

# AfterSchool Today

The Official Publication of the National AfterSchool Association/naaweb.org | Spring 2014

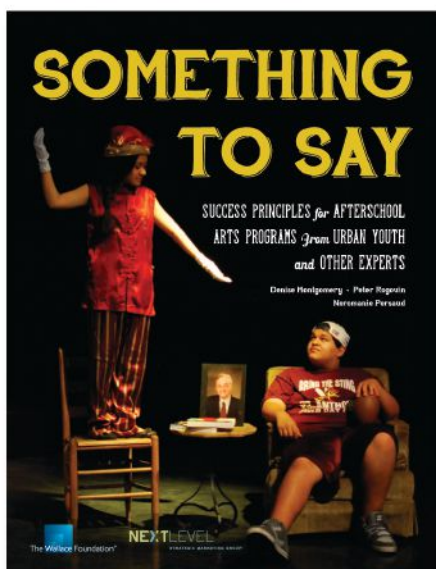


## THE **Top 25** MOST INFLUENTIAL PEOPLE IN AFTERSCHOOL



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and the SCHOOL DAY**

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Spring 2014



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Spring 2014

# AfterSchool Today

Volume 5 Issue 1

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# from the executive director



Gina Warner



Sarah Pitcock

It appears that the worst of this long winter is finally behind us—how could we not be looking forward to summer?! For many children, summertime means camp, visits to the museum, parks and libraries, and access to fun and engaging activities. For many low-income children, however, the reality of summer is far from this ideal.

Working to ensure that every child is safe, engaged, and learning during the summer months is the mission of the National Summer Learning Association. That's why we are excited for our two organizations to be collaborating on this special issue of *AfterSchool Today*, focusing on ways to improve summer learning experiences for all children.

As out-of-school time professionals, many of you are aware that unequal access to high-quality summer learning opportunities contributes to a persistent achievement gap between higher- and lower-income youth that is producing lifelong consequences.

While we have a long way to go to provide enriching, memorable summers for all young people, there are efforts underway across the country to turn summer from a time of loss to a time of accelerated growth and gain.

The National Summer Learning Association is working to reduce the achievement gap through high-quality summer learning opportunities and by building awareness of the value of summer learning, changing public policy, and supporting school districts, nonprofits, and city and state leaders to implement life-changing programs for disadvantaged youth.

Together, we salute the many individuals and organizations in this issue who are leading the charge, and we hope that you will join us in our work to level the playing field for all young people across the country. Learn more at [www.summerlearning.org](http://www.summerlearning.org).

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Sarah Pitcock  
CEO  
National Summer Learning Association



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## EXTRA!

Did you miss keynote speaker  
Jaime Casap at the 2014 NAA Convention?

Don't miss his podcast interview:

<http://developmentwithoutlimits.org/category/podcast/>  
<https://itunes.apple.com/us/podcast/please-speak-freely/id452606826?mt=2>

## VISIT: WWW

Read more  
about the people,  
products, and programs  
featured in this issue of  
*AfterSchool Today!*

Summer Starts In  
September: Summer  
Program Planning Guide  
[www.SummerStartsinSeptember.com](http://www.SummerStartsinSeptember.com)

Exploratorium  
<http://www.exploratorium.edu/>

Holistic Student Assessment Tool  
<http://www.pearweb.org/tools/hsa.html>

The Wallace Foundation  
<http://www.wallacefoundation.org>

RAND Corporation  
<http://www.rand.org>

GRANTS.GOV  
<http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/home.html>

USDA Summer Food Service Program  
[www.summerfood.usda.gov](http://www.summerfood.usda.gov)

California Summer Meal Coalition  
[www.summermealcoalition.org/](http://www.summermealcoalition.org/)

## FROM: NSLA

National Summer Learning Association  
[www.summerlearning.org](http://www.summerlearning.org)

National Conference on Summer Learning  
[www.summerlearning.org/conference](http://www.summerlearning.org/conference)

Summer Learning Day  
[www.summerlearning.org/SLD](http://www.summerlearning.org/SLD)

New Vision for Summer School  
[www.summerlearning.org/NVSS](http://www.summerlearning.org/NVSS)

Healthy Summers for Kids: Turning Risk into Opportunity  
[www.summerlearning.org/HealthySummers](http://www.summerlearning.org/HealthySummers)

Research in Brief (one-pagers)  
[www.summerlearning.org/researchbrief](http://www.summerlearning.org/researchbrief)

Quality Assessment  
[www.summerlearning.org/QualityAssessment](http://www.summerlearning.org/QualityAssessment)

Moving Summer Learning Forward: A Strategic  
Roadmap for Funding in Tough Times  
[www.summerlearning.org/funding](http://www.summerlearning.org/funding)

Innovative Pathways to Teaching Reform: Using  
Connected Learning to Develop Tomorrow's Leaders  
[www.summerlearning.org/ConnectedLearning](http://www.summerlearning.org/ConnectedLearning)

## MORE: RESOURCES

**Expanding Minds and Opportunities: Leveraging the Power of Afterschool and Summer Learning for Student Success (2013)**, edited by Terry K. Peterson, Ph.D., is a groundbreaking compendium of studies, reports, and commentaries by more than one hundred community leaders, elected officials, educators, researchers, advocates, and other prominent authors and thought leaders.

[www.expandinglearning.org/expandingminds](http://www.expandinglearning.org/expandingminds)

**Making Summer Count: How Summer Programs Can Boost Children's Learning**  
(a RAND Corporation report by McCombs et al., 2011)

<http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/MG1120.html>

**Getting to Work on Summer Learning: Recommended Practices for Success**  
(a RAND Corporation report by Augustine et al., 2013)

[www.rand.org/pubs/research\\_reports/RR366.html](http://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR366.html)

**Food Research and Action Center, Hunger Doesn't Take a Vacation** report

<http://frac.org/reports-and-resources/publications-archives/>



## SUMMER STARTS IN SEPTEMBER

By Sarah Pitcock

### FOR YOUR PROGRAM:

*Summer Starts in September* is a great reference book we're using to help plan our 2014 summer program. The Belle Fourche Middle School JAM program, offered afterschool and in summer, serves fifth- to eighth-grade students in rural South Dakota.

We've had great summer programs, but we could have an even better one. I wanted to start planning earlier, strengthen weak areas, and maintain and improve upon our strengths. When I learned of *Summer Starts in September*, I felt this material could help.

JAM staff and I started with the P-CASP process. This book offers a valuable program assessment plan. We've met as a team and begun evaluating our program. We're having our parents and teachers participate in the surveys. The book's timeline, indicators, and level information help us with this process. I like the roadmaps the book offers. It's a quick reference with ideas on information you may want. The helpful worksheets will make planning activities, goals, and training much easier. The work is already done; they have the critical questions you need to answer.

You could learn from every part of *Summer Starts in September*. This book could help programs of all sizes and resources. The book neatly lays out how to plan for your program. It's easy to follow and hits areas a program needs to be concerned with: quality programming, planning, maintaining partnerships, and sustainability.

*Contributed by Kristy Messner, site coordinator, Belle Fourche Middle School JAM program*



## EXPLORALAB: 150 WAYS TO INVESTIGATE THE AMAZING SCIENCE ALL AROUND YOU

By The Exploratorium

### FOR YOUTH:

*Exploralab*, created by San Francisco's renowned Exploratorium, has twenty-four hours' worth of discoveries, experiments, and household investigations to pique the interest of your curious child scientists, ages eight and older. The intrepid researchers could learn what makes an alarm clock tick. They could defy gravity in the bathroom. They could find out what magnets have to do with breakfast cereal.

*Exploralab* is packed with cool things, such as glow-in-the-dark ink, a magnifier, and polarizing filters. The book is intended to be carried with the child throughout the day, so it's available as an on-the-spot experiment guide. It encourages children to use the tools they already have—head tools and hand tools—to use the book and branch out into their own experiments. It encourages them to look and touch and write things down, to see things differently than others see them. It prompts children to test their guesses and imagine what their results may be; it prompts them to partner with others, to learn even more.

Simple labs include learning about afterimages—pesky shapes you see after staring at something—that exist only in your brain. What causes them? At breakfast, children could spin their cup to see “cosmic forces” at work, or turn good ol' white milk into a rainbow.

Each lab offers experiments, games, puzzles, a list of items you'll need, details on the science behind what you're doing, and more. Are you ready to explore?



# Summer Learning

AS A PRIORITY

Mary Ronan, Cincinnati Public Schools Superintendent

BY AMY L CHARLES

## How did Cincinnati become part of the National Summer Learning Association's New Vision for Summer School Network?

In 2009, Cincinnati Public Schools launched "5th Quarter," a summer learning initiative aimed at extending the school year for sixteen low-performing schools. This initiative, funded by Title I ARRA funds, provided an extra four weeks of full-day programming that included academic enrichment, arts, music, gardening, and field trips for students attending these schools. The 5th Quarter Program continued until summer 2013.

In 2010, The New Vision Summer School Network contacted CPS about 5th Quarter and invited the district to be part of the network. District representatives have attended these national meetings to share best practices with other cities and learn about new research and strategies for summer learning.

## Could you talk a bit about the good work happening in Cincinnati?

Summer Learning continues to be a priority in Cincinnati Public Schools. Our participation in The Wallace Foundation Summer Learning Demonstration Project has afforded us the opportunity to "dig deep" into our approach to summer learning. We have refined our approach and improved in several areas, including:

- Stronger focus on K-3 literacy, providing additional support for our

struggling readers to meet Ohio's new third-grade guarantee.

- Improved Family and Community Engagement Strategies. Last year, we reached out to our faith-based community to help us get the message out; this year, we have a new website and hired a Family and Community Engagement Coordinator to support recruitment and help educate families about the importance of summer learning.

- Sustained community involvement and support. Our community partners continue to help us extend the day—the district offers a half-day of academic programming for four weeks—but community partners are picking up where we leave off, providing enrichment programs that fill the afternoon and, in some cases, the rest of the summer months.

- Freedom Schools, two new Summer Bridge programs for students transitioning into our reorganized seven-to-twelve high school model.

- Kindergarten Bridge Programs, supporting the successful transition of our youngest students into our elementary schools.

- With the help of The Strive Partnership, Cincinnati has established a summer learning collaborative consisting of local organizations in the region who provide summer learning. The collaborative is looking at data—who is served, how often, and with what results. We're looking at best practices for replication throughout the region.

## Why are these efforts important, and how do they address the New Vision for Summer School principles of high-quality summer learning?

Summer learning continues to be a critical component of the CPS school reform strategy. We believe in the reality of summer learning loss, and want students to participate in academically enriching summer programs to sustain academic growth. CPS also views summer as a way to promote the successful transition into kindergarten and into high school.

CPS continues to rely on community partnerships to help us identify and fill gaps in needed services for our students. Our community has embraced the idea of shared outcomes, and through a formal community engagement process, our schools are developing a shared vision for student success with all key stakeholders—parents, community residences, businesses, et cetera. This shared vision includes opportunities for summer learning in the schools and in the community.

The CPS Community Learning Center offers students a comprehensive system of supports to provide for the basic needs of children—food, clothing, healthcare, et cetera—and enrich their school experiences through art, music, leadership training, mentors, and more. Many of our partners who support schools during the year stay connected during our summer programs. •

# GETTING TO WORK ON Summer Learning

BY NINA SONENBERG, PHD

## **BREAKING NEWS ON SUMMER PROGRAMS: Fun and learning can go hand-in-hand.**

That's one early lesson from a large national study currently underway on summer learning programs run by large school districts. All programs in the study blend learning and enrichment, but the program with the strictest focus on academics has the highest rate of attendance!

More lessons continue to emerge from this nationwide study, funded by The Wallace Foundation. This largest "randomized controlled trial" ever conducted on summer learning involves thousands of fourth-grade students in summer learning programs in five urban U.S. school districts. The voluntary programs offer reading, math, and enrichment activities. The goal is to benefit children immediately with high-quality, no-cost summer learning programs, and in the long term establish whether and how these summer programs could help eliminate the achievement gap between low-income students and their higher-income peers, and even produce lasting academic gains.

The word isn't out yet on student outcomes—the first findings will be published this fall—but lessons from the study have already been published. The RAND Corporation is conducting all research.

In 2011, RAND released a report on why summer learning programs might be a good bet to reduce the achievement gap. *Making Summer Count: How Summer Programs Can Boost Children's Learning* reviews a century of literature documenting "summer learning loss," identifying challenges and providing fresh evidence that programs can make a difference.

Last summer, RAND released detailed information about the how, drawing from its close observations of the districts in the Wallace study. *Getting to Work on Summer Learning: Recommended Practices for Success* provides districts and others with early, practical lessons and guidance on how to operate successful summer learning programs.

Here we share some of what we learned. For the full report and all lessons learned, visit [wallacefoundation.org/gettingtoworkonsummer](http://wallacefoundation.org/gettingtoworkonsummer).

## 4 Tips TOWARD A Successful SUMMER LEARNING PROGRAM

### 1 PLAN EARLY.

Ideally, planning for your summer program is well underway. The truth is, implementing a quality summer program is a lot like embarking on a new school year—typically with a lot less time to plan and execute. For this reason, planning early could be the most important characteristic of a program that runs smoothly and maximizes learning time.

Start planning in January and be inclusive in the planning process. Clearly delineate roles, and hold regular—and productive—planning meetings. Making decisions about staffing, curriculum, and enrichment selections early allows for the time necessary to secure contract approvals, deliver comprehensive training and ensure thorough lesson planning.

### 2 MAXIMIZE ACADEMIC TIME ON TASK.

The ultimate goal of a summer learning program is academic achievement, and that requires a structure that allows for sufficient time on task. Operating programs for five to six weeks and scheduling at least three hours of academics a day can help maximize learning time.

### 3 PROVIDE FUN, ENGAGING ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES

Providing fun and engaging enrichment activities could provide a number of benefits, from boosting attendance and keeping kids coming back to narrowing the "opportunity gap" by providing low-income youth with opportunities they so often miss out on.

Enrichment activities range from learning how to swim to orchestrating a theatrical

production to completing a complex science experiment. A review of the practices of the six demonstration districts revealed different approaches—but regardless of the approach, practices worked well when implemented by qualified staff.

While enrichment activities can be linked to academic content, it's not necessary. When linked, it works best when the link is natural, such as science exploration and experimentation, and requires careful planning.

## 4 BOOST ATTENDANCE.

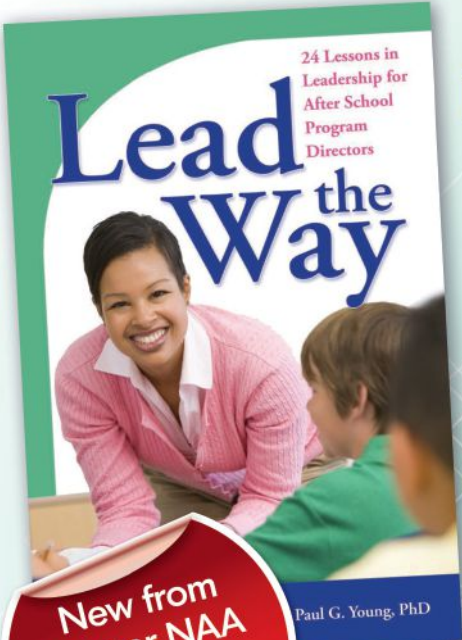
Even the best summer program can't make a dent in student success unless students attend. Several practices in the six districts proved effective in getting kids through the door and coming back for more.

It's important to set enrollment deadlines. This is obviously important for program planning, but also ensures higher average daily attendance. Establishing a clear attendance policy signals the importance of regular attendance to students and parents. RAND found that districts that reinforced the need for consistent attendance in program application materials typically had better attendance than those with loose policies.

A variety of incentives can boost attendance. Programs in the study recognized consistent attendance and participation with rewards such as field trips, games and public recognition. What's not necessary to boost attendance? Disguising academics! In the study, the two district programs that were both the most and least "school-like" had the strongest attendance.

To review findings to date, including lessons on curriculum, hiring, training, and costs, visit [www.wallacefoundation.org/gettingtoworkonsummer](http://www.wallacefoundation.org/gettingtoworkonsummer) to download the full report, free of charge. All Wallace knowledge products are available at no cost via [www.wallacefoundation.org](http://www.wallacefoundation.org). •



| Nina Sonenberg, PhD is the communications officer at The Wallace Foundation.



**24 lessons in leadership essential to developing a successful after school program**

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They played.  
They swam.  
They climbed.  
They learned.  
They explored.  
They dreamed.

**What will you do with all the photos from summer camp?**



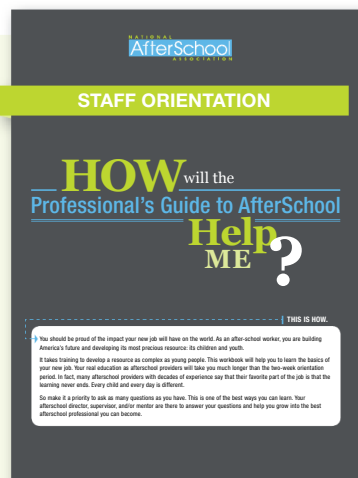
**CAPTURE the MOMENTS** 

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614-432-4917

# 3 Helpful New NAA Tools

BY GINA WARNER

Learning and educational development are ongoing development processes, for you, your program, and the youth and families served. As programs grow, so do the people facilitating them. Professional development never stops. That's why the National AfterSchool Association has created these latest helpful tools, with your professional development in mind.



## THE PROFESSIONAL'S GUIDE TO AFTERSCHOOL: STAFF ORIENTATION

The Professional's Guide to AfterSchool: Staff Orientation Workbook was developed by NAA to help meet basic expectations of quality afterschool care in your first two weeks on the job. How did we discover these best practices? We talked to people like you: afterschool directors, program staff, children, youth, and family members from across the country and from diverse program settings. In addition, we pulled from the NAA Core Knowledge and Competencies to identify the essentials for working with children and youth. Afterschool Essentials: Staff Orientation Workbook is a module in the Afterschool Essentials series.

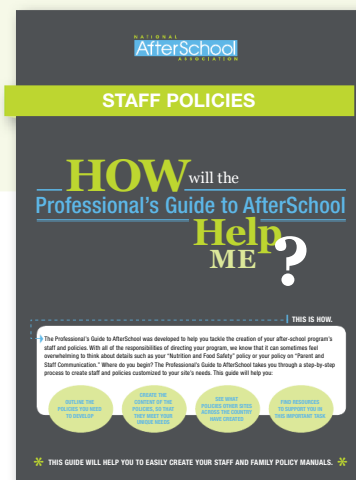
This guide is organized into five sections, each a major category within the afterschool field—Staff-Child Relationships, Staff-Parent Relationships, Staff-Staff Relationships, Supervision & Setting Limits, and Health & Safety. The sections share basic standards for quality programming and supervision. (Be aware that NAA uses

the term “parents” to refer to all legal guardians of children and their families.)

Working with children and youth afterschool is a hands-on, highly active profession. When you work with school-age children and youth, you'll be asked to make important judgment calls, fast. To develop your thinking skills, this guide will present scenarios based on real after-school situations. By picturing the scene, you'll learn how to apply the fundamental expectations in practice. Begin by reading through each section and studying the expectations. Consider how you'd respond to the scenarios. It's a great way to practice and test your growing knowledge.

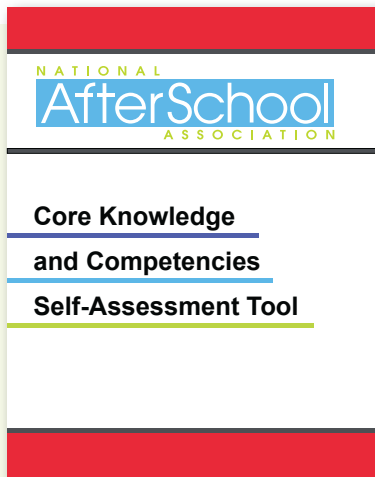
## THE PROFESSIONAL'S GUIDE TO AFTERSCHOOL: STAFF POLICIES

The Professional's Guide to AfterSchool was developed by the National Afterschool Association (NAA) to support best practices in hiring. So how did we discover these best practices? Well, we talked to people like you—afterschool directors, program staff, children, youth, and family members from across the country and from diverse program settings. In addition, we pulled from the NAA Core Knowledge and Competencies to identify the essentials for working with children and youth. The Professional's Guide to AfterSchool:



Staff Policies is a module in the Professional's Guide series.

The Professional's Guide to AfterSchool: Staff Policies is designed to offer guiding questions and things to consider. It is not, nor should it be used as, a replacement for legal advice. Employment laws and regulations vary by state and it's important to check with all appropriate regulatory agencies to ensure you have the information required as an employer in your state.



### NAA CORE KNOWLEDGE AND COMPETENCIES SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL

This checklist is a tool for administrators, trainers, and practitioners. If you're a director, administrator, staff development trainer, or affiliate leader, this self-assessment checklist could be what you've been waiting for. It's based on the NAA Core Knowledge and Competencies for Youth and Development Professionals, adopted in 2011 to guide your staff. This checklist could be adapted for hiring and evaluating staff, and is a guide for formal and informal professional development.

If you are a group or club leader, youth worker, or other youth development practitioner, this checklist is designed for you. It will empower you to assess your knowledge and skills, and will help you to develop professionally by honestly assessing your level of knowledge and skills and identifying specific areas of need for your future professional development. •

To all the of leaders in afterschool who use their energy and influence to inspire, to engage and to expand learning opportunities for young people, we salute you!

**COLLABORATIVE**

[www.collaborativecommunications.com](http://www.collaborativecommunications.com)



“ The definitive source of why afterschool works... ”

More than 100 authors contributed to this groundbreaking compendium of studies, reports and commentaries presenting bold and persuasive evidence—as well as examples of effective practices, programs and partnerships—that demonstrate how opportunities after school and during the summer are yielding positive outcomes for authentic student, community and family engagement in learning.

Download at [www.expandinglearning.org/expandingminds](http://www.expandinglearning.org/expandingminds)

Available at Amazon.com 

#### Congratulations to These Influential Afterschool Leaders & Authors:

Terry K. Peterson, Editor  
Terri Ferinde Dunham  
Lucy N. Friedman  
Ayeola Fortune

Jodi Grant  
Sam Piha  
Carla Sanger  
Deborah Lowe Vandell

# HOW SUMMER LEARNING HELPS support EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING

EDITED BY AMY L CHARLES

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Research has long shown that young people lose academic ground during summer vacation. Most lose roughly two months of grade-level equivalency in mathematical skills; low-income youth tend to lose more than two months in reading achievement.

Lack of access to meaningful summer activities widens achievement and opportunity gaps, and the effects could lead to placement in less rigorous high school courses, higher dropout rates, and lower college attendance rates. A 2011 RAND report indicates that “... these learning losses (for low-income students) are cumulative, and students may never overcome them.”

Quality summer learning programs help stem these effects and have other benefits. Students that regularly attend high-quality summer programs demonstrate higher self-esteem and stronger leadership qualities, more successful grade transitions, and better employment outcomes. Summer learning is poised to help students make up for lost time and close the achievement gap.

Summer learning also benefits teachers and informal educators; it offers new teaching and learning perspectives and the flexibility to innovate, create, and try out new lessons and teaching strategies—inside of the classroom and out. Teachers report building deeper relationships and seeing “problem” students excel in the more hands-on, individualized summer learning environments.

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## SMARTER SUMMERS PROGRAM

In 2011, the Walmart Foundation made a **\$25 MILLION INVESTMENT** aimed at filling the gaps that start when the school year ends. The National Summer Learning Association (NSLA) received an **\$11.5 MILLION GRANT TO PROVIDE HIGH-QUALITY SUMMER LEARNING EXPERIENCES** for twenty thousand middle-school students in ten cities, beginning the three-year *Smarter Summers* project.

## SMARTER SUMMERS EVOLUTION

NSLA invited four high-quality nonprofit summer learning providers to apply for the initial round of *Smarter Summers* funding—all of them with an existing plan for middle-grades growth and the ability to scale up short term. NSLA awarded funding to Summer Advantage USA (Chicago and Indianapolis), THINK Together (Los Angeles County, Sacramento County, and San Diego, California), Higher Achievement (Baltimore and Washington, D.C.), and Building Educated Leaders for Life, BELL (Baltimore, Boston, Detroit, and New York).

Thousands of middle school students achieved significant learning gains through these programs. Those who historically would’ve fallen off track during the critical transition to high school instead gained academic ground and exposure to careers, colleges, cultural experiences, important life skills, and a network of supportive adults.

A second round of grants engaged five school districts, and over three years the initiative engaged more than twenty-eight thousand students from fifteen cities. Participating programs provided high-quality summer learning experiences, emphasized hands-on learning and active enrichment opportunities, provided nutritious meals, and gave students the chance to meet their teachers, practice important academic skills, take outstanding field trips, and connect with mentors

and role models in their communities.

Additionally, participating school districts and nonprofit providers gained a peer network invested in transforming summers into a springboard for families and schools. This helps shape how providers designed and marketed programs, evaluated success, and engaged stakeholders in efforts to sustain those programs.

The programs targeted underserved, low-income communities—with students at particular risk of summer learning loss—and middle-grades students. The transitional fifth- to ninth-grade middle school years are critical, and research shows that students often start exhibiting poor attendance, disruptive behaviors, failing grades, and other “off track” signs as early as sixth grade—indicators that often mean youth won’t graduate from high school. Engaging youth in middle grades is a challenge, and these programs worked diligently to recruit students, retain their interest, and boost attendance.

## OUTCOMES

In 2013, NSLA spearheaded implementation of standardized tools to gauge students’ social and emotional well-being and development at six participating programs. The tools—developed by the Program in Education, Afterschool and Resiliency (PEAR) at Harvard University—included the Holistic Student Assessment (HSA), administered at the start of summer, and the Summer Learning Tool, a retrospective survey administered at program end.

Through the HSA, youth were asked questions designed to measure the Resiliencies, Relationships, Learning and School Engagement, and Strengths and Difficulties areas of social and emotional development. The HSA, taken by 2,602 students at thirty-two sites, gave programs a snapshot of each student’s social-emotional state and areas where targeted interventions were most needed. HSA administration was intended to equip summer program staff with critical information about the young people with whom they were working in the program’s first week. The profiles become a logical tool for summer programs to share with school-year teachers come fall, acting as a non-academic summer learning report card.

By summer 2013’s end, students across the programs reported that the summer learning experience positively affected several key assessment areas. They reported higher scores on the post-test in relationships with peers, relationships with adults, critical thinking, perseverance, interest in learning, optimism, empathy, and bonding with the school. **“More” or “much more” learning interest was reported by 75.4 PERCENT; 67 PERCENT reported “more” or “much more” critical thinking improvement; and 65.7 PERCENT reported “more” or “much more” strength in their sense of perseverance.**

Participating programs and districts contributed a wealth of lessons and experiences to further inform the field and develop a growing network of top-notch summer programs. Much has been accomplished in three years, yet work still remains to expand summer learning opportunities for all youth who need them. •

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Visit <http://www.pearweb.org/tools/hsa.html> to learn more about the HSA tool.



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The graphic features a central cluster of six hexagons representing key skills: Character Education (blue), Social and Emotional Learning (green), Academic Achievement (teal), Service Learning (purple), Bullying Prevention (red), and Drug & Alcohol Prevention (orange). To the right is the Lions Quest logo, which includes a stylized hand icon.



2013

# NEW YORK LIFE EXCELLENCE IN SUMMER LEARNING AWARDS

Congratulations to Boston Summer Learning Project, Freedom School Partners, and CPEP, 2013 New York Life Excellence in Summer Learning Award winners. These programs exemplify the strategies and plans needed to help children and educators succeed during summer. The winners, selected from close to one hundred applicants through a rigorous application and interview process and through measurement by the National Summer Learning Association's Comprehensive Assessment of Summer Programs, are high-quality summer learning leaders that make a difference in young peoples' lives.

BY AMY L CHARLES

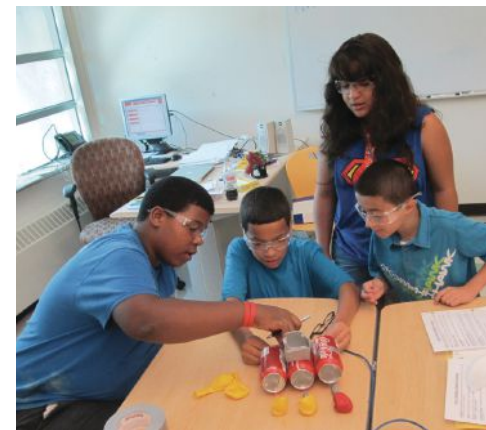
## **BOSTON SUMMER LEARNING PROJECT**

Learning doesn't happen in the classroom alone, and the Boston Summer Learning Project uses settings including college campuses, nature centers, and neighborhood nonprofit associations to make that point. The program's certified teachers and youth development professionals collaborate to lead students through hands-on projects integrating the Common Core Standards and based upon an "essential question," such as, "What does it mean to be living?" The program, which serves more than seventeen hundred low-income elementary through high school youth through twenty-eight sites, is designed to spark critical thinking and mastery of academic skills through engaging and enriching activities—and students are seeing tangible results in English Language Arts and math skills.

Boston Summer Learning Project is led by Boston Public Schools and Boston After School & Beyond, and fueled by strategic partnerships with eighteen community-based organizations, all working together with certified leaders and program teachers to promote strong quality learning in a fun, helpful environment. Boston Summer Learning Project programs are stringent enough to qualify for school credit while enticing students to take part of their own accord.

## **FREEDOM SCHOOL PARTNERS**

Children in Charlotte, North Carolina, face plenty of challenges. Census statistics have shown that twenty-five percent of Mecklenburg



County children live at or below the poverty line, and data from the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School District approximates sixty thousand local youth in need of high-quality summer learning opportunities. That's why Freedom School Partners steps in to help engage and boost the literacy skills of 1,250 students across nineteen school district locations.

Mornings are filled with literacy-building activities led by highly trained college students. Afternoons involve field trips, physical activities, and enrichment, with an emphasis on Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math (STEAM) learning. And over the past four summers, the vast majority of students involved in the program have maintained or improved their reading levels and abilities. The Freedom School Partners program encourages youth to fall in love with books and revel in the learning, adventures, and joy of reading. The program's Integrated Reading Curriculum means youth are involved with culturally relevant books and activities relative to their lives and experiences.

## CPEP

Certified teachers + Interactive video games = CPEP's Summer Gaming Challenge. Multiply this by several hundred seventh- and eighth-graders

from five low-income and three suburban Connecticut communities, and you get memorable summer learning experiences with a positive educational impact.

CPEP, founded as the Connecticut Pre-Engineering Program, focuses on the critical middle grades and emphasizes Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) learning. In CPEP's Summer Gaming Challenge, students challenge each other in math skill-building computer games and build projects with STEM themes. The program blends cutting-edge educational gaming software, face-to-face teacher-led instruction, and engaging challenges to make math fun and helps students improve their proficiency in math, problem-solving, and twenty-first-century skills such as collaboration, communication, creativity, and critical thinking.

Youth work daily with certified teachers to practice specific math skills and use math-gaming software to help them master the skills at a pace suited to their abilities. They earn points and badges, and increase their self-confidence substantially via competing with their peers (around the state and around the world) in live games and weekly tournaments. Youth participate weekly in hands-on STEM-themed design challenges—framed as real-life scenarios—that prompt them to develop

creative solutions.

Since 2010, the CPEP program has blossomed from one site with sixty students to six sites with close to four hundred students, and has served more than six hundred students. In 2013, average daily attendance was at ninety-four percent, and student retention was at eighty-nine percent. From the start, CPEP has focused on challenge-based, hands-on projects to create a learning opportunity that's transformative for the participating students and the certified teachers facilitating their activities and progress alike.

"A key factor to CPEP's success has been the organization's priority on developing out-of-school-time STEM programs that are educationally rich and highly enjoyable for both students and teachers," said Noah Ratzan, summer program manager. "Over the past twenty-five years, CPEP's priority on the student and teacher experience has helped the organization develop a keen understanding of the elements that make for STEM programming that is both academically rigorous and irresistibly attractive.

"These elements came together in the CPEP Summer Gaming Challenge, and the result has been enthusiastic participants, positive youth development, and substantial academic gains." •

# Summer Learning, AFTERSCHOOL, and the SCHOOL DAY

## A Proposed Plan for a Kentucky Project – Game After

BY PAT TROTTER

As I've begun to read and research more about out-of-school learning, I've realized that summer learning programs and afterschool programs are often viewed as distinctly separate entities. There is growing awareness and supportive data that demonstrates the importance of tying the regular school day to afterschool program design. To complete the circle, we should also tie summer learning programs to the goals and learning targets established during the regular school year. The difference between the school learning and the out-of-school learning will be the method of delivery—which is what sets OST apart from the traditional school day.

Our proposed project here in Kentucky, to establish an afterschool game design program targeting at-risk high school students, will attempt to engage in that process. As schools seek to break the mold of “sit-and-get” learning and provide for anytime, anywhere, anyplace, any pace learning, the importance of afterschool and summer learning programs grows exponentially. Couple this with the push to award credit based on demonstrated mastery rather than hours in a seat, and it becomes clear that OST needs to be considered as a critical learning strategy to ensure students are ready

for college, the workplace, and success in life.

This proposed program will incorporate key elements identified as critical components of personalized learning: It will provide variety and choice; allow students to make decisions about the direction of their learning; present a dynamic learning opportunity; provide a means for students to access learning experiences that enable them to progress at their own level of ability; foster relationships between teachers, students and mentors; and create a strong sense of community within the group as a whole.

The afterschool program will be based on teaching students game design. Utilizing a framework developed by the Learning Games Network, this program will incorporate higher-order thinking skills, research and writing, art design, history/social studies, and science, technology (programming, coding) and math. Students will work in teams led by peer mentors and will be able to collaborate virtually on their projects even after the 3-6 p.m. in-school meetings that will occur three or four days a week. Students will have an opportunity to earn credits toward graduation or for credit recovery by demonstrating mastery of certain Kentucky Core Academic standards as

determined by content area teachers, game design instructors, mentors, and the students themselves. Connections to the classroom learning during the regular school day will be made by engaging the teachers and program providers, throughout the program. The program will be physically housed within one high school, with other high schools serving as satellite locations. Instruction can be delivered virtually, and students can work on their projects in a virtual setting. Facilitators and mentors will be on hand at each satellite school to monitor attendance, assist with technical issues, provide guidance, and more. Community technology companies will provide students with real-world connections, and participating students will be expected to make a pitch to these local companies and receive feedback before proceeding with their project.

Ultimately, as students become proficient in game design, it is our hope that the project will segue into a summer learning program where they'll be expected to identify a social or community issue, then build a game that will allow them to create solutions to problems and try out the solutions via the game format. The summer program could be a blend of a residential and virtual environment, allowing it

to stretch out over a longer period of time than most traditional summer programs. It might also include internships, which will help students develop and hone their essential skills.

A one-week pre-program workshop will be hosted during the summer, prior to the launch of the program, to provide professional development for teachers and mentors. They will receive training on personalized learning; defining what professionals need to know and be able to do in order to provide quality youth programming; how afterschool is different from “in school” and key factors that separate these approaches to learning; using the online Google community platform; understanding the game design process; and much more. We feel it is important for all stakeholders to engage

in this planning and orientation process, to ensure a smooth launch when the school year begins.


There are many obstacles to overcome in designing and implementing this type of program, not the least of which is securing sufficient funding. We’re exploring several avenues, including federal funds allocated to low-performing schools, private foundations, and reallocating state and district funding already earmarked for dropout prevention, closing achievement gaps, and reaching the state college and career readiness goals. Each student would be provided with a laptop, and we would secure sufficient game design software licenses to cover all participants. Graduate education major students from the University of Kentucky will participate as facilitators,

researchers, instructors, and coaches, and will earn credit toward degree completion. Student progress would be tracked to determine if the program was having a positive effect on attendance, grades, and graduation.

While the program is ambitious, we are finding enthusiasm and support within both the education and technology communities, and we are optimistic that the project will launch in the fall in at least two of the five high schools. There is also a strong possibility we will be able to include students from military families stationed at Fort Campbell. • | Pat Trotter, White-Riley-Peterson Fellow, project manager of the Kentucky Department of Education.

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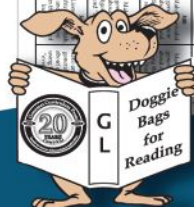
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# THE **Top 25** MOST INFLUENTIAL PEOPLE IN AFTERSCHOOL

BY AMY L CHARLES

**SERVICE.  
RESEARCH.  
ACTION.  
INFLUENCE.  
IMPACT.**

The nominations were many. The selection process was focused. These are leaders whose service, research, and action influence affect large numbers of children and families, bringing positive attention and investment to the afterschool field. Congratulations to the 2014 Top 25 Most Influential People in Afterschool! The honorees will receive a commemorative plaque from the NAA and be featured over a series of NAA e-newsletters.



## **MATTHEW BOULAY**

*Founder, Chairman of the Board of Directors,  
National Summer Learning Association*

As a Johns Hopkins University undergraduate in 1992, Matthew Boulay founded Teach Baltimore, a nonprofit summer education initiative that grew into the National Summer Learning Association.



## **BEN PAUL**

*President and CEO, After-School All-Stars*

During Ben Paul's ten-year After-School All-Stars tenure, he's overseen expansion of program operations from forty-five to nearly four hundred schools, and expanded the organization's focus to academics, enrichment, and health and fitness.



## **JUDY NEE**

*Executive Vice President and General Manager,  
AlphaBEST Education, Inc.*

Prior to joining AlphaBEST, Judy Nee served as president and CEO of NAA, leading its growth in membership, affiliates, and presence in Washington, D.C. She's pursuing a PhD in Leadership and Education.



## **TERRI FERINDE DUNHAM**

*Partner, Collaborative Communications / Lead, National  
Network of Statewide Afterschool Networks*

Terri Ferinde Dunham works to create new learning systems where schools and communities together expand learning opportunities for youth. She's most often found behind the scenes in the afterschool field.



## **JESSICA DONNER**

*Director, Every Hour Counts*

Jessica Donner manages Every Hour Counts efforts to develop policy recommendations and solutions, test the feasibility of policy and practice recommendations and disseminate findings, and deliver technical assistance to communities to build expanded-learning systems.



## **LUCY N. FRIEDMAN, PhD**

*Founding President, TASC (The After-School Corporation)*

Dr. Lucy N. Friedman and TASC are dedicated to expanding the school day to give disadvantaged youth opportunities to discover and develop talents; support to overcome poverty's challenges; and time to achieve at levels essential for success.



**ELLEN S. GANNETT, M.ED.**

*Director, National Institute on Out-of-School Time (NIOS), Wellesley Centers for Women at Wellesley College*

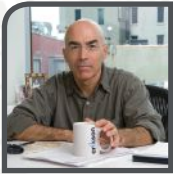
Ellen S. Gannett entered the afterschool field four decades ago. Her work ranges from system building for afterschool and youth development to professional development and creating evaluation systems.



**CLIFF JOHNSON**

*Executive Director, Institute for Youth, Education and Families, National League of Cities*

Cliff Johnson is leading National League of Cities' efforts to strengthen the capacity of municipal leaders to meet the needs of children, youth, and families in their communities.



**ROBERT HALPERN**

*Professor and Chair of Research Council, Erikson Institute*

Robert Halpern's current research focuses on the evaluation of afterschool programs for poor children and their families. He writes extensively on the history of human services.



**JIM CLARK**

*President and CEO, Boys & Girls Clubs of America*

Under Jim Clark's leadership, Clubs are increasing their impact on young people by focusing on three priority outcome areas: Academic Success, Good Character and Citizenship, Healthy Lifestyles.



**SYLVIA LYLES, PhD**

*Director, Academic Improvement and Teacher Quality Programs, U.S. Department of Education*

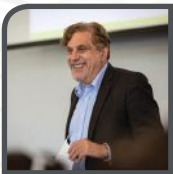
Dr. Sylvia Lyles has more than three decades of experience federal service, begun in the U.S. Department of Commerce. She provides leadership for more than twenty discretionary and formula programs, overseeing a \$5 billion educational investment.



**JODI GRANT**

*Executive Director, Afterschool Alliance*

Jodi Grant oversees setting goals and strategies for reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, helping programs tap into federal funding streams, and supervising research to help advocates and providers support, create and expand quality afterschool programs.



**GIL NOAM, Ed.D, PhD**

*Founder and Director, Program in Education, Afterschool and Resiliency, Harvard University*

Dr. Gil Noam has a strong interest in translating research and innovation to support youth resilience in educational settings. He's published two hundred-plus papers, articles, and books on child and adolescent development- and risk and resiliency-related topics.



**JIM MURPHY**

*Senior Manager, Child and Youth Development Program, Council on Accreditation*

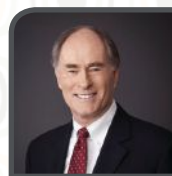
Jim Murphy's more than thirty years' experience working with children, youth, and families includes providing independent consultative services countrywide, and volunteer Endorser, Peer Reviewer, and Team Leader services for the COA.



**CARLA SANGER, M.ED.**

*President and CEO, LA's BEST After School Enrichment Program*

Throughout her more than forty-five year career, Carla Sanger, an activist in the afterschool movement has been a specialist in children's education policy and advocacy in the public and private sectors.



**NEIL NICOLL, M.ED.**

*President and CEO, YMCA of the USA*

Neil Nicoll is the thirteenth person to lead the YMCA movement in the United States. He joined Y-USA following fourteen years as president and CEO of the YMCA of Greater Seattle.



**TERRY PETERSON, PhD**

*Director, Afterschool and Community Learning Network*

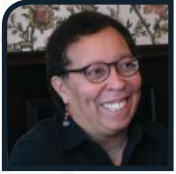
Dr. Terry Peterson has taught at all education levels and been a parent and community organizer. He also served as chief education deputy for an education reform governor and the U.S. Secretary of Education.



**TOM WYATT**

*Chief Executive Officer, Knowledge Universe-United States*

Under Tom Wyatt’s leadership, Knowledge Universe brands collectively provide early learning and school-age programs to nearly 175,000 children in more than 1,600 locations and four hundred-plus programs countrywide.



**KAREN J. PITTMAN**

*President and CEO, The Forum for Youth Investment*

Karen J. Pittman has made a career of launching organizations and initiatives that promote youth development—including the Forum for Youth Investment, which she co-founded with Merita Irby in 1998.



**AYEOLA FORTUNE**

*Director, Education Team, United Way Worldwide*

Ayeola Fortune leads key education initiatives focused on older youth that advance United Way Worldwide’s education goals and strategies: middle grades success, high school graduation, post-secondary access and completion.



**SHANNON RUDISILL, MSW**

*Director, Office of Child Care,  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services*

Shannon Rudisill promotes childcare policies and practices that are child-focused, family-friendly, and fair to providers. She’s focused on raising the bar on childcare quality, particularly for low-income children.



**JENNIFER SIRANGELO**

*President and CEO, National 4-H Council*

Jennifer Sirangelo believes in young people and their capacity to change the world. She leads the Council mission to increase investment and participation in high-quality 4-H positive youth development programs worldwide.



**CHARLES SMITH, PhD**

*Executive Director, David P. Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality*

Dr. Charles Smith leads the measures and analytics team. His current areas of focus include design and implementation of lower stakes performance accountability policies and integration of afterschool systems with schools.



**DEBORAH LOWE VANDELL, PhD**

*Founding Dean, School of Education, University of California Irvine*

Dean Deborah Vandell, a university professor and author of more than one hundred fifty articles and three books, studies the effects of afterschool and summer programs on children’s academic, social, and behavioral development.



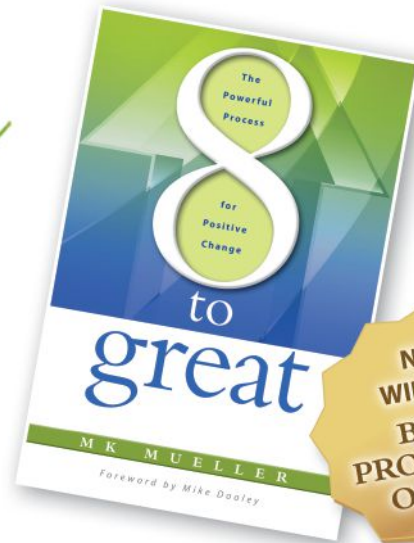
**SAM PIHA, MSW**

*Founder and Principal, Director, Temescal Associates,  
Learning in Afterschool & Summer Project*

Sam Piha is dedicated to building the capacity of leaders and organizations in education and youth development that are serious about improving the young peoples’ lives. He began his career as an afterschool worker.

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# Summer Meals SUPPORT HEALTHY KIDS & BOOST Community Impact

BY PATRICE CHAMBERLAIN

When schools close for the summer, food access becomes tenuous for many low-income families that are forced to stretch limited budgets even thinner to meet basic needs. According to a national Share Our Strength survey, forty-three percent of low-income families financially struggle in summer, and thirty-two percent don't have enough food during this time.<sup>1</sup> The National Summer Learning Association reports children may gain weight two to three times faster during summer than during the school year.<sup>2</sup> The summer decline can also lessen school-year obesity prevention efforts.<sup>3</sup> Add exacerbated summer learning loss, and summer break has a negative and lasting effect on low-income students' health and academic outcomes.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) was designed to ensure low-income children continue to have access to healthy meals when school isn't in session. This federal program enables nonprofit agencies, school districts, and tribal and local government agencies to serve nutritious meals to children eighteen and under at eligible community and school sites in high-poverty areas. Sponsoring agencies are reimbursed through the state's administering agency for serving meals that meet federal nutrition requirements. This funding mechanism can play an important role in supporting program operations—and helping kids stay healthy. But nationwide, only three million of the twenty-one million eligible children participated in a summer meal program.

## – OPPORTUNITIES FOR SUMMER PROGRAM PROVIDERS –

Food for participants can be costly for summer learning programs. Cost can affect food quality or eat into program funds. Yet the ability to offer meals as part of the program can be a big draw for families and increase participation. Becoming a summer meal sponsor or site:

**SPARKS CREATIVE COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS.** Summer meal programs can be the proverbial glue bringing together a broad range of community partners to leverage existing community resources and lasting collaboration.

**INSPIRES HEALTHY HABITS.** Summer meals ensure children's access to healthy foods, provide opportunities to introduce children to fresh summer produce, and promote healthy nutrition education.

**ENHANCES ROLE IN THE COMMUNITY.** The resulting collaboration and "whole child" approach elevates the role of summer program providers as key community partners and leaders.

The evolution of summer program to summer leader is best demonstrated in Santa Clara County, California. In 2009, the YMCA of Silicon Valley became a summer meal sponsor because it saw a growing community need that could not be ignored. School's summer closure meant many low-income children would lose access to the school lunch they relied upon. This involvement marked the beginning of new partnerships with schools, other community-based organizations, healthcare providers, and even local libraries. The Y now mentors other organizations to become summer meal sponsors and sites—while operating twenty-nine summer meal sites of its own—and supports community-wide efforts to ensure year-round access to healthy food in out-of-school time. The impact has been immediate in its relief for families, and long-lasting in its emergence as a community leader and catalyst of a movement.

## – THE SUMMER LEARNING – HEALTH MOVEMENT –

Across the nation, summer meal programs drive collaborations that enhance summer learning programs while meeting needs that support learning. In California, the California Summer Meal Coalition helps ignite those collaborations by identifying promising ideas and innovations and widely sharing them. A network of local and state leaders, the Coalition works to strengthen the link between summer learning and health.

To support this goal, the Coalition and California Library Association launched Lunch at the Library at public library systems throughout the state. As public libraries evolve and advance their position as "The Great Equalizer" by providing free access to resources, books, and technology, the project aims to reach those low-income families not served by other summer learning programs. Lunch at the Library develops public libraries' capacity to offer integrated summer literacy and enrichment programs along with a subsidized healthy meal. In its second year, the project has seen promising results and illuminated the library's role as an influential summer partner.

**- WHAT'S NEXT? -  
HOW TO GET INVOLVED**

The possibilities are endless to provide children and youth with a healthy, well-rounded summer experience through summer meal programs. To get involved:

**BECOME A SUMMER MEAL SITE.** Find out who's serving summer meals in your community and contact them to inquire about becoming a site. The best place to start is the nutrition services department at the local school district.

**BECOME A SUMMER MEAL SPONSOR.** Contact your state agency for more information. State contacts are available at [www.summerfood.usda.gov](http://www.summerfood.usda.gov).

**PARTNER WITH PROVIDERS.** Contact local providers to determine how your program could support their efforts through promotion or programming at sites.

- | Patrice Chamberlain is the director at the California Summer Meal Coalition.

**CALIFORNIA AFTERSCHOOL ASSOCIATION**

<sup>1</sup> Share Our Strength. 2013 March. Summer Meal Survey. Retrieved January 10, 2014 from <http://bestpractices.nokidhungry.org/sites/default/files/resources/SOS%20-%20Summer%20Meals%20Survey%20Report%20FINAL2.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> von Hippel, P. T., B. Powell, D. B. Downey, and N. Rowland. (2007). The effect of school on overweight in childhood: Gains in children's body mass index during the school year and during summer vacation. *American Journal of Public Health* 97 (4): 796-802.

As cited in National Summer Learning Association's Healthy Summers for Kids: Turning Risk into Opportunity. (2012). Retrieved March 6, 2014 from [http://c.yumcdn.com/sites/www.summerlearning.org/resource/resmgr/Healthy\\_Summers\\_/NSLA\\_Healthy\\_Summers\\_for\\_Kid.pdf?hhSearchTerms=healthy+and+summers+and+summer](http://c.yumcdn.com/sites/www.summerlearning.org/resource/resmgr/Healthy_Summers_/NSLA_Healthy_Summers_for_Kid.pdf?hhSearchTerms=healthy+and+summers+and+summer)

<sup>3</sup> ibid

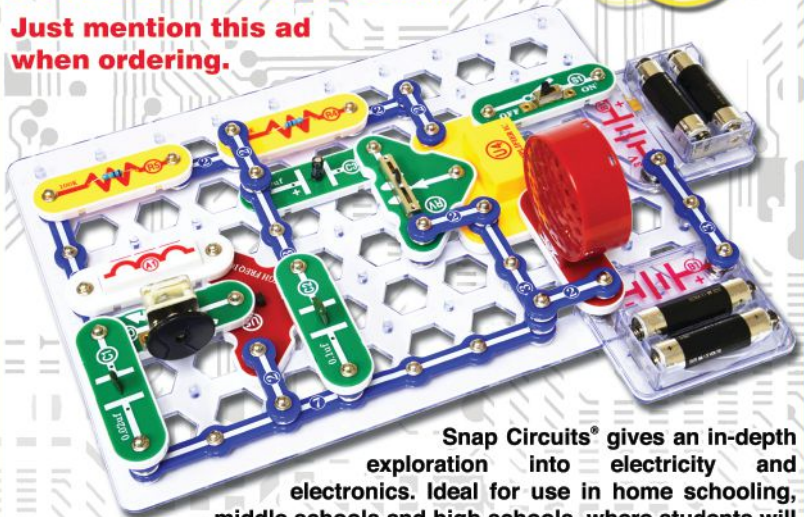
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Unless you're a total data nerd like I am, it can be as interesting and frustrating as doing your taxes; we know we have to, but we'd rather do the fun stuff, such as working with our students. If only we could get the data to collate and organize itself. Well, we can! And you can do it without hiring a new team member. But first, let's talk about the data on a superficial level. It can be divided into two main types: recorded data and performance data.

Recorded data is information given to us that we need to save in order to run our program. It would consist of items such as the names and addresses of your students and parents, and when, for how

long, and for how much they attend afterschool. Who pays? The parent or outside funding?

Performance data is what the kids have done and how well: attendance, records of assessments, learning plans, behavior goals, life skills, and progress reports; recording the students' gains during or after the program be they qualitative or quantitative. The real reason we do what we do!

Accounting for the above: Have the parents or the agency paid us, and how much do I pay my workers?

Using software to manage your business and its data is like the difference between dog sitting and house sitting. (No, stay with me now, this will make perfect sense, I promise!) When you dog sit, you are running around and exhausting yourself—managing your guest, and remembering to stop your routine and attend to things that need to be done. Sometimes, your routine is interrupted in order for you to deal

with a variety of accidents. When you house sit, you either simply swing by and check once in a while or move in and carry on with your life while performing your task subconsciously.

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Oases Online manages, produces and collates your data with minimum input from you, so you don't need to employ a quant or any other trendy new job title. If you do need to apply for a grant or complete an RFA or report back to a grantor or school district, all of your supporting data is there, at the touch of a key.

If you're wondering, a quant is a quantitative analyst, a person who specializes in the application of mathematical methods, such as numerical or quantitative techniques to financial and risk management problems. You won't need one. •

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*Submitted by Katharine Thoresen, chief data survival expert, Oases Online*

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# SUMMER PROGRAM FUNDING IN TOUGH TIMES

A roadmap of resources  
and strategies for support.

SUBMITTED BY BOB SEIDEL

*Moving Summer Learning Forward: A Strategic Roadmap for Funding in Tough Times*, published by the National Summer Learning Association (NSLA) in 2013, provides an outline of resources and strategies for blending diverse funding streams to support summer learning programs.

Summer learning loss creates a permanent drag on our education system, but without resources, programs cannot provide access for all of the children who need meaningful learning opportunities over the long vacation from school. With the generous support of the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, NSLA developed this guide to show out-of-school time programs, school districts, and other stakeholders how they can obtain funding to provide meaningful programming during summer.

Following are highlights from the roadmap.

For those who know where to look and how to devise creative strategies to combine funding streams for summer learning, there is substantial opportunity. The funding roadmap is designed to help state and local leaders identify the most promising funding streams to support summer learning and show how innovative states, districts, and communities have creatively developed and sustained funding for high-quality summer programming.

These are tight fiscal times, and no single funding stream is risk-free. The challenge is to weave together multiple streams from among federal, state, and local public funds, foundation grants, and cash and in-kind support from businesses.

## FEDERAL RESOURCES

These days, it can seem that federal requirements are pulling in different directions. On one hand, there's a strong emphasis in federal grant-making on rewarding programs with well-documented positive outcomes. On the other, federal policy is increasingly flexible on how school districts, their partners, and other program providers achieve federal objectives.

When visiting [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) or otherwise searching out federal funding opportunities, don't limit yourself to searches for "summer." There are many federal funding streams that you might use that don't explicitly focus on summer. Examine the overall goals of a federal program and ask yourself whether your work supports those goals. Also, if you suspect that your organization is not eligible for a particular funding stream, consider whether any of your partners might be eligible and work with them to seek funds.

The roadmap details federal funding streams that can support summer learning programs from agencies including the Departments of Education, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, Labor, and Agriculture as well as NASA and the Corporation for National and Community Service.

## STATE RESOURCES

Of course, no two states are identical and the opportunities for summer learning vary from state to state. In general, however, funds for summer programs may be available in a state's primary education funding formula or may be in a special category. But, as with the federal government, it's always important to look at funding opportunities across agencies, including health, juvenile justice, workforce development, libraries, and others.

The one federal program that explicitly

funds afterschool and summer learning programs is the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program. The United States Department of Education provides funds to states on a formula basis, and the states in turn conduct competitive grant processes for school districts and community-based organizations. A growing number of states have requirements that grant proposals include summer components. Be sure to check the rules in your state.

## LOCAL RESOURCES

As with states, there is great diversity of potential resources at the local level. For a community-based program, partnership with the local school district can be tremendously important, not only for aligning summer offerings with school-year curriculum and for data-sharing, but also potentially for shared support of teaching staff, in-kind provision of space, transportation, and other resources. Partnerships with other public agencies, including the mayor's office, parks and recreation department, libraries, and health agencies may provide a wide variety of assets.

For school districts, partnership with other public agencies as well as community-based organizations serving children and youth, such as Boys and Girls Clubs and the Y, could yield great benefits.

There may be strong local education collaboratives, such as the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading, already bringing together public and private partners.

Finally, local private support from either foundations or businesses could not only directly help fund activities, but serve as a "match" (cash or in-kind) to leverage public investment as well. Business donors in particular may fund program features not allowable for public funds. They may also support planning and resource

development and bridge time gaps between public funding cycles. Businesses are often eager to provide in-kind support—from food for events to accounting services.

## CONCLUSION

Resource development can be hard work. But it can be relatively efficient

if you are clear about your program’s specific goals and objectives and how funders’ priorities align with yours. Never stop looking for funding opportunities. For more ideas, including case studies of blended funding, download Moving Summer Learning Forward: A Strategic Roadmap for Funding in Tough Times

from [www.summerlearning.org](http://www.summerlearning.org) (click on Publications & Resources, then Program Resources, then Funding Resources) or contact Bob Seidel at [bseidel@summerlearning.org](mailto:bseidel@summerlearning.org). • | **Bob Seidel is the senior director, Strategic Initiatives and Policy, at the National Summer Learning Association.**



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# A LITTLE BACKGROUND GOES A LONG WAY

BY AMY L CHARLES

Bruce Dixon, CPEP chief executive officer, has a background in corporate America. He spent twenty-five years in the financial services industry—underwriting, sales, marketing, advertising—a variety of areas. But that isn't the background that's important. That isn't the background that made Dixon who he is; the background that compels him to help others.

During his corporate America years, Dixon became a liaison between the company he worked for and a Connecticut public school district. That, he says, is when his past caught up with him.

Dixon was one of nine children (eight of them girls) adopted by a loving, dedicated mother and father. His mother had only completed the third grade; his father, some high school. When Dixon was just eleven, his father passed away suddenly, and his mother had a heart attack and became partially disabled. The family didn't have much, and the children didn't have many opportunities to gain insights towards possible STEM careers. If someone had tried to predict Dixon's future outcome, it might have been bleak.

Many youth in this position might've begun a downward spiral of "Why?" Not in this family! Mrs. Dixon recovered and encouraged her children to take advantage of their educational

opportunities and compelled them to participate in afterschool, Saturday, and summer programs. Through these amazing programs, Dixon discovered a love of learning, exploring, and, ultimately, excelling. He gained critical life skills such as persistence, courage, problem-solving, and teamwork, which increased his self-confidence and reshaped his goals. "If it were not for these programs being available, I have no idea what I would have done."

CPEP inspires youths through innovative out-of-school programs. It serves as a catalyst to significantly change underrepresented students' knowledge, attitude, and behaviors regarding STEM careers. The program is a 2013 Excellence in Summer Learning Awards winner. (See page 14.) While many out-of-school time programs provide the impetus for youth to consider pursuing a STEM career, Dixon and CPEP realized the need to build an intensive experience that helped to strengthen the mathematics foundations of these would-be STEM professionals. Students often struggle with math, and CPEP strives to provide the foundation students need to survive the rigorousness of a STEM-based post-secondary curriculum.

"We went nuts about creating this innovative summer program so we could significantly shift students' math

progress during the summer," Dixon said. "We had to create irresistible learning opportunities for the students and for the teachers hired to conduct the summer experience. Teachers are the linchpins in all of this." In the CPEP summer program, teachers use video game learning systems, face-to-face instruction, and hands-on projects to maximize mathematics improvement.

Dixon often shares stories of the people who designed and staffed the programs he attended during his youth, and notes that if not for such people, he wouldn't be the person and in the capacity he is today. He's had the opportunity to build a nonprofit organization that helps children and youth, which honors his parents and the people who helped make his childhood positive. He's had an opportunity to do something he knows is really important; he knows how critical OST programs are.

When he was younger, Dixon never considered how his background would be an asset; yet clearly, it is. "Growing up, I didn't necessarily appreciate the background and experience I have. Yet without them, I wouldn't be the aggressive advocate that I am for the underrepresented students we serve."

And with each child CPEP helps, Dixon again feels his parents and those who helped him are honored. •

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