

State of Summer Learning

2019 State Policy Snapshot



WHAT'S HAPPENING AT THE FEDERAL LEVEL?

Midway through the 116th Congress, some familiar themes are being considered by Congress that affect summer opportunities. The budget deal that set spending levels for FY20 contained many increases to key federal programs including 21st Century Community Learning Centers, Title I, and AmeriCorps.

The President also signed into law the Building Blocks of STEM Act, which includes funding for STEM education research meant to encourage greater participation in STEM education and career pathway activities by groups historically underrepresented in STEM fields.

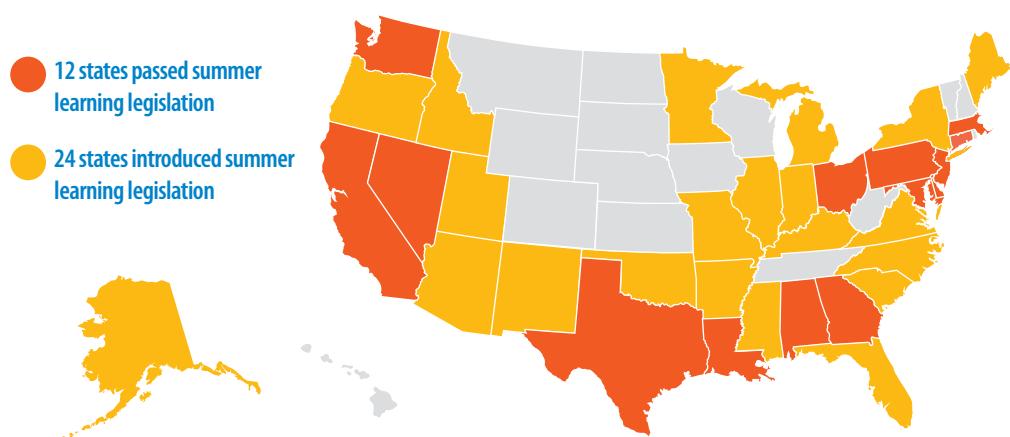
For its second session, this Congress has on the table important issues, including bills addressing summer nutrition programs, child care, and summer jobs. The long-anticipated reauthorization of the Higher Education Act may also bring to the forefront issues like Year-Round Pell grants and federal programs like GEAR UP and TRIO that help students into and through college, including with summer support.



SUMMER IS THE MOST INEQUITABLE TIME OF THE YEAR FOR YOUTH, in terms of access to learning, enrichment, nutrition, and other critical services that are more readily available during the nine months of the school year. Across the country, states are recognizing the return on investment in preventing summer learning loss and keeping kids safe, healthy, and learning during the summer months.

In 2019, the National Summer Learning Association (NSLA) tracked 128 state bills in 36 states affecting summer programs and resources, particularly for families in low-income communities and populations most at risk.

12 states passed legislation affecting summer learning in 2019



STATES THAT PASSED LEGISLATION	STATES THAT INTRODUCED LEGISLATION
Alabama	Nevada
California	New Jersey
Delaware	Ohio
Georgia	Pennsylvania
Louisiana	Texas
Maryland	Washington
	Alaska
	Arizona
	Arkansas
	Connecticut
	Florida
	Idaho
	Illinois
	Indiana
	Kentucky
	Maine
	Massachusetts
	Michigan
	Minnesota
	Mississippi
	Missouri
	New Mexico
	New York
	North Carolina
	Oklahoma
	Oregon
	South Carolina
	Virginia
	West Virginia
	Wisconsin

INVESTMENTS IN SCHOOL-BASED SUMMER LITERACY

States are making new investments in summer reading school-based programs, especially for youth in the early elementary grades. These are coming through both stand-alone programs, and adjustments to school funding formulas that include new funds targeted for summer interventions. NSLA recommends that states and districts ensure community-based providers like neighborhood programs and libraries are included as resources and options for extending services to more students. Schools can't and shouldn't do this work alone.

Examples of legislation passed in 2019:

- **Alabama HB388** (The Alabama Literacy Act): to implement steps to improve the reading proficiency of public school kindergarten to third grade students, including by providing summer reading camps to all K-3 students identified with a reading deficiency
- **Arkansas SB603**: to require the department of education to provide certain levels of support to certain public school districts based on reading scores, which may include summer school programs
- **Nevada AB289**: requires that summer reading programs be evidence-based
- **Oregon HB3427**: establishes the Fund for Student Success, to fund programs including summer learning programs for Title I schools
- **Texas HB3**: adjusts school formula funding to provide additional funds to extend the school for elementary school students who are not reading at grade level



RESOURCES:

- [Summer School and Reading Proficiency](#)
- [How to Make Summer Reading Programs Effective](#)

STEM LEARNING FOR WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Summer is an ideal time for students to engage in hands-on STEM learning that connects to workforce development down the road. Students can explore their STEM career interests, and develop skills imperative for future careers, such as collaboration and creative problem-solving.

Examples of legislation passed in 2019:

- **New Jersey SB3685**: Expands the Accessing Careers in Engineering and Science (ACES) Program, which includes a residential pre-college summer program at several New Jersey research universities for selected underrepresented high school students, consisting of one or two-week immersive, residential programs that introduce high school students to a range of topics in science, engineering, mathematics, and technology in a hands-on learning environment.
- **Oregon HB2444**: providing grants for programs of study in agricultural science and technology during the summer months
- **Washington HB2158**: Creating a workforce education investment to train Washington students for Washington jobs, which may include summer apprenticeships and programs.



RESOURCES:

- [Summer Youth Employment Programs Offer More than Just a Summer Job](#)
- [STEM in the Summer: The Joy of Meaningful Learning](#)
- [STEM Policy Brief: The Power of Summer](#)
- [Science in the Summertime: A Multi-Layered Learning Experience](#)

ENSURING ACCESS TO SUMMER MEALS

Childhood hunger is an issue exacerbated by reduced access to federally subsidized meals when school is not in session. According to the Food Research and Action Center, in 2018 only one in seven youth eligible for free summer meals was able to access these meals. States are finding ways to bolster participation in the Summer Food Service Program and Seamless Summer Option for schools, by improving the use of data across agencies, reducing program waste, and other strategies to maximize participation and efficiency.

Example of legislation passed in 2019:

- **New Jersey SB2527**: requires the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Education to highlight and promote the value and importance of the federal meals programs, and the importance of providing a nutritious meal to all children for their general health and their success in school



RESOURCES:

- [Feeding Hungry Minds and Bodies](#)
- [Hunger Doesn't Take a Vacation](#) (from the Food Research and Action Center)



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, 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.

smarter summers. brighter futures.