

State of Summer Learning

2020 State Policy Snapshot



WHAT'S HAPPENING AT THE FEDERAL LEVEL?

Over the course of this pandemic, NSLA, along with its coalition of partners, have garnered some important legislative policy successes including the following:

Secured language in the COVID-19 relief bills that allow funds to be used by local education agencies to support summer learning programs;

Helped pass the 21st Century Community Learning Centers Coronavirus Relief Act of 2020, a bipartisan bill to help expand access to child care services through the remainder of the COVID-19 emergency;

Helped ensure additional flexibilities in school meal programs so that children could access school meals while at home during the pandemic.

While Congress has passed legislation to address some of the fallout from COVID-19, there is still much to be done to accelerate student learning, support social-emotional growth and prepare students for a unknown economy. In addition to passing another economic stimulus bill, Congress still needs to pass its FY21 appropriations bill to fund programs within the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), youth workforce programs, and nutrition programs that all support summer learning opportunities for all children.

INTRODUCTION

COVID-19 has illuminated the nation's inequities in our school systems and communities like never before, shining a spotlight on the significant digital divide, food insecurities, childcare issues and learning losses millions of underserved students and their families actually face every summer and into the school year. Now more than ever, essential funding investments and policy support, are critical to help communities leverage the summer and afterschool programs to help students catch up on unfinished learning and thrive during an extraordinarily challenging school year.

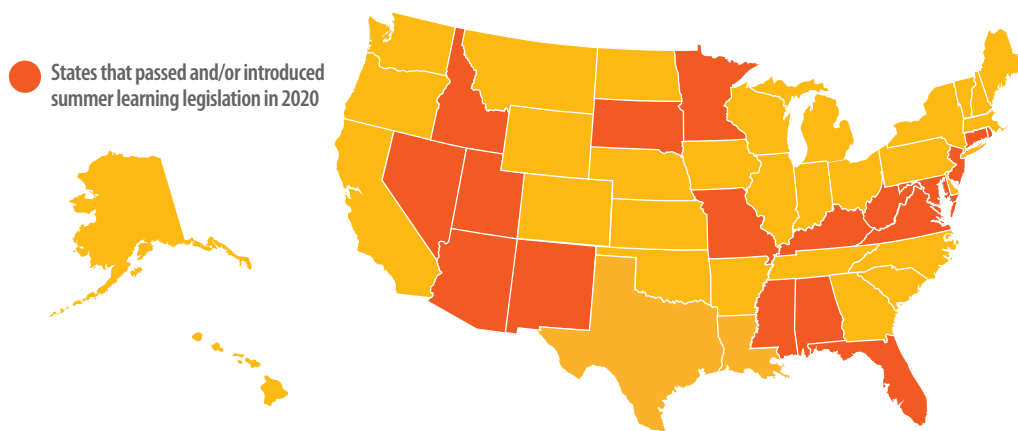
As the national leader on summer learning and its role in education improvement, the National Summer Learning Association (NSLA) tracks and responds to policy issues that affect summer opportunities at the federal, state, and local levels, with the goal of ensuring high-quality summer learning opportunities reach the nation's most underserved students. Effective policies now must address the unmet demand that families have for quality out of school time experiences and childcare, and improve access to critical nutrition programs as food insecurity needs rise.

SUMMER IS THE MOST INEQUITABLE TIME OF THE YEAR FOR YOUTH,

and 2020 brought additional unforeseen challenges. Many state legislatures adjourned prior to the start of the pandemic, and passed several bills that were meant to address the new reality that children have faced, while seeking to address new challenges of food insecurity, housing instability, and economic challenges amidst the public health crisis.

In 2020, NSLA tracked 247 bills with 18 states introducing legislation affecting summer programs and resources, particularly for families in low-income communities and populations most at risk.

18 states introduced and/or passed legislation affecting summer learning in 2020



STEM INTRODUCED	STEM PASSED	NUTRITION INTRODUCED	NUTRITION PASSED	LITERACY INTRODUCED	LITERACY PASSED
Alabama Idaho Minnesota Missouri Mississippi	Arizona Florida Kentucky New Jersey New Mexico Rhode Island Utah Virginia West Virginia	Connecticut Minnesota Missouri Mississippi	Arizona Florida New Jersey New Mexico Nevada Rhode Island Utah Virginia West Virginia	Alabama Connecticut Florida Minnesota Missouri Mississippi South Dakota	Arizona Kentucky Maryland** New Jersey New Mexico Rhode Island Utah Virginia West Virginia

** Maryland passed the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, a sweeping education reform package that included summer literacy investments, among other critical investments. Governor Hogan vetoed the bill, and it is anticipated that the Maryland General Assembly will override his veto in the 2021 session when they reconvene.

INVESTMENTS IN SCHOOL-BASED SUMMER LITERACY

With a number of academic studies demonstrating the benefits of summer school-based literacy programs, state policymakers introduced several bills to invest in reducing academic achievement gaps and improving literacy levels. Several states considered bills that would have improved summer reading camps, however, due to the early adjournment of many state legislatures, they were unable to complete consideration of the measures.

Examples of legislation passed in 2020:

- **Nevada AB3** - Provides additional funding for evidence-based and school-based literacy initiatives for students enrolled in kindergarten through third grade, as well as for the professional development of school personnel who provide summer programs for students.
- **New Jersey HB1** - Requires the Public Education Department to work with school districts and charter schools to prioritize additional instruction time for all students through participation in extended learning programs to recover instructional time lost due to the pandemic. It also authorized \$10 million to provide evidence-based structured literacy interventions and develop literacy collaborative models that lead to improved reading and writing for students in kindergarten through second grade.

Example of legislation introduced in 2020:

- **Minnesota HF69** - Requires the Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board and Commissioner of Education to collaborate and establish a 5-day professional development training program for kindergarten through grade three teachers to participate in over the summer. The program must provide instruction in comprehensive, scientific research-based reading instruction techniques and curriculum. Once established, the program must compensate educators for participation, and may not mandate their attendance.

 **RESOURCE:**
• [Effects of Home-based and school-based summer literacy programs](#)



ENSURING ACCESS TO SUMMER MEALS


Nearly 30 million students rely on the National School Lunch Program for nutritious meals, with 22 million receiving free or reduced meals. The abrupt closure of schools at the end of the 2019-2020 school year resulted in a significant disruption in the distribution of school and summer meals. With an increase in unemployment and families in need of food assistance, the distribution of summer meals became even more critical for a larger population of families across the country. In response, the USDA enabled states to apply for emergency waivers to continue to feed children and families outside of school through a number of distribution methods - socially distanced grab-and-go sites at schools, central distributions within communities, deliveries along bus routes, and emergency meal delivery.

Example of legislation passed in 2020:

- **New Jersey A3840** - Requires school districts to provide school meals or meal vouchers to students eligible for free and reduced price school meals during school closures due to the COVID-19 epidemic.

Example of legislation introduced in 2020:

- **Virginia HB5005** - Establishes a \$5.2 million pilot program funded by a transfer from the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families block grant (TANF) for a one-year summer feeding program. The pilot provides \$50 for each month of June, July and August on a qualifying child's family Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) card to assist the family in purchasing meals for low-income children in areas that are currently underserved by the summer feeding programs.

 **RESOURCES:**
• [Emerging Strategies & Tactics for Meal Service During School Closures Related to the Coronavirus](#)
• [Healthy Food Choices in Schools](#)



STEM LEARNING FOR WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT


Investing in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) has become a widely popular policy focus as schools and policymakers work to train the next generation of workers in a globalized economy, along with reducing access barriers to these fields from traditionally underrepresented communities. State policymakers introduced and passed a number of bills across the country to increase funding for summer programs that focus on STEM.

Example of legislation passed in 2020:

- **Kentucky SB193** - Established a goal of increasing participation in computer science courses by underrepresented groups; require the Department of Education to submit an annual report on public school students participating in computer science courses.

Example of legislation introduced in 2020:

- **Rhode Island H7678** - If enacted, this bill would authorize \$2,000,000 to enhance quality afterschool, summer and out-of-school time programs. The bill assess outcomes and invests in the professional development of providers. The bill prioritizes funding for programs that offer a broad array of services, programs, counseling programs, art, music and recreation programs, technology and character education programs that are designed to supplement the regular academic programs for participating students.

 **RESOURCE:**
• [STEM Learning in Afterschool and Summer Programming: An Essential Strategy for STEM Education Reform](#)

The National Summer Learning Association is committed to working with State policymakers, State and Local Departments of Education, and community leaders to invest in and create summer learning policies and opportunities to solve pressing challenges, promote equity and benefit all youth, families, schools and communities.

For more information, resources and consulting support please visit www.summerlearning.org or contact info@summerlearning.org.

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