

From: **National Summer Learning**

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SUMMER LEARNING STORY STARTERS

(Baltimore, MD – September 26, 2017) – Research shows that summers without quality learning opportunities hold our nation’s youth back – year after year – in core subjects like math and reading, making summer one of the most inequitable times of the year for millions of underserved students. And now, just as school is back in session, this inequality may only grow and the accompanying achievement gap may only get wider because of the threat of federal budget cuts that could take away out-of-school learning resources critical to academic success. With this environment as a backdrop, the National Summer Learning Association (NSLA) is bringing together nearly 800 out-of-school time providers, school district administrators, community leaders, funders, and thought leaders for its Summer Changes Everything™ conference on October 23-25th in Phoenix, Arizona.

There will be a wide range of featured speakers that are available for interview. Among them are; Reggie Love, Vice President – Transatlantic Energy Group; Gigi Antoni, Director of Learning and Enrichment – The Wallace Foundation; Ann Stone, Senior Research and Evaluation Officer, The Wallace Foundation.

Below, NSLA offers several trending and timely story ideas to help reporters tackle summer learning loss; explore the economics of the issue and offer tips and perspectives around solutions to keeping all kids learning, healthy and safe every summer:

The summer slide – the most financially inefficient time in the country: We all hear about the learning losses caused by the “summer slide” with research suggesting that it is one of the most significant causes of underachievement in America. However, the financial implications of this loss are equally staggering. Public school funding in the 2014–2015 school year totaled roughly \$600 billion for 50 million students nationally, or roughly \$12,000 per student, per school year. If the average student loses during the summer 10–20 percent of what they learned during the school year, that is \$60-\$120 billion dollars lost every year. Matthew Boulay, founder of the [National Summer Learning Association](#) can address why investing in summer programming makes sense financially and discuss the links between learning and forgetting, and achievement and underachievement.

Implications of ESSA on summer: The new Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), maintains the 21st Century Community Learning Center (21st CCLC) grant program as a dedicated program for summer, afterschool, and extended learning opportunities, and expands on opportunities for states and local districts to decide how Title I and other ESSA funds can be used in the summer space, with input from community partners and other stakeholders. Rachel Gwaltney, Director of Policy and Partnerships, can discuss the implications ESSA will have for the out-of-school time community and for students who need high-quality, year-round learning, and what still needs to be done.

Planning and Operating High-Quality Programs: How do summer planning processes and operations ultimately influence whether kids experience a “good day” or “bad day” at our programs? RAND will highlight findings and recommendations from a new operational guide to be released this fall, which synthesizes over five years of on the ground research from the Wallace Foundation’s National Summer Learning Project. Rachel Gwaltney, Director of Policy and Partnerships at NSLA, can discuss how programs, districts and states can build quality evaluations into summer efforts to elevate respective programs. Matthew Boulay, founder and CEO of the [National Summer Learning Association](#), can provide accessible tips and guidance for parents, teachers, and principals on how they can integrate summer learning programs into their own schools and communities – regardless of income or access.

Role of Libraries in Afterschool and Summer: Technology and the internet have changed the where, when, and how Americans read. Young people are increasingly consuming books through their tablet, smartphone and e-readers but that hasn’t diminished the importance of physical books and the local library. [According to a 2014 PEW study](#), 69% of people still read a physical book and 90% of Americans say that closing their public library would impact their community and 67% say it would affect their family. With a foot in the past and an eye to the future, libraries across the country are redefining their roles, especially as a bedrock institution in keeping young people learning, safe and fed during the critical summer months. For this story, one can examine the vital role of libraries in childhood development, shared community space, access to the internet and the expansion of their digital offerings through programs created by the [Urban Libraries Council](#) or new apps, such as [Open eBooks](#), that provide free access to eBooks for children from low income families, military families, and for children with special needs.

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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.