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*Allie Rice/ MEDILL*

*Students will get a 20 minute recess and snack break before they continue extra math and reading work in the classroom.*

### **Ninety school minutes, \$5.5 million: Worth it?**

by ALLIE RICE

Oct 28, 2010

This Monday five Chicago public schools begin a test program that extends one of the country's shortest school days by 90 minutes, but many are wary of the program's oversight and shelf life.

The mandatory program, known as Additional Learning Opportunities, is broken into a 20-minute recess and snack break before students head back into the classroom for 70 minutes of online learning. It extends to students in first through eighth grades at Ryerson, Chavez, Burke, Leland and Smythe schools.

The teachers won't be hanging around, though.

Instead classroom facilitators will be in charge during the extended period. The paid facilitators are required to hold at least an associate's degree, have some experience working with children and have knowledge of computers.

Many will be college students, parents and teachers, the Chicago Public Schools said.

"Longer school days are good, but the question is longer school days with whom?" said Jitu Brown, education organizer for the Kenwood Oakland Community Organization. "And are they getting real instruction or are they just being put in front of a computer?"

Due to the collective bargaining agreement with the Chicago Teachers Union, the length of the school day is set to end at 2:45 p.m. The school day totals 5 hours and 45 minutes.

"Anything over and above the contractually set schedule would need to be negotiated and would have a significant cost