Creating Evidence-Based Summer Programs

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NAESP, Tackling the Summer Learning Slump
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Poll question 1: Are you going to offer summer school in summer 2020?

a) Yes, we will host a **remote** summer learning program—no in-person programming

b) Yes, we will host an **in-person** summer learning program

c) Yes, we will host a summer program that **combines** **in-person** and **remote** learning

d) No, no summer program

e) Don’t know! / Debating!
A 2019 review identifies 43 summer programs that meet ESSA Evidence Tiers I-III


TIER I: STRONG EVIDENCE
Statistically-significant evidence of an improved outcome from a well-designed, well-implemented experiment

TIER II: MODERATE EVIDENCE
Statistically-significant evidence of an improved outcome from a well-designed, well-implemented quasi-experiment

TIER III: PROMISING EVIDENCE
Statistically-significant evidence of an improved outcome from a correlational study with controls for selection bias

TIER IV: DEMONSTRATES A RATIONALE
(1) Well-specified logic model informed by relevant research about how the program or practice will improve student outcomes and (2) is being evaluated
Programs promoting social and emotional well-being for special populations of children and youth were particularly effective.

**Example: Just Do It**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4-week program for 8th-graders with learning disabilities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-advocacy training, lessons on creating successful IEPs and achieving goals</td>
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<tr>
<td>Led to positive impacts on self-esteem, depression, adaptability</td>
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<tr>
<td>Did not impact GPA</td>
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Most of the programs studied did not meet all of the studied goals

• Example: Elevate Math Summer Program
  • 4-week four hours per day program for 7th-graders
  • School-based with traditional math instruction, Khan Academy online courses, field trips to colleges, laptops for all participants

• Positive outcomes in math based on algebra assessment

• No impacts on:
  • Interest in math
  • Sense of competency in math
  • School engagement
  • Social and emotional learning
RAND’s study of the National Summer Learning Project (NSLP) met ESSA Tier I evidence criteria.

Learning from Summer: Effects of Voluntary Summer Learning Programs on Low-Income Urban Youth
The Wallace Foundation launched NSLP in 2011

- Launched to expand summer opportunities for low-income students in urban settings
- Engaged RAND to understand whether and how district-led, voluntary summer learning programs that include academic instruction and enrichment opportunities can improve student outcomes
National Summer Learning Project Cities

- Boston
- Jacksonville
- Pittsburgh
- Rochester
- Dallas
We examined the effectiveness of a specific program model in five districts

- no-cost full day program for 5 to 6 weeks
- small classes of 15 or fewer students
- certified teachers focused on 3 hours of academics per day
- enrichment activities daily
- meals
- transport
We collected and analyzed an extensive set of data:

| ✔️ 900 interviews |
| ✔️ 2,000 observation hours of academics and enrichment |
| ✔️ 1,200 surveys of summer staff |
| ✔️ attendance records for 5,600 students |
| ✔️ math, language arts assessments for 5,600 students |
| ✔️ other outcome measures |
Frequent attenders over two summers benefitted in mathematics and ELA

✓ **Finding**: Short-term gains in math equivalent to about 15% of what students learn in mathematics in a calendar year.

✓ **Finding**: After two consecutive summers, students with high attendance (20 or more days per summer) outperformed peers in math, ELA, SEL.

✓ **Finding**: Students who received a minimum of 25 hours of math, and 34 hours of ELA performed better on the subsequent state math and ELA tests.
Fifth publication in our Summer Learning Series specifies recommendations for achieving these outcomes
Four factors make voluntary summer programs effective

- Sufficient duration
- Regular attendance
- Quality instruction
- Positive climate
Consequently, the report provides detailed recommendations on...

- Early planning
- Teacher selection
- Use of time
- Student recruitment
- Academic curriculum and instruction
- Enrichment activities
- Positive climate
- Program costs
Today, I’ll on four of the most important categories

- Early planning
- Teacher selection
- Use of time
- Student recruitment
Planning affects every aspect of a summer program

- Site management
- Site climate
- Instructional quality, for both academic and enrichment classes
- Use of time
- Student attendance
Promising practices for effective planning

• Start early (by January)
• Identify a dedicated lead person to manage cross-functional planning who has influence/authority and time for summer
• Engage key partners, subject experts, in planning
• Meet regularly and be comprehensive in scope
We focus here on the top four:

- Early planning
- Teacher selection
- Use of time
- Student recruitment
Teachers’ content knowledge influenced instructional quality

- Hire teachers with grade-level and subject-matter expertise and, if possible, familiarity with the students
- Consider staff and teachers’ potential for positively impacting the program’s culture
Promising practices to recruit motivated and effective teachers

• Advertise the reported benefits of teaching in summer:
  • 81-97% of surveyed teachers agreed that they enjoyed their summer experience, mostly due to:
    • Access to new curricular materials
    • Small class sizes
    • Departmentalization
    • Supportive adults
    • Half-day schedules

• Emphasize these aspects as well as the importance of the program’s goals and student benefits
Promising practices to retain motivated and effective teachers the following summer

- Allow half-day schedules
- Employ sufficient adults in the program to address students’ needs and behavior
- Ensure that teachers have all the materials they need on time

The majority of teachers in our study did re-apply in the subsequent summer
We focus here on the top four

- Early planning
- Teacher selection
- Use of time
- Student recruitment
Use of time is critical to student experience and attaining student benefits

• Summer programs are relatively short
• *Productive* academic learning time is more predictive of student achievement than the amount of time students spend in the classroom
Summer programs lost as much as 25% of their intended instructional minutes

- Intended instructional time is easily lost to
  - Late class starts and early dismissals
  - Wasted time within the classroom
  - Unplanned or lengthy transition time between classes
  - Poor student attendance
Promising practices to maximize instructional time

• Offer programs of at least five weeks’ duration
• Schedule 3-4 hours a day for academics, with each subject in one continuous block
• Build in time for transitions (which might lengthen the day)
• Communicate to staff and students the importance of maximizing on-task time
Poll question: If offering a summer 2020 program, how many weeks will it last?

a) 6 weeks or more
b) 4-5 weeks
c) 2-3 weeks
d) Other: multiple shorter sessions
e) Other, and please specify in the Zoom chat box
We focus here on the top four:

- Early planning
- Teacher selection
- Use of time
- Student recruitment
Why is student recruitment and retention important?

- Students will not benefit (academically) unless they attend regularly
- Programs are not worth the investment unless students benefit
- Teachers and staff may have to be let go if there is insufficient attendance
Key challenges to recruiting and retaining students

• Even with sophisticated recruitment strategies, 20-30% of students who signed up for NSLP programs never showed up
• On average, students attended about 75% of the time
• Only about half of the students recruited to the program in the first summer returned to the program in the second summer
Promising practices for effective student recruitment and retention

• Develop compelling and accurate recruitment and enrollment information for parents

• Acknowledge the potential no-show rate and recruit and budget accordingly

• Provide incentives for students who attend

• Foster a positive site climate
  • Sites with a negative site climate rating had 79% ADA
  • Sites with a mixed site climate rating had 82% ADA
  • Sites with a positive site climate rating had 86% ADA
Discussion question: Student attendance is especially tricky with remote learning. How do you intend to measure it?

For those of you who will carry out summer 2020 programming, please type in the Zoom chat box what kind of attendance taking you plan.

Do you plan to offer incentives to students for daily attendance?
A free online tool helps practitioners implement these recommendations.
Where to find the report and the toolkit

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<th>Getting to Work on Summer Learning, 2nd Ed.</th>
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<td><a href="https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR366-1.html">https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR366-1.html</a></td>
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<th>Summer Learning Toolkit</th>
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Questions?
hschwart@rand.org

Source: RAND research staff, presentation use only
The 2019 evidence review affirms the value of summer programs

• Identified programs with positive impacts on academic learning, at-home learning, social and emotional well-being, employment and career outcomes

• Identified few branded programs, but evidence in the guide can be cited when writing proposals for federal funding
Poll question: For those of you running summer 2020 programs, which aspects of planning are complete? *Select all that apply.*

A) None; we haven’t yet started or decided if we’ll have one.
B) Set the start & end dates and total program days
C) Recruited students
D) Hired teaching staff
E) Selected curricula
F) Created master calendar/ bell schedule
G) Other (and specify in chat box)
Discussion question: How do you plan to deliver instruction during a summer 2020 program day?

For those of you who will carry out summer 2020 programming, please type in the Zoom chat box what kind of instructional delivery you envision.

For those planning remote learning, please comment whether you’ll be offering synchronous or asynchronous instruction or both for approximately how many hours each day. And covering which subjects.

For those planning in-person learning, please comment on hours/day and subjects & activities.
Recommendation: If possible, hire based on motivation, grade-level, and subject-area experience.

Tool: For a sample teacher job description that sets performance expectations, visit The Wallace Foundation’s website to access the Summer Learning Toolkit.
Promising practices to select motivated and effective teachers

- Recruit early
- Solicit recommendations
- Require cover letters
- Conduct interviews
- Consider school-year performance and grade-level experience