



For Immediate Release
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States Increasingly Focus on Summer as Season of Learning *End of School Year Marks the Start of Summer Slide in Math and Reading*

Editors Note: The National Summer Learning Association offers a summer learning [online media kit](#) with story tips, research and materials for reporters. To interview CEO and summer learning expert Sarah Pitcock, contact Laura Johnson at ljohnson@summerlearning.org or 410-856-1370 x208.

Baltimore - As kids and teachers prepare for the end of the school year, some school districts, communities and states across the country are undertaking major steps to make this summer a season of learning for students. This year, an analysis by the National Summer Learning Association (NSLA) found state legislatures have considered more than 100 bills that include support for summer programs. At least 15 bills specifically included appropriations totaling more than \$130 million. States continue to support summer by administering more than \$1.1 billion in pass-through funding through federal 21st Century Community Learning Centers funds and \$461 million in pass-through funding for summer meals.

More than 160 state and community coalitions also have prioritized summer learning as a key strategy in improving third-grade reading proficiency among students, as part of the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading. A dozen case studies of summer learning programs addressing current public education priorities, including third-grade reading, can be found in a new David and Lucile Packard Foundation-funded report, [Accelerating Achievement Through Summer Learning](#).

On [Summer Learning Day](#) - June 19, 2015 - nonprofits, school districts, Mayors and libraries will host more than 700 community events as part as part of an annual national advocacy day led by NSLA to elevate the importance of keeping kids learning, safe and healthy every

Research shows that summer learning loss is a significant contributor to the achievement gap - a gap which remains constant during the school year but widens during summer break.

- Every summer, low-income youth lose two to three months in reading achievement while their higher-income peers make slight gains. And, most youth lose about two months of grade-level equivalency in math skills in the summer.

- Year after year, these losses accumulate. By the end of third grade, four out of every five low-income students fail to read proficiently, making them four times more likely to drop out of high school, according to a report from the Annie E. Casey Foundation.
- By fifth grade, cumulative years of summer learning loss can leave low-income students 2.5 to three years behind their peers.
- Summer nutrition is also a significant issue. Six out of every seven schoolchildren who qualify for federally funded meals during do not have access to those meals during the summer, according to the Food Research Action Center.

Yet, there is evidence that students who attend high-quality summer learning programs can avoid summer learning losses. A RAND Corp. report commissioned by The Wallace Foundation, [Making Summer Count: How Summer Programs Can Boost Children's Learning](#), found that quality summer programs with individualized instruction, parental involvement and small classes can boost student achievement.

"All children deserve a memorable and meaningful summer," said Sarah Pitcock, CEO of the National Summer Learning Association. "High-quality summer learning opportunities can make a significant difference in helping young people get college- and career-ready, while also making a dent in the billions of dollars lost to illiteracy, dropouts and the cost of re-teaching in the fall."

According to the Afterschool Alliance's [America After 3PM](#) 2014 survey of parents, only about one-third of households had at least one child participate in a summer program in 2013. But demand is high - more than half of families said they wanted their children to participate in a program the next summer. But at an average weekly cost of \$250, summer programs are out of reach for many families. Parents overwhelmingly -- 85 percent -- support public funding for summer programs.

For Summer Learning Day 2015, NSLA urges programs, families, schools, educators, policymakers and businesses to make summer a season of learning by taking the [pledge to #KeepKidsLearning](#).

Resources:

View NSLA's [online media kit](#).

Find a Summer Learning Day event in your community on NSLA's [interactive map](#).

For more information about Summer Learning Day, visit www.summerlearning.org/keepkidslearning.

For examples of high-quality summer learning programs, learn about winners of the [New York Life Excellence in Summer Learning Awards](#).

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The National Summer Learning Association 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 in summer learning, develops and delivers capacity-building offerings and convenes and empowers key actors to embrace summer learning as a solution for equity and excellence in education. For more information, visit www.summerlearning.org.