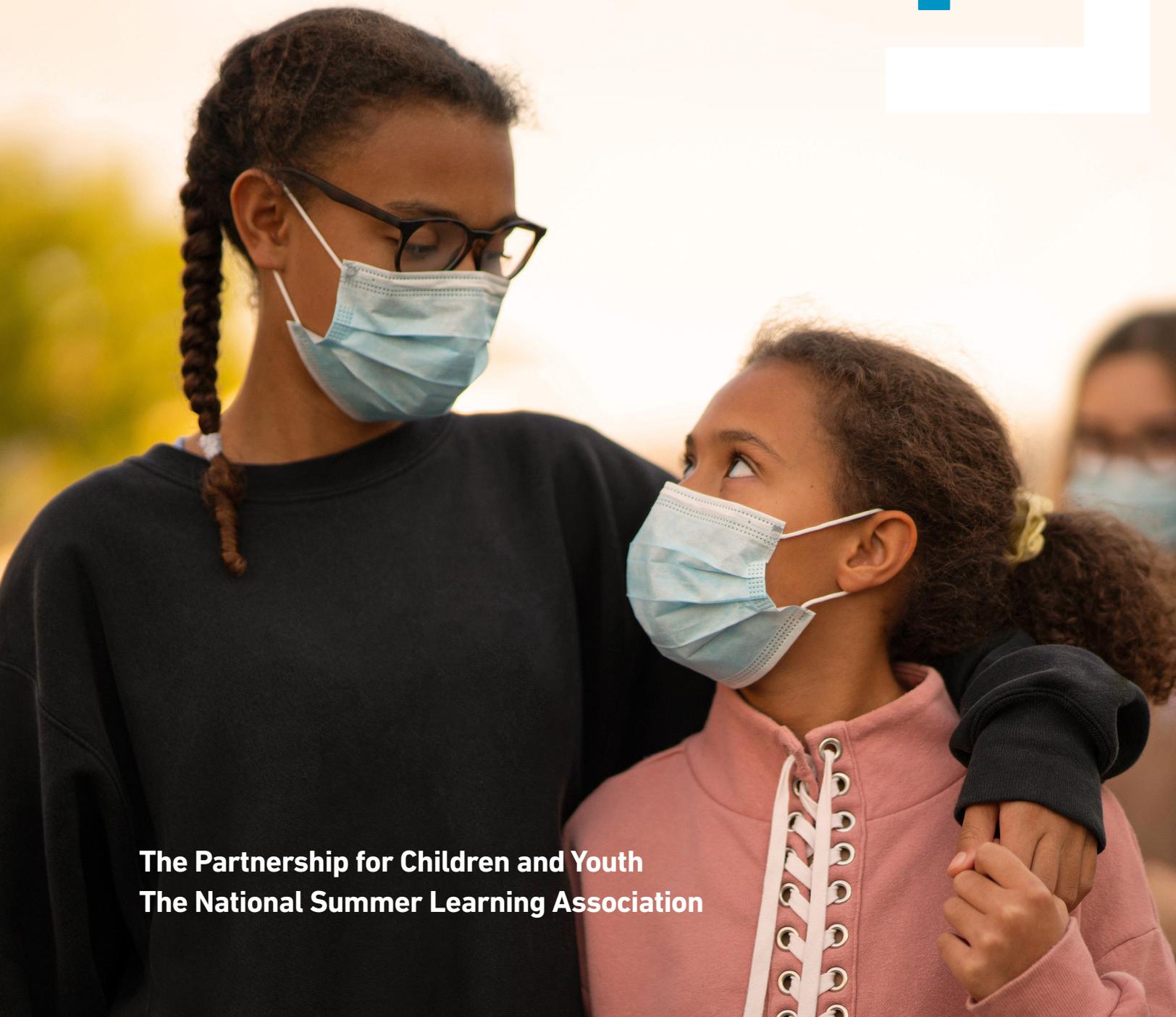


**2021 California Summer Learning Guide:**

# **Investing in Resilience and Relationships**



**The Partnership for Children and Youth  
The National Summer Learning Association**

# Introduction

There is an unprecedented sense of urgency, calls to action, and investment of resources from multiple levels of government to increase access to, and expand the role of, summer learning programs. This is very good news for students and families in California, a state that has historically underinvested in summer learning, and this moment represents an opportunity to change this picture now and into the future.

Summer is a time for fun, for exploration, and yes, for learning – but in different ways from the traditional school year. And this summer, more than ever, our highest priority must be on providing safe spaces with caring adults, and learning opportunities grounded in student interests that can re-spark their engagement, foster their recovery, and prepare them for returning to in-person learning in the fall.

This guide does not delve into the “why” of summer learning. Rather, this guide is designed to support local education leaders in jump-starting their summer planning and to offer ideas and resources to help offset the overwhelming sense of urgency felt by us all. This guide draws upon foundational research and best practices for how to design and implement summer learning programs anchored in lessons learned and adaptations emerging from the pandemic.

As you dive into the content and plan your summer program, please keep this in mind: Some communities have an existing summer learning infrastructure to build on and some do not. There are unknowns about facilities and staffing and work to be done to build family trust. What is important is that we join forces with our partners and open our minds to all the creative ways we can support students in the summer months with a focus on relationships, resilience, and recovery.

## About the Authors

The **Partnership for Children & Youth (PCY)** is a statewide intermediary that has been working for over 20 years to expand access to high-quality expanded learning and wellness opportunities for children in under-resourced communities across the state of California. PCY oversaw a seven-year statewide [Summer Matters Campaign](#) dedicated to creating and expanding access to high-quality summer learning programs for underserved students. This campaign engaged hundreds of diverse schools, districts, community-based organizations, municipal agencies, and county offices of education, and this brain trust remains a resource for California educators. [www.partnerforchildren.org](http://www.partnerforchildren.org)

The **National Summer Learning Association (NSLA)** is the only national nonprofit exclusively focused on closing the achievement gap by increasing access to high-quality summer learning opportunities. NSLA recognizes and disseminates what works, offers expertise and technical assistance for summer programs and communities, and advocates for summer learning. NSLA has an array of summer models to learn from through the Summer Learning Awards and the [New Vision for Summer School](#), a group of over 50 school districts committed to summer learning that engages more children and youth, boosts academic achievement, and supports teaching and learning throughout the school year. [www.summerlearning.org](http://www.summerlearning.org)



**Special thanks to:** Jessica Gunderson, lead writer; Laura Zahn, Generation Teach; and Rebecca L. Wade-Mdivanian, NSLA Field Consultant



## SUMMER LEARNING 2021

# 1 Core Values

Building off the research (see page 7) and years of experience supporting practitioners, plus the distinctive priorities that summer 2021 requires, the Partnership for Children & Youth and National Summer Learning Association recommend these core values to drive program planning:

### **Elevate relationships and enrichment.**

Programs should prioritize developing the conditions for healing and development, including opportunities to play, to explore new skills and experiences, and to connect with peers and caring adults.

### **Focus on equity.**

There is broad consensus and evidence that the COVID-19 crisis and school closures have illuminated and exacerbated the structural economic and racial inequities in the education system. Programming should target the most underserved student groups and proactively seek input from families and students in their language of choice about their wants and needs.

### **Be creative.**

Summer is an opportunity to think outside the box to improve teaching and learning year-round by testing new hands-on instructional strategies, rethinking learning environments, and experimenting with staffing models before scaling. Programs should align to, but not replicate, school year methods.

### **Deepen community partnerships.**

This effort requires an all-hands-on-deck approach. Identify and collaborate with partners, including community-based organizations (CBO), libraries, parks and recreation centers, cultural attractions, housing agencies, and higher education to reach more students and achieve stronger shared outcomes.



## 2 Laying the Groundwork for Success

Historically, funding has been the biggest barrier to summer programming. In a first for districts across California, this is not the case. There are billions of dollars in new and very flexible funding targeted at addressing pandemic needs and learning loss, including summer and expanded learning programs, in 2021 and beyond. (see page 8)

### Schools need to plan for multiple scenarios, and they need to start now.

Summer programs should not be all or nothing, or one-size-fits-all. As illustrated by research, program quality – including staff development, appropriate curriculum, positive climate, partnerships, and alignment with the school year – is essential to making the most of summer. The cornerstone to making this happen is planning and a shared vision of success. Families make plans for summer by mid- to late April with some working into May, meaning districts and schools must move quickly to determine summer plans.<sup>1</sup> Districts and schools should break down barriers to coordinating and planning with community partners who have experience delivering high-quality enrichment and engaging students and families.

### Summer programs are adaptable; integrate lessons learned from this year to save time and money.

All planning discussions should begin with prioritizing in-person programming.<sup>2</sup> Though this requires the most heavy lifting to prepare for and operationalize up front, in-person programs are strongly encouraged and more impactful for student learning and development. Fundamental to any level of in-person programming will be prioritizing safety guidelines and building deep trust among families, staff, and students.

### Promising practices from learning hubs

A wide array of California districts and community organizations have been providing in-person learning and supervision on school campuses throughout the school year. Insights from learning hubs can help inform summer planning.<sup>3</sup>

- Adhere to strict safety protocols; this is a heavy lift on frontline staff, so invest in training, self-care, and social-emotional well-being.
- Coordinate with teachers, site leaders, and support staff to enroll, conduct outreach, and develop schedules.
- Leverage strong existing partnerships between schools and expanded learning providers to make it both possible and easier to quickly set up programs.
- Start small – number of kids, days, sites – and increase over time.
- Build processes and time for continuous learning. Collaborative real-time problem-solving is a necessity given shifting public health and education guidance, and a new learning environment that requires space for feedback from staff and students.
- Overcommunicate with parents about safety; pictures and videos are particularly useful.

### Promising practices from Summer 2020

Data collected from a diverse group of summer providers around the country identified the most effective program elements:<sup>4</sup>

- Programs that were multiyear and well established in the community had the most success. Teachers/counselors from previous years returned, eliminating the burden of recruitment. Trust and rapport built previously in person were transferred to the virtual environment. Direct contact information for families served was provided to expedite enrollment.
- Programming that was designed to address racism, oppression, and injustice included racial healing practitioners, youth-led peace circles, and recruitment of Black authors and speakers.
- Early decision-making, as opposed to keeping program decisions contingent on state/local regulations, helped programs to have some control over their future and prevented confusion and last-minute changes.

## PROMISING PRACTICES FOR PLANNING



Source: RAND Corporation/The Wallace Foundation: *Getting to Work on Summer Learning* (2019)

Even in the best-case scenario, where large numbers of students and staff will be able to be on school campuses, there will be a subset of students who will require or prefer virtual summer learning programs. Educators already have a year more of practice with distance learning and should build off their lessons learned from what engagement and learning strategies worked best for different ages. [Learning Policy Institute](#) has a repository of distance learning resources from across the country.

### Invest in staff.

**Staffing will be the driving challenge this summer.** Teachers, many of whom are fatigued from a year of distance learning, may not want to work this summer and should have the space to recover and plan for next year. That will mean looking beyond school personnel and thinking creatively about partners to bring to the table: community-based organizations, higher education, parks and recreation agencies, affordable housing organizations, libraries, and more.

#### CASE STUDY

#### ENGAGING LOCAL HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE STUDENTS

[Generation Teach](#) partners with eight urban districts and charter schools across three states to engage elementary and middle school students in summer learning, invest undergraduate and high school students in teaching, and develop professional teachers as leaders. Generation Teach contracts with districts to serve sets of 500 students, 100 undergraduate and high school students, and 15 professional teachers. Undergraduate and high school students receive \$2,800 AmeriCorps Education Awards and cash scholarships, letters of recommendation, and career counseling. Students show two to three months of growth in reading and math, and 40% growth in social-emotional learning; more than half of teaching fellows enter careers in education, and professional teachers remain in education and emerge as school leaders.

**Staff at summer programs must be trained in instructional methods and positive learning environments in order to garner positive outcomes.** One way to support summer staff is to anchor summer learning programs in commercially available and evidence-based summer learning curricula.<sup>5</sup> Programming and professional development should align broadly with school-year learning and goals, but the opportunity of summer to provide hands-on, experiential, project-based, social justice-themed, and culturally relevant curriculum is critical. Strong summer programs organize around a unique theme and/or distinctive summer camp culture. Play-based curriculum can be utilized for younger children, and student voice is essential to older youth programming.

**Building collaborative relationships between teachers, administrators, and expanded learning staff during the summer can build lasting cohesion at school sites to improve whole child outcomes.** Summer can provide a welcome change of pace while developing future school leaders, providing more planning and collaboration time, and expanding the training ground for staff, teachers, and site administrators to learn how to operate blended staffing models.

Teachers surveyed in California's Summer Matters districts reported that they appreciated having more time to test out project-based learning and new ways to connect with kids – the strongest finding was improving staff beliefs about their own ability to work with challenging students and increased perceptions of all students as learners.<sup>6</sup> Evidence from California evaluations indicates that noncredentialed program staff benefited professionally from the new challenges and expanded responsibilities they experienced in high-quality summer programs.<sup>7</sup>

**Classroom teachers can have a wide variety of roles in summer programs:**

- Provide full-day small group academics and enrichment
- Provide half-day academic instruction
- Develop curriculum and train paraprofessionals and community staff
- Advise and coach small groups of staff and/or prospective teachers to lead instruction
- Serve as a site director; manage operations and/or family communication

#### CASE STUDY

#### BLENDING COMMUNITY AND SCHOOL STAFF TO INCREASE OUTCOMES FOR YOUTH

[Aim High](#), a community-based summer program located in the Bay Area, serves 2,300 students annually and utilizes teachers and community-based educators to deliver no-cost summer programs to low-income middle school students. Students engage in project-based learning in humanities, math, social-emotional development, and college and career readiness activities. This staffing partnership has reaped significant benefits for youth. In an independent study, youth had a 22% reduction in chronic absenteeism, a 37% reduction in suspension rates, and achieved six points higher on their English Language Art scores.<sup>8</sup>

### PRACTICE TIP #1

To increase teacher recruitment, advertise summer’s unique benefits. According to the National Summer Learning Project, 81-97% of surveyed teachers reported that they enjoyed their summer experience due to small group size, access to new curricula materials, and half-day schedules.<sup>9</sup>

### Student and family centered: recruitment and engagement.

Summer attendance is always challenging and will only be intensified with a year of distance learning. Districts, schools, and their community partners need to proactively engage both families and students now about what they need and want summer to look like in their language of choice. Students and families are overwhelmed by multiple communication channels.

Outreach, communication, and updates should be coordinated across the schools and their partners at the program, site, and classroom level.

1. Survey families and students before the summer to understand their priorities.
2. Provide virtual family orientations at multiple times to meet needs of working families; use this time to share expectations for summer programming and to build relationships.
3. Administer survey after week two of programming to understand the student and family experience; analyze results; and share action plan. ([See survey example.](#))
4. Administer end-of-summer survey, share the final impact report with families, and use data to inform fall learning and next summer.

### PRACTICE TIP #2

More school districts are providing external community-based staff with district emails and access to internal communication resources and student data. This has led to real-time and more seamless communication across families, teachers, and support staff and should remain even after distance learning ends.

Summer programs must make enrollment quick and easy. Many families have a negative reaction to “summer school,” so promotion and outreach should be clear and articulate as to what makes the summer program different from school as well as relay basic logistics and schedules.

### PRACTICE TIP #3

Programs should plan to reach parents and families at least three times for enrollment using multiple communication channels, including, but not limited to, flyers, social media, and phone calls.<sup>10</sup>

Many programs incentivize student attendance with field trips, college tours, or low-cost, high-novelty rewards, such as books and gift cards. Small but tangible celebrations, such as digital badges and certificates of achievement or appreciation, honor the investment of students and families. For older youth, internships, credit-earning opportunities, and paid work experience can be strong motivators.



### PROMISING PRACTICES TO RECRUITING STUDENTS AND OBTAINING STRONG ATTENDANCE

DEVELOP	Develop compelling and accurate recruitment and enrollment information for parents.
ESTABLISH	Establish a firm enrollment deadline and a clear attendance policy.
ACKNOWLEDGE	Acknowledge the potential no-show rate, and plan for it in recruiting and budgeting.
PROVIDE	Provide small incentives for students who attend.
FOSTER	Foster a positive site climate.

Source: RAND Corporation/The Wallace Foundation: *Getting to Work on Summer Learning* (2019)

## Support services must be built into all models.

Providing students and families with access to critical services, such as nutrition, healthcare, and mental health support, will be more essential than ever. From the beginning, planning processes should include student support services staff from the district, school sites, municipal agencies, and external partners to ensure that students have access to behavioral health and trauma-informed supports. Support services are not just for students; access to health and wellness resources must be provided to staff as well.

Most districts have strengthened their collaboration with local public health agencies and should consider building off existing relationships and structures, including how to leverage Medi-Cal and/or Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS).<sup>11</sup> Providing community resources can strengthen the trust and connection of families to the school community and help to maintain direct contact to students, especially those with unstable housing.

### CASE STUDY

### BUILDING TRUST TO SUPPORT THE WHOLE FAMILY

**Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County** operates after-school and summer programs at 15 sites in partnership with Franklin McKinley School District. These programs are the touch point to get many families in the door. When program staff conduct weekly wellness checks with families, they talk about more than just academic support. They get to the root causes of what families need and develop deep community bonds. Any single wellness check could result in the family being connected to immigration services, eviction resources, grandparents joining their senior center clubs and events, enrolling a sibling in preschool, or helping a relative access healthcare. It is essential that enough staff are bilingual.



## FEDERAL SUMMER FEEDING PROGRAMS

Child hunger is on the rise, and federal summer feeding programs have always been a lifeline for the families that rely on them. Schools should build off their existing school lunch program, including retaining nutrition staff year-round, targeted feeding site locations, and offering flexible hours.<sup>12</sup> To maximize participation, schools can extend the number of hours food pickup is available, allow family members to pick up the food (instead of requiring in-person pick-up by students), and provide breakfast and lunch in one pickup so families do not have to schedule multiple trips.

## Open the doors to summer learning.

To meet wide-scale demand and need, school campuses must be available to house programs. In California, most campuses were closed this last year, severely hindering the ability to get critical services to students, especially those with unstable housing and a lack of connectivity.<sup>13</sup> In addition, school campuses are familiar to families, and returning to these campuses in the summer will smooth the transition back to school in the fall.

**Get outside.** An integral part of all summer programs is increased time, activities, and field trips in outdoor spaces and parks. Due to physical distancing, outdoor learning – both in the summer and into the fall – will help ensure safety and reduce burdens of indoor space and capacity. Using outdoor space in the summer can translate into more fun for kids and new practices for staff in the fall.

### CASE STUDY

### HANDS-ON LEARNING AND FUN SUPPORT KIDS OF ALL AGES

For nearly a decade, hundreds of primary and secondary students in the rural city of Kerman, CA, have participated in **Kerman Enrichment Summer Adventures** (KESA). KESA is operated through an innovative partnership between the Fresno County Superintendent of Schools, **California Teaching Fellows Foundation** (CTFF), and the school district. KESA Jr. serves grades K-3, while KESA Big serves 4-8; in 2019, the program served a combined total of 600 students (64% English learners, 13% special education). KESA offers five weeks of full-day programming centered on literacy, STEM, physical activity, and field trips. KESA staff (CTFF staff) build thematic learning and enrichment units around a fictional book, which is woven into every aspect of the program, making learning fun, including a community culminating event.

### 3 Research Snapshot: Quality Matters!

Similar to high-quality after-school programs, summer programs can reduce learning loss, provide opportunities for youth to gain literacy and math skills, and support social-emotional growth.<sup>14</sup> But attendance at a summer program alone doesn't guarantee these benefits for youth: quantity and quality matter.<sup>15</sup> Below are highlights from some of the most comprehensive and utilized research on developing and implementing high-quality summer programs.

Quality is well-defined in summer programs – whether in-person or virtual. [The Wallace Foundation](#), in partnership with the [RAND Corporation](#) and others, has published a wealth of evaluations, research, and tools that dive deep into the core elements of impactful summer programs. Over the last decade, they have found the strongest results from the following practices:

- Offering voluntary, no-cost summer programs over multiple summers with free transportation and meals
- Providing at least five, preferably six, weeks of academic and enrichment programming with three hours of daily high-quality academic instruction
- Ensuring strong attendance (75%), small class sizes, and curricula aligned with the school year to impact the level and longevity of positive student outcomes
- Implementing summer youth employment programs that can have a range of positive outcomes<sup>16</sup>

[The Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality](#) has spent decades researching key program quality elements in out-of-school-time programs. Many summer learning programs across the country use this framework to design and assess program quality. These elements include:

- Youth engagement (youth voice in planning and reflection)
- Peer interaction (building community, cooperative learning, homework help)
- Supportive environment (active learning, ask-listen-encourage, reframing conflict)
- Safe environment (structure and clear limits)
- Youth voice in governance

For more research and resources, see addendum with foundational planning and implementation resources.



## 4 Roadblocks Removed: Key Funding and Policies to Expand Summer

State and federal COVID relief funds provide broad discretion and flexibility to schools and districts. Investments in summer programs align well to the goals these funds lay out for serving vulnerable student populations.

### FEDERAL

- *Stimulus Round #1: CARES Act* directed \$6.4 billion to the state and local education system. The majority of this funding was directed to learning loss mitigation and has differing spending timelines. There is a [list](#) of the funding breakdown by district.
- *Stimulus Round #2: ESSER II* directs over \$6 billion directly to California districts based on the Title 1 formula and can be used similar to the CARES Act. This funding can be spent through September 30, 2023.
- *Potential Round #3: Learning Recovery Act of 2021* – part of a three-bill package – to increase learning time supports and is aligned with the Biden administration’s spending plan. This bill directs \$75 billion nationally, over two years, for grants to state education agencies with the bulk of the funds going directly to districts. The Senate is expected to take up the House-passed version and potentially pass the entire package by mid-March.

In addition to the tens of billions of new one-time funding, the most common existing sources for summer learning programs are also being maintained, if not increasing:

- Federal: Title 1, 21st Community Center Learning Center (21st CCLC) program, Community Development Block Grant
- State: Local Control Supplemental and Concentration grants and [After School Education and Safety \(ASES\) program](#)

### STATE

- According to the [Legislative Analyst’s Office](#), current projections point to a more than \$14.9 billion (21%) increase in state education funding compared to the enacted 2020-21 level. This is the largest increase in school funding since Proposition 98 was passed. The final allocations will be determined in July 2021 and may continue to increase.
- As of March, the California Legislature and the Governor have agreed upon investing \$4.6 billion into expanding learning opportunities to include summer programs, tutoring, and more. Districts will have until September 2022 to expend these funds, allowing districts to invest in two consecutive summers. The budget trailer bill, [AB/SB86](#), emphasizes supporting the social and emotional needs of students, addressing learning losses, and prioritizing students most in need of support such as homeless and foster youth, English learners, and low-income students.
- There is a [centralized hub](#) of all necessary safety guidance and resources for school settings.

**In building out budgets, districts should be intentional about making investments (vs. spending down) to meet both short- and long-term goals:**

- Hire to provide continuity of consistent staff
- Plan for a two-summer approach
- Commit to living wages, healthcare access, and vaccine prioritization for all frontline staff
- Design program schedules with collaborative planning time and training
- Offer culturally responsive professional development with a focus on health and safety, trauma-informed and social-emotional learning pedagogies, and academic acceleration strategies
- Provide transportation and field trips
- Offer curricula that addresses racial injustice and inequities



## Essential Planning and Implementation Resources

### General Summer Program Management Resources and Tools

**Summer Learning Toolkit** by *The Wallace Foundation*: This web-based resource provides summer program leaders with over 50 evidence-based tools and resources, including customizable tools, sample documents from actual summer programs, and tip sheets, as well as guidance documents that provide the connection to research.

**Getting to Work on Summer Learning** by *The Wallace Foundation*: In this edition, researchers distill lessons about implementation that they have gleaned from a six-year study of voluntary summer programs in the five urban districts participating in the National Summer Learning Project. Topics include: planning, teacher selection and professional development, sufficient time on task, student recruitment and attendance, academic curriculum and instruction, enrichment activities, positive summer climate, summer cost and funding.

**Summer Learning** by *the California School Boards Association*: This resource includes presentations, trainings, and case studies that school board members and district administrators can use to plan, implement, and expand summer learning. Topics include: integrating STEAM into summer, district needs assessment, and funding strategies.

**Summer Starts in September Program Planning Guide** by *the National Summer Learning Association*: The Summer Starts in September Program Planning Guide is a comprehensive summer learning program planning guide full of research-based strategies, program examples, and tools that program leaders can use to develop an intentional and high-impact program.

**Summer Learning Program Quality Intervention** by *the Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality*: This assessment tool was developed by the National Summer Learning Association and the Weikart Center to support summer programs in assessing their program quality based on research of youth development standards. Tools are also available to help management and staff have critical conversations about improving overall program quality.

### Programming during the COVID-19 Pandemic

**Suggestions for Youth Programs and Camps: Readiness and Planning Tool** by *the Centers for Disease Control*: This tool provides a checklist of protocols and procedures for camps and youth programs to consider while making initial preparations for program operations. It is intended for use in partnership with local health authorities.

**Field Guide for Camps on Implementation of CDC Guidance** by *the American Camp Association*: This field guide provides camp leaders with recommendations to reduce risks related to COVID-19. The American Camp Association is regularly updating this document to respond to changes and developments throughout the pandemic. This guide was designed to support various types of camps, including day, overnight, and outdoor programs.

**Restart Recovery: Virtual Summer School State Guidance for District and School Leadership** by *the Council of Chief State School Officers*: This guide was developed prior to the summer of 2020 to assist state and local educational agencies in planning and executing virtual summer programming. It includes key strategies for curriculum, teaching SEL, attendance, professional learning, and family engagement.

**COVID-19 and Summer Learning Scenario Planning** by *the Association of California School Administrators*: This brief, written during the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in the spring of 2020, outlines key scenarios for summer program options during the summer of 2020. Key elements and opportunities for four scenarios for school implementation of summer learning programs: in-person, hybrid, community-based summer programs, or virtual.

**Summer Learning: A Bridge to Student Success and America's Recovery, a COVID-19 Playbook** by *the National Summer Learning Association*: This playbook provides a framework for school and community leaders to plan, collaborate, and execute evidence-based practices and partnerships to create high-quality summer programs. Key resources are included throughout to help programs navigate the reality and ever-changing environment of the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Return to Play: COVID 19 Risk Assessment Tool** by *the Aspen Institute*: This online resource provides guidance on COVID-19 risks related to individual youth sports and recreational activities. Program leaders can use this tool to develop strategies to mitigate risks during sports or recreational activities during summer programs.

### Teacher Professional Development

**The Promise of Summer as a Time for Teacher Professional Learning** by *the RAND Corporation*: This report provides highlights and findings from the first national representative survey of teachers focused on summer professional learning experiences. The purpose of the study was to better understand professional learning opportunities teachers participate in during the summer months and how those may improve their instructional practices during the school year. Recommendations from the study include utilizing the low-pressure summer environment to support teachers' professional development and growth.

**A High-Impact Training Ground for Teachers** by *the Summer Matters Campaign*: This report looks at how education leaders in pilot communities in California used summer programs to provide powerful professional learning opportunities to support Common Core implementation and social-emotional learning goals.

## School Community Partnerships

**[Learning Hubs: In-Person Learning for the Whole Child](#) by Policy Analysis for California Education, Partnership for Children & Youth, American Institutes for Research:** This brief discusses how learning hubs can provide in-person education supports to students who are distance learning. It provides considerations for local policymakers, schools, and expanded learning partners; includes guidance for the design and operation of learning hubs; and identifies the policy levers that support the model.

**[SPARK! Building Community Systems for Summer Learning](#) by the National Summer Learning Association:** This issue of SPARK! focuses on building community systems for summer learning through six key elements: a shared vision, engaged leadership, continuous quality improvement, data management, and marketing and communications.

**[Expanded Learning Partnerships: A Foundation for Rebuilding the Whole Child](#) by Policy Analysis for California Education and American Institutes for Research:** This brief provides key principles for school and expanded learning partnerships – informed by insights from leaders and practitioners across California – that policymakers and practitioners should consider as they move from reopening to rebuilding.

## Teaching Social-Emotional Skills in Summer Programs

**[Early Lessons from Schools and Out-of-School-Time Programs Implementing Social and Emotional Learning](#) by The Wallace Foundation:** This report provides highlights from a two-year study focused on teaching social and emotional skills to youth. Specifically, it shares key lessons learned from six communities that have worked to implement social-emotional learning for youth through partnerships between the school and out-of-school-time programs. This report is beneficial for those working to support SEL both inside and outside the school.

**[SEL Roadmap: Actions for a Successful Second Semester](#) by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL):** This resource was developed by CASEL and 40 other partners to help schools support the social-emotional needs of youth as they transition from virtual to in-person learning. Key strategies are identified, including focusing on adult connections and providing a safe, nurturing environment. Tools to support these strategies are discussed and linked to provide easy implementation by schools and programs.

**[Teaching Kids How to Be Successful Learners](#) by the Summer Matters Campaign:** This report describes some of the ways these programs are intentionally structured to support youngsters' social and emotional development. It draws from program evaluations, survey data, and in-person observations that all provide evidence of the differences this experience can make for children and youth, including the likelihood that their beliefs and attitudes will carry over into the regular school year

## Recruitment and Retention in Summer Programs

**[Summer Learning Recruitment Guide](#) by The Wallace Foundation:** This report reviews key lessons learned from recruitment and retention by summer programs included in the National Summer Learning Project. It proposes and reviews eight key strategies for successful summer program recruitment: engage directly with students, understand your audience, create engaging messaging, create a written plan, make your outreach consistent and assertive, use trusted messengers, build a relationship with parents and students, and make registration as easy as possible.

**[What Keeps Kids Engaged in Summer Learning](#) by the National Summer Learning Association:** This research brief highlights a study conducted by Neil Maftzger from the American Institutes of Research. Specifically, his research documented key program strategies that led to higher levels of youth engagement, including: relevance statements, opportunities for youth to experience a sense of agency, and quality programming.

## K-8 Summer Programs

**[The Effects of Summer Reading on Low-Income Children's Literacy Achievement from Kindergarten to Grade 8: A Meta-Analysis of Classroom and Home Interventions](#) by James Kim and David Quinn:** This meta-analysis published in the Review of Educational Research synthesizes 41 classroom- and home-based summer reading interventions. Interventions occurred both in the United States and Canada from 1998 to 2011. Findings from the meta-analysis indicate that low-income children benefit significantly from summer reading interventions.

**[Engineering Strong Summer STEM](#) by the Summer Matters Campaign:** The brief documents why and how STEM education can be successfully integrated into summer learning programs, and the significant positive impacts it can have on students and staff. The Summer STEM brief collects the data from this groundbreaking three-year, multi-district pilot program and offers best practices, lessons learned, and resources to help districts implement STEM learning in their summer programs.

## Summer Bridge Programs

**[Supporting Successful High School Transitions](#) by Hanover Research:** This brief provides key strategies for supporting youth during critical transitions before, during, and after high school. Of interest to summer program leaders is a focus on key strategies for summer bridge programs.

**[Ninth Grade Counts: Using Summer Bridge Programs to Strengthen the High School Transition](#) by Great Schools Partnership:** This is an extensive three-part guide directly tailored toward districts and schools interested in developing or implementing a bridge program for incoming ninth graders. The guide features a self-assessment protocol, three brief profiles of districts with bridge programs, and planning "road maps."

**[Connecting Older Youth to Success through Afterschool](#) by *After School Matters*:** This short article is taken from the book, *Expanding Minds and Opportunities: Leveraging the Power of Afterschool and Summer Learning for Student Success*. It reviews keys strategies employed to engage older youth in programming, including active learning, community involvement, linking school day and use of school personnel, and youth input.

### **Impact of Summer Programs**

**[Every Summer Counts](#) by *The Wallace Foundation*:** This report highlights the findings from the National Summer Learning Project (NSLP). The NSLP study collected and analyzed academic outcome data from five school districts implementing voluntary summer programs. Key findings include the importance of attendance at summer programs and the amount and quality of instruction (five weeks of at least three hours per day).

**[The Summer Slide: What We Know and Can Do about Summer Learning Loss](#) edited by *Karl Alexander, Sarah Pitcock, and Matthew Boulay*:** This book provides a comprehensive review of summer learning loss. Contributions to the book are made by scholars and practitioners leading the field of summer learning. These contributors provide up-to-date research about summer learning loss, best practices in summer programming, and program evaluations.

**[Expanding Minds and Opportunities: The Power of Afterschool and Summer Learning for Student Success](#) by *The Expanded Learning & Afterschool Project*:** This book, edited by Terry Peterson, is a compendium of articles and research evidence supporting the need for afterschool and summer learning. It includes nearly 70 articles that can be accessed for free.



## **Footnotes**

1. <https://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/Documents/Summer-Learning-Recruitment-Guide.pdf>
2. The California Department of Public Health released a [map](#) of school reopenings.
3. <https://edpolicyinca.org/publications/learning-hubs>
4. <https://www.summerlearning.org/knowledge-center/a-summer-like-no-other-lessons-from-the-field-during-covid-19>
5. [https://www.rand.org/pubs/research\\_reports/RR366-1.html](https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR366-1.html)
6. <http://www.summermatters.net/a-high-impact-training-ground-for-teachers-and-staff/>
7. <http://www.summermatters.net/a-high-impact-training-ground-for-teachers-and-staff/>
8. <https://aimhigh.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Full-Stanford-Report-Impact-Study-2019.pdf>
9. [https://www.rand.org/pubs/research\\_reports/RR366-1.html](https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR366-1.html)
10. <https://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/Documents/Summer-Learning-Recruitment-Guide.pdf>
11. [https://cachildrenstrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/CCT\\_Brief\\_7.12.19\\_v5.pdf](https://cachildrenstrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/CCT_Brief_7.12.19_v5.pdf)
12. <https://content.acsa.org/coronavirus-in-ca-schools/schools-and-summer-meals-prioritizing-child-nutrition-during-covid>
13. <https://edsources.org/2021/more-white-students-learning-in-classrooms-while-more-black-latino-asian-students-in-distance-learning/648862>
14. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3181549?seq=1>
15. [https://www.rand.org/pubs/research\\_reports/RR1557.html](https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR1557.html)
16. <https://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/pages/investing-in-successful-summer-programs-essa-review.aspx>