
Issue Date: May 30, 2023

Summer Learning Program Considerations

Purpose

This support document highlights key considerations to support supervisory unions/districts in afterschool and summer program planning. The document originally was created in 2021 to support “recovery” efforts as Vermont grappled with the pandemic and “recovery” period.

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 planning efforts. For SUs, districts and schools that have limited or no extended learning programs during summer or the school year for their students, now may be 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 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.

Invest and spend strategically. Using and/or braiding multiple funding streams in the near term to support development and expansion of programming, in line with fiscal guidance, is a viable option.



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.

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](#)