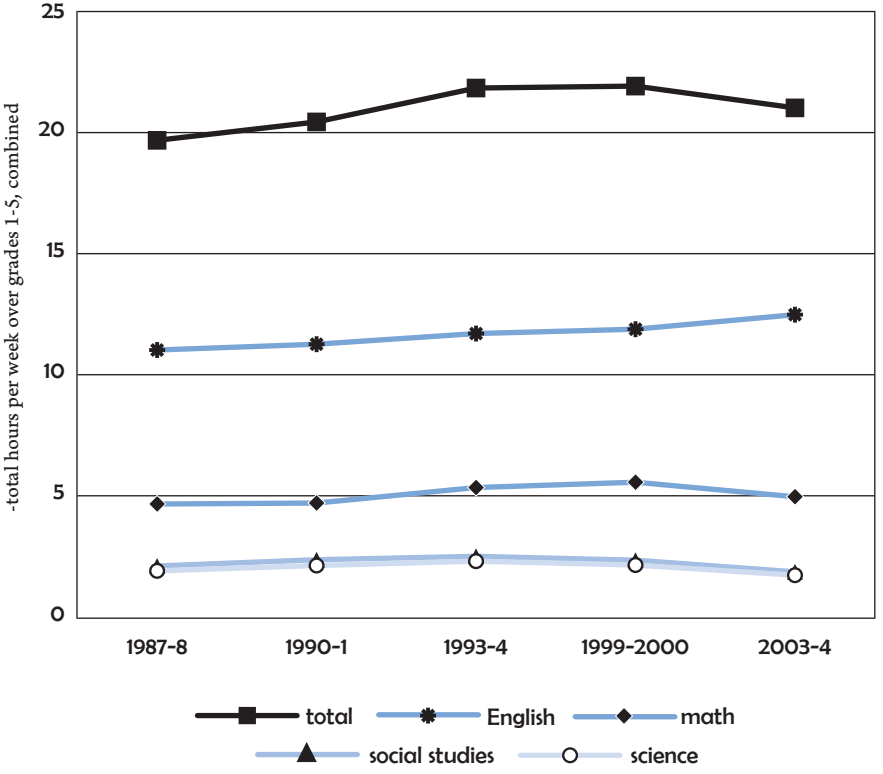
NAEP Long-Term Trend Assessment in Reading

Graph 7: Time Allocated to Four Major Subjects, Public Schools with More Than 50 Percent Minority Students



The trend lines for science and social studies overlap in this graph.
SASS, analyzed by CIRCLE

Graph 8: Time Allocated to Four Major Subjects, Public Schools with Less Than 50 Percent Minority Students



The trend lines for science and social studies overlap in this graph.
SASS, analyzed by CIRCLE

The major limitation of this source is that the NAEP reports the credits earned by students who have graduated from high school. As a result, students who do not graduate from high school are omitted. There is no precise count of high school dropouts nationally, but estimates run as high as 29 percent of those who enter ninth grade.[28] If the curriculum broadens only for students who make it all the way through high school, then it never broadens for some.

In addition to examining transcripts, we can also ask which subjects students say they have studied. The student survey attached to the NAEP Reading Assessment provides such information for 17-year-olds. Graph 6 shows statistically significant increases in the proportion of students who report that they have taken a course in art, drama, and music weekly, although participation in these subjects remains relatively low, suggesting that these subjects are not prevalent in the curriculum. Self-reported participation in science courses has become much more common while gym has fallen off.

By age 17, close to the end of high school, students have passed the point at which NCLB testing requirements apply. Many students have completed state requirements for graduation. During that period of relative freedom or flexibility, it appears that they are taking slightly more arts classes, but less gym, than in the past.

HOW HAVE VARIOUS GROUPS FARED?

There are reasons to worry that the curriculum may narrow disproportionately for students who are people of color and/or poor. These students are most likely to attend schools that are furthest from meeting state and federal mandates in reading and math; their schools also may lack resources to provide "special" classes such as music and art. Judith Pace writes in *Education Week* that the "social studies squeeze occurs disproportionately in low-performing schools with large minority and low-income populations that are under intense pressure to raise scores." [29]

We find mixed evidence on this point. According to SASS teacher self-reports of how they allocate their in-classroom time across topics, the curriculum is very similar—and has changed in similar ways—in schools that are majority-white and in schools where the majority of students are children of color.

The differences between graphs 7 and 8 are almost invisible and probably inconsequential. For example, an average of six minutes more time per week was devoted to social studies in majority-minority schools than in majority-white schools. Teachers in majority-white schools reported spending eight minutes more on English than teachers in majority-minority schools in 2003-4.

Greater differences emerge when we compare urban, suburban, and rural public schools. In general, urban and rural schools are at greater risk of failing to meet standards and accountability measures. Our analysis of SASS data finds that the urban and rural public schools spend somewhat less time on social studies and science than their suburban counterparts, and spend correspondingly more time on English. Mathematics is allocated less time in rural public schools than in urban or suburban public schools, whereas rural schools spend the most time on English.

The trends since 1987 generally look similar in all three types of community (see graphs 9-11). However, the increase in time allocated to English in rural schools is a significant anomaly. Rural public school students spent two hours more per week on English in 2003-4 than their predecessors did in 1987-8. Science and social studies decreased by a total of about half an hour per week in rural public schools over this period.

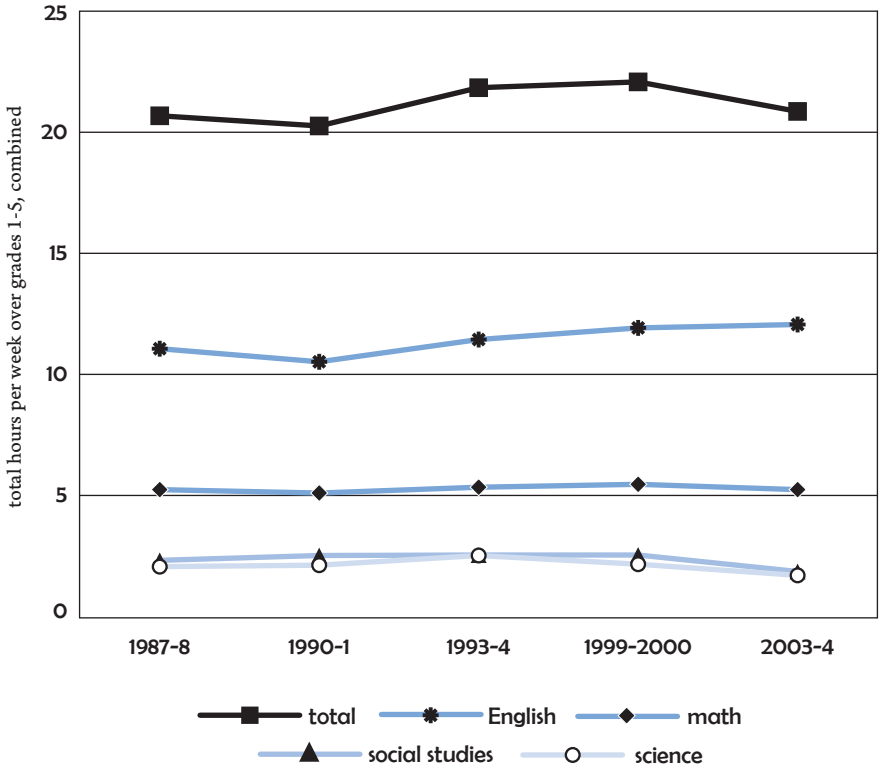
We are also able to compare public and private schools using the SASS. We find that teachers in public schools devote substantially more total

time to mathematics and reading/language arts than teachers in private schools. Thus, by sending a child to private elementary school, one purchases more attention to social studies and science.

Public schools are more directly affected by NCLB and other government policies than private schools are. Yet the trends in the allocation of time are roughly similar in public and private schools. Both types of schools have cut back proportionally on social studies and science since the 1999-2000 school year.

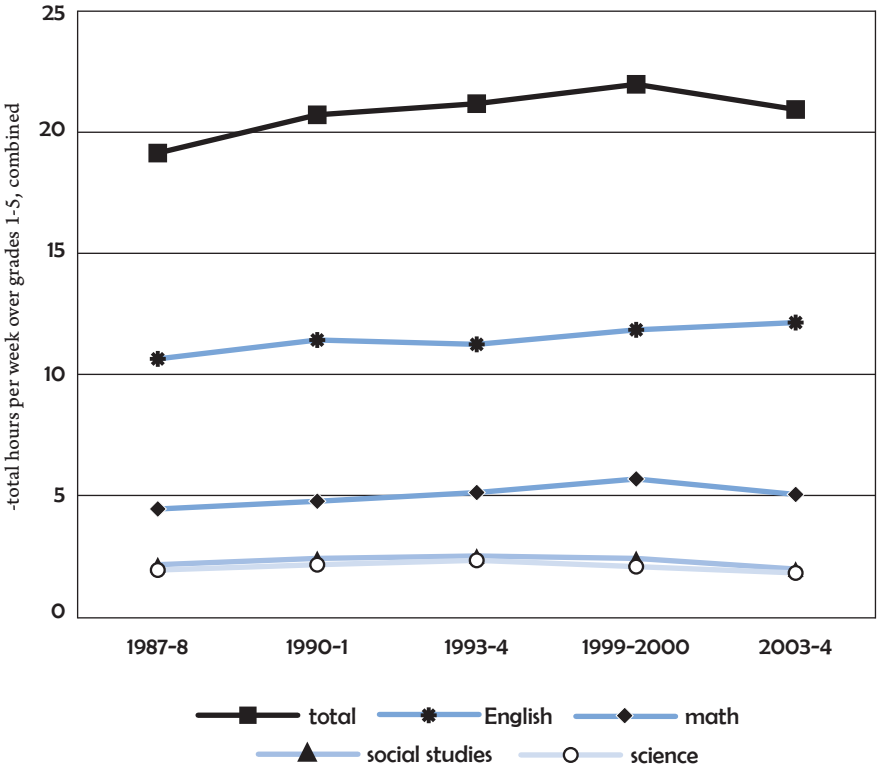
Finally, using the SASS, we can track allocations of time by experienced teachers versus teachers who are new to the profession. We would

Graph 9: Time Allocated to Four Major Subjects in Urban Public Schools, Grades 1 to 5



The trend lines for science and social studies overlap in this graph.
SASS, analyzed by CIRCLE

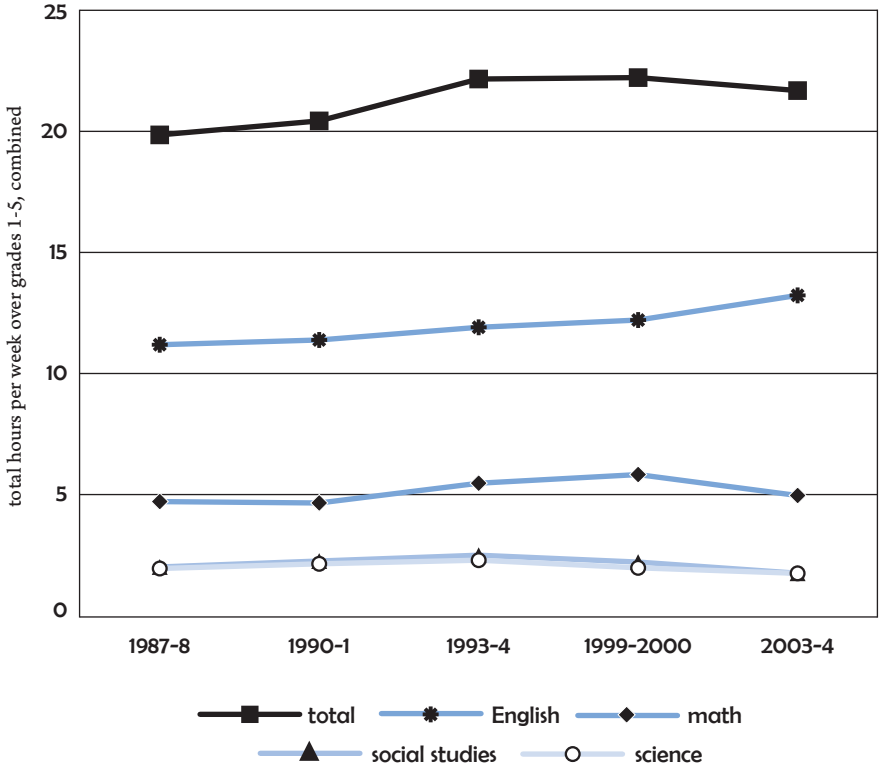
Graph 10: Time Allocated to Four Major Subjects in Suburban Public Schools, Grades 1 to 5



The trend lines for science and social studies overlap in this graph.
SASS, analyzed by CIRCLE

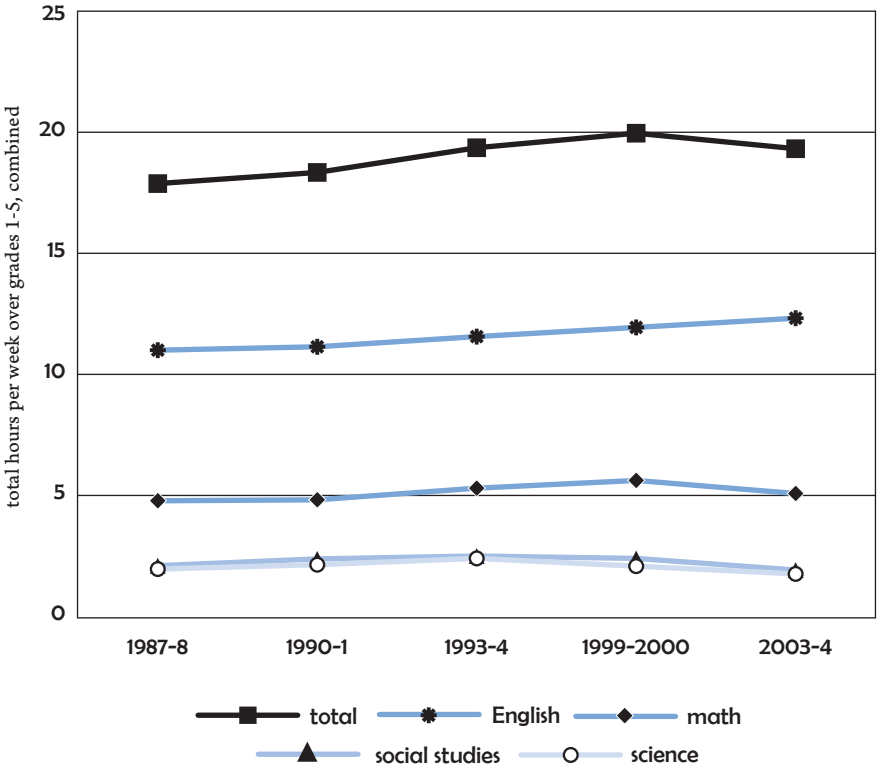
expect that experienced elementary school teachers would have some reluctance to change their allocations of time and would thus offer a broader curriculum, compared to new teachers who have been trained in the era of NCLB. The contrary is true, according to the SASS. In recent years, experienced teachers have spent more time on English and less time on social studies and science at the elementary level than their new colleagues have. They have changed their time allocations to favor English since the 1980s, whereas new teachers are still allocating time much like their predecessors who entered the profession around 1987.[30]

Graph 11: Time Allocated to Four Major Subjects in Rural Public Schools, Grades 1 to 5



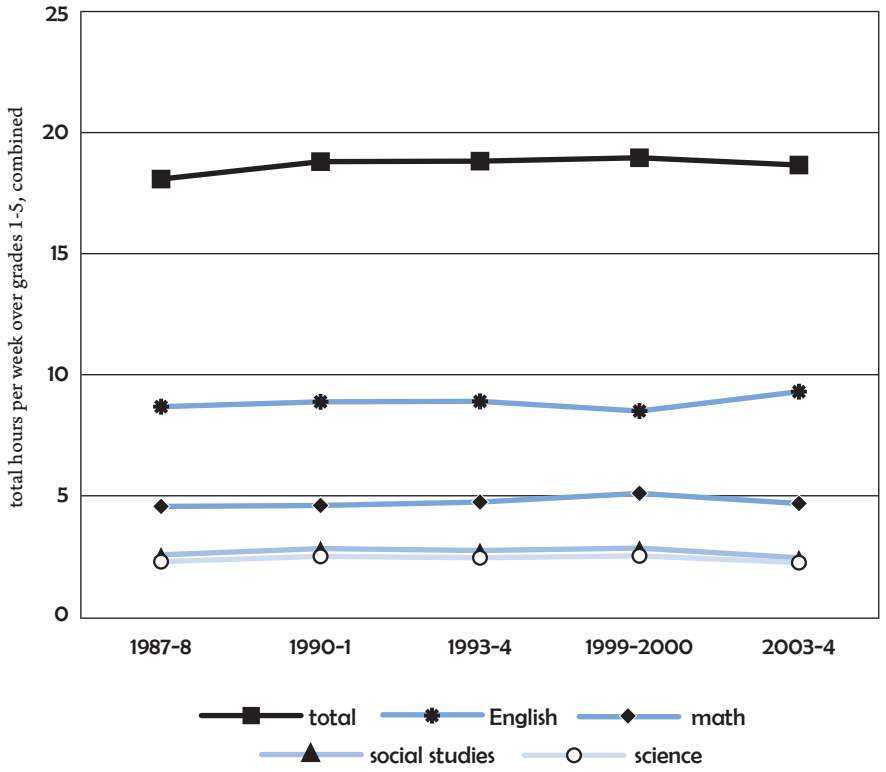
The trend lines for science and social studies overlap in this graph.
SASS, analyzed by CIRCLE

Graph 12: Time Allocated to Four Major Subjects in Public Schools, Grades 1 to 5



The trend lines for science and social studies overlap in this graph.
SASS, analyzed by CIRCLE

Graph 13: Time Allocated to Four Major Subjects in Private Schools, Grades 1 to 5



The trend lines for science and social studies overlap in this graph.
SASS, analyzed by CIRCLE

WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES?

Schooling is not just about courses. Schools also offer extracurricular activities (sometimes called "co-curricular" activities) that can be highly educational. Indeed, so many types of extracurricular activities are available in our nation's schools from kindergarten until 12th grade that it is difficult to bring the overall trends in participation into sharp focus. Here, we track three major forms of extracurricular participation that seem especially relevant to the narrowing issue:

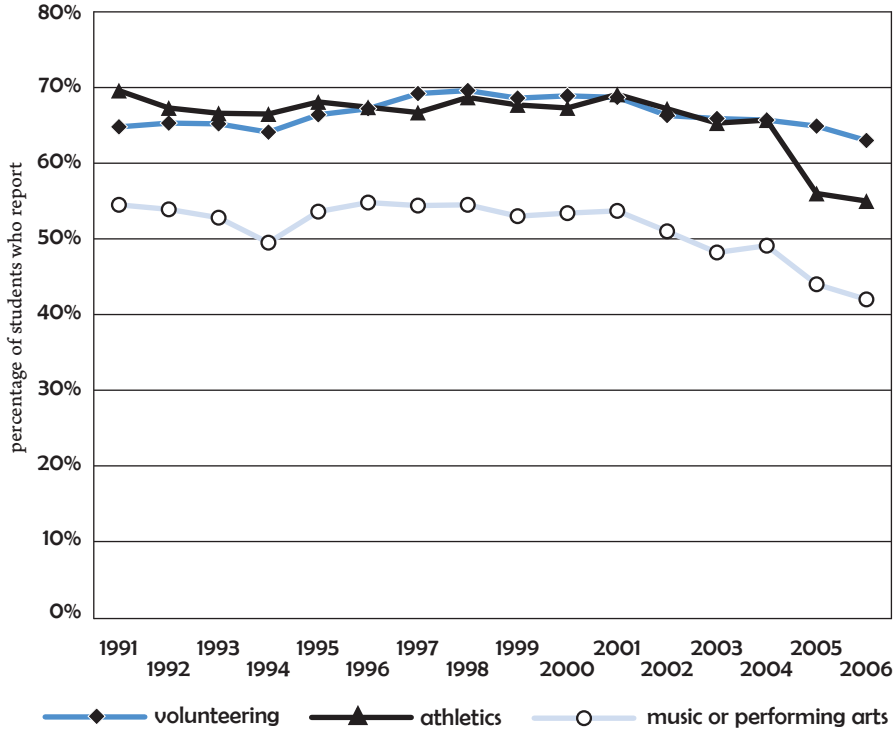
- music and performing arts, which serve similar purposes to music and drama classes
- athletic teams and activities, which serve the same purposes as gym class and also teach skills and habits relevant to civic participation, such as belonging to groups; and
- volunteering, which can teach powerful lessons about social issues, politics, and civil society, especially if the volunteering is connected to academic work ("service-learning")

At the eighth grade level, the annual federal survey known as Monitoring the Future finds small but significant declines in the proportion of students who report participation in athletics and music or performing arts activities. Volunteering has been basically flat. The declines seemed to accelerate in 2005 and 2006, although one should treat short-term trends with caution.

At 10th grade, we see fairly significant increases in the prevalence of music and performing arts and volunteering until 2004, and stable rates of athletic participation. Again, 2006 saw declines, but we cannot yet tell whether that year represents a trend.

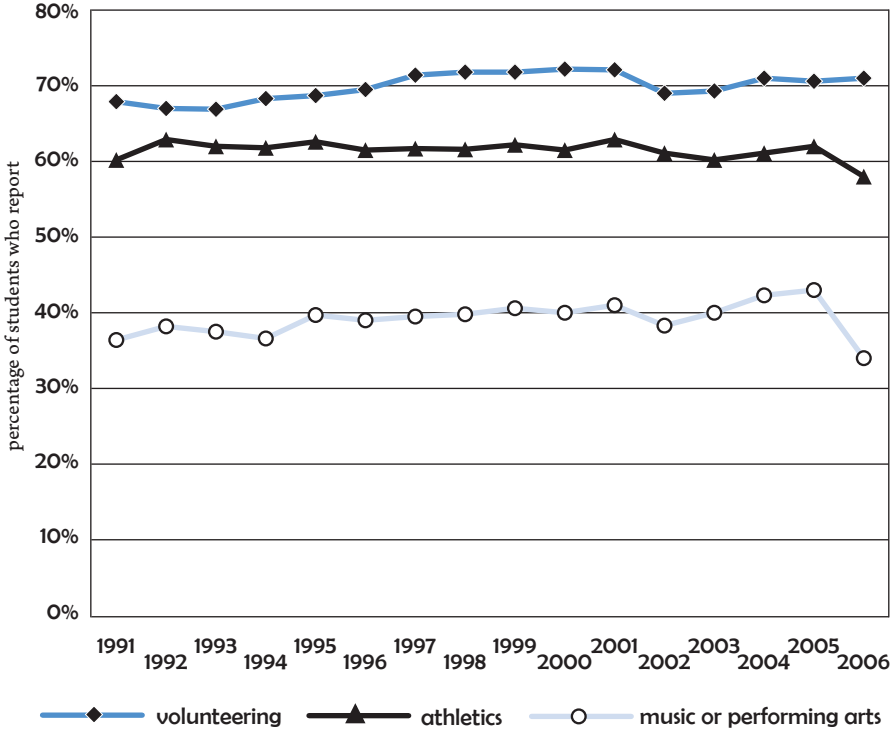
Finally, at 12th grade, we see little change in music and performing arts

Graph 14: Extracurriculars at Eighth Grade



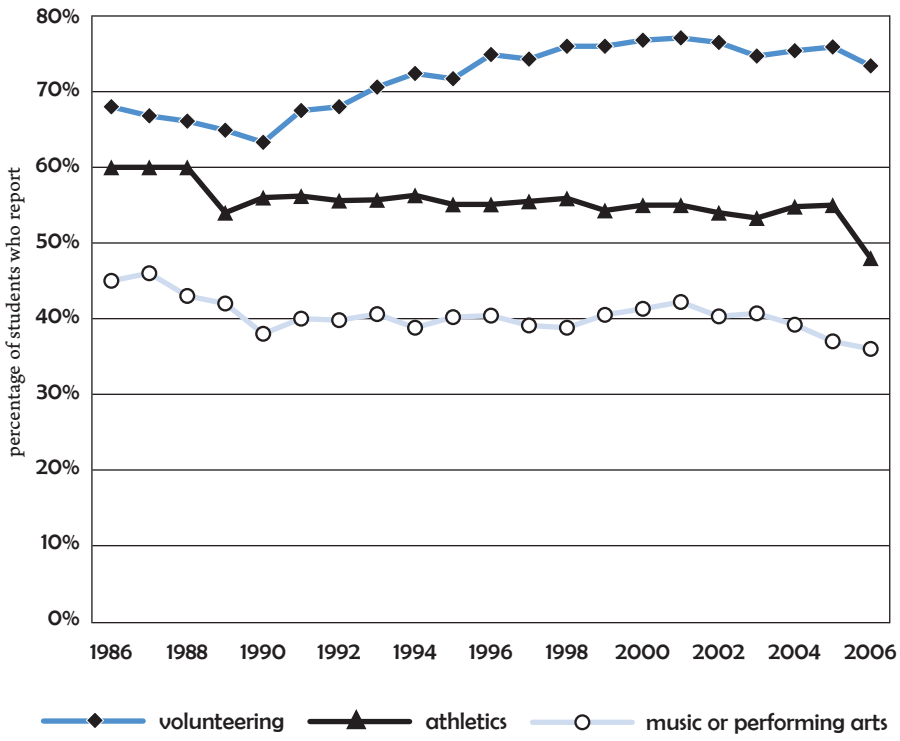
Monitoring the Future, tabulated by CIRCLE except for athletics and music-performing arts for 1991-2004, which are tabulated by Child Trends

Graph 15: Extracurriculars at 10th Grade



Monitoring the Future, tabulated by CIRCLE except for athletics and music-performing arts for 1991-2004, which are tabulated by Child Trends

Graph 16: Extracurriculars at 12th Grade



Monitoring the Future, tabulated by CIRCLE except for athletics and music-performing arts for 1991-2004, which are tabulated by Child Trends

or in athletic participation, but participation in volunteering activities increased substantially after 1990.

In summary, the rate of extracurricular participation for the whole of the K-12 population does not appear to have changed dramatically, but there are significant shifts, such as the decline in music and performing arts in eighth grade and the increase in volunteering in high school. These trends reinforce the patterns found in the main curriculum.

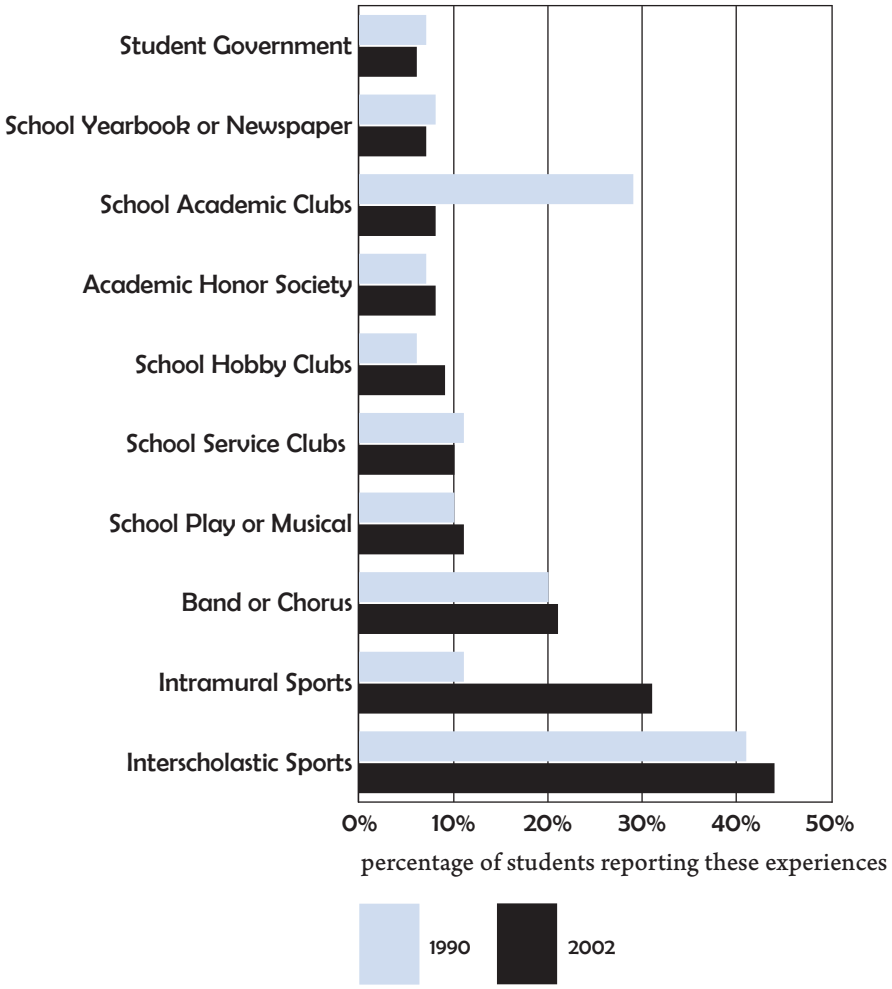
Another major source of data on extracurricular participation is a series of longitudinal studies, funded by the federal government, that have followed selected classes of American public school students through their academic careers and early adulthood. The National Educational Longitudinal Study (NELS) follows the class of 1992, and the Educational Longitudinal Study (ELS) follows the class of 2004. By comparing these surveys, we can observe changes in extracurricular participation before and after NCLB and other recent educational reform efforts. NELS and ELS measure more extracurricular activities than Monitoring the Future does, although they provide data for only two cohorts.

The NELS/ELS data reveal that academic clubs (such as French Club or Science Club) have fallen substantially in 10th grade. There have been modest but significant declines in student government and school newspaper/yearbook, which are important components of civic education in American schools. Sports, and especially intramural sports, have increased in prevalence.

The same NELS/ELS data also provide evidence about changes at 12th grade. At this level, none of the changes are dramatic, but there is some increase in student government and school newspaper, and a decline in interscholastic sports.

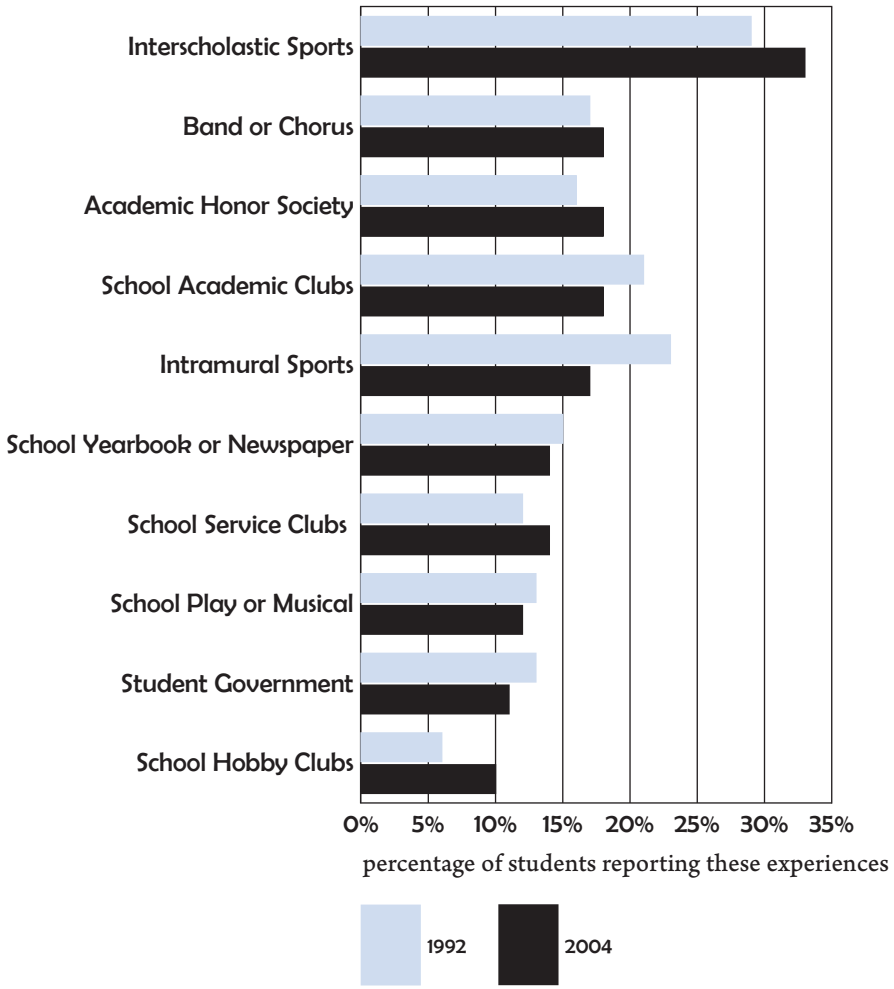
The pattern observed in the curriculum seems to hold for extracurricular activities as well. At least until 2005-2006, experiences broadened for 12th graders, but many young people do not reach senior year of high school.

Graph 17: Selected Extracurriculars at 10th Grade



Educational Longitudinal Study of 2002 and National Educational Longitudinal Study of 1988, tabulated by CIRCLE

Graph 18: Selected Extracurriculars at 12th Grade



Educational Longitudinal Study of 2002 and National Educational Longitudinal Study of 1988, tabulated by CIRCLE

IS NCLB RESPONSIBLE FOR THE NARROWING IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL?

News reports and editorials have drawn a fairly clear and simple relationship between No Child Left Behind and subjects such as social studies, history, art, and foreign languages. One administrator surveyed by the Center on Education Policy in 2006 said, "[NCLB] has torn apart our social studies curriculum. We are raising tomorrow's leaders and [it's] forcing us to fill their heads with math facts that do not make them better leaders or help students make choices."[31]

The evidence we have collected suggests that there is not such a simple, causal relationship between NCLB and the narrowing of the curriculum.

- If NCLB caused the narrowing, we would expect declines in instructional time for subjects other than reading and math to be most pronounced after 2002, when NCLB was enacted. In fact, the declines began between 1993-4 and 1999-2000 and continued, but did not become notably more pronounced, after 2002.
- If NCLB caused the narrowing, the change would be significant in middle school, since NCLB requires high-stakes tests at eighth grade. In fact, we find a stable curriculum in middle school.
- If NCLB caused the narrowing, we would expect new teachers to emphasize English and math more than experienced teachers. New teachers would be most influenced by current expectations, whereas veteran teachers would retain priorities from earlier periods. The reverse is true; newer teachers provide a broader curriculum.
- If NCLB caused the narrowing, we would expect a divergence between public schools and private schools, since the latter are much less affected by NCLB. In fact, the trends are parallel in public and private schools.

We conclude that there has been a narrowing of the United States curriculum at the elementary level—especially at first grade and especially in rural public schools—but it has more causes than NCLB alone. NCLB, after all, emerged from a whole movement for standards and accountability in reading and mathematics that also affected state and local policies, teacher training programs, the priorities of students and parents, and textbook publishers. To the extent that narrowing is a problem, NCLB may be more a symptom than a fundamental cause.

This does not mean, of course, that the Act should be reauthorized exactly as it is. It codifies and reinforces narrowing trends that require critical discussion. Although the changes in elementary curricula have been relatively modest so far, the trend points toward narrowing, and that pattern deserves review.

RECOMMENDATIONS

CIRCLE recommends that all stakeholders—including legislators, educational administrators, teachers, parents, and students themselves—give critical attention to the ways that the American curriculum has changed since the 1980s and 1990s. Citizens may wish to consider the following positions:

1. Back to basics. Reading and math are fundamental. Performance in these subjects is inadequate for the whole population and very unequal. We need to focus our attention on these subjects until all students can read, write, and calculate. The trends toward more reading and math in elementary education are desirable.

2. The liberal arts. Education today is too instrumental. It is all about outcomes, especially economic outcomes. It overlooks the intrinsic value of subjects like history, fine arts, natural sciences, foreign languages, and current events.

3. Cultural literacy. The only way to be literate is to have a base of facts, concepts, and vocabulary. We obtain that base best by studying history, natural science, social science, and foreign cultures. The trends shown in this report indicate that we are failing to emphasize cultural literacy in the early years; and that is why reading scores are flat despite increased time devoted to reading/language arts.

4. Civic mission. The purpose of schools is not (only) to prepare workers, but also to create an active and egalitarian democracy. That mission requires widespread literacy and numeracy. But it also requires specific knowledge of history, government, social issues, and current events. We are losing those elements of the curriculum.

This discussion should be based on reliable information. Thus it is important for the federal government to collect and disseminate detailed data about the courses, extracurricular activities, and other opportunities that our students receive at all ages and grade levels.

CIRCLE (The Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement) studies the civic and political engagement of Americans between the ages of 15 and 25. CIRCLE is part of the Jonathan M. Tisch College of Citizenship and Public Service at Tufts University. CIRCLE's research is online at www.civicyouth.org. This report was funded by a generous grant from the Ford Foundation. The authors are solely responsible this document but wish to thank Andrew Dean Ho, Molly McCloskey, and Patrick Phillips for comments.

APPENDIX I: DATA SOURCES

Schools and Staffing Survey: The Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) is a Department of Education survey of teachers, principals, and district administrators about school conditions, staff compensation, teaching needs of schools, demographic characteristics of staff, and allocation of time by teachers to specific aspects of the curriculum. Each data collection is a nationally representative cross-section. In this report, the teacher survey has been utilized to assess how teachers allocate their time in their classrooms to specific subjects. Data are available for the school years 1987-88, 1990-91, 1993-94, 1999-2000, and 2003-2004.

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) High School Transcript Study: The NAEP Transcript study is a Department of Education collection of transcripts from high school graduates across the United States. The Department of Education has conducted NAEP transcript studies in 1982, 1987, 1990, 1994, 1998, 2000, and 2005. In 2005, more than 20,000 transcripts were collected from public and non-public schools from a nationally representative sample of schools.

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Long-Term Trend Assessment in Reading: The NAEP Reading Assessment is administered to nationally representative samples of students at age 9, 13, and 17. The long-term trend version of the assessment is kept as consistent as possible over time to permit comparisons. It has been administered in 1971, 1975, 1980, 1984, 1988, 1990, 1992, 1994, 1996, 1999, and 2004.

Monitoring the Future: The Monitoring the Future (MTF) data collection is an annual survey of more than 50,000 students asking them about their drug use and activities related to school. Since 1976, a sample of 12th graders has been interviewed. Since 1991, a sample of eighth and 10th graders has been included. Currently the survey is administered by the Survey Research Center in the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan under grants from the National Institute on Drug Abuse, a part of the National Institutes of Health.

National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS:88) and Education Longitudinal Study of 2002 (ELS:2002). NELS:88 surveyed a nationally representative sample of eighth-graders in 1988 and then followed them until 2000. ELS:2002 surveyed a nationally representative sample of high school sophomores in 2002 and then followed up in 2004. These studies are conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) of the U.S. Department of Education.

APPENDIX II: TABLES

Tabulations by CIRCLE staff unless otherwise noted.

Table 1: Time Allocated to Four Major Subjects in Public Schools, Grades 1 to 5

U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS)					
	science	social studies	math	English	total
1987-8	1.96	2.10	4.78	11.00	17.88
1990-1	2.14	2.38	4.82	11.14	18.34
1993-4	2.40	2.50	5.30	11.56	19.36
1999-2000	2.08	2.40	5.62	11.94	19.96
2003-4	1.76	1.92	5.08	12.32	19.32
average total hours per week over grades 1-5					

Table 2: Time Allocated to Four Major Subjects in Public Schools, First Grade

U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS)

	English	math	social studies	science	total
1987-8	11.8	4.6	1.9	1.8	20.1
1990-1	11.8	4.7	2.2	2.0	20.7
1992-4	12.2	5.2	2.4	2.4	22.2
1999-2000	12.8	5.4	2.1	1.9	22.2
2003-4	13.4	4.9	1.7	2.4	22.4

average total hours per week over grades 1-5

Table 3: NAEP-Designated "Special" Classes at Age 9

U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, NAEP Long-Term Trend Surveys in Reading

	drama class	art class	music	computer	gym	science
1988	6%	78%	79%	49%	80%	80%
1990	7%	70%	80%	54%	77%	80%
1992	8%	78%	86%	60%	85%	80%
1994	6%	76%	83%	64%	83%	77%
1996	9%	74%	83%	71%	86%	79%
1999	8%	71%	85%	71%	83%	76%
2004	8%	71%	81%	66%	81%	74%

percentage who report taking these classes in a week

Table 4: NAEP-Designated "Special" Classes at Age 13

U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, NAEP Long-Term Trend Surveys in Reading

	art	computer	drama	gym	music	science
1988	33%	25%	3%	77%	39%	91%
1990	32%	29%	6%	81%	43%	90%
1992	36%	33%	6%	80%	47%	95%
1994	35%	32%	6%	81%	47%	94%
1996	33%	31%	7%	81%	46%	94%
1999	33%	39%	8%	75%	46%	93%
2004	33%	37%	6%	75%	42%	94%

percentage who report taking these classes in a week

Table 5: Average Number of Credits Earned by High School Graduates

U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, High School Transcript Study (HSTS), Selected years 1987–2000; High School and Beyond (HS&B), 1982. For source of tabulations, please see note 27.

	total	math	science	English	social studies	fine arts	foreign lang.	comp.
1982	21.8	2.6	2.2	3.9	3.2	1.4	1.1	0.1
1987	23.1	3.1	2.6	4.1	3.4	1.4	1.5	0.5
1990	23.6	3.2	2.8	4.1	3.5	1.5	1.7	0.5
1994	24.3	3.4	3.1	4.2	3.6	1.6	1.8	0.6
1998	25.3	3.5	3.1	4.1	3.8	1.9	2.0	0.7
2000	26.2	3.7	3.2	4.3	3.9	2.0	2.1	0.8
2005	26.8	3.8	3.4	4.3	4.1	2.0	2.1	1.0

average total credits earned by graduation

Table 6: NAEP-Designated "Special" Classes at Age 17

U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, NAEP Long-Term Trend Surveys in Reading						
	art	computer	drama	gym	music	science
1988	15%	19%	5%	43%	17%	69%
1990	17%	20%	5%	44%	18%	70%
1992	21%	25%	6%	50%	20%	80%
1994	22%	27%	6%	51%	19%	81%
1996	18%	29%	6%	48%	22%	81%
1999	22%	30%	6%	42%	22%	83%
2004	22%	27%	7%	40%	20%	82%
percentage who report taking these classes in a week						

Table 7: Time Allocated to Four Major Subjects, Public Schools with More than 50 Percent Minority Students

U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS)					
	science	social studies	math	English	total
1987-1988	2.24	2.26	5.06	10.92	20.48
1990-1991	2.20	2.58	5.06	10.82	20.66
1993-1994	2.62	2.58	5.32	11.24	21.76
1999-2000	1.96	2.48	5.70	12.10	22.24
2003-2004	1.76	1.96	5.30	12.34	21.36
average total hours per week over grades 1-5					

Table 8: Time Allocated to Four Major Subjects, Public Schools with Less than 50 Percent Minority Students

U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS)					
	science	social studies	math	English	total
1987-1988	1.90	2.10	4.66	11.02	19.68
1990-1991	2.12	2.36	4.70	11.26	20.44
1993-1994	2.30	2.50	5.34	11.70	21.84
1999-2000	2.14	2.34	5.56	11.88	21.92
2003-2004	1.72	1.86	4.96	12.48	21.02
average total hours per week over grades 1-5					

Table 9: Time Allocated to Four Major Subjects in Urban Public Schools, Grades 1 to 5

U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS)					
urban	science	social studies	math	English	total
1987-1988	2.06	2.32	5.24	11.06	20.68
1990-1991	2.12	2.52	5.10	10.52	20.26
1993-1994	2.52	2.54	5.34	11.44	21.84
1999-2000	2.16	2.54	5.46	11.92	22.08
2003-2004	1.70	1.86	5.24	12.06	20.86
average total hours per week over grades 1-5					

Table 10: Time Allocated to Four Major Subjects in Suburban Public Schools, Grades 1 to 5

U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS)					
	science	social studies	math	English	total
1987-1988	1.92	2.14	4.44	10.64	19.14
1990-1991	2.14	2.40	4.76	11.42	20.72
1993-1994	2.32	2.50	5.12	11.24	21.18
1999-2000	2.06	2.40	5.68	11.84	21.98
2003-2004	1.80	1.96	5.04	12.14	20.94
average total hours per week over grades 1-5					

Table 11: Time Allocated to Four Major Subjects in Rural Public Schools, Grades 1 to 5

U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS)					
	science	social studies	math	English	total
1987-1988	1.946	2.010	4.710	11.188	19.854
1990-1991	2.140	2.256	4.652	11.384	20.432
1993-1994	2.290	2.496	5.468	11.908	22.162
1999-2000	1.974	2.212	5.826	12.208	22.220
2003-2004	1.746	1.752	4.960	13.226	21.684
average total hours per week over grades 1-5					

Table 12: Time Allocated to Four Major Subjects in Public Schools, Grades 1 to 5

U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS)					
	science	social studies	math	English	total
1987-1988	1.96	2.10	4.78	11.00	17.88
1990-1991	2.14	2.38	4.82	11.14	18.34
1993-1994	2.40	2.50	5.30	11.56	19.36
1999-2000	2.08	2.40	5.62	11.94	19.96
2003-2004	1.76	1.92	5.08	12.32	19.32
average total hours per week over grades 1-5					

Table 13: Time Allocated to Four Major Subjects in Private Schools, Grades 1 to 5

U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS)					
	science	social studies	math	English	total
1987-1988	2.28	2.56	4.56	8.68	18.08
1990-1991	2.50	2.82	4.60	8.88	18.80
1993-1994	2.44	2.74	4.74	8.90	18.82
1999-2000	2.52	2.84	5.10	8.50	18.96
2003-2004	2.24	2.44	4.68	9.30	18.66
average total hours per week over grades 1-5					

Table 14: Extracurriculars at Eighth Grade

University of Michigan, Institute for Social Research, Monitoring the Future Surveys. Tabulations for Music/Performing Arts and Athletics for years 1991-2004 provided by Child Trends			
	music or performing arts at eighth grade	athletics	volunteering
1991	55%	70%	65%
1992	54%	67%	65%
1993	53%	67%	65%
1994	50%	67%	64%
1995	54%	68%	66%
1996	55%	67%	67%
1997	54%	67%	69%
1998	55%	69%	70%
1999	53%	68%	69%
2000	53%	67%	69%
2001	54%	69%	69%
2002	51%	67%	66%
2003	48%	65%	66%
2004	49%	66%	66%
2005	44%	56%	65%
2006	42%	55%	63%
percentage of students reporting these experiences			

Table 15: Extracurriculars at 10th Grade

University of Michigan, Institute for Social Research, Monitoring the Future Surveys. Tabulations for Music/Performing Arts and Athletics for years 1991-2004 provided by Child Trends			
	music or performing arts at 10th grade	athletics	volunteering
1991	36%	60%	68%
1992	38%	63%	67%
1993	38%	62%	67%
1994	37%	62%	68%
1995	40%	63%	69%
1996	39%	62%	69%
1997	40%	62%	71%
1998	40%	62%	72%
1999	41%	62%	72%
2000	40%	62%	72%
2001	41%	63%	72%
2002	38%	61%	69%
2003	40%	60%	69%
2004	42%	61%	71%
2005	43%	62%	71%
2006	34%	58%	71%
percentage of students reporting these experiences			

Table 16: Extracurriculars at 12th Grade

University of Michigan, Institute for Social Research, Monitoring the Future Surveys. Tabulations for Music/Performing Arts and Athletics for years 1991-2004 provided by Child Trends

	music or performing arts at 12th grade	athletics	volunteering
1986	45%	60%	68%
1987	46%	60%	67%
1988	43%	60%	66%
1989	42%	54%	65%
1990	38%	56%	63%
1991	40%	56%	67%
1992	40%	56%	68%
1993	41%	56%	71%
1994	39%	56%	72%
1995	40%	55%	72%
1996	40%	55%	75%
1997	39%	56%	74%
1998	39%	56%	76%
1999	41%	54%	76%
2000	41%	55%	77%
2001	42%	55%	77%
2002	40%	54%	76%
2003	41%	53%	75%
2004	39%	55%	75%
2005	37%	55%	76%
2006	36%	48%	63%

percentage of students reporting these experiences

Table 17: Selected Extracurriculars at 10th Grade

U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, Education Longitudinal Study of 2002 (ELS:2002) and National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS:88)

	1992	2004
Interscholastic Sports	41%	44%
Intramural Sports	11%	31%
Band or Chorus	20%	21%
School Play or Musical	10%	11%
School Service Clubs	11%	10%
School Hobby Clubs	6%	9%
Academic Honor Society	7%	8%
School Academic Clubs	29%	8%
School Yearbook or Newspaper	8%	7%
Student Government	7%	6%

percentage of students reporting these experiences

Table 18: Selected Extracurriculars at 12th Grade

U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, Education Longitudinal Study of 2002 (ELS:2002) and National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS:88)		
	1992	2004
Interscholastic Sports	29%	33%
Band or Chorus	17%	18%
Academic Honor Society	16%	18%
School Academic Clubs	21%	18%
Intramural Sports	23%	17%
School Yearbook or Newspaper	15%	14%
School Service Clubs	12%	14%
School Play or Musical	13%	12%
Student Government	13%	11%
School Hobby Clubs	6%	10%
percentage of students reporting these experiences		

Notes

[1] Lowell C. Rose and Alec Gallup, "The 39th Annual Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools," *Phi Delta Kappan*, September 2007, p. 36.

[2] The National Commission on Excellence in Education, *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1983).

[3] Center on Education Policy, *Instructional Time in Elementary Schools: A Closer Look at Changes for Specific Subjects* (February 2008), via http://www.cep-dc.org. In December 2007, the Center for Education Policy reported the results of a survey of 349 nationally representative school districts. Forty-four percent of those districts reported cutting time devoted to at least one of the following: social studies, science, art, music, physical education, and recess. Sixty-two percent reported that more time was now devoted to English and/or mathematics at the elementary level. Center on Education Policy, *Choices, Changes, and Challenges: Curriculum and Instruction in the NCLB Era* (Washington, DC, revised edition, December 2007). Martin West, however, finds evidence of relatively modest narrowing. See West, "Testing, Learning, and Teaching: The Effects of Test-based Accountability on Student Achievement and Instructional Time in Core Academic Subjects," in Chester E. Finn, Jr. and Diane Ravitch, eds., Beyond the Basics: *Achieving a Liberal Education for All Children* (Thomas B. Fordham Institute, 2007), pp. 45-62.

[4] Claud von Zastrow with Helen Janc, "Academic Atrophy: The Condition of the Liberal Arts in America's Public Schools," Washington, DC: Council for Basic Education, 2004.

[5] Shirley Dang, "Schools Pile on English, Math Classes," *Contra Costa Times*, May 19, 2007.

[6] Judith L. Pace, "Why We Need to Save (and Strengthen) Social Studies," *Education Week*, December 19, 2007

[7] Nell K. Duke, "3-6 Minutes per Day: The Scarcity of Informational Texts in First Grade," *Reading Research Quarterly*, 2000, 35(2), p. 202-224.

[8] U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 2002, 2003, 2005 and 2007 Reading Assessments.

[9] Chester E. Finn, Jr., and Dianne Ravitch, "Why Liberal Learning?" in Finn and Ravitch, p. 5.

[10] Linda Darling-Hammond and Elle Rustique-Forrester, "The Consequences of Student Testing for Teaching and Teacher Quality," *Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education*, vol. 104, issue 2, (June 2005) p. 311.

[11] Rose and Gallup, p. 36.

[12] Herbert J. Walberg, "Uncompetitive American Schools: Causes and Cures," in Diane Ravitch (ed.). *Brookings Papers on Education Policy* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 1998), p. 185.

[13] Margit E. McGuire, "What Happened to Social Studies? The Disappearing Curriculum," *Phi Delta Kappan*, volume 88, no. 8 (April 2007), p. 621.

[14] Rose and Gallup, p. 431.

[15] National Endowment for the Arts, *The Arts and Civic Engagement: Involved in Arts, Involved in Life* (Washington, DC, 2006).

[16] E.D. Hirsch, Jr., "Reading Comprehension Requires Knowledge—of Words and the World," *American Educator*, Spring 2003, p. 28.

[17] Richard G. Niemi and Jane Junn, *Civic Education: What Makes Students Learn* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998); Melissa K. Comber, "Civic Curriculum and Civic Skills: Recent Evidence," CIRCLE fact sheet, November 2003; James G. Gimpel, J. Celeste Lay and Jason E. Schuknecht, *Cultivating Democracy: Civic Environments and Political Socialization in America* (Washington, DC; Brookings Institution Press, 2003) p. 149.

[18] Shelley Billig, Sue Root, and Dan Jesse, "The Impact of Participation in Service-Learning on High School Students' Civic Engagement," CIRCLE Working Paper 33 (2005); Joseph Kahne and Susan Sporte, "Developing Citizens: A Longitudinal Study of the Impact of Classroom Practices, Extra-Curricular Activities, Parent Discussions, and Neighborhood Contexts on Students' Commitments to Civic Participation," in press.

[19] Alberto Dávila and Marie Mora, "Civic Engagement and High School Academic Progress: An Analysis Using NELS Data," CIRCLE Working Paper 52 (2007), and "Do Gender and Ethnicity Affect Civic Engagement and Academic Progress?" CIRCLE Working Paper 53 (2007).

[20] CIRCLE's analysis is based on Schools and Staffing Survey data from the National Center for Education Statistics. There are somewhat different sampling frames in each year, but the dataset is designed for comparisons over time. The 2003-4 survey was based on 31,086 interviews.

[21] West, 2007.

[22] NAEP Assessment in Civics.

[23] The mean score for all fourth-graders rose from 150 to 154 from 1998 to 2006, a small but statistically significant increase. U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1998 and 2006 Civics Assessments.

[24] Sample sizes vary by year in the NAEP Long-Term Trend Assessment in Reading. For 9-year-olds, they range from 3,800 in 1988 to 23,200 in 1971. Sample sizes are similar at age 13 and 17. See Marianne Perie and Rebecca Moran, *NAEP 2004 Trends in Academic Progress: Three Decades of Student Performance in Reading and Mathematics*, Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2005, p. 101

[25] NAEP Assessment in Reading.

[26] Center for Education Policy (2007), p. 11.

[27] U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), High School Transcript Study (HSTS), Selected years 1987–2000; High School and Beyond (HS&B), 1982. The 2005 results are derived from Carolyn Shettle, Shep Roey, Joy Mordica, Robert Perkins, Christine Nord, Jelena Teodorovic, Marsha Lyons, Chris Averett, David Kastberg (Westat) and Janis Brown (National Center for Education Statistics), *America's High School Graduates: Results from the 2005 NAEP High School Transcript Study* (NCES, 2007).

[28] Jay P. Greene, "High School Graduation Rates in the United States" (New York: Manhattan Institute, 2002).

[29] Pace, "Why We Need to Save (and Strengthen) Social Studies."

[30] CIRCLE analysis of SASS data.

[31] Center on Education Policy, *From the Capital to the Classroom: Year 4 of the No Child Left Behind Act* (Washington, DC, March 2006), p. 20.

CIRCLE (Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning & Engagement)

Jonathan M. Tisch College of Citizenship and Public Service

Tufts University

Lincoln Filene Hall

Medford, MA 02155-7028

www.civicyouth.org