

2021 Summer Learning Program Considerations for Recovery Planning

Purpose

This support document highlights key considerations to support supervisory unions/districts in afterschool and summer program planning as part of ongoing recovery efforts.

Introduction

Supervisory Unions/Districts (SUs/SDs) that have 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21CCLC) and other afterschool and summer programs in place should consider how best to leverage and integrate those existing investments and best practices into ongoing recovery planning efforts. For SUs, districts and schools that have limited or no extended learning programs during summer or the school year for their students, 2021 is an excellent year to consider planning for, developing and/or implementing a summer or afterschool program as an extended learning strategy. The Agency of Education offers the following considerations and practical strategies when planning for summer and after-school programming.

Strategic Considerations

Set reasonable goals and expectations. The scope and sequence of summer programming can vary greatly; be sure to set reasonable and achievable goals and expectations of the program, staff, and students based on capacity and readiness. A summer program is normally multiple weeks long and can contribute significantly to recovery efforts and extended learning support, but it also requires significant and on-going integrated program effort.

High quality summer learning programs do take time to build. Consistent with research they should be implemented (to the degree possible) as part of a year-round, multi-year after-school or extended learning program aligned with MTSS systems and other aligned district/school strategies to most effectively attain positive student outcomes.

Start with equity at the center and build from there. SU/SDs and schools should consider what is achievable this summer through an equity and quality lens and build out strategically from there.

Contact Information:

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Invest and spend strategically. Using and/or braiding federal ESSER funds in the nearer term to support development and expansion of programming, in line with fiscal guidance, is a viable option. Post-Recovery, longer-term federal funding options such as 21st Community Learning Centers funding should be considered for longer term sustainability.

Structural Considerations

High-quality summer programming, particularly for five weeks or more, is a research-based model to “prevent learning loss” while providing a rich variety of engaging social emotional and academic-based programming combined with meals and other engaging program opportunities for youth. Programs can be flexibly delivered using different models in partnership with school staff as well as community partners and educators as COVID Health and Safety rules allow.

Half-day or full-day models versus shorter dosage efforts should be prioritized to the degree possible being sure to incorporate the three priorities of Recovery Planning intentionally in curricular, scheduling and activity design:

1. Socioemotional functioning, mental health, and well-being
2. Student Engagement and Truancy
3. Academic Achievement and Success

Identifying effective and timely communication strategies for families is essential. This should include program naming, branding, and clear explanatory language to assure how any program will be safe, appropriate, engaging, and effective so that families have the right information to make informed decisions in partnership with schools.

Summer learning programs can and should have all the components of dynamic and supportive programming: academic rigor, engaging, social-emotional learning, exercise, food, and fun.

Summer Learning Continuum of Development and Quality

| What | Beginning | Developing | Expanding |
|-------------|--|---|---|
| Planning | A small group of staff | Core group of leaders and staff plan together | Larger team including school and district leadership with many engaged partners |
| Dosage | 2-4 weeks, limited to a few hours in the morning | 5 weeks for a half day ending at lunchtime | Full day program for 5+ weeks |

| What | Beginning | Developing | Expanding |
|------------------------------|---|--|---|
| Learning Approach and Choice | One Classroom | Multiple classrooms Small group work Additional components (meals, formal exercise, other options) | Full school used Multiple classrooms 4:1 targeted tutoring Themed enrichments Project based learning Robust meal program Innovative Methods |
| Staffing | A few licensed teachers and others | A substantial licensed teacher component, behavioral, special education, and other supports | A full school presence, including administrator(s) with fully integrated supports including outside partners |
| Partnerships | Limited or non-existent | Partners connections or activity deepen learning experiences | Partners may run program components or are integral to the overall intended design |
| ESY services | Isolated or inconsistent connection to the summer program | Co-located with some overlap with summer program | Integrated intentionally with the summer program schedule to extend options |
| Space | Classroom(s) only Informal transportation | Multiple rooms and spaces needed Some transportation | Entire campus used Full Transportation Off Site Components |
| Equity | Smaller group gets benefit | Enhanced capacity and methods deepen access and learning potential | Full-service integration Available to all Individualized scheduling MTSS connected |

Related Links

[National Summer Learning Association](#)

[Research and Evidence Overview](#)

[Use of Levels of Evidence](#)