

CONGRESS MUST PROVIDE FULL FUNDING FOR FEDERAL SUMMER AND ENRICHMENT PROGRAMS ACROSS AGENCIES

About NSLA: For 30 years, NSLA has worked to combat summer learning loss and close the achievement and opportunity gaps which research shows grows most dramatically between lower and higher income students over the summer months. Our vision is, and always has been, to ensure all young people in America, regardless of background, income, and zip-code, can participate in and benefit from a high-quality summer learning experience, every year. NSLA supports and collaborates with a broad and ever-growing network of 15,000+ leaders of school districts, youth serving government agencies, non-profit and corporate partners from across the country focused on improving the lives of youth. At the federal level, our priorities include: robust funding for a wide array of programs that support summer enrichment, youth workforce development, and access to healthy nutrition via summer meals.

Background: There is substantial research to show that low-income grade school students fall behind their higher-income peers academically during the summer. While affluent children often have access to extracurricular activities, too many low-income children lose access to learning opportunities when school is closed for the summer. Children lose on average 1-2 months of reading progress, and 2-3 months of math progress, over the course of the summer. Low-income children are especially vulnerable to these learning setbacks. While summer has been identified as a major factor in the achievement gap in America's schools, there is still no permanent dedicated source of funding for summer learning.

What Can Congress Do to Support High Quality Summer Learning and Enrichment Programs?

Fully Fund Education and Other Related Programs: The federal investment in education is important to all yet the United States invests only about 2 percent of the regular federal budget on education. Federal education funding was stagnant or cut for many years. Despite recent welcome but modest increases, Department of Education funding is more than \$22 billion below what it was in 2011 in inflation-adjusted dollars.

A larger investment would better support children, socially and emotionally, and a more modern and equipped workforce, leading to more research and innovation, economic growth. A bigger federal education investment would help ensure access to more opportunities for a high quality education including summer programs, fill gaps where local and state funding is insufficient or where new needs arise, and help with the costs of federally mandated services, such as child nutrition programs.

For these reasons, NSLA calls on Congress to provide maximum funding for the following federal programs:

Department of Education Programs

- 21st Century Community Learning Centers
- Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grant Program

Department of Labor Programs

- YouthBuild
- Workforce Pathways for Youth

Other Programs w/in Various Agencies

- Youth Mentoring Program (Dept of Justice)
- Parks and Recreation (National Park Service)
- Institute of Museums and Library Services (IMLS)
- Service Learning Fund (CNCS)

For any questions or follow up, please contact NSLA's Policy & Advocacy expert, Ally Talcott, at ally.talcott@alliedforprogress.com.