

SMART SUMMERS

Investing in Experience, Skills, and Oregon's
Future through Summer Learning



LETTER FROM CHAIR

During the last legislative session, I was honored to work with colleagues, education and business leaders, and parents and students, to explore some of Oregon's most critical educational challenges -- performance, funding, equity among them -- and what data could tell us about potential solutions.

We identified summer as a missed opportunity to engage Oregon kids in learning -- both to prevent the "summer slide" and to enhance their engagement in the classroom. As a result, I chaired a Summer Learning Work Group to study and explore the issue.

We are proud to have taken a creative approach to this task. We explored not just curriculum, testing, and the structuring of the school calendar, but also less formal opportunities for engaging kids in hands-on learning outside the classroom. We found that community-based afterschool and summer learning programs such as computer clubs, boys and girls clubs, and camps in music, sports, and arts enhance the educational experience and help young people develop the academic, technical, and 21st Century skills they will need in college and the workplace -- skills for which there is scant time to address in school. Further, summer learning programs, in particular, can play a critical role in addressing equity and achievement gaps.

The Summer Learning Work Group, with the assistance of Oregon ASK, offer this brief as a testament to the potential of summer learning to improve educational achievement in our state, for all students. We trust Oregon's education, government, business, and community leaders will consider its contents in making important decisions that will impact Oregon children and families today, and the state's social and economic well-being for generations to come.

Sincerely,

Barbara Smith Warner

Oregon State Representative House District 45

Co-Chair, Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Education

SUMMER LEARNING WORKGROUP PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS

- Boys and Girls Club of Portland Metropolitan Area
- Chief Education Office
- Children First of Oregon
- Confederation of Oregon School Administrators (COSA)
- Lebanon Public Library
- National Summer Learning Association
- Oregon Community Foundation
- Oregon Education Association
- Oregon Department of Education- District and School Effectiveness
- Oregon Department of Education- Office of Teaching, Learning and Assessment; Migrant Specialist
- OregonASK Expanded Learning Partnership
- Oregon State Library
- Oregon Library Association
- Oregon School Board Association
- Portland Community College Links Programs
- Saturday Academy
- Senator Arnie Roblan
- Representative Jodi Hack



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Summer learning is one of the most powerful tools we've got for closing the achievement gap in our schools

BARBARA SMITH WARNER
Oregon Legislator

Summer learning offers solutions to Oregon's most significant educational challenges. But in the policy arena, it has been overshadowed by many issues seen as more important -- from infrastructure spending to curriculum design to compliance with new federal legislation. This must change.

Smart Summers explains the nature of summer learning, provides policy context for decision makers, and offers examples of how summer learning has made a difference to children and families across the nation -- and right here in Oregon. This report encompasses a review of the work done by the House Education Committee Summer Learning Work Group convened by Representative Smith Warner

between the 2016 & 2017 legislative sessions. The group had several goals centered around defining summer learning, assessing current summer opportunities and gaps, and creating a comprehensive plan for addressing Oregon's needs. Drawing on the experiences of diverse programs supported by a wide range of partnerships and funding streams, and using current data, this report offers recommendations for linking enrichment and skill-building opportunities to provide high-impact learning experiences for Oregon kids most in need of them. Together, these recommendations support broader improvements in the structure, design, and quality of educational offerings that Oregon leaders are working toward.



THE PROBLEM: ENSURING HIGH QUALITY LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL OREGON KIDS.

Oregon has struggled to provide the modern, high-quality education children need to succeed in higher education or training after high school, and to build careers, raise families, and participate in civic life.

The state's critical challenges are well-known:

- *Too few Oregon kids graduate from high school.* Although *new data* reveals that Oregon's high school graduation rate rose slightly in 2016 to 75%, Oregon's rank actually fell from 47th to 48th among the 50 states on this measure because Alaska showed greater improvement. The highest performing states graduate some 90% of their students.
- *Graduation rates among students of color are lower than those of white students.* Here, there is also good news: graduation rates for black students, special education students, and Latino students in Oregon increased by 3 to 4 percentage points this year. However, large gaps remain -- a full 28 percentage points separate the graduation rates of Asian student (88%) and Native American students (60%) in Oregon.
- *Kids from low-income families fall behind early -- and then fall further behind.* The difference in performance between students who are poor and those who are not is called "The Achievement Gap," and in Oregon, it is growing. Last year's *Quality Counts* study found the performance of Oregon's low-income fourth- and eighth-graders in reading and math had fallen 9 points further behind their wealthier peers compared to 2003. The percentage of eighth-graders with advanced math skills had also stalled -- a particular concern to Oregon which has seen explosive growth in labor market demand for these skills.
- *Oregon spends less money educating students (per student) than 38 other states.* According to the same study, only 13% of Oregon students attend schools where spending is at or above the national average compared to 42% nationally. Money isn't everything, but its absence matters.
- *Oregon's overall ranking in the new national Quality Counts 2017 assessment dropped to 40 in 2017 (from 39 in 2016),* owing primarily to further declines in the areas of K-12 achievement -- Oregon ranks 33rd in current performance, 42nd in improvement over time, and 45th in the gap between the performance of low income students compared with their more affluent peers.

The consequences of low educational achievement are felt most immediately by students who face limited opportunities to enroll in post-secondary education or launch careers after high school. But the effects also manifest down the road in skill gaps among workers, instability within families, and poverty in our communities, undermining our state’s social, environmental, and economic health and well-being.

These challenges are serious, urgent, and vexing. Simple solutions are unlikely. But expanding and enhancing summer learning -- through partnerships with communities and not just schools -- is a good place to start.

Here’s why.

WHY SUMMER LEARNING MATTERS

Afterschool and summer learning help students learn and interact with peers (in a low-stakes environment), develop positive mentoring relationships with program staff, and engage in hands-on activities that help them apply their skills in tangible ways. Most programming also includes the provision of meals or snacks. A recent civic data project found that these meals provided significant benefits for students and families struggling with hunger or facing economic hardship. (*Programming to Progress*)





SUMMER LEARNING IN BRIEF

WHAT IS SUMMER LEARNING?

A decade ago, summer education programs could feel like punishment to the kids enduring them. They were comprised of remedial instruction intended to help kids who were falling behind “catch-up” with their peers. Traditional classroom instruction followed by practices drills for long (often hot) summer hours was common. The result? Disengaged kids, attendance problems, and rarely realized academic gains. Worse, students who struggled the most could lose interest in school altogether.

We knew we could do better.

Researchers, educators, and experts looked at the activities of high achieving (and often high income) students and saw summer camps, sports leagues, enrichment activities, and family trips to cultural institutions. Students participating in these activities maintained their school-year skill gains over the summer and tried new things -- without the pressure of standardized testing. Learning in these contexts was fun.

Summer learning -- and the broader field of afterschool or out-of-school-time (OST) -- was born.



Summer learning is the sweet spot between summer school and summer camp.

KATIE BRACKENRIDGE
*Vice President of Programs
 Partnership for Children & Youth*



AN EMERGING FIELD OF PRACTICE

Today, summer learning is an emerging field of practice in communities across the county. More and more programs are guided by quality indicators, outcome measures, and effective models and practices, and savvy public policy. One of the goals of the House Education Summer Learning Work Group was to identify an agreed-upon range of classifications to describe summer learning programs, and once established, define each classification in order to categorize the programs we identify through the statewide summer learning survey.

As a work group, we also came to the consensus that there is no single definition of summer learning -- programs are anchored in the unique social, natural, and cultural assets in communities -- but they do share common dimensions.

- Schools and school systems are involved in summer learning activities, but they are not always at the center of summer learning programs. Summer learning activities occur in libraries, museums, parks, theatres, city halls, faith-based organizations, and in schools, colleges, and universities (though not always in classrooms).
- Summer learning programs may be designed around a single activity or provide students with experiences across a range of activities. Art, music, language, entrepreneurship, leadership, environmental stewardship, food, health, games and hobbies, even academic enrichment rooted in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) are all common areas of focus for summer learning programs.
- Summer learning programs are staffed in a variety of ways, employing paid professionals, volunteers, and older students to provide care, instruction and academic, social, and nutritional support. There are efforts underway nationally to professionalize the summer learning (and afterschool) workforce through training, licensure, and by establishing quality benchmarks for programs, although this can create formidable challenges for programs operating on slim margins and multiple (often restrictive) funding sources. (Ref: About the OST Workforce: Unify a Fragmented Profession, in Youth Today, School-Age Care and OST, in Youth Today.)
- Summer Learning should be fun, dynamic and engaging for youth. Whether in a classroom, library or park, summer is one of the most important opportunities we have to inspire youth in unconventional learning environments, helping keep them engaged in classroom learning from September -June.

HIGH QUALITY AFTERSCHOOL AND SUMMER PROGRAMS HAVE:

Physical and psychological safety

Appropriate structure

Supportive relationships

Opportunities to belong/feel included

Positive social norms

Support for youth efficacy and mentoring

Opportunities for skills building

Integration of family

SUMMER LEARNING: A POWERFUL EDUCATIONAL INTERVENTION

Over the last decade, a mounting body of evidence reveals the many ways summer learning helps kids achieve.

- *Summer learning stems summer learning loss.* Every year, low-income youth lose two-three months of the previous year's gains in reading and math. Educators call this the "summer slide." Low-income youth lose two-three months of the previous year's gains in reading and math. The losses are cumulative, leaving low-income 5th-graders up to three years behind their higher income peers. Summer learning programs have been shown to prevent learning loss -- and even generate learning gains -- among low-income kids, the positive effects of which endure (rand.org).
- *Summer learning builds the life skills kids need but are largely absent from the formal curriculum.* These skills go by many names -- essential skills, employability skills, 21st century skills, social and emotional learning, and so on. They include communication skills, problem-solving, the ability to work with others, and the skills that help kids apply what they know, leading to success at home, at school, and eventually, in the workplace and in public life. Hands-on summer learning programs can have a significant positive effect on student outcomes in this area, resulting in increased school attendance, motivation, and improved relationships with peers and adults (*The Cost of Summer*).
- *Summer learning helps kids transition.* At the end of each school year, teachers encourage students to set summer goals. But without regular interactions with peers and mentors, those goals can fall by the wayside -- a process educators call "the summer melt." For graduating high school students, it can be particularly consequential, since not completing enrollment or financial aid applications can mean not enrolling in postsecondary education at all. Each year, as many as one in five low-income students who plans to attend college in the fall does not. Among students of color in large urban districts, it's nearly one in two. Summer learning can help kids stay on track when they experience disruptive changes in their education experience or personal lives (*Education Northwest*).
- *Summer learning can aid in student wellness.* Many summer learning programs engage kids in physical activity. Most include meals. For low-income students who participate in full-day programs, this can mean exercise, more than five meals a week and snacks every day -- enhancing their access to healthy activities and lifestyles and nutrition and reducing the risk of hunger within families. A recent civic data project using Oregon data showed that the effect of meal provision in afterschool and summer programs in low-income communities reduced hunger at a regional level (*Programming to Progress*).



More recently, as summer learning has grown and diversified, additional benefits have been documented, not just for students but for their schools and communities. As a Work Group of providers, stakeholders and community representatives, many of the findings below match up with our recommendations for supporting effective summer learning programming in Oregon.

- *Summer learning provides opportunities for teachers to experiment with new methods, practices, and approaches to learning -- as well as integrate new learning content -- in a low-risk environment.* It also invites schools to partner with community organizations in crafting programs designed around student interests rather than state standards. In turn, the programs that result in significant learning gains can be adapted to the classroom environment and scaled across schools and districts (*Why Summer Learning*).
- *Summer learning provides opportunities for community volunteers, leaders, and aspiring educators to meaningfully participate in educational programming, but outside the confines of traditional school.* A growing body of evidence suggests this may be one strategy for diversifying the education workforce and for connecting young people to positive role models in their own neighborhoods and communities.
- *Summer learning can encourage higher value and more efficient use of community-wide resources.* Every community is home to its own unique mix of cultural institutions, nonprofit and special interest organizations, and outdoor and recreation spaces. Most of these are not fully subscribed and could provide spaces where leaders share knowledge with young people eager to learn about what they do. By forging partnerships, educators and community leaders can support youth development in ways neither could do alone (*Better Learning Through Community Partnerships*).

The evidence is clear. Summer learning offers significant, tangible benefits for communities, schools, and students -- especially those from low-income families.



Advocates for kids should be shouting summer learning from the rooftops

RACHEL GWALTNEY
*Director of Policy & Partnerships
National Summer Learning Association*

WHY THE HUSH?

Summer learning -- embedded in community partnerships and characterized by quality standards -- offers evidence-based solutions to so many of Oregon's educational ills.

But policy and programming have been slow to follow at the scale their potential impact should merit. One reason for this? Mark Twain.

COMPETING VISIONS OF SUMMER

The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, like so many stories of its day, has informed our shared ideas about summer. We imagine long sunny days in which young people enjoy endless adventures, while also learning new skills -- like fence-painting. Our modern equivalent might be set at the beach, with Oregon kids exploring tidepools, or visiting local museums and participating in spendy camps. Or even traveling abroad where

the luckiest youth visit landscapes, people, cultures, and have adventures unlike any they've experienced before.

*"Summer is the most unequal in America."
Matthew Bouley, Founder, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the National Summer Learning Association*

But this is not the kind of summer most kids experience. The dearth of affordable child-care means that typical families juggle an array of care solutions comprising camps, babysitters, grandparents, neighbors, and parents taking time off from work. Many kids from low-income families lack even this kind of care. Instead, they may be charged with caring for younger siblings themselves -- and it's not uncommon for parents to instruct children home alone to stay inside for their own safety.

It's a long way from a raft on the Missouri River.

UNEASY FIT WITH TRADITIONAL POLICY LANDSCAPE

Another reason summer learning has had difficulty penetrating official education policy circles has to do with our rigid adherence to the school calendar and the idea that the policy levers that affect educational outcomes lie within school walls (and traditional education budgets).

In most states much angst, many hours, and enormous resources are devoted to improving what happens in school during the traditional school day during nine months of the year -- curriculum design, learning materials, instructional practices, assessment, class size, and so on. Afterschool and summer programs are relegated to the sidelines.

But among low-income children, up to three months of every nine-month school year's gains are lost -- every year. Summer learning programs that stem this loss are wise investments -- they act as insurance policies against losses equivalent to one grade every three years.

Increasingly, however, there is room for partnerships between traditional school systems and summer learning. A *2017 report* by the Oregon Chief Education Office found that school districts themselves, when asked for specific items they would add first with additional resources and funding, cited more time for learning in afterschool and summer above other support items. Yet, school districts also acknowledge that summer and afterschool programs are the most common thing cut when budgets get tight.

We will not close the achievement gap without reducing summer learning loss. That means education policy must change.

The evidence is clear. Summer learning offers significant, tangible benefits for all communities, schools, and students -- and especially those from low-income families.

BY 5TH GRADE, LOW INCOME CHILDREN WITHOUT SUMMER LEARNING ARE ALREADY 2-3 YEARS BEHIND THEIR PEERS.

Summer Matters, The Cost of Summer: An inside look at the operating budgets of high quality summer learning programs in CA.

CURRENT POLICY CONTEXT

Key trends in the field of summer learning are shaping the context in which states are investing in, designing, and implementing summer learning programs.

First, summer learning is emerging as a strategy for advancing a wide range of education and workforce outcomes. Boosting third-grade literacy, expanding learning time, improving student attainment in STEM or STEAM, enhancing safety (for young students), improving or increasing career exploration activities (for older students), and engaging target groups (girls, boys, low-income students, gifted and talented students) in areas of interest are all goals quality summer learning programs can help achieve.


Programs designed around these goals are increasingly supported by formal state policy or legislation: by 2015, 22 states and the District of Columbia had passed some 40 pieces of legislation affecting summer learning -- our neighboring states of California, Idaho and Washington were among them. Some states established Commissions or launched studies, others created programs or increased budget allocations, still others used the bully pulpit to promote summer learning through proclamations, events, or designations -- like Library Week or STEM day. Several states -- California and Massachusetts, for example -- are working toward state-level programs modeled after the US Department of Education's 21st Century Learning Center program, which has provided foundational support for afterschool and summer learning programs for over a decade. [*State of Summer Learning, 2015 Policy*

Snapshot, NSLA

Second, states are increasingly connecting summer learning and workforce development by focusing summer learning for older students on career and technical education (CTE), internships, or work experience. In addition, many programs for younger students introduce career components through partnerships with firms or professional associations or through corporate-sponsored competitions -- usually in STEM fields. As a result, workforce boards, CTE programs, colleges, and universities are also establishing partnerships with summer learning initiatives. Recent changes in federal workforce legislation -- the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act -- should encourage such partnerships. Finally, In 2015, the Every Student Succeed Act (ESSA) became law.

THE IMPORTANCE OF A DIVERSE ARRAY OF SUMMER LEARNING OFFERINGS

All students benefit from summer learning, but the needs of individual students vary and their interests at different developmental stages change. **That's why the real (and lasting) value of summer learning lies in the range of choices a community can provide.** When students can make choices, they are more likely to embrace a wide range of learning experiences that accumulate over multiple years and help them not only learn new skills, but shape their futures.



ESSA represents the first major overhaul of federal education legislation since 2002. Although it maintains a focus on accountability, ESSA supports a wider range of accountability measures, emphasizes equity in student performance, and shifts considerable authority away from the federal government, returning it to states and districts.

Under the new law, states have a rare opportunity to design unique locally-relevant policies and programs that show promise -- such as summer learning -- into their education systems and to link those programs to state-level performance management and longitudinal data systems. OregonASK and a committed stakeholder group have created an ESSA and ELO report, *A Sustainable Pathway for All*. ESSA can help make summer a critical component of broader educational reform efforts while preserving what is most special about it -- the opportunity to blend learning, social interaction, and fun in creative ways, while encouraging students to explore new interests and environments.

SUMMER LEARNING IN OREGON

RISING DEMAND

In 2012, OregonASK launched the Summer Learning, Summer Library, Summer Lunch (SL3) project with the support of the National Summer Learning Association. The project piloted activities in four sites, and helped establish the Summer Learning Partnership, and conducted a first-of-its-kind survey of summer learning in Oregon. By 2015, the project had grown to 20 sites, and the number of summer readers grew from 278 to 1,026. The project also documented a link between lunch provision and participation rates: schools with summer food provision saw twice the number of visits to the library and three times the number of books checked out. The exponential growth of the SL3 program suggested a significant need for summer learning programs.

In 2014, the Afterschool Alliance released a major report that confirmed that need: 45% of parents reported that they would like to enroll their child in summer learning -- up from 38% in 2009 -- but only 27% do. The same report found that 83% of Oregon parents support public funding for summer learning programs. These findings generally reflect national trends.

IMPROVING QUALITY

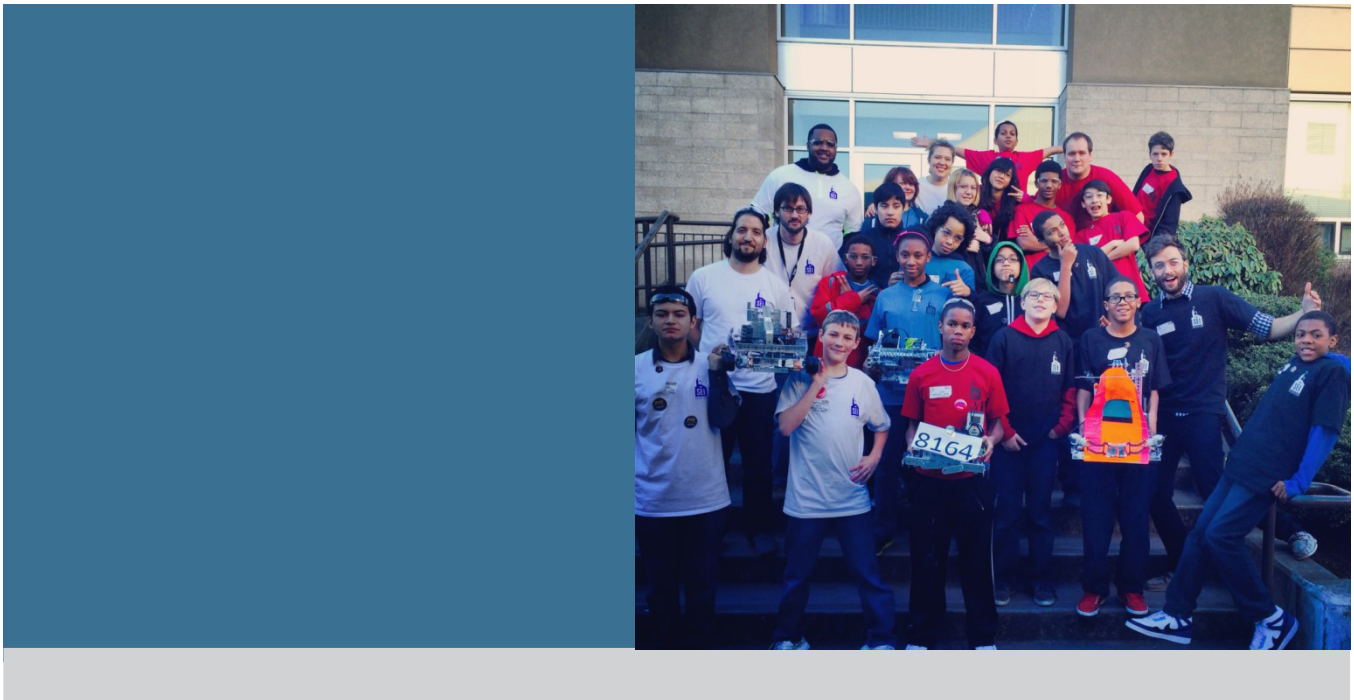
Oregon is a leader in the quality standards movement. OregonASK has worked with a statewide committee of experts from public, private, and nonprofit sectors, as well as parents and trainers, to develop a quality framework and set of standards now in its third iteration. The standards offer an evidence-based set of indicators of high quality summer programming, together with a set of tools program managers can use to enhance specific program components.

The steady increase in demand for and participation in summer and after-school learning over the past decade has resulted in increased investment in these activities by all levels of government.

Although the system is still described as a “hodgepodge,” the efforts of federal agencies, states, and municipalities have increased summer learning availability, and some have embraced it as a public policy priority. Philanthropy has also played a major role in supporting these efforts. Increasingly, the business community is engaged, too. Sustaining successful approaches, however, remains a formidable challenge — especially for rural areas lacking scale (and public transportation) and low-income communities lacking resources.

The following programs most often offer base support for summer and afterschool programs:

- **21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC):** A US Department of Education grant program providing enrichment opportunities for children attending high-poverty and low-performing schools. In Oregon, for the 2015-16 school year, there were 22 grantees serving 89 sites. CCLC is structured so that funding declines during the five-year life of the grant, with the expectation that local programs find alternative ways to sustain themselves over time.
- **Child Care and Development Fund:** a program of US Department of Health Human Services designed to assist low-income families in accessing childcare for children up through the age of thirteen so they can work or attend training/education.
- **Child and Adult Care Food Program:** a program of the US Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service that aims to provide nutritious food to young children, older adults, and people with disabilities in care settings. Oregon’s Afterschool At-Risk Meals Program is a core provider of meals and snacks in Oregon afterschool programs.
- **Supplemental Education Services** were authorized under the 2001 No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) and will be replaced under its successor law, Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) by two categories of service: 1) Comprehensive support and improvement; and 2) Targeted Support and Improvement. The Oregon Department of Education provides information about the transition on its website.
- **Workforce Investments:** Example workforce investments include The Oregon Youth Conservation Corps (OYCC) provides grant funding, training and resources to youth-serving agencies across the state to create training and employment opportunities for Oregon youth. The Oregon WIOA Youth Programs provides workforce development training opportunities to young people ages 14-24 through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). Through WIOA, youth can gain valuable work skills through a variety of job opportunities such as job shadows, internships, and summer jobs.



Another factor in improving the quality of summer and afterschool programming is the increasing emphasis on science, technology, and engineering and math (STEM) as a context for learning activity. This shift is a consequence of policy makers, educators, and parents seeking new opportunities to enhance STEM education among students at all all levels and into the workforce. Robotics, code camps, and outdoor science labs are more common summer activities than a decade ago.

Finally, funders are increasingly demanding measurable returns on their investments in summer learning and afterschool programming: philanthropic organizations are interested in the impact of the programs they fund on children, families, and communities, and states and local governments are funding research that helps them assess the effect of enrichment programs on learning loss in their own communities.

One challenge of this returns-centered view of value is that it tends to favor achievement-centered outcomes like skill gains over broader

goals like safety, health and well-being, and positive youth development. Because achievement is easier to measure, a narrow focus on returns can favor programs designed more like traditional school and work against those that emphasize art, sport, or general enrichment.

EQUITY AND ACCESS REMAIN CHALLENGES

As a result of a commitment to equity within the field of summer learning, many programs funded by government and philanthropic organizations target low-income students and families and their schools. However, these programs often require “matched” funding (community support) so they can be sustained after the initial grant period ends.

Most programs simply cannot generate such support because the organizations programs partner with are already thinly resourced. This places pressure on providers to offer “pay-to-play” models, even though affordability is already a challenge for families.



A WAY FORWARD FOR OREGON

The failure of Ballot Measure 97 in the November 2016 election has left Oregon's state leaders with a deficit of \$1.7B. Oregon schools -- recipients of nearly 40% of the dollars allocated by the legislature -- will almost certainly face substantial cuts.

PROPOSED EDUCATION PRIORITIES

In this context, Oregon leaders should make every effort to achieve the following priorities:

- Preserve the gains students are making in the classroom each year so that student progress continues unabated;
- Promote equity so that students of color and those from low-income families can advance in school and life, enhancing the prosperity of our state over time; and
- Engage communities in creating high-impact learning and skills building experiences for kids -- because there is a real limit to how much more schools alone can do for less.

Summer learning can accomplish all of them.

Further, summer learning strategies can be designed to meet the specific needs of kids and communities who could benefit most from them. Summer learning (especially before 3rd grade) is a powerful equity investment. Since poor children and children of color feel the summer slide most severely, summer investments have the potential to bring the most bang for the buck to level outcomes.

We see three critical challenges/priorities around which unique, high-impact programs could be launched or scaled, based on proven models:

- *Too few students reading by third grade* -- which can inhibit learning in subsequent years. Programs focused on reading could center around schools and libraries and emphasize enrichment activities that require reading -- from theatre arts to STEM/STEAM.
- *High demand for remedial instruction, especially during transition years* (e.g., from middle school to high school). Programs focused on reducing "summer slide" could be designed around the application of academic skills gained during the school year, and employ social activities so that students gain essential and social and emotional skills at the same time.
- *Low high school graduations rates*. Engagement, through work experience, internships, labs, or summer jobs can help young people stay on track in school and work toward gainful employment or postsecondary education, avoiding the "summer melt." The shift from vocational education to career and technical education (CTE and career pathways) in recent years, together with new federal education and workforce legislation, has catalyzed new program models, partners, and resources for summer programming involving older youth.



We also see an opportunity to address Oregon's data gaps in summer learning, by incorporating an applied evaluation component that both generates data and uses it to improve programs in real time.

Specific data gaps include:

- Data on summer slide that is specific to Oregon. We know what summer learning losses look like across the country, but what are our biggest challenges in Oregon?
- Comprehensive mapping of the current summer opportunities in Oregon. The first step in building high-impact summer learning programs is to determine where the highest areas of need are located.

Oregon is building a *data system* that link aggregate student data from pre-kindergarten through higher education or apprenticeship and into the workforce (P20W). Over time, this will enable not just improved performance assessment within schools and programs, but also longitudinal research to help us understand the impact of education and training on students' careers, industry growth and development, and community prosperity.

Expanded learning opportunities -- afterschool and summer -- should be included in the data system.

DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

At the initiative level, there are important design considerations that can impede or amplify the impact of summer learning.

First, the benefits of summer learning accrue over time. That's why large-scale (statewide) initiatives should offer at least two years of programming support.

Second, many communities most in need of summer learning and enrichment opportunities lack the capacity to assemble highly polished grant applications. That's why the process for allocation and accessing summer learning should be simple, supported (e.g., include technical assistance), and based on levels of need established by existing data.

Third, schools are essential partners in summer learning -- but they are not the only partners. One of the biggest takeaways from our workgroup was the role that local cultural, environmental, and commercial partners and stakeholders play in making summer learning programs special, and uniquely suited to the needs of their students, families, and communities. That's why creative partnerships are encouraged and what makes summer learning and enrichment most distinguishable from school. Creative partnerships also generate the kind of innovations -- big ones, like Grand Challenge Competitions, and small ones, like text-based apps that keep kids motivated -- that can be introduced into the year-round school environment having proven effective in the more risk-tolerant context of summer learning. Another example are Oregon State Library's Ready to Read Grants, which fund summer reading programs at libraries throughout the state.

Fourth, since we know that adequate nutrition plays a significant role in participation levels and quality of summer learning, meals are an essential component of summer programming. As community organizations and districts work together more effectively, including access to summer meals will help encourage participation and provide much needed nutrition for many youth.

Finally, over time, the goal of every state summer learning effort is to shift from makeshift, "hodgepodge" program models, each with

COLLABORATION ON THE RISE

We once managed these as distinct systems -- pre-school, K-12, and postsecondary or higher education were the common reference points. But in recent years, education leaders, supported by educators, parents, and often students themselves, established policies, governing boards, institutions, programs, and initiatives that blur these lines. More hands-on learning opportunities have emerged in all parts of the system. Increasing numbers of dual-credit programs allow students to earn college credit while still in high school, and tellingly, many data systems and governance structures now reflect efforts to link these systems and focus on student outcomes. Existing partnerships between public, private, and nonprofit and volunteer organizations offer a wide range of possibilities for new or enhanced summer learning initiatives -- without having to start from scratch.

distinct reporting systems, performance measures, eligibility requirements, and funding sources, to a system comprising high-impact programs supported by braided funding that is brought to specific schools, students, or communities based on need. Modeling this approach -- at the scale Oregon can offer today -- can establish a solid foundation for continued program growth and improvement over time.

Oregon cannot afford its students losing 30%

of their annual learning gains in two and a half months during the summer -- year after year. Now is the right time to make smart, strategic investments in summer programming that boost Oregon's students' performance, lay the foundation for excellence in post-secondary education and training and into the workforce, and ensure that existing investments in education throughout the year result in real and retained skill development.



More academic time is not the solution, it's more time doing the things that matter — providing high quality, engaging educational experiences, not just more school

MICHAEL FUNK

*Director, Expanded Learning Opportunities Division,
California Dept. of Education*