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**National Summer Learning Association Appoints Education Leader, Activist,  
Margaret McKenna as Chairman of the Board**

*Former President of Walmart Foundation brings veteran experience to organization committed to closing the achievement gap*

**Baltimore, MD** - Research shows that no matter how well America'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.

"Summer learning loss is real for most students and a drain on our education system," said Margaret McKenna, former president of the Walmart Foundation. "Communities that invest deeply in keeping all young people learning, safe and healthy during the critical summer months reap measurable rewards in stronger schools, safer neighborhoods and a better-prepared workforce."

McKenna, also President Emeritus of Lesley University and former president of Suffolk University, has been elected Chairman of the Board of the National Summer Learning Association (NSLA) -- the only national nonprofit exclusively focused on closing the achievement gap by increasing access to high-quality summer learning opportunities.

In her role as NSLA Chairman of the Board, McKenna will provide crucial leadership for the organization and its advocacy, fundraising, community outreach efforts and awareness campaign: *Smarter Summers, Brighter Futures*.

"Summer is the most unequal time of the year for millions of students who lose access to critical services and learning opportunities when the school doors close for the summer," said Matthew Boulay, PhD, NSLA founder and CEO. "We are honored to have such a well-respected education leader and social justice advocate working with us to advance summer learning as a solution to equity and excellence in education."

NSLA is the nation's hub on summer learning research, policy and promising practice. In 2016, NSLA tracked 193 state bills affecting opportunities for summer learning. In addition to supporting specific kinds of programs such as STEM learning, literacy support and youth employment, states are turning an eye toward implementation of Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), and opportunities for programming that best fit the needs of local communities. NSLA continues to see states recognize opportunities to extend learning and other services beyond the school day and year, when students' needs don't end just because the bell rings.

"Summertime inspires hope for learners and educators alike who discover the freedom, space and time to sharpen their skills, tap into talents and to enjoy hands-on, educational experiences often limited during the nine months of the school year," said McKenna who has been a NSLA board member since 2013. "I am honored to bring my education, civil rights and philanthropy experience to create a pathway for brighter futures for our nation's young people."

During her 22 years as president at Lesley University, McKenna led its transformation from a small regional college to a nationally recognized university with one of the foremost teacher training programs in the country.

From 2007 to 2011, McKenna served as president of the Walmart Foundation, the largest corporate entity of its kind in the United States. She developed the strategic priorities of the Foundation and coordinated its international, national and local programs. The Foundation is a leader in fighting hunger and a major supporter and advocate of educational opportunity in the U.S.

She held a previous appointment as Director of the Bunting Institute and Vice President of Radcliff College, Harvard University. McKenna began her career as a civil rights attorney for the U.S. Department of Justice. She later served as the deputy counsel in the White House and then deputy undersecretary of the U.S. Department of Education under President Jimmy Carter. She has also held appointments as a Fellow at the Harvard Kennedy School of Government, Institute of Politics, and Visiting Professorships at the Heller School, Brandeis University and Tisch College, Tufts University.

The recipient of ten honorary degrees, McKenna has received honors from a variety of national and regional organizations including Meals on Wheels, Feeding America, Women's Equity Action League, Big Sister, Council of Independent Colleges, the International Tallories Network of Universities, City Year, and the Boston Chamber of Commerce.

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### **About the National Summer Learning Association**

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, offers expertise and support for programs and communities, and advocates for summer learning as a solution for equity and excellence in education. NSLA's work is driven by the belief that all children and youth deserve high-quality summer learning experiences that will help them succeed in college, career, and life. For more information, visit [www.summerlearning.org](http://www.summerlearning.org)