Summer Learning Planning Guide

March 2021

Introduction

Summer learning is a research-based strategy shown to help prevent summer learning loss and support students who may be below grade level to grow before the next school year. Summer learning is also appropriate for all students to accelerate learning. This strategy is particularly important in the summer of 2021 as states, districts, and schools seek to curtail potential learning loss from the COVID-19 pandemic.

This planning guide was inspired by the investment that Tennessee has made in summer learning through the summer Read to be Ready program and recent legislation targeted at COVID-19 related learning loss. The guide was specifically developed to assist districts participating in the Tennessee Rural Acceleration and Innovation Network (TRAIN) as they began to plan for their summer learning camps.

This guide should be used to assist education leaders in thinking through, planning for, and making the decisions that will ensure opportunities are successful for students, families, and teachers. The planning guide begins with an overview of recent research findings that highlight effective small group and summer learning practices. It then provides space for leaders to focus on some of the most important questions, decisions, and next steps to implement high-quality summer learning opportunities.

Research on Summer Learning

The Annenberg Institute for School Reform at Brown University has released research-based guidance on how schools and school districts should address learning loss related to the COVID-19 pandemic. They have also created a resource for designing tutoring programs in particular. Some of the most relevant aspects are noted below. These can serve as useful guides to inform your planning for summer learning programs.

Focus

- Losses are likely to be larger in math than ELA, but math losses will potentially be more responsive to intervention efforts.

Relationships

- Knowing that many students have faced incredible difficulty during the pandemic, districts and schools can help students and communities heal over the summer. Research has shown that strong, supportive, and sustained relationships with adults in schools consistently predict children's capacity for resilient behavior, even in the face of traumatic experiences.

Personnel

- Extended learning time interventions, including weeklong acceleration academies staffed with highly effective teachers, show strong evidence of effectiveness. A targeted recruitment effort is important to ensure the most effective teachers are incentivized to teach during the summer is key.

Group Size

- Teaching extra content without changing the degree to which students are getting extra support is unlikely to be successful. Small class sizes and intervention are critical.

Curriculum

- Remediation, or giving students simpler, previous grade-level materials, had been found to result only in students falling further behind the grade-level material. Thus, access to high-quality instructional materials and a summer curriculum that is based in grade-level texts and focuses on grade-level standards must be a priority when planning summer programs.

Prioritization

- Many students who would benefit are unlikely to sign up for tutoring on their own. Schools must take an active role in marketing summer programs to families and conducting individual outreach to share.

Planning for Summer Learning

1. Determining Target Groups

Many students will likely need additional support to curtail potential learning loss. You can use the tables below to determine how many students you hope to prioritize for participation in summer learning. While you may want to allow fairly open access to summer learning programs, starting by planning for the students most in danger of learning loss will help create a potential headcount.

This will help your district to determine how you should focus recruitment efforts on priority students, expand your internal definition of priority, and if you should open programs to more students. This process should also assist you as you begin to think about how many teachers and staff you will need for the programs.

The table below helps to define targeted attendees based on the students most likely to benefit from focused learning opportunities during summer programs.

Summer Learning Program Participant Estimation					Count	
How many students entering each grade band (elementary, middle, and high school) missed a substantial (as defined by you) amount of time during the last school year?						
Of those who did not meet the prior criteria, how many students are eligible for free or reduced lunch?						
Of those who did not meet the prior criteria, how many students receive special education or are English Learner services?						
Of those who did not meet the prior criteria, how many students scored below proficient in math or reading on the most recent state or local benchmark assessment or screener?						
How many total students meet the priority definition within your district? Will your district require attendance for priority students?						
Ideally how many spaces would you like to make available to additional students?						
How many students do you anticipate by grade level: *(Add additional rows for middle school and high school planning)*	K:	1st:	2nd:	3rd:	4th:	5th:

2. *Determining Staffing Needs*

Research has shown that having teachers and trained professionals lead instruction for tutoring programs leads to the most positive impact on learning outcomes. Having the best teachers lead instruction during summer programming will be a key component to ensuring that participating students make the most growth possible. This section outlines key questions to think through both the staffing needs and the ideal teachers to participate.

Initial Staffing Considerations	
Staffing Timeline: When will you begin recruiting teachers? When do staffing assignments need to be finalized?	
Staff Training: How will you provide training for teachers who participate? Who will provide teacher training? When will teacher training begin?	
Staffing Configuration: Will you allow teachers to work partial schedules (e.g., one week, half days, etc.)? What considerations are there for partial schedules (e.g., payroll, number of staff, etc.)?	

Staffing Elementary School Summer Programs					
How many students do you anticipate by grade level?					
K:	1st:	2nd:	3rd:	4th:	5th:
What is your ideal ratio student to teacher ratio?					
How many teachers does that mean you will need by grade level?					
K:	1st:	2nd:	3rd:	4th:	5th:
Do you anticipate needing to use volunteers or additional tutors to support? If so, how many?					
How will you determine teacher participation?					

Staffing Middle School Summer Programs		
How many students do you anticipate by grade level?		
6th:	**7th:**	**8th:**
What is your ideal ratio student to teacher ratio?		
How many teachers does that mean you will need by grade level?		
6th:	**7th:**	**8th:**
Do you anticipate needing to use volunteers or additional tutors to support? If so, how many?		
How will you determine teacher participation?		

Staffing High School Summer Programs			
How many students do you anticipate by grade level?			
9th:	**10th:**	**11th:**	**12th:**
What is your ideal ratio student to teacher ratio?			
How many teachers does that mean you will need by grade level?			
9th:	**10th:**	**11th:**	**12th:**
Do you anticipate needing to use volunteers or additional tutors to support? If so, how many?			
How will you determine teacher participation?			

3. Determining Potential Partners

Bringing in high-quality partners (e.g., YMCA, local daycares, sports camps, nearby school districts, post-secondary institutions, etc.) can be an effective way to support summer programs. This section provides an opportunity to consider which partners exist locally and how they may support the work of the summer programs. It may also be beneficial to consider internal personnel (e.g., social workers, school counselors, etc.) who might be called upon to provide support for the programs as well.

Partner Planning
1. List all of the potential partners in your area that you may be able to work with. Think broadly about volunteers, program providers, and other levels of support.   2. Label each of the potential partners with aspects of the program that they may support.

Partner Name	Area of Support

4. Determining Logistics

Determining the logistics behind summer programs will be vital to their success. The table below is a place to capture some of the basic logistical information during the planning process. Using this resource to answer, and store, these decisions will help ensure that everyone involved in planning is aligned on the logistics needed to allow the program to operate. By using this table during planning, districts should be able to see potential logistical constraints, hurdles, or efficiencies on which they can plan for and around.

Logistical Considerations			
Consideration	Grades K-5	Grades 6-8	Grade 9 - 12
Location(s)			
Approximate start date			
Approximate end date			
Intake time			
Dismissal time			
Number of students			
Number of teachers			
Number of classrooms			
Who will serve as the site director?			

5. *Developing a Transportation Plan*

One of the biggest obstacles to student participation in summer programming is the associated transportation needs. This section outlines key questions for considering transportation logistics. By planning for these considerations ahead of time districts can anticipate potential issues and communicate transportation needs to families well in advance.

Guiding Questions	
Are you providing transportation to any of the locations for other summer programs happening concurrently?	
Can student assignment for program location be determined by geographic location?	
Are certain schools better suited to serve as a central location?	
Can you utilize a community partner to assist with transportation?	
How and when do you need to communicate transportation logistics to sites? To families?	

Communication of Summer Learning

Clear, consistent, and targeted communication is vital to ensure that students, families, the community, and school-based staff are all aware of these programs. The guided questions below will allow schools and districts to begin creating a communication plan for all stakeholders.

6. *Planning Stakeholder Communication*

A successful summer learning experience requires careful communications planning to ensure that students, families, and teachers know about the summer learning opportunities. Ensuring that communication is compelling and that outreach is strategic is key to enrolling those students most in need of additional learning time. The following table outlines key questions for planning communications.

General
- What will you call the summer learning programs (a clear, fun name is more likely to attract interest)?
- How can you plan for multiple modes of communication with stakeholders (e.g., direct calls, mailers, social media, etc.)?
- What details do you need to determine before communication starts?
- What FAQ do you need to be prepared to answer?

Teachers
- What is the best way to communicate this opportunity to your teachers?
- Who will be responsible for planning and following through on teacher communication?
- How will you build excitement about participation?
- How will you recruit/prioritize your most effective teachers?
- How can you include teachers in the planning and messaging phases of the programs?
- What concerns can you anticipate and prepare for?

Students
- What is the best way to communicate this opportunity to students?
- Who will be responsible for planning and following through on student communication?
- How will you build excitement about participation?
- How can you ensure that the highest priority students are the ones getting the messages about participation?

Families
- What is the best way to communicate this opportunity to your families?
- How can you frame this opportunity to ensure that families of the highest priority students want to participate?
- What data can be shared about student needs to incentivize participation?
- Who will be responsible for planning and following through on family communication?
- How will you build excitement about participation?
- How can you include families in the messaging phase of the programs (i.e., helping get the word out)?
- What concerns can you anticipate and prepare for?

Planning for Content

Research shows that focusing on remediation, rather than grade-level content, results in students falling farther behind. This will hold true when planning for summer programming, and districts will need to proactively plan to get high-quality, grade-level content to all participating students. The tables below outline some resources and guiding questions to focus the content of summer learning programs on the highest need, grade-level-appropriate material. Districts that have adopted high-quality instructional materials are encouraged to utilize these during the summer.

NIET's Learning Recovery Data Deep Dive can be used to determine key content for summer learning.

7. *Planning Guided Questions *repeat as needed**

Content-Specific Summer Questions	
ELA Guiding Questions:	**ELA Responses:**
Based on your district deep dive, where should the content focus for each grade level?	
How can you maximize content delivery throughout the day? The week? The entirety of the program?	
How can this time be used to incorporate activities (e.g., centers for word work) that reinforce math and ELA content?	
What resources do you have to support this content focus?	
What resources do you need to support this content focus?	
Math Guiding Questions:	**Math Responses:**
Based on your district deep dive, where should the content focus for each grade level?	
How can you maximize content delivery throughout the day? The week? The entirety of the program?	
How can this time be used to incorporate activities (e.g., centers for word work) that reinforce math and ELA content?	
What resources do you have to support this content focus?	
What resources do you need to support this content focus?	
Science & Social Studies Guiding Questions:	**Science & Social Studies Responses:**

Based on your district deep dive, where should the content focus for each grade level?	
How can you maximize content delivery throughout the day? The week? The entirety of the program?	
How can this time be used to incorporate activities (e.g., centers for word work) that reinforce math and ELA content?	
What resources do you have to support this content focus?	
What resources do you need to support this content focus?	

Additional Consideration Questions:
- Are you able to build purposeful field trips into the schedule?
- Can you utilize partners to help support students during less formal instruction time?
- How can you build supports for students who are ELL or receive special education services into the programming? How can you target these students' learning needs specifically with content?

Schedule for Summer Learning

Consistency of schedule will help students feel a sense of normalcy within summer learning programs. Below you will find some sample schedules that can be adjusted to meet local needs. Both half-day and full-day schedule options are highlighted.

For instance, in grades K-2 learning blocks are more broken up by play and lunch times than they are for older students. Additionally, these schedules allow for students in grades K-5 to be in the same location without overlapping in play time but sharing a common lunch time.

Finally, there is a "Flexible Content Block" at the end of each day. NIET recommends that this time be targeted to best meet the needs of the enrolled students. This time could be used for small group instruction and assignments determined by student data. Groupings may be set for the duration of the program or rotate based on student progress.

8. Example Schedule: Half-day grades K-2

Time	Activities
7:00-7:30 a.m.	Breakfast with literacy activity
7:30-8:30 a.m.	ELA Block
8:30-9:00 a.m.	Play
9:00-10:00 a.m.	Math Block
10:00-10:30 a.m.	Play
10:30-11:00 a.m.	Intervention/Individualized Content
11:00-12:00 p.m.	Flexible Content Block
12:00-12:30 p.m.	Lunch

9. Example Schedule: Half-day grades 3-5

Time	Activities
7:00-7:30 a.m.	Breakfast with literacy activity
7:30-8:30 a.m.	ELA Block
8:30-9:30 a.m.	Math Block
9:30-10:00 a.m.	Play
10:00-10:30 a.m.	Intervention/Individualized Content

Time	Activity
10:30-11:30 a.m.	Flexible Content Block
11:30-12:00 p.m.	Play
12:00-12:30 p.m.	Lunch

10. Example Schedule: Half-day grades 6-8

Time	Activities
7:00-7:30 a.m.	Breakfast with literacy activity
7:30-8:30 a.m.	ELA Block
8:30-9:30 a.m.	Math Block
9:30-10:30 a.m.	Intervention/Individualized Content
10:30-11:00 a.m.	Play/Physical Activity
11:00-12:00 p.m.	Flexible Content Block
12:00-12:30 p.m.	Lunch

11. Example Schedule: Full-day grades K-2:

Time	Activities
7:00-7:30 a.m.	Breakfast with literacy activity
7:30-8:30 a.m.	ELA Block
8:30-9:00 a.m.	Play
9:00-10:00 a.m.	Math Block
10:00-11:00 a.m.	Intervention
11:00-11:30 a.m.	Lunch
11:30-12:30 p.m.	Flexible Content Block
12:30-1:00 p.m.	Play/Physical Activity
1:00-2:00 p.m.	Flexible Content Block

12. *Example Schedule: Full-day grades 3-5:*

Time	Activities
7:00-7:30 a.m.	Breakfast with literacy activity
7:30-8:30 a.m.	ELA Block
8:30-9:30 a.m.	Math Block
9:30-10:00 a.m.	Play/Physical Activity
10:00-11:00 a.m.	Intervention
11:00-11:30 a.m.	Lunch
11:30-12:30 p.m.	Flexible Content Block
12:30-1:30 p.m.	Flexible Content Block
1:30-2:00 p.m.	Play/Physical Activity

13. *Example Schedule: Full-day grades 6-8:*

Time	Activities
7:00-7:30 a.m.	Breakfast
7:30-8:30 a.m.	ELA Block
8:30-9:30 a.m.	Math Block
9:30-10:30 a.m.	Intervention
10:30-11:30 a.m.	Play/Physical Activity
11:30-12:00 p.m.	Lunch
12:00-1:00 p.m.	Flexible Content Block
1:00-2:00 p.m.	Flexible Content Block

14. Example Schedule: Grade 9 Transition and Acceleration Camp

Time	Activities
7:00-7:30 a.m.	Breakfast with literacy activity
7:30-8:00 a.m.	Team building and school spirit building
8:00-9:00 a.m.	ELA Block
9:00-9:30 a.m.	High school preparation activity
9:30-10:30 a.m.	Math Block
10:30-12:00 p.m.	Flexible Content Block
12:00-12:30 p.m.	Lunch

15. Example Schedule: High school (all grades)

Time	Activities
7:00-7:30 a.m.	All grades breakfast with literacy activity
7:30-9:00 a.m.	Flexible Content Block
9:00-9:15 a.m.	Break
9:15-10:45 a.m.	Flexible Content Block
10:45-11:15 a.m.	9th and 10th grade lunch
11:30-12:00 p.m.	11th and 12th grade lunch
12:00-1:30 p.m.	Flexible Content Block
1:30-1:45 p.m.	Break
1:45-3:15 p.m.	Flexible Content Block

16. Example Schedule: High school extracurricular integration

Time	Activities
7:00-7:30 a.m.	Breakfast with literacy activity
7:30-9:00 a.m.	Flexible Content Block
9:00-End	Extra-Curricular Activity (e.g., sports camp, robotics camp, etc.)

Resources

NIET recommends the continued use of any high-quality instructional materials or resources that are used during the regular school year. However, we are also well aware that many schools and districts will need additional resources to help plan for these summer programs. To that end, we have put together some resources that can help to supplement materials already in use. All of these resources are free though some will require the creation of an account. This list is not exhaustive and is designed to help start thinking about additional places to find support.

Organization	Description
Achieve, Inc	A list of materials by grade bands, content area, and type of instructional material. Contains materials aligned to ELA and math in grades K-12.
Achieve the Core	Ready-to-use classroom resources that include lessons and supporting materials for ELA and math in grades K-12. Their priority content guide may also be helpful for content planning.
Annenberg Institute EdResearch for Recovery Project	A place to find evidence-based briefs designed help inform recovery strategies by connecting research and practice.
American Museum of Natural History	A set of virtual field trips with supporting materials and teacher guides for students in grades K-12.
Collaborative for Student Success	A resource to help determine how curriculum you have already adopted may be adjusting and/or providing support for virtual or remote learning.
Discovery Education Virtual Field Trips	An online collection of virtual field trips or learning experiences across a wide number of content areas.
EngageNY	A full K-12 curricula for ELA and math including unit and lesson plans.
Hanover Research	A collection of reports that focus on different elements of potential need. These topics include learning loss, online instruction, reading and literacy, math, and defined student subgroups.
Open Up	A K-8 ELA and 6-8 math curricula with supporting resources. You will need to create a teacher account to access materials.
Rowan University College of Education	A list of virtual field trips with links to external field trip providers that have a variety of additional resources.
The Nature Conservatory	A set of virtual field trips designed for students aged 5-18 with accompanying teacher guides.
UnboundEd	An open curriculum that allows you to access lessons and content guides for PK-12 content