Accelerating Achievement Through SUMMER LEARNING

the David & Lucile Packard FOUNDATION

NATIONAL SUMMER LEARNING ASSOCIATION

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About this Report

This report is designed as a resource for program providers, education leaders, policymakers, and funders who are making important decisions about whether and how to strengthen and expand summer learning programs as a way to accelerate student achievement. In addition to 13 case studies of diverse program models, this report includes a look at key research on what works in summer learning and an overview of supportive state policies. While the case studies focus on specific providers, the key themes and success factors are transferable to many settings and programs. The featured program goals of third-grade reading proficiency, successful middle school transitions, college and career readiness, and teacher training and retention are some of the most critical underpinnings of efforts to improve K-12 education today.

The National Summer Learning Association (NSLA) would like to thank the David and Lucile Packard Foundation for their support of this publication and for their leadership in expanding access to high-quality summer learning programs in California through the Summer Matters Campaign. To learn more about Summer Matters, visit www.summermatters2you.net.

About the National Summer Learning Association

The National Summer Learning Association is the only national nonprofit exclusively focused on closing the achievement gap by increasing access to high-quality summer learning opportunities. NSLA recognizes and disseminates what works, offers expertise and support for programs and communities, and convenes leaders to advocate for summer learning as a solution for equity and excellence in education. NSLA's work is driven by the belief that all children and youth deserve high-quality summer learning experiences that will help them succeed in college, career, and life. For more information, visit www.summerlearning.org.

Summer Learning Accelerates Key Education Priorities

Summer learning is no longer an afterthought in public education policymaking, and for good reason.

Expanded learning opportunities (before school, afterschool and summer), extended learning time (school day and school year), and year-round or "balanced" calendars are emerging across the country as key strategies in accelerating student achievement, closing the achievement gap and promoting 21st Century skill development. Consider these examples of state action that improves access to high-quality summer learning programs:

ARKANSAS: Positive Youth Development Grant Program
Signed into law in 2011, the Positive Youth Development Grant Program is a competitive grant for afterschool and summer learning programs that prioritizes high-need schools and school-community partnerships and requires matching funds. The program was appropriated $5M in funding in 2014.

CALIFORNIA: Expanded Learning Enhances Student Success
Signed into law in 2014, this program focuses existing resources on summer and year-round programs; requires data-driven local quality improvement plans; leverages state data systems to track outcomes; and streamlines program administration. Implementation is supported by new quality standards from the California Afterschool Network.

NEW MEXICO: K-3 Plus
During the 2012 legislative session, K-3 Plus was converted from a six-year pilot into a program of the Public Education Department. K-3 Plus provides funding for additional educational time for disadvantaged students in kindergarten through third grade by extending the school-year by at least 25 instructional days. The program is administered in schools with 80 percent or more of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch or with a D or F grade the previous year. The program was appropriated more than $21M in funding in 2014.

WYOMING: Wyoming Bridges
Since 2004, Wyoming Bridges has prioritized about $1,000 in supplemental per-student funding for summer learning programs for academically at-risk students. Forty seven of 48 districts participate in the K-12 program and measure their effectiveness through standard assessments. The program has narrowed the achievement gap in math and reading in most grade levels since 2008 and serves about 10 percent of students in each district. The program was appropriated $16.5M in funding in 2014.

MASSACHUSETTS: After-School and Out-of-School Time (ASOST) Quality Enhancement Grant Program
Since 2011, the ASOST program has provided grants to enhance afterschool and summer learning programs in areas such as professional development and STEM; address barriers to participation and expand summer learning programs specifically. The program was appropriated $1.7M in 2014.

Opportunities for Further Action

Summer learning action in states continues to build, and several states are weighing new programs designed to expand access and quality.

Texas House Bill 742
This 2013 bill was signed into law, creating a statewide summer learning competitive grant program; however, the program did not receive appropriations in the last session. The program pairs new teachers with veteran teachers to deliver summer learning program in the state's neediest districts for students who are behind in reading and math.

Oregon House Bill 2650
The purpose of House Bill 2650 is to provide grants to keep up to 130 school libraries open in the summer. Eligibility is based on the number of students who qualify for the free and reduced-price lunch program and the school's reading scores. The proposed bill will create a framework to increase access to summer meal programs, summer learning programs, and expanded learning opportunities and

is based on the successful two-year pilot of the SL3 program, led by OregonASK. Partners include the Oregon Department of Education, Oregon Volunteers, Child Nutrition Programs, Oregon State Library, and Oregon School Library Association.

Much of the summer learning action in states like Rhode Island, California, Texas, and Massachusetts has been generated through statewide expanded learning task forces. These representative groups hear testimony and recommendations from expanded learning providers and other experts before making recommendations to state lawmakers. Washington is the most recent state to pass legislation forming such a task force, and New Jersey lawmakers are considering similar legislation this session.

District Investments in Summer Learning

These state-level efforts are creating opportunities to test a variety of strategies designed to improve access to high-quality summer learning opportunities for the young people who need them most. States are enhancing existing programs, pilot-testing new models of drop-in and enrollment-based programs, and creating better systems for tracking and improving participation and quality.

Similarly, many major school districts are turning to the summer months to accelerate the goals they are hard-pressed to achieve during the school year. Dozens of large urban school districts have joined NSLA's New Vision for Summer School Network over the past six years as a means to learn from their peers and other experts on how to maximize the summer months. These districts are partnering with community-based organizations (CBO) and using a combination of Title I, General Funds, 21st Century Community Learning Centers and private funding to offer innovative, full-day programs in the summer. Learn more at www.summerlearning.org/nvss.

A Focus on Summer Learning Programs that Work

As education decision-making continues to devolve to states and districts, we hope this publication will be a resource to education leaders and policymakers who are deciding whether and how to allocate expanded learning resources. *Accelerating Achievement* profiles more than a dozen diverse programs that are accelerating one or more key education priorities, including third-grade reading proficiency, middle school transitions, college and career readiness, and teacher training and retention.

These priorities are rooted in a strong evidence base.

Summer learning programs can erase early reading deficits

More than 80 percent of low-income youth in this country are not proficient in reading by the end of third grade, making them more than four times as likely to drop out of high school as their peers to who reach this critical benchmark[1]. K-3 summer learning programs, such as Y Readers* featured in this report, have been shown not only to mitigate summer learning losses in reading in the early grades, but to accelerate skill development to get young people up to grade level by third grade.

The summers before and after middle school are some of the most critical transitions in a young person's academic career

A large body of research confirms that the level of academic achievement that students attain by eighth grade has a larger impact on their college and career readiness by the time they graduate from high school than anything that happens academically in high school[2]. Students who make school transitions in the sixth grade are absent more often than those who remain in one school through eighth grade and are more likely to drop out by tenth grade[3]. Similarly, the transition from eighth to ninth grade is one of the most pivotal moments in a student's education, and one of the most treacherous. In fact, a ninth grade student is three to five times more likely to fail a class than students in any other grade[4]. Students participating in programs like Higher Achievement* navigate those transitions with the extra support of adults and peers and are more likely to improve or maintain their grades and graduate from high school on time.

High-quality summer learning programs level the college and career playing field

Alarming data on the skilled workforce pipeline and need for remedial coursework in two- and four-year colleges have created a national sense of urgency around work-embedded learning, apprenticeships and college preparation programs, particularly for first-generation attenders. Students who participate in NJ LEEP* in Newark, New Jersey, may begin the program in ninth grade with little knowledge of skilled careers and low SAT scores, but they finish with a strong professional network, experience with rigorous coursework, SAT scores that outpace the state, and a 100 percent rate of college matriculation.

Pre-service and in-service teachers want to make the most of their summers

Quality teaching is consistently linked to successfully closing achievement gaps, but the United States is facing a collapse of the teaching pipeline from both ends. With baby-boom teachers flooding into retirement, most teachers today have between one and two years of

experience. Attrition rates of first-year teachers have increased by a third in the last two decades, and between 40 and 50 percent of teachers leave within the first five years of entering the profession. Summer learning programs like Aim High* are an increasingly likely place to find the kinds of pipelines into and through the teaching profession that are working. Offering training, mentorship, leadership, and ownership of their work, community-based programs like Aim High might be the best place to look for answers to this nationwide crisis.

*In addition to the case studies in this publication, learn more about these Excellence in Summer Learning Award-winning programs and 30 others at www.summerlearning.org/excellence.

What is "High-Quality" Summer Learning, and How Can it Accelerate Student Achievement?

This publication is comprised of case studies that demonstrate how high-quality summer learning programs address a variety of education objectives and deliver strong outcomes. These case studies present a clear picture of what "high-quality" summer learning looks like and, perhaps most importantly, how it accelerates student achievement.

A growing body of research also supports the notion that high-quality summer learning programs help students succeed and sheds light on what it takes to do so. The RAND Corporation's multi-year series of reports, commissioned by The Wallace Foundation, is one of the most comprehensive investigations of how summer programs boost young people's learning[5]. The 2011 report, *Making Summer Count: How Summer Programs Can Boost Children's Learning*, uses literature reviews, interviews with providers, and site visits in five cities to come to these conclusions:

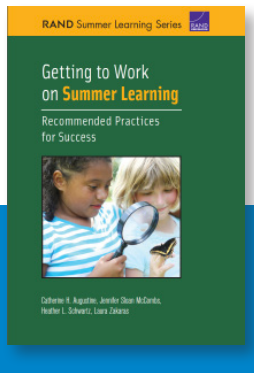
- Summer learning loss, which is disproportionate and cumulative, contributes substantially to the achievement gap.
- Students who attend summer programs have better outcomes than similar peers who do not attend these programs.
- Strategies for maximizing quality, enrollment, and attendance are critical to achieving benefits.
- Partnerships can strengthen summer learning programs.
- Developing and sustaining district-based voluntary summer learning programs is challenging but feasible.

RAND's 2013 report, *Getting to Work on Summer Learning: Recommended Practices for Success*, builds on the 2011 report and focuses on evaluations of summer programs in six urban districts—Boston, Cincinnati, Dallas, Duval County, Florida (Jacksonville), Pittsburgh, and Rochester, New York—committed to serving a significant number of at-risk students.

Among the defining characteristics of high-quality summer learning programs that RAND identified are:

- Highly qualified and specially trained staff, along with early planning that engages partners with clearly delineated roles;
- Smaller class sizes, individualized instruction, and sufficient time on task (operating the program for at least five weeks, with three to four hours of academics per day);
- Involving families and maximizing student attendance with firm enrollment deadlines, clear attendance policies, and electronic student records;
- Strategic use of partnerships;
- Using evidence-based, commercially available curricula, and standardizing its use across sites; and
- Providing carefully planned, engaging enrichment activities.

[1]The Annie E. Casey Foundation, "Double Jeopardy: How third-grade reading skills and poverty influence high school graduation," Baltimore: The Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2010.
[2]ACT, "The Forgotten Middle," 2008. Iowa City, IA.
[3]Sparks, S. D., "Learning Declines Linked to Moving to Middle School," *Education Week*, November 28, 2011.
[4]Southern Regional Educational Board, "Opening Doors to the Future: Preparing Low-achieving Middle Grades Students to Succeed in High School," 2002.
[5]McCombs, Jennifer Sloan, Catherine H. Augustine, Heather Lee Schwartz, Susan J. Bodilly, Brian McInnis, Dahlia S. Lichter, and Amanda Brown Cross, *Making Summer Count: How Summer Programs Can Boost Children's Learning*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, MG-1120-WF, 2011. http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/MG1120.html. Augustine, Catherine H., Jennifer Sloan McCombs, Heather L. Schwartz, and Laura Zakaras, *Getting to Work on Summer Learning: Recommended Practices for Success*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, 2013. http://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR366.html.



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Substantial evidence now exists of the efficacy and feasibility of developing high-quality summer learning programs and of the potential to help students and schools alike achieve higher levels of success. Following is a series of brief case studies of summer learning programs that successfully address current public education priorities.

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Parks & People Foundation "SuperKids Camp"

Grade-Level Reading

BALTIMORE, MARYLAND

Photos left to right: 1) Camper participating in Music Workshop Enrichment. 2) Dissecting owl pellets at Port Discovery. 3) Learning about the parts of a ship with Historic Ships. 4) Campers ready to go sailing with the Baltimore Museum of Industry.

THE PROGRAM

SuperKids Camp (SKC) is a six-week summer academic and enrichment program administered by the Parks & People Foundation in partnership with Baltimore City Public Schools (BCPS) to help rising second, third, and fourth-grade students maintain or improve their academic skills. SKC strives to create an environment that prevents student summer learning loss.

In 2014, the camp enrolled 604 elementary school students from 97 of the district's schools. The majority of participants were African-American rising third graders, who received free or reduced price lunch and came from a family with a gross household income in the range of $24,500 to $41,000. SKC operated Monday through Friday at seven sites in and around Baltimore City, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. It provided students with the opportunity to strengthen their literacy and mathematical skills and to explore and develop new interests. At each site, students were divided into groups based on their literacy levels (i.e., low, moderate, high).

A typical program day consisted of two hours and 15 minutes of academics (reading and math) facilitated by credentialed teachers, followed by a 30-minute lunch break. In the afternoon, participants were handed "keys to the city" for two hours and 15 minutes of literacy-based enrichment activities with 10 of the finest cultural institutions in the city. For instance, some campers explored the theatre arts at Center Stage and learned about storytelling, prop making, scenic arts and staging, while others learned to sail and develop life skills and appreciation for the natural environment at the Downtown Sailing Center. With each activity, every effort was made to ensure that the enrichment experiences were both educational and fun, while providing each child a chance to develop his/her hidden interests, talents, and abilities.

Outcomes and Results

Year	Percent of Students Maintained or Improved in Reading Level *
2014	95%
2013	99%
2012	99%

** The Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills™ 6th Ed. (DIBELS) was used to assess "normal" (or grade-appropriate) academic progressions for rising second and third graders.*

"In just this short period of time, I really see a dramatic change in my child's reading ability. Staff is professional and pleasant and accessible. Activities are interactive, not just feeding information."

CAMP PARENT

Costs

The Parks & People Foundation operated SKC in 2014 on a total operating budget of $587,933. With 604 students enrolled, the cost came to $973 per student, with participants paying a camp fee of $80, and scholarships made available to those with extreme need. Funding was raised through a variety of sources, including corporations and foundations as well as city (Department of Housing and Community Development "Community Development Block Grant" funds) and state (Department of Education 21st Century Community Learning Centers and state-aided institution funds) government agencies.

How It Began

In 1997, the Parks & People Foundation started SuperKids Camp with the Baltimore Reads program to provide a fun and engaging summer experience for children in Baltimore City. The idea was to combine traditional summer camp activities with enriching learning experiences that help prepare students to return to school in the fall. The following year, a mayoral challenge to make Baltimore "the city that reads" resulted in a significant expansion of the program. Now in its 18th year, SKC has served more than 20,000 young people and is an integral part of the citywide effort to provide summer academic enrichment and enhancement programs for students in Baltimore City Public Schools.

Partnerships and Key Players

Each summer, SKC partners with and hosts programs at a network of 10 to 15 sites throughout Baltimore City, including college campuses and private and public schools. The program also engages 10 to 12 enrichment providers, such as local museums, performing arts institutions, the Maryland Zoo in Baltimore, and the Y of Central Maryland. The program employs close to 100 managerial, teaching, and non-education professionals, all recruited from local school systems, colleges, and universities in and outside of Maryland, as well as other agencies within the Baltimore metropolitan area. The program includes a partnership with the Urban Teacher Center, which furnishes the program with teaching residents at most sites. In addition, the camp has a robust internship program that recruits talented students from nearly 30 colleges and universities nationwide to serve as reading counselors.

Replication Potential

SKC has forged strong partnerships with a diverse array of colleges, universities, enrichment partners, reading partners, and funders who share a common goal of supporting the citywide effort to provide summer academic enrichment and enhancement programs for students in Baltimore City Public Schools (BCPS). The bedrock of this network of partners is the engagement of BCPS with the leadership of the Parks & People Foundation. This partnership approach draws on the strengths of diverse partners and helps maximize resources—and could work in other urban areas that have strong relationships among public schools, cultural institutions, and recreational facilities.

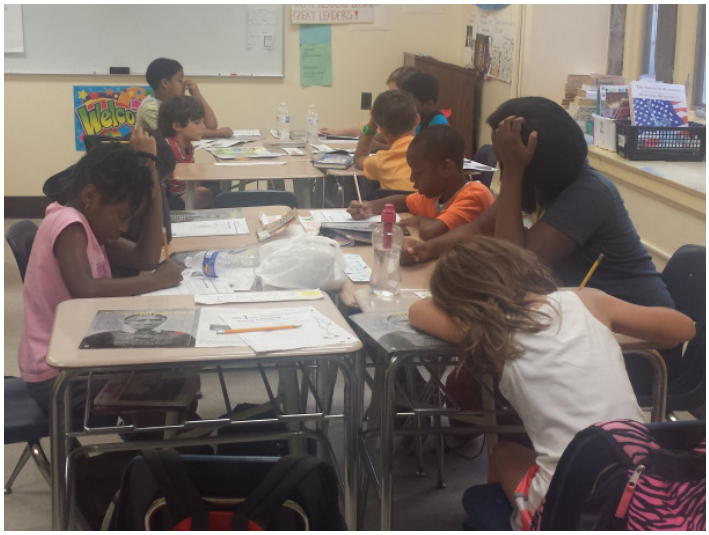


Photo: Campers working on Math activities.

Project Summer Stride - Richland Library

Grade-Level Reading

COLUMBIA, SOUTH CAROLINA

Photos left to right: 1) Special appearances by local artists and storytellers provide learning opportunities to keep children excited about reading throughout the summer. 2) Each child is able to build a library of their own through this partnership effort. 3) Special programs like this African Drumming performance provide active learning experiences for the children. 4) Pairing students with tutors and learning opportunities throughout the summer ensure they have the support and encouragement they need to strengthen skills instead of losing ground.

THE PROGRAM

The literacy scores of children in South Carolina are among the lowest in the nation. In Richland County, one child in five lives in poverty, and more than 82 percent of students receive free or reduced price lunch. Richland Library led the charge to move from merely offering reading enrichment activities to launching an innovative model of learning to mitigate the epidemic of summer learning loss.

Project Summer Stride (PSS) offers a learner-centered intervention strategy. In 2013, PSS sessions were offered at the library every Tuesday, from June 11 to August 6. The sessions provided 18 rising first and second-grade students with 45 minutes of one-on-one tutoring tailored to their individual needs, a nutritious breakfast and lunch, and learning enrichment activities, including art projects and performances by musicians and storytellers. Each student chose new books to take home each week, which culminated in more than 30 books for each home library.

The program also included a broad range of family engagement initiatives, including Family Night enrollment events, literacy tip sheets to help families integrate reading into daily life at home, and outreach by library staff to parents. At the end of the program, the entire family was invited to an awards ceremony and lunch, during which students came to the stage for pictures as tutors distributed reading medals and certificates of achievement. Each student also received a new book bag filled with school supplies to build confidence and excitement about the coming school year.

Offering cost-free tutoring and parent incentives contingent on their student's participation were essential to bolstering consistent attendance. The training provided by a retired reading recovery teacher empowered tutors with strategies and resources to effectively access students' needs and implement a plan for improvement.

Outcomes and Results

Richland Library employed the services of the University of South Carolina's Office of Program Evaluation (OPE) to promote evidence-based methods based on best practices in the field, as well as research-based decision-making through systematic inquiry. The program's goals were to:

1. Provide 30 low-income students reading below grade-level with reading interventions to prevent summer learning loss and positively affect their attitudes about reading;

2. Determine the feasibility of the library's capacity to offer one-on-one tutoring to positively affect summer learning loss; and

3. Explore the library's civic action to find and deploy community solutions to address barriers to summer learning.

Results from the 2013 program include:

- Seventy-two percent of the students attended regularly, thanks in part to parent incentives and bus transportation, according to the University of South Carolina's OPE.

- Pre/post assessments revealed all students made moderate gains on three of the four assessments.
- According to school data, approximately 50 percent maintained or improved standardized testing scores.
- One-hundred percent of students gained a more positive outlook on reading, greater interest in reading, and demonstrated major literacy concepts, the OPE reported.

OPE offered recommendations regarding staffing needs, transportation challenges, tutor coverage, and shared responsibilities of stakeholders. In addition, OPE commended the library on the innovative model for summer learning, tutor training, and the foresight to provide meals.

Costs

A $50,000 National Leadership Grant from the Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS) funded Project Summer Stride in 2013. Students and families did not pay to participate.

How It Began

The program has benefited from a recent national study by the Graduate School of Library and Information Science at Dominican University, which received a National Leadership Grant from IMLS for a three-year research initiative, completed in 2010, to answer the question: do public library summer reading programs have an impact on student achievement? The top two recommendations of the Dominican Research Report's Executive Summary were to: 1) recognize the significant role public libraries play in closing the achievement gap, and 2) promote the powerful role public libraries play in helping children maintain and gain reading skills.

Based on this work, Richland Library convened a learning network of stakeholders to transform typical summer reading activities into intervention strategies. The new approach focuses on students with multiple risk factors and strives to promote school success and, ultimately, high school graduation and preparation for college, a career, and engaged citizenship.

Project Summer Stride was piloted in 2013 and offered again in 2014 through a United Way grant award. United Way is a potential multi-year funding partner that may enable consistent impact data collection over several years.

Partnerships and Key Players

Strategic collaborations were critical to eliminating barriers to summer learning—cost, transportation, attendance—most prevalent with families living in poverty. The school district provided bus transportation and access to student data; United Way of the Midlands engaged more than 30 volunteers; and Midlands Reading Consortium identified more than 30 low-income students reading below grade-level.

Photo: Ensuring children have access to books, tutoring and learning opportunities helps prevent summer learning loss.

Replication Potential

Almost every community has a library. The viability and impact of this program depend on partnerships with entities that have counterparts in many other communities. These include:

- The public school system (providing access to student data as well as transportation);
- Higher education institutions committed to performing program evaluation research;
- United Way and other community partners identifying both students and volunteers for the program.

Richland Library recognizes the importance of pre- and post-testing both to serve students well and to attract and sustain funding. Starting small could help other libraries ease into a similar program. Seeking committed volunteers who are interested in working one-on-one consistently with a child throughout the summer is vital. Finally, tutoring activities can take place outside of just the children's part of the library to offer privacy and variety to students and tutors.

Springboard Collaborative

Grade-Level Reading

PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA AND CAMDEN, NEW JERSEY

Photos left to right: 1) Springboard Family Workshop at Morton McMichael School. 2) A family makes predictions while reading. 3) A mother practices letter sounds with her daughter. 4) Springboard partner and scholar share a story.

THE PROGRAM

Springboard Collaborative is a nonprofit that partners with schools to address the reading achievement gap in pre-K to 3rd grade by coaching teachers, training family members, and incentivizing learning with books and tablets so that scholars have the requisite skills to access life opportunities. Over the summer, the program offers an intensive five-week summer literacy program (Springboard Summer) that integrates home visits, daily instruction by students' school-year teachers, teacher-led weekly family workshops, coaching of teachers, and learning incentives contingent on parent participation and student reading growth. Springboard targets low-income communities and trains schools' existing teachers to use their current budgets to collaborate with parents. This innovative approach builds lasting internal capacity by developing teachers as instructors, parents as collaborators, and site managers as school leaders.

Outcomes and Results

2013

- Springboard's 642 students achieved an average 3.3 month reading gain during the summer.
- Thirteen percent of pre-K participants scored at Springboard's above-the-kindergarten-ready threshold on a baseline assessment. A month later, 63 percent of participants had achieved kindergarten readiness.
- Attendance at the weekly family reading workshops averaged 93 percent.

2014

- Springboard's 1,200 students achieved an average 3.4 month reading gain.
- Attendance at weekly family reading workshops averaged 91 percent.
- A longitudinal analysis found that a single Springboard Summer intervention nearly tripled students' annual reading progress.

Costs

Springboard Summer costs about $860 per student, most of which is covered by the student's school. Schools pay the teachers and pay Springboard a per student partnership fee, so that the school/Springboard partnership can deliver products and services to families for free. Springboard leverages philanthropic funding to offset operating costs and sees this funding as critical to long-term growth and sustainability.

How It Began

Springboard Collaborative was founded in 2011 by Alejandro Gac-Artigas, a Teach for America alumnus and Harvard University graduate, to close the reading achievement gap by coaching teachers, training family members, and incentivizing learning. Since its launch, Springboard has grown its reach from 42 to 1,200 students. In 2013, Springboard landed a vendor agreement with the School District of Philadelphia, making Springboard the only district-funded summer learning provider in the city. The contract also marked the first time in recent history that the district has invested in a startup. In 2014, Springboard won a competitive bidding process to become the exclusive K-3 summer literacy provider for the Camden City School District.

"One thing I learned was the value of asking her questions about what she is reading. Now I can become a partner and spend more time with her one-on-one. There are some very specific skills I've gotten here this morning."

GRANDFATHER OF A SPRINGBOARD STUDENT

Partnerships and Key Players

Springboard has a vendor agreement with the School District of Philadelphia and continues to expand its partnership network. In 2014, Springboard received offers to expand in Camden, Baltimore, and Washington, DC. Deliberate supply chain decisions have been made to maximize the impact on the community, while minimizing the impact on the environment. Suppliers include: Better World Books for family books; Share Food for warehousing; iFoster for school supplies and computers/tablets; and TS Designs for t-shirts. Springboard also has a partnership with Learning A-Z that gives parents free access to "RAZ-kids," an online leveled library of books that get progressively more challenging as students read more.

Replication Potential

Springboard's unique model of "insourcing" transforms school communities from within by reorienting existing staff and assets. Springboard trains current teachers to collaborate with families using existing budgets. This builds internal capacity through teacher professional development and active family participation.

Beyond Philadelphia and Camden, invitations to Springboard to work in other cities reflect the appeal of the program. Springboard's ability to reduce per student partnership costs is, however, contingent on developing new investors, which could present different challenges in different locations. Springboard's current track record of success and business model offer compelling data to funders and school districts facing similar challenges.

Photos left to right: 1) Families learn to ask questions before, during, and after reading. 2) A mother acknowledges difficultly and encourages rereading. 3) Pre-K scholars learning their letters.

YMCA of Greater Charlotte Y Readers

Grade-Level Reading

CHARLOTTE, NORTH CAROLINA *(and surrounding areas)*

Photos left to right: 1) A volunteer reads one on one with a student during self-selected reading time. 2) A student writes independently during the writing block. 3) A certified teacher works one on one with a student during self-selected reading time. 4) A student reads independently during self-selected reading time.

THE PROGRAM

Y Readers is a nationally recognized summer literacy program that serves more than 500 rising first, second, and third graders who read below grade level and come from economically disadvantaged homes. Nearly half of the students who take part (41 percent) are English Language Learners.

Y Readers strives to help students reach proficiency in reading by the end of third grade. It is operated by the YMCA of Greater Charlotte and serves students in schools across three districts: Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, Mooresville Graded School District, and Lincoln County Schools. Participating schools are selected by a number of factors, including Title I status, third-grade reading proficiency scores, and proximity to a YMCA branch.

A six-week summer learning program, Y Readers provides a mix of literacy instruction and enrichment activities that take place four full days a week and are taught by certified teachers. The primary goal is for students to grow, on average, at least three months in reading proficiency by the end of the summer, and for at least 85 percent of students to improve or maintain their levels over the course of the program. These goals have been met—and in many cases exceeded—for nine consecutive summers.

Each day starts with a healthy breakfast, followed by a morning of instructional time devoted to character development and literacy development based on the Four-Blocks literacy model, which includes Guided Reading, Working with Words, Writing, and Self-Selected Reading. In the afternoon, students take part in a variety of enrichment activities—art, music, science, technology, physical activity, swim lessons—and take weekly field trips.

Outcomes and Results

In 2014, the program served 527 children.

- Participants gained an average of 3.1 months in reading proficiency.
- Eighty-six percent of students improved or maintained their reading level.
- Of the 86 percent, 85 percent improved and 15 percent maintained.
- *This was the ninth consecutive summer that participants have gained an average of 3 months or more in reading proficiency.*

Costs

Y Readers costs $1,300 per student but is offered to families at no cost. In comparison, the cost for a child to repeat a grade in school is approximately $8,500. The program is funded by the annual YMCA Community Support Campaign, as well as the Belk Foundation, the Leon Levine Foundation, the City of Charlotte, Mecklenburg County, the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Community Foundation, and United Way.

How It Began

Y Readers was developed in response to a community need for academic support during the summer months. The local school district needed additional support to prevent low-income students from losing skills over the summer. In 1999, the YMCA of Greater Charlotte partnered with Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools to launch Project Starfish, a six-week literacy camp originally serving 40 students from one school. Based on the success of Project Starfish, the YMCA expanded the program model to other elementary schools in and around Charlotte.

Photo: A student reads independently during self-selected reading time.

"An example that I think has distinguished [Y Readers] and has contributed to its results is the fact that they use certified teachers. One could argue that that's an easy, obvious approach, but [many summer programs use instructors] who are not licensed or credentialed. Instead, the Y chose to really go after some of our best teachers who knew the students they were going to be working with, knew the curriculum during the day, and could extend that and focus their work in the summer program."

ANN CLARK, DEPUTY SUPERINTENDENT, CHARLOTTE-MECKLENBURG SCHOOLS

Partnerships and Key Players

A number of partnerships and community volunteers enable Y Readers to thrive. The Y partners with local school districts to identify schools with a need for the Y Readers program. School leaders assist in selecting certified teachers and teacher assistants from their own faculty to lead the program, identify students to participate, and provide facilities for the program. Together, the Y and partnering schools track students' progress and measure the program's impact. Two local non-profit organizations, First Book-Charlotte and Promising Pages, serve as ongoing partners and donate age-appropriate books each year. In 2014, 206 community members volunteered more than 1,100 hours to read and write with students on a weekly basis.

Replication Potential

Y Readers is a highly scalable model that was piloted in five cities across the country in 2012, in 29 cities in 2013, and 35 cities in 2014. The core fidelity markers that enable scalability are a 1:8 staff/student ratio, use of certified teachers, 2.5 hours each day of literacy instruction, and use of the Four-Blocks literacy framework.

In 2012, the national Campaign for Grade-Level Reading designated Y Readers one of seven "Bright Spots" for summer learning across the country. "Bright Spots" are programs that increase the number of children from low-income communities that succeed in school, are rigorous in data tracking, and have demonstrated results.

Y Readers was named the 2012 National Signature Program for Summer Learning for the YMCA of the USA, in part for the program's scalability.

Glenn County Office of Education Expect Success Summer Camp

Middle School Transitions

ORLAND, CALIFORNIA *(Orland, Willows, and Hamilton Unified School Districts)*

Photos left to right: 1) Students explore science concepts at Gateway Science Museum in Chico. 2) Students build a "trust web" during Cabin Time. 3) Students learn to kayak and water safety at Lake Oroville. 4) Students explore math concepts during a Barbie Bungee Jump activityinfo for this pic.

THE PROGRAM

In 2012, Glenn County Office of Education (GCOE) overhauled the summer programs of three of its eight school districts to combine academics with enrichment in a summer camp environment for elementary and middle school students. The new program, Expect Success Summer Camp, aims to inspire and encourage students to become lifelong learners and to prevent summer learning loss by providing a safe and enriching program that encourages students to think critically across all content areas.

The model serves 320 rural students and draws from the most disadvantaged students in Glenn County. Seventy percent of participants are learning English as a second language, and most of the students enrolled scored below the state average in reading and math. GCOE's goal is for students to leave Expect Success Summer Camp at a reading level equivalent to or higher than they had at the start of summer and to promote camp values of leadership, spirit, citizenship, and teamwork.

Outcomes and Results

Expect Success Summer Camp measures outcomes through pre- and post-tests, math assessments, and student surveys. Participants demonstrated improvements in all areas. In math, more than 50 percent of students showed an increase of more than the program's target, and 100 percent of English as a Second Language students demonstrated improvement in English fluency.

Given the importance of social and emotional skills in the transition to high school, the program assesses each student's growth in four priority areas: leadership, spirit, citizenship, and teamwork. Results from a student survey show:

- Youth agreed that they are better at listening to others (84 percent) and more of a leader (66 percent).
- Nearly all youth (92 percent) agree that they feel good about themselves in the camp, while about 8 in 10 agree that the program helped them to feel more connected to their community.
- Nearly 9 in 10 youth agreed that they are better at getting along with people their age, and 7 in 10 youth reported engaging in volunteer service.
- Most youth reported improvements in their teamwork skills, including doing things as part of a team (90 percent) and understanding what others think or feel (82 percent).

Expect Success Summer Camp partners with local junior high schools and offers credit recovery for those students who need to make up credits to transition from eighth grade to high school. Credentialed teachers from each district serve as site coordinators, and four other teachers from each district teach at the camps. All teachers and administrators begin preparatory work months in advance and collaborate on themes and focus areas to stimulate and sustain student engagement. Teachers then develop activities that support those themes and focus areas with age-appropriate academic and character development components.

Costs

The cost per student is $550, bringing the total cost to approximately $175,000. The student fee is $35 for the summer. Funding sources include the David and Lucile Packard Foundation; the California State After School Education and Safety (ASES) program; federal migrant education funds; and local business and civic organization donations.

How It Began

GCOE has long appreciated the importance of sustaining engagement with young people when school is not in session. In collaboration with a variety of partners, including the David and Lucile Packard Foundation and Partnership for Children and Youth, GCOE decided to revamp its existing summer program by incorporating evidence-based methods of high-quality summer learning programs.

Beginning in the summer of 2012, GCOE and its partners began a focus on middle school youth. During the first year, the program engaged students with hands-on activities, including math games, inquiry-based instruction, and applied science lessons like designing roller coasters out of pipe insulation and using principles of physics in egg drops.

Attendance in the junior high age group has increased by almost 20 percent from the first to most recent year, and the program benefits from an overall positive word of mouth—and from former students participating in recruitment and highlighting the hands-on projects. Currently, GCOE is working to develop an engaging age-appropriate camp culture that focuses on science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) while integrating English language arts.

Partnerships and Key Players

Staff, parents, community members, and students provide feedback on the program's activities and schedule through community conversations, student focus groups, and surveys. School administrators are key to the program's success, as they help identify focus areas for the academic portion of the camp.

Expect Success Summer Camp has more than 16 community partners that include foundations, school districts, and nonprofits. Many of these partnerships provide or support programming by offering field trip opportunities at a minimal cost to the camp. Partners include the Chico Creek Nature Center, State Parks and Recreation Department, the California Migrant Education Program, Willows Fire Department, Orland Parks and Recreation, Willows Parks and Recreation, Westhaven Assisted Living, State Farm Insurance, and the Orland Chamber of Commerce.

Photo: Students create and share campfire stories in their class cabin.

Replication Potential

Using existing partnerships in a new way has been key to Expect Success Summer Camp's success. After securing grant money from the David and Lucile Packard Foundation to develop a new summer program, and with support from the Partnership for Children and Youth, GCOE used existing program sites to implement its new vision for summer school.

Key factors in engaging middle grades students that can be replicated elsewhere include:

- Using peers who have been through the program to help recruit;
- Careful planning by teachers and other staff to develop challenging, hands-on, project-based activities relevant to students' experiences; and
- Creating a positive, supportive environment.

Higher Achievement

Middle School Transitions

RICHMOND, VIRGINIA WASHINGTON, D.C. ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA BALTIMORE, MARYLAND PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA

Photos left to right: 1) Higher Achievement scholars celebrate their successes at the annual Olympics of the Mind competition, where all of the organization's middle school students come together for a day of academic and field game competition, and to demonstrate their commitment to the organization's culture principles of spirit, collaboration, excellence, and respect. 2) Higher Achievement scholars learning together during the organization's six-week long Summer Academy, delivering daily instruction in math, literature, science, social studies, and engaging electives. 3) Higher Achievement scholars commemorate their annual overnight university trip, a highlight of each Summer Academy that brings college to life for middle school students. 4) A Higher Achievement scholar learns about pursuing a medical degree during one of the organization's annual overnight college trips, a highlight of each Summer Academy that brings college to life for middle school students.

THE PROGRAM

Higher Achievement's Summer Academy strives to close the opportunity gap during the pivotal middle school years and leverage the summer months to propel students ahead. Operating for five full days per week for six weeks, Summer Academy represents a core component of Higher Achievement's year-round, multi-year academic enrichment program. Students engage in math, science, social studies, and literature lessons, plus daily elective classes (such as dance or yoga), field trips, and a college visit.

In the summer of 2014, Higher Achievement served more than 1,000 students in 15 centers in and around Washington, D.C., Richmond, VA, Baltimore, MD, and Pittsburgh, PA. The majority of students were eligible for free and reduced-price meals.

Higher Achievement's focus on student voice, leadership, and mastery of critical content and skills in middle school builds a strong foundation for a successful transition to high school. Higher Achievement recently announced the findings of a landmark randomized-controlled trial (RCT) study that evaluated the long-term impact of the program on its graduates. The study found that Higher Achievement had a statistically significant effect in three areas: standardized test scores, certain types of family engagement, and placement in top high schools and avoidance of struggling high schools.[1]

Outcomes and Results

Higher Achievement scholars commit to a year-round program, so the program measures its success through school-year indicators. Students who took part in the 2013 Summer Academy made significant gains in reading, math, and attendance in the 2013-2014 school year.

- 69 percent of students improved their math standardized test scores or maintained "proficient or advanced," while 68 percent improved their math grades or maintained an A/B average.
- 70 percent improved their reading standardized test scores, while 71 percent improved their reading grades.
- 78 percent improved their school attendance or maintained fewer than five absences.

In 2012-2013, results included:

- 74 percent of scholars improved their grade in math by a full letter grade or maintained an A/B.
- 73 percent of scholars improved their grade in literature by a full letter grade or maintained an A/B.
- 70 percent improved their reading score or maintained "advanced/proficient."
- 87 percent of scholars improved their school attendance or maintained five or fewer absences.

Key findings of the Randomized Control Study showed gains in math and reading equivalent to[2]:

- 48 extra days of learning in math
- 30 extra days of learning in reading

Costs

Though free to students and families, the average cost per student in the summer of 2013 was $1,925. In comparison, the RAND Corporation and The Wallace Foundation's 2011 "Making Summer Count" report indicates that other high-quality interventions over the summer could cost up to $2,800 per student. In the recent RCT study, researchers at MDRC, a nonprofit, nonpartisan education and social policy research organization, noted that Higher Achievement's outcomes present a strong alternative to higher-cost interventions, such as KIPP charter schools or the Harlem Children's Zone Initiative.

Higher Achievement pursues a diverse portfolio of sustaining funding that allows it to offer the year-round, multi-year program free of cost to scholars and their families. Forty percent of 2014's anticipated funding is expected to come from private foundations, 23 percent from corporations, 15 percent from government grants, 10 percent from individuals, and the remainder from previously restricted investments, in-kind support, rental, and other income. Higher Achievement was recently selected as a recipient of an Investing in Innovation (i3) Validation grant from the U.S. Department of Education. The $12 million grant, distributed over 5 years, will allow Higher Achievement to serve up to 2,000 scholars by 2019 (a nearly 90% increase over its current roster), evaluate scholar academic achievement, and impact at least 20,000 additional students by disseminating curricula and training. Higher Achievement aims to leverage this significant investment to ensure ongoing financial sustainability.

How It Began

Founded by Greg Gannon in 1975 as a mentoring program for underserved students in Washington, D.C., Higher Achievement evolved into a nationally-recognized program benefiting thousands of students by making the most of time out of school during the critical window of the middle years.

Higher Achievement has always aligned its instruction and curriculum with local standards in an effort to best prepare and support scholars. The program model has established rigorous standards for middle school academic success and student placement in top high school programs.

Partnerships and Key Players

Strong partnerships with a variety of stakeholders are key to Higher Achievement's success. Partners include schools and school districts; local foundations and corporations; other expanded learning programs; adult literacy and financial literacy programs; family strengthening services; community-based organizations that provide arts electives; and many local companies, universities, and other nonprofit and service organizations that provide highly-qualified mentors.

"Learning doesn't stop when the school year ends. We are delighted to continue to serve our students throughout the summer, and we hope families will take advantage of everything we have to offer at DCPS."

KAYA HENDERSON, CHANCELLOR,
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Replication Potential

Higher Achievement's core model is highly replicable at both the district and single-school level. The program works to ensure that affiliates are positioned to meet the needs of their communities by providing efficient and reliable back office support, effective sharing of best practices, and a cohesive organizational strategy. The U.S. Department of Education Investing in Innovation grant recognizes the program's replication potential.

Replicating Higher Achievement's rigorous standards for middle school academic success and student placement in top high school programs require strong relationships with local school districts, along with a clearly aligned teacher and staff professional development program. This strong alignment lies at the core of Higher Achievement's growth strategy and plan to open eight new Achievement Centers by 2019.

Citations: 1) http://www.higherachievement.org/our-impact/results/ppv-study. 2) http://higherachievement.org/images/Higher_Achievement_Study.pdf?utm_source=Study+Results+Email+11.1.2013&utm_campaign=Study+Results&utm_medium=email.

Summer Advantage – Learn and Earn

Middle School Transitions

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

Photos left to right: 1) Scholars pose for a shot in front of Lake Michigan. 2) Scholars hard at work completing an assignment during morning academic instruction.

THE PROGRAM

Learn and Earn provides youth in Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) residences with a high-quality summer learning experience that combines academic skill-building with career-readiness and financial literacy classes. The program operates five days per week for six weeks during the summer. It incorporates a pay-for-performance component, where students can earn up to $100 per week based on attendance and other performance criteria, as if they are reporting to work. Teens participating in the program also have the opportunity to hear from guest speakers who expose them to a wide range of careers and inspire them with their life stories.

The goal of Learn and Earn is to address middle school student engagement and enable students to grow academically and build pathways to their future careers. Students are ages 13 to 15 from low-income communities in Chicago.

Outcomes and Results

Teens who participate gain seven months of math skills and three months of reading skills, as measured by the STAR pre- and post-assessments. This academic growth is consistent year after year—teens who participate in the program consistently gain two to seven months of academic skills. Students were able to identify 30 percent more career opportunities than they were at the beginning of the program. Ninety-four percent of teens attend the program daily.

Costs

The cost of the program per student is $2,400, paid by CHA to Summer Advantage to operate the program, with indirect costs covered by local philanthropy.

How It Began

Teens who live in the section three housing community in Chicago face tremendous challenges, especially in the summer, when their safety is often at risk. In fact, when students were asked about their biggest fears, most mentioned "getting shot." In response to clear data on the need for summer learning programs, CHA released a Request for Proposals calling for evidence-based programs to provide teens with a safe and high-quality learning environment in the summer. Summer Advantage was selected through a competitive process, and when a pilot summer program proved successful, CHA decided to expand the contract to serve all Learn and Earn teens so that they can stay safe, stay in school and build future careers. Since 2009, Summer Advantage has built a reputation by serving more than 15,000 children across multiple cities.

Partnerships and Key Players

The program partners with local universities that serve both as the service sites and as learning resources for teens, reinforcing college readiness. At some community colleges, the program leverages existing opportunities already provided so that young people can understand how the city college system works and how to access its varied resources. Other partnerships include field trip locations that the program calls "learning trips" to expose students to career choices, colleges, cultural resources, and community service.

"Learn and Earn is an 'on ramp' to high school and future career success with its intensive academic focus on reading, writing and math and emphasis on the development of critical building blocks such as problem solving, persistence and resilience."

EBONY CAMPBELL, DIRECTOR OF YOUTH OPPORTUNITIES, CHICAGO HOUSING AUTHORITY

Photo: Chicago scholars visit the sites of their hometown on a double-decker bus tour.

Replication Potential

Schools are not the only public agencies concerned with student success. Public housing authorities (PHAs) also want their resident families to succeed. This case represents one of a number of PHAs across the country that support summer learning.

The early- and mid-teen years are critical for student engagement and success in high school and beyond. Summer learning programs that address this transition period can benefit from partnerships with PHAs and higher education institutions in their communities for programming, space, staffing, and diverse other resources. Having strong curricula and related tools is important for cost-effective replication. Additionally, summer programs need to be evidence-based, and their core components easily transportable. Summer Advantage meets both of these goals and can execute key functions such as recruitment and training across multiple sites and multiple states. The replicable aspects of the program are what appealed to the Chicago Housing Authority and gave CHA the reassurance that the program will be excellent even when serving a large number of teens.

The Boston Summer Learning Project

College and Career Readiness

BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

Photos left to right: 1) At one SLP site, students learn about healthy eating through caring for a community garden. 2) Middle school students engage in enrichment clubs, including the Capoeira Club where students learn this traditional Brazilian martial arts practice. 3) Students participate in outdoor enrichment activities guided by the site's essential question, "Are you a part of nature?" . 4) Instruction in math and English Language Arts (ELA) is a part of each program day, bridging students' academic skills between grades. *Photos by Tiffany Knight*

THE PROGRAM

The Boston Summer Learning Project (SLP) represents a citywide approach to summer learning that addresses the knowledge, skills, and experiences young people need to succeed. Launched in 2010, the SLP is a partnership between the Boston Public Schools (BPS) and Boston After School & Beyond (BASB), and involves collaborating with leading community organizations to deliver an integrated full-day, five-week summer program for high-need students. The program accelerates academic progress and builds skills associated with success not only in school but also in college and careers.

Each program employs a different mix of time, location, enrichment, and staffing based on the needs and interests of their students. All of the programs strive to promote academic progress in math and language arts, along with improvement in specific power skills like critical thinking, perseverance, relationships, and self-regulation. A majority of sites are located at community-based settings, including college campuses, workplaces, and the Harbor Islands.

Principals and community-based organizations select students to participate based on the need for academic or social intervention during the summer. These students would otherwise have little or no opportunity to spend their summer engaged in learning. Participants include a higher proportion of male students, English Language Learners, students of color, students with special education needs, and students who qualify for free or reduced-price lunch than exists in the BPS population.

Outcomes and Results

SLP sites deploy a unique mix of time, setting, and structure to provide students with new, engaging experiences. These opportunities allow students to apply content knowledge to real-world situations, empowering students to become lifelong learners who are equipped for success in school, work, and life.

- In 2013, an evaluation from the National Institute on Out-of-School Time (NIOST) at Wellesley College found that SLP students' English language arts skills improved by 15 percent over the course of the summer, while math skills improved 19 percent.

- Two different tools administered separately by NIOST and the Program in Education, Afterschool and Resiliency (PEAR), a joint initiative of Harvard University and McLean Hospital, found statistically significant increases in students' power skills (critical thinking, peer relationships, and perseverance), which correlate with school and career success.

- This pattern continued in 2014, with students achieving significant growth in those three power skills.
- Across sites, programs met the benchmark for high-quality programming. NIOST noted a slight increase in program quality across the SLP between 2012 and 2013, and again between 2013 and 2014.
- BPS summer teachers have continued to report positive experiences of SLP students carrying over into the school year. Across sites, more than 90 percent of students in both 2012 and 2013 had an easier transition back to school.

Costs

For the SLP, the cost per student in a 200-hour program is $1,500, which breaks down to $7.50 per student, per hour, or $300 per student, per week. This brings the program cost to roughly $2.8 million.

How It Began

The SLP was launched in 2010 by Thomas M. Menino, the mayor of Boston at that time, and by the Boston Opportunity Agenda as part of its cradle-to-career agenda. The project set out to combine the strengths of schools and community partners to address the issue of summer learning loss. It coincided with the establishment of the public school district's Office of Expanded Learning Time (ELT) to lead BPS's work in defining and supporting expanded learning opportunities for schools and to develop a district-wide strategy. Together, Boston After School & Beyond, Boston Public Schools, and the BPS Office of Expanded Learning Time have worked to strengthen district and community learning in Boston through the SLP.

Partnerships and Key Players

BASB and BPS have developed a diverse array of local and national partners, with nearly 50 schools and 16 community partners, as well as a number of local and national funders. The SLP collaborates with BPS, the Program in Education, Afterschool and Resiliency (PEAR), and the Center for Collaborative Education to utilize coaching services. In addition, BASB and BPS collaborate with RAND, the National Institute on Out of School Time (NIOST), and PEAR to evaluate the SLP. Diverse local program partners include the Boys & Girls Clubs, the local YMCA, and higher education and cultural institutions. Funders include the Wallace Foundation, the Klarman Family Foundation, the Charles Hayden Foundation, and the Eos Foundation.

"We are deeply invested in ensuring that Boston's graduates succeed in college. The Summer Learning Project allows us to reach students in middle and high school. Its focus on skills such as critical thinking, collaboration, perseverance, and self-management will pay off not only in high school graduation but also in increasing the odds of completing college."

ELIZABETH PAULEY, PROGRAM DIRECTOR, EDUCATION TO CAREER, THE BOSTON FOUNDATION

Replication Potential

The SLP uses 16 community organizations to deliver programming and allows for flexibility in implementation at each site. Memoranda of understanding (MOUs), work plans, and budgets are given to partners to allow sites to develop their own programming tailored to the student population they serve. This approach draws on the strengths of partners and helps maximize resources, though it also requires oversight to ensure that program objectives and goals are met across the diverse range of programming. To address this, the SLP uses evaluation tools, such as surveys and observations, that are customizable, scalable, and provide comparable data.

The New Jersey Law Education Empowerment Project

College and Career Readiness

NEWARK, NEW JERSEY

Photos left to right: 1) Students examine witnesses during a mock trial competition.. 2) Site visit to Goldman Sachs. 3) Site visit to American Express. 4) Students examine witnesses during a mock trial competition.

THE PROGRAM

The New Jersey Law Education Empowerment Project (NJ LEEP, Inc.) is a private, nonprofit organization that enables low-income, minority students in the greater Newark area to perform at high academic levels and gain admission to a four-year college or university. Key partners include Seton Hall Law School, Rutgers University Law School, Newark Public Schools, and law firms and corporate law departments.

Most of the sixth- to twelfth-grade students who take part in NJ LEEP are immigrant youth, first generation Americans, or from diverse backgrounds, e.g., Hispanic/Latino, black or African-American. The program supports their needs by offering high-caliber, law-related coursework taught by practicing attorneys at local schools, along with real-life law experience and intensive after-school and summer programs for high school students. NJ LEEP staff attorneys teach constitutional law, criminal law, and trial process, and facilitate mock trial and constitutional debate competitions. Volunteer attorneys and law students serve as competition coaches and career-track mentors.

To date, NJ LEEP is the only law-related program in the country that addresses college readiness.

Outcomes and Results

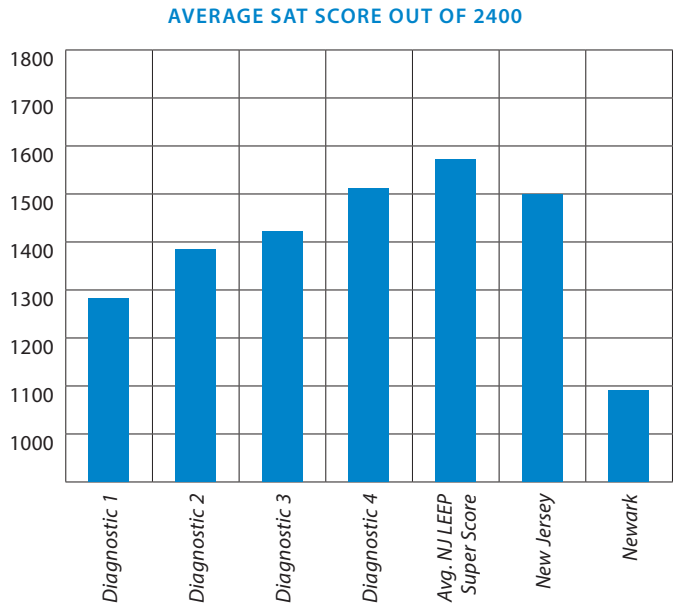
In Newark Public Schools, test scores lag behind state averages, only about 50 percent of students graduate from high school, and the vast majority does not attend college. NJ LEEP provides a credible solution, offering afterschool and Saturday classes during the school year—and an intensive, full-day College Bound Program over the summer that combines classroom instruction with hands-on learning in local law firms, courthouses, and corporate law departments. In tenth grade, for instance, students serve as summer interns and receive a stipend, while eleventh and twelfth graders hone their SAT test-taking skills and apply for college.

- Rising ninth graders in the Summer Law Institute are administered a writing diagnostic at the beginning and end of the program to measure their growth in writing and analytical skills (syntax, comprehension, analysis) taught via legal content during the program.

- During summer 2014, the average first year student scored 59.47 on their writing pre-diagnostic. At the end of the program, the average score was 73.46, an increase of nearly 14 points. Below are the results for first year students, sophomores, and juniors.

Class Year	Pre-Diagnostic Average	Post-Diagnostic Average	Point Difference
First Year Students	59.47	73.46	+13.99
Sophomores	46.01	62.04	+16.03
Juniors	57.6	61.5	+3.9

- The chart below highlights the increase in SAT scores by diagnostic test for the NJ LEEP juniors in the summer SAT prep program, benchmarked against the average score in Newark and in New Jersey.



Costs

The NJ LEEP summer program serves about 140 youth, with a budget of approximately $238,000, or $1,700 per student. The program is free to students and supported by foundation grants, corporate sponsorships, and individual donations.

Photo: Student group work.

"NJ LEEP is not only changing the trajectory of the lives of the students it serves, but it is also changing the trajectory of pipeline diversity programming."

PATRICK HOBBS, DEAN, SETON HALL SCHOOL OF LAW

How It Began

Founded in 2006, NJ LEEP arose from its founding executive director Craig Livermore's experience working for a similar program, Legal Outreach, in Brooklyn, New York. Like NJ LEEP, Legal Outreach seeks to empower low-income minority youth to achieve at high levels and gain admission to college. Livermore, a graduate of Columbia Law School, took what he learned from Legal Outreach and partnered with Seton Hall Law School to create NJ LEEP.

Partnerships and Key Players

The success of NJ LEEP stems from its many partners. These include partnerships with public schools, with Seton Hall Law School (a founding partner institution) and Rutgers University Law School, and with the more than 20 law firms and corporate law departments that provide direct experience to NJ LEEP students. A number of corporate partners support NJ LEEP's mission and provide essential financial support.

Replication Potential

For school districts in need of more college readiness support, NJ LEEP is a proven model with a strong record of measurable success. What makes the NJ LEEP model so important is its potential to be successfully implemented in other states and communities—regardless of students' economic background and skills. Key ingredients for success include strong partnerships with:

- At least one law school;
- Law firms ready to engage their leadership and staff with students;
- Law firms and other businesses ready to provide financial support; and
- Public schools.

With these partnerships and the right funding in place, the program is highly replicable.

REACH! Partnership Early College Summer Institute

College and Career Readiness

BALTIMORE, MARYLAND

Photos: Students on a field trip to New York City.

THE PROGRAM

REACH! Partnership is an innovative program in Baltimore City Public Schools that serves middle and high school students, focusing on college readiness and preparation for careers in healthcare and construction. Operated by Civic Works, a nonprofit in Baltimore that works to strengthen communities through education, skills development, and community service, REACH! Partnership works with the Baltimore City Community College (BCCC) to enroll students in 100-level and developmental courses aligned with the needs of individual students.

Throughout the summer, Reach! Partnership students take part in the program's Early College Summer Institute. Here, they attend BCCC every day for four weeks, taking classes that utilize a co-teaching method involving college instructors, AmeriCorps tutors, and high school teachers. Students receive two to four hours of group instruction followed by one-on-one tutoring, plus one to three hours of cultural enrichment and college readiness activities that range from a weeklong BCCC orientation to seminars on financial aid, résumé writing, and financial management.

Outcomes and Results

The program uses ACCUPLACER, a suite of computerized tests used widely across the nation to determine student knowledge in math, reading, and writing, and to place students in college courses. Since 2012, REACH! Partnership has used ACCUPLACER to tailor programs for students, and in the summer of 2013, held a one-week institute to create math and literacy activities based exclusively on ACCUPLACER data. At the end of the program, the number of students placing into college courses stayed the same, however, students showed improvement within levels in particular skills. The team decided that a longer, more comprehensive program was needed—and adjusted the 2014 summer program accordingly.

A number of features were added in 2014 based on Accuplacer's findings. Students met with BCCC's Dean of Student Success and discussed supports such as tutoring services; they also met the deans of the English and math departments, the vice president of the college, and the director of the early college program. Throughout the summer, students read books about the Harlem Renaissance—and participated in a culminating field trip to Harlem. Eligible seniors were then able to enroll in AmeriCorps to earn an education award to offset college costs.

Outcomes from the 1014 summer program are as follows:

- 56 percent of students improved one or more ACCUPLACER levels in math.
- 44 percent of students improved one or more ACCUPLACER levels in English.

- 88 percent of students who did not improve a full ACCUPLACER level in math showed improvement in both elementary algebra and arithmetic.

- 83 percent of students who did not increase a full ACCUPLACER level in English showed improvement in both reading comprehension and sentence structure.

Costs

REACH! Partnership provides four weeks and 120 hours of summer programming, at a cost of $1,000 per student. The total program budget for the summer is $40,000, which accommodates 40 students. A YouthBuild USA grant procured by Civic Works and a grant from the Family League of Baltimore fund the summer program.

How It Began

The high school dropout rate in Baltimore City has long been a serious problem. Education and community leaders in Baltimore have for years understood that schools alone cannot resolve it, and that school-community partnerships are critical to supporting student success. The Family League of Baltimore manages the city's community school initiative, bringing diverse institutional and organizational partners to the table, REACH! Partnership and Civic Works recently completed a planning process with the Family League of Baltimore to become a community school partner. For the previous four years, these organizations, REACH! Partnership and Civic Works had operated a post-secondary education program during the school year in cooperation with BCCC, and then decided to expand to the summer.

"One of the many benefits of the summer institute is that it allows our teachers to back-map the high school course curriculum and to align it with students' needs based on the data."

MICHAEL FREDERICK, PRINCIPAL, REACH! PARTNERSHIP

Partnerships and Key Players

The principal, other members of the leadership team, and teachers from REACH! Partnership are committed to the mission and have infused its values into the summer program. Civic Works serves as the community school lead agency and is the recipient of the YouthBuild grant, while BCCC funds the 100-level classes for high school students and works with the school to identify the exact supports needed for students to prepare for college. Developmental courses are funded through various sources at no cost to students. In addition, the Family League of Baltimore helps the school leverage community partnerships and provided a grant to support the school's summer program.

"The early college summer program was helpful because it gave me hands-on experience in a college environment and made me realize all the hard work that college entails."

EPIPHANY ANDERSON, SENIOR,
REACH! PARTNERSHIP CLASS OF 2015

Replication Potential

Many aspects of REACH! Partnership represent best practices in 21st Century teaching and learning. Replicable components include:

- Developing a memorandum of understanding with a college partner;

- Implementing a model of co-teaching that uses a mix of certified teachers, college instructors, and AmeriCorps members (as tutors) and promotes individualized instruction;

- Creating a community-school partnership that blends a wide range of community and school resources to run a low-cost summer program;

- Using ACCUPLACER assessments to determine placement in courses and, just as important, to identify high-need skill areas for intervention/remediation for subsequent improvement within levels and between levels; and

- Establishing a four-week summer "boot camp" course addressing college instructional processes, funding, and career awareness.

Aim High

Teacher Training and Retention

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA *(and surrounding areas)*

Photos left to right: 1) Students exploring what DNA looks like. 2) Our 3rd successful summer at our Tahoe/Truckee campus. 3) Students research different colleges in Issues and Choices Class. 4) Aim High hires a diverse teaching corp.

THE PROGRAM

Aim High has been changing the lives of middle school students from under-resourced neighborhoods since 1986. Its academic and enriching summer program builds on what educators recognize and studies confirm: that intervention during the middle school years correlates strongly with future success. A tuition-free, award-winning program, Aim High supports more than 1,700 students and employs 400 teachers at 15 locations in Northern California.

Aim High's summer program provides participants with a positive, supportive classroom experience that helps low-income students expand their horizons and develop a love of learning, self-esteem, and confidence. These gains, in turn, prepare students for a successful transition to high school, college, and adulthood.

Aim High also functions as a teaching laboratory for experienced and novice educators, high school students, and college interns committed to careers in teaching. Through its "Pathways to Teaching" initiative, the program strives to increase both the number and diversity of people who enter the teaching profession; to nurture a love of teaching and boost classroom confidence and skills; and to provide teachers with leadership opportunities—all in a highly supportive environment. The program's team teaching model cultivates a collaborative, innovative project-based approach to teaching and learning, and gives teachers the autonomy to revise the curriculum based on their own interests and the needs of students. By employing diverse, young educators, Aim High improves student outcomes and performance, and creates a pathway to teaching for the next generation of educators of color.

Outcomes and Results

Aim High's "Pathways to Teaching" program seeks to reverse high teacher turnover rates and the shortage of teachers of color in the Bay Area. Across the country, the average teacher turnover is 17 percent, and in urban school districts specifically—Aim High's target communities—the number jumps to 20 percent, according to the National Center for Education Statistics. The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future offers even starker numbers, estimating that one-third of all new teachers leaves after three years, and 46 percent are gone within five years.

In addition, studies show that students of color do better on a variety of academic outcomes if they're taught by teachers of color, most notably in the STEM disciplines (1, 2). Yet only 44 percent of teachers in the San Francisco Unified School District are teachers of color, compared to the district's 88-percent minority student population. In San Mateo County, 75 percent of teachers are white, while 71 percent of the students are of color (3).
In contrast, Aim High's math and science educators in the summer of 2014 were 74 percent of color and 48 percent bilingual, while students were 97 percent of color and 74 percent bilingual. Across all content areas that same summer, Aim High employed:

- 153 lead/master teachers
  - 80 had a teaching credential.
  - 40 are in the process of completing a credential program.
  - 60 percent were teachers of color.
  - 60 percent had fewer than 3 years of teaching experience.

- 110 college students as teaching interns
  - 80 percent were youth of color.
  - 65 percent said that because of Aim High they are considering becoming a teacher.

- 96 high school students as teaching assistants
  - 60 percent were Aim High graduates.
  - 85 percent were youth of color.
  - 80 percent of them said that Aim High was their first professional experience.

Among those educators enrolled in a credential program:

- 92 percent reported that their site leadership gave them valuable feedback about their teaching.
- 92 percent reported that their site leadership was accessible when they needed support with their teaching.
- 100 percent said they believed Aim High would make them a better teacher during the academic year.

Fifty-seven percent of Aim High's teachers who are not professional educators reported that because of Aim High, they now want to pursue a teaching career.

"Our teacher candidates spend their first year in BATTI as full-time paid assistant teachers in independent schools, sometimes under the watchful gaze of an overly protective veteran mentor teacher. Thus the chance to be an Aim High lead teacher and work with bright, motivated public middle schoolers becomes a refreshing opportunity to try out new techniques and teach new subjects."

BOB HOUGHTELLING, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
BAY AREA TEACHER TRAINING INITIATIVE

Costs

Aim High spent $960,000 to employ 383 educators in 2014, and an additional $125,000 to provide them with training, professional development, and ongoing support from its director of academics and a dozen academic and curriculum coaches. The teacher development budget has grown by approximately 20 percent from 2013 to 2014. While some of these funds come from targeted teacher development support, most come from the general operating budget.

How It Began

Teachers Alec Lee and Eleanor McBride co-founded Aim High in 1986, with the idea of giving urban middle school students a summer of high quality learning in an environment that promoted education as a way to unlock the future. They chose to focus on middle school students because research pointed to the time between elementary school and high school as a critical juncture for keeping at-risk students engaged in their education, a moment when a little intervention could go a long way in helping students graduate from high school.

Over the past 27 summers, Aim High has expanded from one campus to 14, and from 50 students and 12 teachers to more than 1,300 students and 400 teachers. The program has become a pipeline for developing young teachers, thanks in part to a strong partnership with the Bay Area Teacher Training Institute (BATTI) and Teach Tomorrow in Oakland (TTO). In addition, many of Aim High's graduates continue to work as teaching assistants and interns during their high school and college years, often working alongside the very teachers who inspired them while they were in the program.

Partnerships and Key Players

Aim High's success depends on its long-term relationships with school districts and independent and charter schools. While these partnerships ensure that the program provides appropriately targeted support to students, they also guarantee that the program's teacher professional development efforts are relevant and aligned with area schools. Furthermore, Aim High's relationships with dozens of programmatic and other community partners support its project-based, experiential curriculum by engaging students and training teachers in innovative methods, while its partnerships with BATTI and TTO provide classroom experience, mentoring, and other professional development resources to aspiring teachers.

Replication Potential

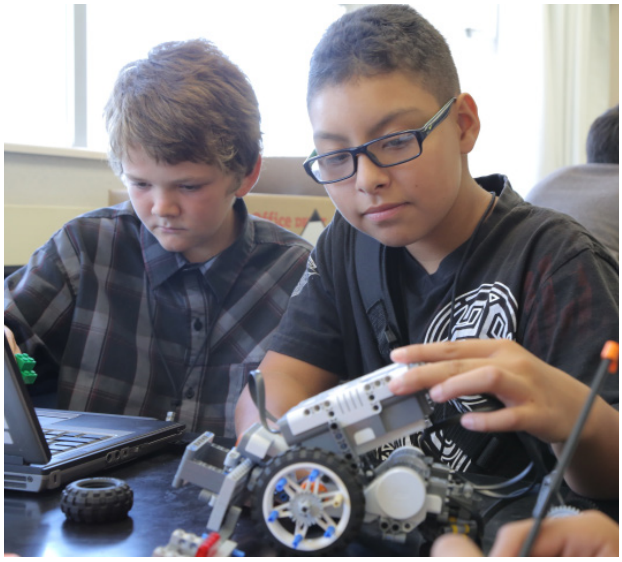
High-quality summer learning programs generally offer both new and experienced teachers opportunities to develop skills and tools in a supportive atmosphere with less pressure than the school year. Partnerships with schools of education and teacher training initiatives like BATTI and TTO can furnish summer programs with enthusiastic staff members who are eager to share their passion for learning with students. The challenge is to identify programs that recognize the value of summer as an opportunity for teacher professional development and to build working relationships that address the objectives of all partners. Because professional development is basically integral to summer teaching, its cost can largely be incorporated in staffing line items to ease the budget burden.

Citations: 1) http://cdn.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/issues/2011/11/pdf/teacher_diversity.pdf. 2) http://stemwire.org/2013/05/22/the-paradox-of-minority-teacher-recruitment/. 3) California Department of Education, Educational Demographics Office (CBEDS, 1/11/13).

Central Enrichment Summer Adventures (CESA)

Teacher Training and Retention

FRESNO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA



Photos left to right: 1) CESA youth choose a shady outdoor area to read and discuss *The Maze Runner*. 2) In partnership with Fresno State, CESA youth learn STEM concepts to design, build, and program robots.

THE PROGRAM

The Central Enrichment Summer Adventures (CESA) program of the Fresno County Office of Education (FCOE) addresses summer learning loss by providing youth with opportunities to expand their knowledge and skills in the areas of literacy, STEM, connection to the outdoors, nutrition, and physical activity. CESA provides a five-week, six-hour-day program of enrichment youth grades six through eight from Central Unified School District (CUSD) elementary and middle schools.

More than 400 youth from this urban school district, comprised of over 65 percent English Language Learners, are provided with unique enrichment options and the opportunity to design a class schedule around individual interests. The literacy and STEM curricula are designed to support youth achievement in school, career, and community. Interpersonal skills are emphasized through healthy lifestyle decision-making and supported through nutrition education and physical activity. The program also facilitates character-building opportunities and youth voice. Over the past three summers, CESA participants consistently achieved gains in each of the following core areas:

- In 2014, 70 percent of students saw gains in literacy, and more than 80 percent of surveyed participants indicated they read as much or more each week in summer than in a typical week of school.
- More than 85 percent of participants demonstrated increased knowledge of fitness and nutrition concepts.
- 62 percent of participants demonstrated increased knowledge in specific STEM content.

An integral component of CESA's program model is its partnership with the California Teaching Fellows Foundation (CTFF). CTFF's originating program, Teaching Fellows, was initiated at Fresno State's Kremen School of Education in 1999 to provide paid early field experience for future teachers that would enhance teacher preparation. The vision of the program is to increase the equality and diversity of the teaching pool within the region, while meeting academic and enrichment needs of K-12 youth through after school and other school-based programs

Outcomes and Results

As a teacher career pathway, CTFF strongly supports and values its employees in an effort to minimize teacher turnover rates. As a CTFF partner, CESA has built a reputation for offering unique experiences for youth and staff. CESA is fertile ground for college-aged fellows to get their first experience working with young people within an outcome-driven program, while flexing their creative teaching muscle. This intentional approach has contributed to good employee retention and a strong commitment to youth served.

- CESA employed more than 40 teaching fellows in 2014, more than 75 percent of whom were persons of color, matching the diversity of the young people in the program.
- The majority of staff report using their summer experience as the foundation for designing extended day program content throughout the year. Additionally, staff report that they feel accomplished and motivated to continue their work with youth at the conclusion of the program.

Costs

Professional development funding is not calculated separately for summer and is included in the annual budget of $98,000.

How It Began

In 2009, FCOE partnered with the David and Lucile Packard Foundation to expand access to quality summer programming by creating a program emphasizing literacy, nutrition education, physical exercise, and connection to the outdoors. FCOE also worked with the Department for Safe and Healthy Kids to expand its existing programs. Meanwhile local colleges had a large pool of liberal studies majors seeking field experience and employment. The result was a partnership that generated a diverse group of mentors who brought a heightened level of creative energy and the ability to build relationships and empower youth. The most talented and effective from this group were provided the opportunity to extend their employment over the summer months by accepting positions with program.

"The Teaching Fellow program is the ideal training laboratory for aspiring teachers. The program also provides a venue for the district to select, train, and test new practices with individuals not saddled with preconceived notions about teaching and learning."

MIKE BERG, SUPERINTENDENT,
CENTRAL UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Partnerships and Key Players

Central Unified School District (CUSD) partners with FCOE to provide the facility, transportation, student recruitment, and student data. CUSD's superintendent's close involvement with the statewide *Summer Matters* initiative has resulted in additional collaboration with his staff and a partnership that is expected to sustain long term. A recent example of the growing collaboration with CUSD is the launch of a new first through third-grade summer learning program. The staffing structure consists of CTFF teaching fellows paired with certificated teachers in the classroom. Teaching fellows bring creativity and youth development experience while certificated staff provided invaluable instructional and classroom management experience.

Replication Potential

The key ingredient of CESA is shared leadership from the county office of education and the school district. In addition to CESA, FCOE supports summer program activities in a number of other school districts. While many communities do not have an entity quite like the California Teaching Fellows Foundation, many do have schools of education that could partner with school districts to take advantage of summer as a unique opportunity for aspiring teachers to gain practical experience. One of the greatest lessons learned by CESA is the importance of supporting highly qualified individuals to design and deliver programming in a way that motivates youth to excel. Providing youth with teaching fellows—young mentors of diverse ethnicities that reflect the student population—promotes learning and creates an atmosphere where relationships are easily formed.

Providence After School Alliance, Inc. (PASA) and Providence Public School Department – AfterZone Summer Scholars

Teacher Training and Retention

PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND

Photos left to right: 1) Keeping camp fun with a water balloon toss! 2) A PASA AfterZone Summer Scholar records her observations at the Audubon Society's Urban Naturalist's program. 3) PASA students interacting with local marine life at the Biomes Marine Biology Center. 4) Students collecting samples from Narragansett Bay for study.

THE PROGRAM

AfterZone Summer Scholars is a lively and engaging STEM community that works to close opportunity and achievement gaps through small class sizes, high expectations and hands-on STEM learning opportunities. Providence Public Middle School students participate in a four-week summer program designed to stem summer learning loss in math by engaging them in hands-on learning opportunities in field-based settings. In the summer of 2014, the AfterZone Summer Scholars program served 660 students at 6 sites in Providence, Rhode Island. Students showed improvement in critical thinking skills[1], maintained their math levels in alignment with Common Core Standards[2] and were more engaged in learning and ready to return to school in the fall.[3]

The program is centered on a unique collaborative teaching model that pairs teachers and informal STEM educators to co-design and co-deliver the program. Teachers and informal STEM educators co-design dynamic, youth-centered curricula, which they then collaboratively deliver over a four-week program, creating a better, more engaged learning process for students. This collaborative approach to teaching STEM ensures that each field strengthens the other—teachers ground the hands-on exploration in classroom math and science concepts, while informal educators from institutions that specialize in marine science, engineering, botany, ornithology, and other fields provide professional context and novel experience applicable to classroom work.

Outcomes and Results

The AfterZone Summer Scholars provides each staff person 22-35 hours of large- and small-group professional development, from early March to late June. PASA staff spearheads this process, but includes community partners and district teachers who help to create and lead training sessions based on their expertise and experience. Each STEM instructional team develops all curricula for the program. In 2014, professional development outcomes include:

Teachers:

- Improve knowledge and practice around Positive Youth Development
- Improve knowledge in general inquiry[4]
- Focus on practice change in areas of guided inquiry: creating a question, collecting information, coming to a solution[5]
- Provide and support a collaborative approach with communication training[6]

In 2012 and 2013, results included:
Teachers self-reported that Summer Scholars enables them to deliver high-quality inquiry instruction by providing[7]:

- Opportunity to work with students outside of a traditional school setting
- Opportunities for community connections through field trips and partnerships
- Designated time for collaborative planning throughout the spring and summer program
- Significant autonomy for teachers and co-educators to develop and deliver curriculum
- High-quality professional development

Costs

This year's budget is $600,000, and the program aims to serve 500 youth. The summer program costs approximately $1,000 per student, four days per week for four weeks. Additional costs for 30 hours of professional development amount to $50,000, and administrative costs comprise the final $50,000.

The Providence Public School Department (PPSD) has continued to fund the AfterZone Summer Scholars STEM program two years after a Walmart Foundation/National Summer Learning Association (NSLA) grant of $720,000 was awarded in 2012. All STEM providers, as well as arts and sports providers (over 70 organizations) have participated in the 30 hours of professional development that occur in the spring and continue throughout the year. This model has become a part of the District's professional development calendar and lead Next Generation Science educators in Providence Public schools use it to inform their efforts to infuse Next Generation Science Standards across the school-year curriculum.

How It Began

In 2010, then-Mayor of Providence David Cicilline asked PASA staff to develop a summer learning session—expanding its existing after school AfterZone program into the summer. PASA launched a field-based program serving 200 youth in partnership with some of the afterschool providers. In 2011, PASA invited teachers from the school district to join the summer program teaching alongside educators in STEAM subjects. While the first year of joint teaching was not as successful as hoped due to limited time to develop relationships or a joint curriculum, AfterZone maintained strong attendance while the district's remedial program saw a decrease in attendance from 800 to 200 students. As a result, PPSD and PASA joined forces to run a joint summer learning program, originally funded by the Walmart grant and matched by the district. This funding enabled PASA to triple the number of youth served to 600 students and invest in a 30-hour professional development training program to ensure better alignment with the Math Common Core and integration of informal and formal learning approaches.

Partnerships and Key Players

Faculty at Rhode Island College of Education provided PASA with expertise on instructional improvements and teacher recruitment through trainings to help staff the program. This relationship has continued throughout the school year with students from their new Youth Development Department and the Physical Education Department. In 2014, PASA also partnered with The Learning Community charter school—a top performing charter school in the state. This work received a Kellogg Foundation grant to train public educators on the implementation of specific Common Core State Standards math practices that align with the Summer Scholars model.

"PASA represents what can be achieved when there is a truly authentic collaboration between an urban school district and community organization working in partnership to provide a student centered, results-driven, rigorous and fun-filled opportunity for students to grow and learn."

NKOLIKA ETELL ONYE, BS, MED,
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT,
OFFICE OF HUMAN CAPITAL, PROVIDENCE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Replication Potential

PASA has developed a co-teaching model that brings together academic skills with social and emotional learning (SEL) or non-cognitive/soft skills. PASA sees summer learning as a strategy to provide deeper professional development time for informal and formal educators interested in experimenting with project-based or experiential learning approaches and integrating youth development and 21st Century Learning skills within the Common Core Habits of Mind and Next Generation Science practices. PASA has developed tools, guides, and videos that can help other cities replicate elements of its summer programming. Its summer learning video has been helpful to many cities looking to bring together informal and formal educators after school and in the summer. The PPSD continued investment of funding recognizes the program's impact and replication potential.

Citations: 1) PQA and SAYO-T (2013). 2) Pre/Post internal math evaluation and STAR Pre/Post assessments (2013). 3) SAYO-Y, SAYO-T and Fall Teacher Survey (2013). 4) Pre/Post Knowledge Survey & PQA (2014). 5) STEM PQA (2014). 6) Exit Survey (2014). 7) Brown University Teacher Focus Groups (2013).

Key Themes

A look across the 13 case studies featured in this report yields compelling key themes about the feasibility and impact of summer learning programs as well as common success factors across diverse models.

1 Summer learning works—programs of different models and dosages as featured in this report all yield meaningful benefits for young people. Featured programs demonstrate their ability to:

- Prevent summer learning loss and regularly promote gains of more than two months in math and reading, helping young people to get and stay on track during the critical years of learning to read and transitioning into new schools;
- Improve critical thinking, perseverance and adult and peer relationships;
- Increase standardized test scores, including state tests and college entrance exams; and
- Produce college matriculation and graduation rates that far outpace district averages.

2 Costs for summer learning are low and the return on investment is high.

- **YMCA of Greater Charlotte Y Readers** is a proven, scalable model that can help readers in grades 1-3 achieve grade-level proficiency by the critical third grade benchmark. Y Readers costs $1,300 per student for the summer, compared to a local cost of $8,500 for repeating a year of school in Charlotte-Mecklenburg school district.
- Nonprofit research firm MDRC noted that **Higher Achievement's** outcomes present a strong alternative to higher cost interventions such as KIPP charter schools or the Harlem Children's Zone initiative. At just $1,925 per student, Higher Achievement is shown to have a statistically significant impact on standardized test scores.
- Participants in the **Summer Advantage Learn and Earn** program in Chicago regularly gain an average of three months of reading and seven months of math skills in one summer for a cost of $2,400, all while earning a stipend to support their education. Comparatively, three months of school-year instruction costs Chicago Public Schools more than $4,600.

3 Higher education institutions such as community colleges, colleges, and universities are investing in summer learning to create a pipeline of prepared students.

- NSLA's Excellence in Summer Learning Award winner, **NJ LEEP** partners with Seton Hall Law School. NJ LEEP students gain skills through law-related activities and college-focused instruction for five weeks on the campus of Seton Hall Law School.
- **REACH! Partnership Early College Summer Institute** works with the Baltimore City Community College to enroll students in 100-level and developmental courses aligned with the needs of individual students.
- **Providence After School Alliance (PASA)** partners with faculty at the Rhode Island College of Education to suggest instructional improvements to the program and provide professional development for program staff.

4 Partnerships with teacher residency programs, schools of education, and districts are critical to both summer program quality and growing the teacher pipeline.

- Through its "Pathways to Teaching" initiative, **Aim High** increases both the number and diversity of people who enter the teaching profession to nurture a love of teaching, boost classroom confidence and skills, and provide teachers with leadership opportunities. Their team-teaching model cultivates a collaborative, innovative project-based approach to teaching and learning, while giving teachers autonomy.
- The **Central Enrichment Summer Adventures (CESA)** partners with the California Teaching Fellows Foundation to identify, train, and staff its program—a strategy that enables CESA to retain and outstanding teaching fellows, who are college students pursuing careers in education. Access to work in summer programs allows fellows to become year-round leaders.
- **SuperKids Camp** partners with the Urban Teacher Center to recruit teaching residents at little-to-no cost to most sites. These pre-service Baltimore City Public Schools teachers use the summer to practice critical classroom management and instructional techniques while getting to know the students in their new district.

5 Business support is critical for summer learning, with programs relying on donations of equipment, supplies, and volunteer mentors from their for-profit partners.

- **Springboard Collaborative** works with a variety of business partners in their service areas of Philadelphia and Camden, New Jersey. Various businesses provide books, warehousing, school supplies, technology, clothing, and online learning tools.
- **NJ LEEP** partners with more than 20 law firms and corporate law departments to provide legal experience, mentoring and networking to its students.
- **Glenn County's Expect Success Summer Camp** partners with the Orland Chamber of Commerce for in-kind field trip opportunities to local businesses.

6 Summer learning programs begin and thrive through cross-sector partnerships.

- Partnerships between **schools and community-based organizations** are at the heart of effective summer learning programs. School districts know the needs of their students and bring strong instruction and neighborhood facilities to the table. CBOs bring talented youth workers, innovative curriculum and infrastructure for planning, training and evaluation to these essential partnerships.
- Increasingly, effective summer learning programs are taking place through school partnerships with less traditional providers such as **public housing authorities, libraries, and parks**. These community hubs bring critical meals and learning opportunities to kids where they are through smart, low-cost programs.
- **City intermediaries** are powerful conveners for summer learning systems. Often funders of summer learning programs, intermediaries are regularly creating a table for summer learning that include leaders of city agencies, schools, nonprofits, and higher education.

7 Summer learning programs are doing more with less by "insourcing," maximizing volunteer resources, and creating centralized evaluation and professional development resources.

- **Springboard Collaborative** trains a school's teachers to collaborate with parents in the summer within existing budgets, a resource that pays school-year dividends.
- Summer learning programs both rely on volunteers and access national service programs as resources for their participants. **Richland Public Library** relies on 30 volunteers to provide one-on-one support to struggling readers. Similarly, **Higher Achievement** relies on mentors from service organizations to build strong relationships. **REACH! College Partnership** supports their participants to become Americorps members, enabling them to earn an education award to offset college costs.
- By centralizing its evaluation and professional development services, the **Boston Summer Learning Project** helps the 16 community-based organizations it partners with to access a caliber of support and peer learning they would not be able to afford independently.

Action Steps

The case studies included here make clear that from early childhood through high school, summer learning can have a marked impact on student and teacher success and make a significant difference in college and career readiness.

As the only national nonprofit exclusively focused on closing the achievement gap by increasing access to high-quality summer learning opportunities, NSLA is committed to supporting program providers, education leaders, policy makers, families, and institutions to strengthen and expand their efforts. Below are links to resources, networks, and ideas designed to continue the conversation.

1 Visit www.summerlearning.org to join NSLA's email list and access a wide variety of research, reports and news items.

- Visit www.summerlearning.org/funding to read *Moving Summer Learning Forward: A Strategic Roadmap for Funding in Tough Times*.
- Visit www.summerlearning.org/summerexcellence to read about dozens of Excellence in Summer Learning Award-winning programs and finalists
- Visit the Research in Brief section to learn why summer learning is so critical and how you can design your program for success.

2 Visit the Wallace Foundation's Knowledge Center at www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center to access important summer learning reports from Wallace and RAND, like *Making Summer Count, Getting to Work on Summer Learning* and *Ready for Fall?*

3 Encourage your school district to join the New Vision for Summer School Network to learn from their peers and other experts how to go beyond remediation to make the most of the summer. Learn more at www.summerlearning.org/nvss.

4 Join the National Summer Learning Day movement by pledging to keep kids learning this summer. Host an event to bring national attention to your program. Learn more at www.summerlearning.org/SLD.

5 Connect with NSLA to start a conversation around expanding access to high-quality summer learning programs in your community or state. Email us at info@summerlearning.org.

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NATIONAL SUMMER LEARNING ASSOCIATION

www.summerlearning.org