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**For Immediate Release**  
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**Contact:** Laura Johnson, NSLA  
[ljohnson@summerlearning.org](mailto:ljohnson@summerlearning.org)  
410-856-1370 ext. 208

### **National Summer Learning Association to Host *Summer Changes Everything*<sup>™</sup> in Baltimore**

*Baltimore Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake serves as honorary chair of 2015 conference; UMBC President, Dr. Freeman A. Hrabowski, III, to deliver keynote address*

**What:** National Summer Learning Association's 12th annual Conference on Summer Learning, featuring keynote by [Dr. Freeman A. Hrabowski, III](#), President of UMBC; mayoral panel discussion on the role of cities in expanding and sustaining high-quality summer learning programs for youth; and the [New York Life Excellence in Summer Learning Awards](#) luncheon honoring four exemplary summer learning programs from across the country.

**When:** October 12-14, 2015

**Where:** Baltimore Marriott Waterfront Hotel in Baltimore, Maryland

**Editor's Note:** Media interested in attending must be currently employed by a publication or news organization. Each media organization is limited to three complimentary media registrations and should email Laura Johnson ([ljohnson@summerlearning.org](mailto:ljohnson@summerlearning.org)) by October 9 to register.

**Baltimore** -- With millions of students now back in school, Baltimore Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake joins the National Summer Learning Association (NSLA) in convening nearly 600 leaders from across the country for ***Summer Changes Everything*<sup>™</sup>**, NSLA's 12<sup>th</sup> annual national conference exploring the role of summer learning in closing the student achievement gap in the United States. *Summer Changes Everything*<sup>™</sup> brings together the country's top thinkers to tackle the "summer slide," a phenomenon in which young people lose approximately two months of academic knowledge when they do not engage in educational activities during the summer months. See conference schedule highlights [here](#).

"We know from more than 100 years of research that summer changes everything—for better or worse—for young people in our nation," says Sarah Pitcock, NSLA CEO. "Far too many young people lose access to books, structured activities, caring mentors and adults and daily subsidized meals when the last school bell rings for summer break. NSLA is working in communities big and small to change that."

This year's conference theme: Renewing the Promise and Purpose of Learning captures NSLA's belief that the extraordinary journey of learning requires high expectations for all students, great teachers and caring adults, and equal access to high-quality experiences that nurture a young person's mind, body and spirit.

Educators, program providers, policymakers, funders and business leaders will delve into out-of-school time public policies, promising summer learning practices, and assess the significant shifts that need to take hold within our highest-need communities in order to create brighter futures for the country's most vulnerable students.

*Summer Changes Everything*™ kicks off with a **mayoral plenary session**, moderated by Virginia B. Edwards, President and Editor-in-Chief of Education Week. This opening session focuses on the tale of two cities and their strategies to increase access to and sustainability of summer enrichment and youth employment opportunities. The panel features champions on the issue: Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake (Baltimore, Md) and Mayor Richard J. Berry (Albuquerque, NM).

Day two of the conference brings to the stage **keynote speaker, Dr. Freeman A. Hrabowski, III**, President of UMBC (University of Maryland, Baltimore County). Dr. Hrabowski was recently appointed by President Barack Obama to chair the newly created President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for African Americans. Named one of the 100 Most Influential People in the World by TIME Magazine (2012) and one of America's Best Leaders by U.S. News & World Report (2008), Hrabowski will share insights from his new book,  *Holding Fast to Dreams: Empowering Youth from the Civil Rights Crusade to STEM Achievement*.

With youth at the center of NSLA's work, *Summer Changes Everything*™ is powered by inspirational ideas, voices, and performances of local youth and will feature a youth art exhibition curated by Young Audiences of Maryland. A **Youth Sparks** panel discussion, moderated by Karim Abouelnaga, Co-founder and CEO of Practice Makes Perfect, will spotlight youth insights from the following organizations: Baltimore Urban Debate League; Baltimore City Public Schools 22nd-Century Pioneers robotics program; Higher Achievement, and the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation Young Scholars Program.

NSLA will also honor four exemplary programs recently announced as having earned the coveted **2015 New York Life Excellence in Summer Learning Award and NSLA's Founder's Award**. Both awards recognize summer programs demonstrating excellence in accelerating academic achievement and promoting healthy development for low-income children and youth, as measured by NSLA's Comprehensive Assessment of Summer Programs.

"We are pleased to once again partner with the National Summer Learning Association, which is one of the nation's leading authorities on summer learning," said Marlyn Torres, senior program officer, New York Life Foundation. "The Excellence in Summer Learning Award has grown into a program that has improved the quality of summer learning programs, which provide thousands of children across the country with enriched summer experiences."

In addition to support from the New York Life Foundation and The Wallace Foundation, *Summer Changes Everything*™ is sponsored by CampSite, Comcast, Giant Word Winder, Scholastic, YMCA and media partner, Youth Today. Conference registration is open until October 12 and includes a Pre-Conference Summer Learning Planning Institute, more than 50 workshops, 30 exhibitors, youth performances and networking receptions. Learn more and register at [www.summerlearning.org/conference](http://www.summerlearning.org/conference).

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*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 in summer learning, develops and delivers capacity-building offerings and convenes and empowers key actors to embrace summer learning as a solution for equity and excellence in education. For more information, visit [www.summerlearning.org](http://www.summerlearning.org)*

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National Summer Learning Association | 575 South Charles Street, Suite 310 | Baltimore | MD | 21201