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'DARE TO DISRUPT' CONFERENCE TO LEAD NATIONAL CONVERSATION ON AFTERSCHOOL, SUMMER LEARNING

Industry experts break down findings of largest research study ever conducted on summer learning; NBC's Rehema Ellis serves as featured speaker; education leaders strategize on closing the achievement gap at national conference on afterschool and summer learning

(Baltimore, MD – September 30, 2016) – Elementary school students with high levels of attendance in voluntary summer learning programs experience benefits in math and reading, according to new RAND Corporation findings, released earlier this month from the largest research study ever conducted as part of The Wallace Foundation's National Summer Learning Project. With the school year in full swing, the National Summer Learning Association (NSLA) and School's Out Washington (SOWA) will host, [**Dare to Disrupt! The Pathway to Equity and Excellence in Education**](#), October 24-26 at The Westin Seattle.

More than 700 out-of-school time providers, school district administrators, community leaders and funders will convene to discuss the landmark findings of the National Summer Learning Project and to share what's working across America in communities that have prioritized afterschool and summer learning as strategies for closing the achievement and opportunity gaps in our nation.

This three-day national convening, in Seattle, Washington, will feature a line-up of notable speakers and industry influencers, including, NBC News' Chief Education Correspondent, Rehema Ellis, Seattle Mayor, Edward B. Murray, Chief Program Officer of the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading, Yolie Flores, Shawn Ginwright, Ph.D., author of **"Hope and Healing in Urban Education: How Activists and Teachers are Reclaiming Matters of the Heart"** and researchers of the newly released book, **"The Summer Slide: What We Know and Can Do About Summer Learning Loss."** Registration and onsite registration remains open through October 24. See full schedule [here](#).

"No matter how well our nation's young people do the nine months of the school year, low-income children often fall behind their higher-income peers without access to essential services and programs provided through quality afterschool and summer enrichment opportunities," says Sarah Pitcock, NSLA CEO. "These programs are great equalizers in helping young people reach their potential while playing a critical role in keeping our most vulnerable students learning, safe and healthy after the school bell rings."

According to a new Afterschool Alliance study, [America After 3PM Special Report: Afterschool in Communities of Concentrated Poverty](#), more than two out of three parents living in communities of concentrated poverty (67 percent) report that finding an enriching environment for their child in the after school hours was a challenge, compared to 46 percent of parents living outside of these areas.

On the summer front, most students, especially those from underserved communities, lose about two months of grade level equivalency in mathematical computation, reading and other academic skills over the summer months. This phenomenon is known as the summer slide, according to the NSLA, the only national nonprofit exclusively focused on closing the achievement gap by increasing access to high-quality summer learning opportunities.

In the new book, **“Summers Matter: 10 Things Every Parent, Teacher, & Principal Should Know About June, July, & August, Matthew Boulay,”** Ph.D., founder of NSLA, says the summer months are often the most challenging and problematic time for families without access to educational activities to keep their kids learning and engaged.

Other conference highlights include:

- *Opening Session* features Mayor Edward B. Murray, NBC News’ Rehema Ellis and a panel of out-of-school time leaders sharing insights about the partnerships and promising practices that have been most effective in disrupting existing systems in order to serve more youth in afterschool and summer programs.
- *Youth Sparks*, moderated by Rehema Ellis of NBC News, features first-time voters speaking to their hopes for the future of our country.
- New York Life Foundation *Excellence in Summer Learning Awards Luncheon* will honor five summer programs from across the country and one corporate champion, iHeart Media Inc., as exemplary models of summer learning and community outreach.

The conference offers more than 70 sessions, interactive workshops, a *Summer Starts in September Planning “boot-camp,”* the Scholastic Inc. Exhibit Hall and a Best Buy *Tech Play and Learn Discovery Zone*, spotlighting their Teen Tech Centers and free Geek Squad Academy programs.

Just prior to ‘Dare to Disrupt,’ on October 20, NSLA and SOWA will recognize *Lights On Afterschool*, the only nationwide [initiative](#) that showcases and celebrates the importance of afterschool programs.

Conference sponsors include Best Buy Tech Play and Learn Zone, Boeing, Scholastic Inc., LightSail, Reading is Fundamental and Umpqua Bank. For registration and more information regarding “Dare To Disrupt!” visit [here](#).

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About National Summer Learning

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

About School's Out Washington

School's Out Washington is a statewide organization with a mission of providing services and guidance for organizations to ensure all young people have safe places to learn and grow when not in school.

School's Out Washington is dedicated to building community systems to support quality after-school, youth development, and summer programs for Washington's children and youth ages five through young adulthood. For more information, visit www.schoolsoutwashington.org