



**For Immediate Release**

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***National Summer Learning Association:  
Official Statement on the Start of the Maryland School Year after Labor Day***

**Baltimore, Md.** – August 31, 2016 – Governor Larry Hogan’s executive order requiring Maryland public schools to begin after Labor Day may be a boost to tourism dollars but at the detriment to many students throughout the state. An extra week of summer means our most vulnerable students in Maryland public schools and their families get the short end of the stick. For many low-income students, a closed school door closes books, playgrounds, lunch bags and access to caring teachers, while exacerbating summer learning loss for millions of children and youth across the country.

Over the past two years, the National Summer Learning Association has tracked 12 bills in ten states on a variety of calendar changes for schools. The Maryland House considered but did not pass a joint resolution in the 2016 session on this issue (HJ5), demonstrating that support for a later start date is not wide spread.

No matter how a state or community chooses to structure their school calendar, it’s critical for youth in low-income neighborhoods to have access to supports and services whenever the school building, with its readily available resources, is closed. States need to ensure that libraries, parks, recreation centers, and other community-based providers are ready and able to step in and fill these opportunity gaps after the bell rings. Summer learning loss is real, particularly for our poorest students, and cuts deeply into the \$10-12,000 per child investment our communities make during the school year.

Every summer, according to a study in the Review of Educational Research, 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 fifth grade, the cumulative years of summer learning loss can leave low-income students almost three years behind their peers.

Our elected officials must make informed decisions and thoughtful plans that keep young people healthy, safe and engaged year-round while being ever mindful of the challenges working parents face in finding quality, affordable summer programs and child care during school breaks. About one-third of households participate in a summer program nationwide, and most school districts serve fewer than 10 percent of their students during the summer. Unmet demand is high -- more than 50 percent of families would enroll their children in a summer program if one was available or affordable. With the national reported average cost for a one-week summer program at \$288, even many middle income families are priced out of the market. An extra week of summer vacation sounds ideal; however, it is no walk in the park for many families in Maryland and beyond.

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*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 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](http://www.summerlearning.org)*