



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 2017, the National Summer Learning Association (NSLA) tracked 293 state bills in 40 states affecting summer programs and resources, particularly for families in low-income communities and populations most at risk.



Research shows that summer learning loss is a significant contributor to the achievement gap — a gap which remains constant during the school year but widens during summer break.

Every summer, low-income youth lose two to three months in reading achievement while their higher-income peers make slight gains. And, most youth lose about two months of grade-level equivalency in math skills in the summer.

Year after year, these losses accumulate. By the end of third grade, four out of every five low-income students fail to read proficiently, making them four times more likely to drop out of high school, according to a report from the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

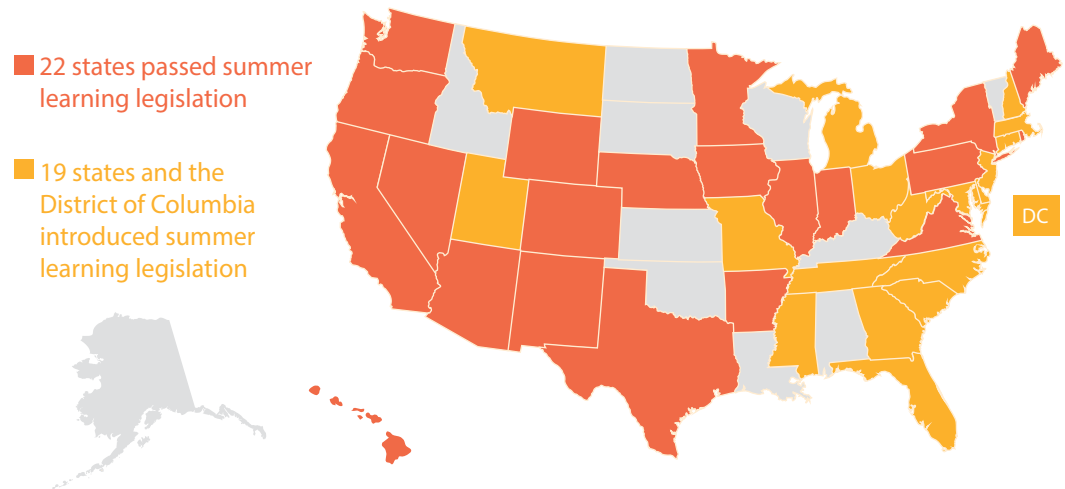
By fifth grade, cumulative years of summer learning loss can leave low-income students 2.5 to three years behind their peers.

Summer nutrition is also a significant issue. Six out of every seven school children who qualify for federally funded meals during the school year do not have access to those meals during the summer, according to the Food Research & Action Center.

[Learn more about research-based strategies to combat summer learning loss.](#)

Twenty-two states passed 50 pieces of legislation affecting summer learning in 2017

(not including appropriations bills funding existing programs)



SPOTLIGHT ON: FUNDING

Programs commonly use a mix of public and private funding to offer high-quality activities at low- or no-cost to low-income families, and to expand what works to new sites and more students. States are supporting these efforts with funds that can serve as a catalyst for growth, or sustain programs with proven impact in the community.



Examples of legislation passed in 2017

- **Nevada AB70:** Designates certain tax revenue to support educational programs in certain low-income communities, including summer learning and wraparound services.
- **California AB616:** Extends by five years existing law related to tuition and financial aid for the California State Summer School for Mathematics and Science (COSMOS), operated by the University of California.
- **Maine LD919 (vetoed by Governor):** Provides grants for expanded access to summer success programs for elementary and secondary school students.

Resource:

[Calculating the Return on Investment in Summer Programs](#)

SPOTLIGHT ON: OPPORTUNITIES FOR OLDER YOUTH

High school-aged youth have very different needs and goals for the summer months than their elementary school peers. They may have specific academic credits to make up, they desire to earn wages and learn workplace skills, they are excited to explore career pathways through hands-on experiences, and they are preparing for the transition to higher education. Career and technical education also presents an opportunity to re-engage disconnected youth and set them back on a positive pathway. States are finding myriad ways to engage and support older youth in making the most of summer learning opportunities.

Examples of legislation passed in 2017

- **Minnesota SF1937:** Includes \$1,000,000 annually for a grant to the Construction Careers Foundation for the construction career pathway initiative to provide year-round educational and experiential learning opportunities for teens and young adults under the age of 21 that lead to careers in the construction industry, including summer internship programs.
- **Oregon HB3437:** Improves the talent development pipeline through greater coordination between state training and workforce development agencies and entities, including education and youth-serving partners; requires the state's Workforce and Talent Development Plan to include ways to strengthen efforts to enhance student work experience and job preparedness in high-demand and critical occupations.
- **Texas HB1608:** Establishes a summer internship pilot program that provides foster youth with the opportunity to develop marketable job skills and obtain professional work experience through a summer internship with a participating business, nonprofit organization, or governmental entity.
- **Arkansas SB528:** Creates the Arkansas Workforce Challenge Scholarship, which can be used to support study (including summer study) towards an associate's degree or certificate in one of three high-demand fields: industry, health care, and information technology.
- **Maine LD 1324:** Supports entrepreneurs by providing training, business assistance and mentors, including summer internship opportunities for college students in the entrepreneurial support system.

Resources:

[Summer Youth Employment Programs Offer More than Just a Summer Job](#)
[Preventing College Plans from Melting Away](#)



SPOTLIGHT ON: STEM

Investments in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) education and career development are growing across the country. Summer is an ideal time for students to engage in hands-on STEM learning, explore their STEM career interests, and develop skills imperative for future careers in STEM fields such as collaboration and creative problem-solving. Partnerships between schools, universities, and STEM-field companies are ideal for bringing cutting-edge resources to students inside and outside of the classroom.

Example of legislation passed in 2017

- **Washington State SB5258:** Establishes the Washington academic, innovation, and mentoring (AIM) program. The purpose of the program is to enable eligible neighborhood youth development entities to provide out-of-school time programs for youth ages six to eighteen years of age that include educational services, social emotional learning, mentoring, and linkages to positive, [enrichment], and recreational activities. The programs must be designed for mentoring and academic enrichment.

Resources:

[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](#)



SPOTLIGHT ON: MEALS AND NUTRITION

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 2016 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.

Examples of legislation passed in 2017

- **California AB1502:** Authorizes the California Department of Education (CDE) to conduct the required data match of local school records with other agencies serving potentially eligible students, to determine program eligibility for the National School Lunch Program and the School Breakfast Program.
- **California SB557:** Permits a local educational agency to provide sharing tables where faculty, staff and students can place unused food, to be consumed by students or donated to a food bank or other nonprofit charitable organization.
- **Illinois SR492:** Recognizes the problem of food insecurity for youth, encourages elected and community leaders around the State to do everything they can to ensure kids have access to summer meals in their communities; encourages Summer Food Service Program sites to operate as open sites to the community so that all children can access healthy, nutritious meals during the summer.

Resources:

[Summertime and Weight Gain](#)
[Hunger Doesn't Take a Vacation: Summer Nutrition Status Report](#)
via Food Research & Action Center



SPOTLIGHT ON: ESSA PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) contains many explicit references to summer learning and enrichment opportunities, as well as indirect uses that are a natural fit for summer activities. ESSA's emphasis on community and stakeholder input particularly acknowledges that schools cannot and should not do this work alone. Partners like other youth-serving agencies, libraries, and community-based organizations provide high-quality programming and expertise in academic areas like STEM and literacy. These partners also bring enrichment and youth development expertise that are not a primary focus in schools, but are critical to social and emotional development and long-term youth success. Under ESSA, schools have a greater opportunity to provide personalized summer programming in which students have greater voice and choice in their own learning path and focus on skills and subjects of greatest interest to them, building motivation and engagement that carries over into the school year. Meaningful partnerships between schools and community programs as structured in ESSA ensures seamless integration of learning activities across different settings.

[Learn more about opportunities for summer learning in state ESSA plans.](#)

SPOTLIGHT ON: FEDERAL POLICY AND THE 115TH CONGRESS

Nearly one year into the current Congressional session, we are tracking 25 pieces of federal legislation with the potential to support new and innovative summer programming (aside from budget bills).



[Look for updates and action alerts on federal legislation on the NSLA Take Action page.](#)



The vision of the National Summer Learning Association (NSLA) is for every child to be safe, healthy, and engaged in learning during the summer. To realize that vision, our mission is to connect and equip schools, providers, communities, and families to deliver high-quality summer learning opportunities to our nation's youth to help close the achievement gap and support healthy development.