



For Immediate Release

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Teachers Confirm Time Wasted Due to Summer Learning Loss

25 National Summer Learning Association “new vision for summer school” districts working to close achievement gap

Baltimore--As the school year winds to a close, the clock starts ticking on an all too familiar cycle of summer learning loss affecting millions of young people each year. Now, a new survey of 500 teachers by the [National Summer Learning Association](#) (NSLA), confirms what has long been suspected - when kids enter the classroom months behind in learning each fall, teachers are forced to waste time backtracking. Sixty-six percent of teachers polled reported that it takes them at least three to four weeks to re-teach the previous years' skills at the beginning of a new school year. Moreover, 24 percent said it takes them 5 weeks or more.

These [new survey results](#) underscore the reality of summertime risks facing children. Research is clear that a summer without learning opportunities presents a risk for kids, particularly kids in low-income communities.

- Every year, most youth lose about two months of grade-level equivalency in math skills over the summer.
- Low-income youth also lose more than two months in reading achievement while their middle-income peers make slight gains.
- The losses are cumulative and troubling, leading to a widening achievement gap, placement in less rigorous high school courses, higher high school dropout rates and lower college attendance. A Johns Hopkins [study](#) of Baltimore City Public School students found that about two-thirds of the ninth grade achievement gap in reading between lower- and higher-income youth can be explained by unequal access to summer learning opportunities during the elementary school years.
- Children in poverty also face hunger and food insecurity. Six out of every seven low-income students who receive free- and reduced-price lunches during the school year lose access to them in the summer, according to the Food Research and Action Center.

[View more facts about summer learning loss from NSLA's Research in Brief series.](#)

Yet, there is evidence that students who attend high-quality summer learning programs can avoid summer learning losses. The RAND Corporation report commissioned by The Wallace Foundation, [Making Summer Count: How Summer Programs Can Boost Children's Learning](#), found that quality summer programs with individualized instruction, parental involvement, and small classes can boost student achievement.

"We cannot afford to stand by while the kids most at risk lose ground during the summer and teachers have to spend valuable class time re-teaching old concepts and material," says Gary Huggins, NSLA's CEO. "We know the costs in the lives of children and in the performance of our schools of a summer without learning opportunities, and we know how to make a difference."

Fortunately, some school districts are prioritizing summer learning. NSLA leads a [growing network of 25 school districts](#) that are part of the "new vision for summer school" initiative, serving more than 2 million kids combined, committed to developing research-based programs to boost achievement and school engagement. Together with their community-based partners, they are providing rigorous, enriching programming for the kids who need it most.

At Pittsburgh's Summer Dreamers Academy, students engage in structured academics in the morning and a variety of activities in the afternoon. This year, all will complete a writing project based on their chosen activity. Through a partnership with MGR Foundation's Positive Spin, students choosing cycling will not only learn how to ride, they'll receive education on bike safety and maintenance, and complete a 100-mile ride at the end of the summer session. They'll also draft letters to send to policymakers advocating on a key issue related to bike safety.

In Providence, hands-on exploration and inquiry-based learning will be the focus at the AfterZone Summer Scholars Program for middle-school students, a partnership between Providence Public School District, Providence After School Alliance and more than 70 community organizations. In a program that combines field-based learning and classroom application, teachers and educators from 26 STEM-based community organizations will work together, using activities like sailing to help students learn math. Hands-on lessons around measuring wind speed and sail angles help shed new light on geometry and physics. Through a partnership with the Audubon Society and Save the Bay, students draw samples from local ponds and waterways and analyze them.

Many programs, offered by school districts, nonprofits or in collaboration, are offering high-quality summer learning experiences. To learn more about some of the best in the nation, view the [program profiles of past winners of NSLA's Excellence in Summer Learning Awards](#) .

On National Summer Learning Day--Friday, June 21--and throughout the summer programs around the country will once again host [activities and events](#) to raise awareness of the importance of high-quality summer learning opportunities, and highlight promising practices and options for children.

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The National Summer Learning Association works to connect and equip schools, program providers, communities, and families to deliver high-quality summer learning opportunities to the nation's youth to help close the achievement gap and support healthy development. NSLA provides resources and expertise to help increase youth access and participation in high-quality summer learning programs, and to encourage the use of summer learning as a strategy for education reform. For more information, visit www.summerlearning.org.