

A Practitioners Guide to Responding to COVID-19 Series: *Guides and Tools for State and Local School Administrators*

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Report Navigation

This Information Request (IR) report contains a navigation scheme that is visible in the sidebar on the left side of the document (to display, from the tool bar, select for PC: View > Show > Navigation Pane or for Mac: View > Sidebar > Navigation). From within the navigation, click the desired section heading or subheading to move to that particular area of the report. The IR is organized into the following sections:

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Background

Three state education agencies (SEA) that are served by Region 7 Comprehensive Center (R7CC) have been working diligently to provide guidance and support to their respective school districts as the impacts of COVID-19 become apparent to each school system. In response to questions and concerns about COVID-19 from state leadership within Region 7, a series of annotated bibliographies was created to inform stakeholders about the potential impact of increased out-of-school time and possible strategies to mitigate harm to students’ academic development. The purpose of the series of bibliographies is to address three main questions.

Question 1: What will the impact of COVID-19 be on out-of-school learning loss?

Question 2: What impact do extended learning programs (summer school, after school programs, extended school day, or year-round school) have on student academic achievement?

Question 3: What initiatives have demonstrated success in offsetting out-of-school learning loss?

This bibliography will address guides and tools that may be useful for state and local administrators when planning for offsetting out-of-school learning loss. Once shared with each SEA, they will then be distributed to LEAs for consideration as they refine their district and school continuity plans for the 2020-2021 school year.

There are 44 annotations included in this series of bibliographies, eight of which are related to guides and tools for planning to offset out-of-school learning loss. The organization within each section (articles or subsections) of the report is by ESSA level of evidence. However, within each level of evidence, organization is not intended to convey meaning. ESSA levels of evidence and What Works Clearinghouse designations are provided as a quick reference to readers.

Procedure

To locate resources for this series of reports, the R7CC Information Request team conducted online searches across three primary databases (ERIC, IES, and Google Scholar). In order to create the body of literature for review, researchers began with three search terms (“summer slide,” “summer melt,” and “summer learning loss”). The term “summer melt” was deleted from the search because it was associated with the summer between high school and college. The searches produced over 1,000 possible publications to create the final pool of 132 unique publications. Upon review of 132 resources located in the above searches, the team selected 44 for inclusion in this series of reports, based on these criteria: (a) publication date within the past 10 years, unless they were perceived as seminal works (e.g., Cooper et al., 2000) by the research team; (b) initiatives, programs, and studies that produced statistically significant, positive effects were included; and/or (c) content relevant to the client’s topics of interest. Detailed information on the selected resources is provided in the Resource Summaries section of this report, which follows the Overview.

General Limitations

As with many topics in education, there is a limited research base of information on guides and tools that offset learning loss including COVID-19 related learning loss. However, resources

cited in this summary include a few research-based strategies and practices grounded by strong, moderate, and promising evidence as defined by the criteria established in the ESSA guidance.

Overview

This report centers around a review of guides and tools that discuss out-of-school learning loss. Summer learning loss occurs for most students. As a result of increased out-of-school time due to COVID-19, schools should expect students to return in the fall with a much wider range of knowledge. Also, the average knowledge of incoming students is likely to be lower than prior years due to more out-of-school time because of COVID-19.

Resource Summaries

The eight selected guides and tools relevant to these research questions are divided based upon the locus of production. Within each group, references are organized based upon perceived usefulness to state and local administrators. The first three resources are products of research funded by the Institute of Education Sciences. The five remaining resources were created by non-government research organizations.

Guides and tools for state and local school administrators

1. Smith, K. G., & Foorman, B. R. (2015). *Summer reading camp self-study guide* (REL 2015-070). Washington, DC; U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Educational Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Education Laboratory Southeast. Retrieved from <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs>

Overview

The toolkit intends to support states, districts, and schools in planning and implementing summer reading camps with effective instruction that helps students meet reading standards. It was originally created for summer camps designed to support Grade 3 students who scored at the lowest level on a state reading assessment and were in danger of retention. The toolkit provides recommendations on gathering background information on summer reading camps, identifying student needs, determining progress monitoring needs, and ultimately evaluating summer camps.

2. Beckett, M., Borman, G., Capizzano, J., Parsley, D., Ross, S., Schirm, A., & Taylor, J. (2009). *Structuring out-of-school time to improve academic achievement: A practice guide* (NCEE #2009-012). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved from https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Docs/PracticeGuide/ost_pg_072109.pdf

Overview

This IES Practice Guide provides several recommendations for administering out-of-school programs. Each recommendation has an assessment of evidence quality, a checklist for carrying out the recommendation, and potential implementation challenges and possible solutions. Recommendations include aligning the program with the school day, maximizing attendance/participation, adapting to individual and small group instruction, providing engaging learning opportunities, and assessing program performance for continuous improvement.

3. REL West. (2018, June). *Ask-A-REL: The effectiveness of summer school in closing achievement gaps* [Web blog]. Washington DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Educational Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Education Laboratory West. Retrieved from <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/west/Ask/Details/60>

Overview

This is a summary of a search for research reports and resources on the relationship between summer school and closing achievement gaps. All information included comes from the publication abstracts. Links are provided.

4. Pitcock, S. (2018). *Summer Learning Toolkit: Evidence-based tools and guidance for delivering effective programs*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation. Retrieved from <https://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/summer-learning/toolkit/pages/default.aspx>

Overview

The Summer Learning Toolkit is an online toolkit designed to help districts and others create or enhance their summer learning programs. Users can browse and download more than 50 practical, adaptable tools and sample planning resources from the five urban districts who formed the National Summer Learning Project. The toolkit is aligned with recommendations

from the RAND Corporation in Getting to Work on Summer Learning. The toolkit includes tools, samples, tip sheets, and guidance and is organized into five planning areas: Planning and Management; Academics & Enrichment; Staffing and Professional Development; Site Climate; and Student Recruitment and Attendance.

5. McCombs, J. S., Augustine, C. H., Unlu, F., Ziol-Guest, K. M., Naftel, S., Gomez, C. J., Marsh, T., Akinniranye, G., & Todd, I. (2019). *Investing in successful summer programs: A review of evidence under the Every Student Succeeds Act*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation. Retrieved from https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR2836.html

Overview

McCombs et al. (2019) provide a systematic review of the evidence supporting summer programs and detailed descriptions of 43 evidence-based summer programs. About 75% of the studies included demonstrated positive impacts on at least one outcome. The report is intended to provide guidance regarding the effectiveness of summer interventions that meet ESSA evidence criteria and to provide useful information for decision makers examining programmatic options, regardless of funding source. McCombs et al. (2019) consider summer a viable time to promote positive outcomes for students and recommend practitioners consider all levels of evidence when making program choices. Two additional recommendations for practice include carefully considering the outcome domain of interest and considering targeted programs for best results in summer programming.

6. Rosenberg, J. (2018). *Summer learning recruitment guide*. New York, New York: The Wallace Foundation. Retrieved from <https://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/Documents/Summer-Learning-Recruitment-Guide.pdf>

Overview

Rosenberg's (2018) report focuses on providing best practices and examples of recruiting students to a summer school program. The report provides detailed recommendations for marketing the program, communicating with families, and completing student enrollment. Administrators interested in using extended instructional time to make up for learning loss due to COVID-19 may want to consult this resource to ensure high participation rates.

7. Augustine, C. H., & Thompson, L. E. (2020). *Getting support for summer learning: How federal, state, city, and district policies affect summer learning programs*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation. Retrieved from https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR2347.html

Overview

Augustine and Thompson (2020) reviewed how federal, state, city, and district policies can affect the sustainability and scale of district-provided summer learning programs. The main source of leverage for states is the state role in interpreting, regulating, and administering federal funding streams which can influence whether summer learning programs get funded. States can influence the quality of district-provided summer programming by layering program requirements into local eligibility for federal funding streams and by requiring specific practices in exchange for funding summer programs with state money. District leaders have the greatest impact on the quality of summer learning programs through the policies they set affecting professional development for summer school staff and which teachers can be hired for summer; other studies have identified teacher effectiveness as a primary influence on summer programs' effect on academic achievement. Recommendations include making summer programming an official board policy and authorizing a central body to carry out summer programming decision making; measuring and communicating the impact of summer programs; identifying and addressing policies or practices at the district level that create barriers to the scale, sustainability, and quality of summer programs; cultivating relationships with district, city, and state policymakers; and clearer messages on funding from state leaders.

8. McCombs J. S., Augustine C. H., Schwartz H. L., Bodilly, S. J., McInnis B., Lichter, D. S., & Cross A. B. (2011). *Making summer count: How summer programs can boost children's learning*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation. Retrieved from <https://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/MG1120.html>

Overview

McCombs et al. (2011) review existing evidence on effective, viable, and sustainable summer learning programs in urban districts for students in grades K-8. The authors address summer learning implementation, effectiveness, and cost. The study drew from existing evidence of factors that influence student achievement during the summer with a strong emphasis on summer slide. The authors found that summer learning targeted to low-income students can help close the achievement gap and that the effects can last for at least two years after participation. Recommendations for practitioners include early planning, investing in high quality staff, considering partners, and being creative about funding.

Conclusion

The eight resources reviewed in this information request provide state and local school administrators with useful guides and tools for implementing and out-of-school learning program. The majority of guides and tools in this section pertain to summer programming with the exception of Beckett and colleagues (2009), whose guide covers other extended learning programs such as afterschool or year-round school. Some of the guidance provided addresses a very specific aspect of out-of-school learning programs such as recruitment (Rosenberg, 2018) or political influence (Augustine & Thompson, 2020). As the concluding piece of our series on out-of-school learning loss and extended learning programs, these guides and tools can help state and local administrators to plan, deliver, and review the effectiveness of their chosen program to close the COVID-19 achievement gap.

Overview of Findings:

Several guides are available to help state leaders plan for extended learning opportunities especially for summer learning programs. These guides and tools include topics such as:

- Designing, implementing, and evaluating successful summer learning programs;
- A review and comparison of other out-of-school learning programs; and
- Specific guidance on working with policymakers and recruiting for out-of-school learning programs.

Information Requests are custom reports that are prepared to fulfill requests for information by the departments of education of the states served by R7CC (Alabama, Florida, and Mississippi). The requests address topics on current education issues related to the implementation of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). For more information, visit the R7CC website at region7comprehensivecenter.org.

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