



national summer  
learning association



# 2020 Summer Story Starters

## OVERVIEW

Across the country, summer programs are adapting to ensure students and their families receive quality summer learning opportunities and critical supports and services throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Millions of working families will soon tackle the difficult task of finding high-quality, safe and affordable summer childcare and enrichment solutions as the COVID-19 pandemic threatens to worsen the already existing opportunity gap students from low-income families face. Educators across the country agree that summers matter and “offer opportunities for social and academic growth, but can also put disadvantaged children at risk for worse outcomes,” according to the first cross-sector [report](#), *Shaping Summertime Experiences: Opportunities to Promote Healthy Development and Well-Being for Children and Youth*, recently released by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NAS).

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The National Summer Learning Association is a non-partisan, nonprofit organization that tracks and responds to policy, research and practice issues that affect summer opportunities at the federal, state, and local levels, with the goal of ensuring high-quality summer learning opportunities reach as many children and youth as possible, especially those most in need.


This story starter aims to provide background on the issue of summer learning and afterschool programs, summer policy considerations, and emerging research to inform your story development around key education issues this summer and beyond.

NSLA's [Guidance for 2020 Presidential Candidates on the Importance of Summer](#) was created pre-COVID-19 to inform candidates as they shape their education agendas.

[summerlearning.org](https://summerlearning.org)

# Getting Schooled on Summer:

## Reports, Research Briefs, and Backgrounders

 **New Report:** National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine funded by [The Wallace Foundation](#) and the [Robert Wood Johnson Foundation](#). *Shaping Summertime Experiences: Opportunities to Promote Healthy Development and Well-Being for Children and Youth*.


The report lays out nine recommendations to address obstacles that disadvantaged children can face during the summer, including lack of access to quality programs, food insecurity, and exposure to unsafe and dangerous conditions, and to help all children develop positively and stay connected to resources.

 **[Parents 2020: COVID-19 Closures — A Redefining Moment for Students, Parents, and Schools.](#)**

In April 2020, Learning Heroes conducted a nationally representative survey of more than 3,600 parents and guardians with children in public schools grades K-12 to understand how they are experiencing their children's education during school closures due to COVID-19.

The survey reveals public school parents' views on their level of engagement with their children's education during the COVID-19 crisis, how they've been communicating with their children's teachers, their understanding of their children's achievement, their aspirations for their children, and how this experience will shape their role in their children's education through the summer and into the next school year. For the newly released report, visit this link:

<https://bealearninghero.org/research/>


 The Collaborative for Student Growth at NWEA is devoted to transforming education research through advancements in assessment, growth measurement, and the availability of longitudinal data.

**New Report:** The COVID-19 slide: What summer learning loss can tell us about the potential impact of school closures on student academic achievement.

The projections in this study and lessons from seasonal learning research present us with a moral imperative: To help students succeed academically, we must provide resources and support to families during and after this disruption, especially in mathematics, which often show the steepest losses over summers and time outside of school.

 **New Report:** Getting Support for Summer Learning: How Federal, State, City, and District Policies Affect Summer Learning Programs:

In this sixth summer learning report in a series by RAND/The Wallace Foundation, the authors consider how policy environments constrain or support districts' attempts to scale and sustain quality summer programs and aim to help summer program leaders in school districts across the country navigate policy contexts at the district, city, state, and federal levels.

 **[Book: The Summer Slide: What We Know and Can Do About Summer Learning Loss.](#)** Foreword by Paul Reville, Director, Education Redesign Labs, Harvard University Graduate School of Education.

This compendium of the most up-to-date research by leading authorities on summer learning theory, practice, and policy establishes the notion that much of student learning occurs outside of school and "is every bit as important as any in-school learning in determining achievement gaps."

 **[Investing in Successful Summer Programs: A Review of Evidence Under the Every Student Succeeds Act.](#)**

RAND establishes that summer programs provide children with the mental, physical, and emotional skills they need to succeed in life. The report ranks the quality of summer programs by measuring their outcomes and provides practitioners a roadmap of what constitutes an effective summer program.

 **[Calculating the Return on Investment in Summer Learning: Research Brief.](#)**

Summer learning is proven to be a cost-effective strategy for boosting achievement of young students. Communities need to build a menu of summer opportunities that allows policymakers to select summer programs that are within their budget and that achieve targeted outcomes for specific students that they serve.

 **[Hunger Doesn't Take a Vacation: 2019 Summer Nutrition Status Report.](#)**

In July 2018, almost 2.9 million children participated in the Summer Nutrition Program on an average day, reaching only one child with a nutritious summer lunch through the Summer Nutrition Programs for every seven children who participated in free and reduced-price school lunch during the 2017–2018 school year.

## Questions to Ask Presidential Candidates

**1** Research shows that finding affordable, high-quality summer care is a persistent problem for working families, forcing parents to make decisions that affect their productivity and their children's well-being. According to the Center for American Progress, families can expect to pay 20 percent of their income on summer child care. **How would you ensure that families can find affordable and high-quality summer programs for their children?**

**2** Nationally 88 percent of teachers and 73 percent of families say that summer learning programs are important for students' academic success. Research confirms that voluntary summer programs contribute to students' academic success. However, schools and communities lack sufficient funding to ensure these programs are available to local children, and only 33 percent of families report that their children are in such a program. **How would you invest in expanding access to summer and afterschool programs?**

# Story Ideas

The opportunity gap, including access to high-quality summer programs or work-based learning experiences, combined with food insecurities can shape a less than idyllic summer break for millions of young people in many urban and rural communities. With the right opportunities, trained staff, and sufficient community funding, summer can be a time for all children – regardless of ZIP code – to enjoy new experiences; learn in different, hands-on ways; and prepare for success in the school year ahead. Let NSLA be your go-to source for summer learning and child wellness tips for families; equity issues in out of school time; along with research, policy, and quality practices on summer learning.

## TOPICS TO EXPLORE

### **WILL SUMMER LEARNING PROGRAMS SURVIVE THE ECONOMIC CRISIS?**

Facing enormous budget challenges from the COVID-19 pandemic, localities and states may be cutting summer learning programs, while many of the organizations that run summer programs face a decline in donations and funding sources. At the same time, many parents and educators are calling for greater investments in summer learning to help students re-engage and get ready for a new school year following a huge decline in learning across the nation while schools and afterschool programs were closed.

***What are the trends across states and localities?***

### **WHAT'S SUMMER LEARNING'S ROLE IN THE RECOVERY?**

The federal government has passed several bills to support communities during the pandemic and for recovery. A number of provisions could support summer learning programs that can help youth re-engage in learning; re-connect with each other and with mentors and role models; and begin to address the effects of this time of isolation and social distancing, not seeing friends, abruptly losing their routines, missing milestone moments, and even experiencing the stress and grief around them.

***What role do summer programs play, and how can recovery dollars help?***

### **FOOD INSECURITY DURING THE SUMMER TIME:**

Sadly, for many kids, summer equals hunger. Good summer programs provide students with access to nutritious meals, which millions of children in the U.S. need. However, research shows that only 1 in 7 youth eligible for summer meal programs receive them. Improved child nutrition policies will support partnerships to get meals and learning opportunities to where kids are. Bookmobiles and community-based enrichment partnerships with food banks and non-traditional feeding sites like libraries, farmers markets, WIC clinics, hospitals, and neighborhood block parties are emerging in many communities to make sure kids not in formal programs have access to both meals and learning, all summer long.

***Where are the food deserts in your community and how well do summer meal programs meet the needs of children and families there?***

### **FOLLOW THE MONEY ON SUMMER:**

This past December, Congress reached a budget deal with many wins for summer funding. The House and Senate came to agreement on a \$1.3 trillion budget deal to fund all 12 Departments for FY20, expected to be passed in two parts with increases for summer learning and enrichment programs.

***What are the budget implications for summer programs in your community?***

### **WHO AND WHERE ARE THE "OPPORTUNITY YOUTH" DURING THE SUMMER?**

According to the Aspen Institute, nearly 40 percent of our young people between the ages of 16 and 24 are weakly attached or unattached to school and work at some point during that formative stretch of their young lives.

***What are local collaborations breaking down barriers and expanding summer opportunities to engage these youth in your state and community?***

### **WHAT'S THE STATE OF SUMMER IN YOUR COMMUNITY?**

Across the country, states are recognizing the return on investment in stemming 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.

***How does your state measure up during the summertime?***

### **WHAT MAKES FOR A QUALITY SUMMER PROGRAM?**

Research has shown that engagement in high-quality summer programs, which can include day and overnight camps, can improve academic outcomes and overall social-emotional learning. Central to any quality program are meaningful interactions between peers and adults, which summer programs do especially well through small-group experiences, hands-on learning, and opportunities to engage in fun and interesting activities. Quality matters and is well-defined in summer programs. NSLA's annual awards for summer learning provide national models for excellence in programs and student outcomes.

***How can parents identify and select quality summer programs and how do communities shape a continuous cycle of quality improvement in their summer offerings?***



## SUMMER EXPANDS TEACHERS' INSTRUCTIONAL SKILLS AND INCREASES PASSION FOR TEACHING:

National out-of-school-time nonprofit leader BellXcel receives consistent feedback from teachers that working in BellXcel Summer is positively influencing their practice. In 2017, BellXcel partnered with Bellwether Education Partners to investigate this finding more deeply. The [study](#) confirmed earlier qualitative data, finding that the combination of summer professional development and teaching experience in a summer program allowed them to test and hone new strategies and approaches, particularly in facilitating growth mindset and positive behavior management.

The teachers applied BellXcel's instructional techniques to school-year classrooms, integrating growth mindset language and allowing students more choice and agency in their learning. The teachers also said being a part of the summer learning program was energizing and renewed their appreciation and passion for teaching. BellXcel is currently engaged in a second research study with RAND to uncover the core features of BellXcel summer that facilitate changes in educator practice during the school year.

**Subject Matter Experts:** **Bryan Hall**, Senior Director of Evaluation, BellXcel; **Danielle Fontaine**, Senior Manager of Evaluation, BellXcel

## STUDY REVEALS HOW STUDENTS PERCEIVED THEIR SEL GROWTH IN SUMMER:

Overwhelming research has shown that strong academic learning is inextricably linked to strong social-emotional learning (SEL). BellXcel was interested to learn if students who enrolled in summer programs powered by BellXcel, known as scholars, felt that their SEL skills and competencies were improving. Last summer, BellXcel conducted a mixed-methods study to dig deeper, and the results were revealing; 84 percent of scholars showed growth in Self-Awareness; 83 percent showed growth in Responsible Decision Making; and 85 percent showed growth in Self-Regulation. In a retrospective survey, scholars shared powerful feelings related to these areas. Excerpts include: *"I like to do hard things like math that will help my brain grow," "I am more kind to others," "My attitude got better and my anger issues are under control," and "I started to question and understand more."* Findings support that 5- to 6-week summer programs can be important drivers of both academic and social-emotional growth.

**Subject Matter Expert:** **Brenda McLaughlin**, Chief Impact Officer, BellXcel

## WHY AND HOW IS THE HOUSING SECTOR ENGAGED IN SUMMER AND AFTER SCHOOL LEARNING?

Public housing authorities (PHAs) across the country are partnering with education-focused organizations to provide high-quality learning and training experiences for young residents during out-of-school times. Public housing collaborations include a robotics summer camp in the South, summer camps that alleviate loss of learning in the West, and an ongoing relationship with the Boys and Girls Club in the Pacific Northwest. Through its Housing Is Initiative, the Council of Large Public Housing Authorities (CLPHA) facilitates cross-sector partnerships like these to improve educational outcomes for low-income residents.

**How are your local public housing authorities supporting educational achievement for the families they serve?**

## HOW WILL STATE SYSTEMS MEET THE SUMMERTIME NEEDS FOR CHILDREN UNDER THEIR CARE DURING COVID-19?

A recent report from the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine ([nas.edu/Summertime](https://www.nas.edu/Summertime)) points out that juvenile justice and child welfare systems do not have a comprehensive approach for system-involved children specific to summertime. The report finds that systems where the state plays an active role in supervision or custodial responsibility for children (e.g., juvenile justice, child welfare, local policing systems) have an enhanced obligation to improve their practices by applying positive youth development principles in their interactions with children. COVID-19 adds a layer of complexity to meeting this obligation.

**Subject Matter Expert:** **Joshua Dohan**, Director, Youth Advocacy Division, State of Massachusetts

## WHAT WILL COVID-19 MEAN FOR THE RATES OF POLICING CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN THE SUMMER?

A recent report from the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine ([nas.edu/Summertime](https://www.nas.edu/Summertime)) highlights research on how high rates of contact with law enforcement among Black and Latinx boys as a result of proactive policing was a predictor of decreased psychological well-being. Despite their frequent contact with youth, law enforcement agents/personnel typically receive little training in how to manage encounters with youth or in the field of adolescent development. The report calls for more work to examine differences in the effects of police contact among youth of different races, as well as youth from marginalized groups beyond racial minorities that have been shown to be heavily policed, such as LGBTQ youth and youth with disabilities.

**Subject Matter Expert:** **Amanda Geller**, Clinical Associate Professor of Sociology, NYU

## HOW CAN YOUNG PEOPLE FROM LOW-INCOME COMMUNITIES ACCESS QUALITY OVERNIGHT SUMMER EXPERIENCES?

The Fresh Air Fund, a nonprofit organization in New York City, has served more than 1.8 million children since 1877. Each summer, children from low-income communities visit volunteer host families along the East Coast and Southern Canada or attend The Fund's six overnight camps in New York's Mid-Hudson Valley. Through immersive outdoor adventures, campers gain self-confidence and take on new challenges. Recreational activities are layered with experiential learning.

In 2019, The Fund opened its sixth camp in Harriman State Park with a new perspective on the critical role camping can play in children's lives. Camp Junior — named in memory of Lesandro "Junior" Guzman-Feliz, a victim of gang violence — helps Bronx children develop skills in communication, empathy, and conflict resolution. Camp Junior is a partnership with New York State Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation; Assembly Speaker Carl E. Heastie; Palisades Interstate Park Commission; and Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz, Jr.

**Subject Matter Expert:** **Fatima Shama**, Executive Director, The Fresh Air Fund

## HIGH STUDENT ENGAGEMENT DRIVES ACHIEVEMENT AT SUMMER CAMPS.

Summer camp should be fun! While many students will need increased support to close academic gaps caused by the COVID-19 school closures, boring skill and drill work is not the answer. Students who participated in a highly engaging arts-integrated literacy camp in Charleston, South Carolina, during the summer 2019 avoided learning loss and even made literacy gains. In fact, 95.3 percent of the campers demonstrated no learning loss in reading, and of those, 58.54 percent actually increased their reading scores. In addition, the principal cited an unprecedented positive shift in the school's culture. Camps designed to tap into a child's natural curiosity and built around engaging strategies like arts integration can be very impactful on a student's academic and social growth over the summer. Though some summer experiences may need to be offered digitally, engagement and fun still need to be a priority. For example, instead of our trademark bubbles at carpool drop-off, maybe our campers could receive a bubble mix in a packet at home to use as part of their camp activities!

**Subject Matter Expert:** Robin Berlinsky, Executive Director, Engaging Creative Minds, Charleston, South Carolina

## CAMPS ARE WORKING DILIGENTLY TO ENGAGE COMMUNITIES VIRTUALLY AND THROUGH CRITICAL SUPPORTS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC.

Day and overnight camps are using shutdowns related to COVID-19 as an opportunity to engage communities in new and innovative ways. Preliminary findings from an ongoing survey of camps and virtual programming suggest that over 60 percent of respondents are likely to implement some kind of virtual programming in summer 2020. The American Camp Association, a national nonprofit that works to ensure safe, high-quality camp experiences for all, is supporting camps and their exploration of virtual programming by developing [resources](#) related to safety and privacy of young people online, accessibility, and inclusion in virtual spaces, and guidelines on how to promote quality in these programs. ACA is also working with other national youth-serving organizations to position camps as contexts for summer nutrition programs and as partners in the effort to promote summer learning so all students can return to school healthy and prepared to thrive.

**Subject Matter Expert:** Tom Rosenberg, ACA CEO

## CAMP EXPERIENCES PROVIDE RICH OPPORTUNITIES FOR (SEL) IN FUN, SUPPORTIVE, AND OFTEN NATURE-BASED WAYS.

Preliminary results from the American Camp Association's National Impact Study, conducted by researchers at the University of Utah, suggest that day and overnight camp experiences promote social-emotional learning (SEL) in ways that are distinct from school, sports, and other developmental contexts. Data collected with current and former campers, parents, and camp staff identify several features that are often unique to camp, such as small groups; active, interest-driven learning; opportunities to disconnect from technology; and meaningful interactions with near-peer role models as mechanisms for lasting learning. These early findings also suggest that the rich social context of camp helps young people practice relationship skills, and these skills later support college, career, and other early adult experiences. Read more [here](#).

**Subject Matter Expert:** Laurie Browne, Director of Research, ACA

## HOW CAN PARENTS BEST SUPPORT, NURTURE AND EDUCATE THEIR CHILDREN WHEN SCHOOLS ARE CLOSED?

While the widespread closure of schools, camps, and summer programs makes sense from a public health standpoint, millions of parents are left feeling alone and overwhelmed. "When Schools Are Closed" is a new e-book that aims to provide parents with much-needed guidance. The book delivers immediate, practical advice to parents who are asking urgent questions about how best to support, nurture, and educate their children during periods of social distancing and quarantine.

**Author:** Matthew Boulay, Ph.D., founder and past CEO, National Summer Learning Association

## REIMAGINING SUMMER THROUGH A RELATIONSHIPS LENS / WHAT DOES IT TAKE FOR MENTORING TO GO VIRTUAL?

We may not be able to recreate in-person mentoring moments this summer, but we can create the same level of interest, caring, purpose, and belonging for young people. For out-of-school-time professionals and educators, shifting relationships to a virtual context does not mean changing how we relate to youth — it means changing where we do it. What does that look like in practice? Examples include MENTOR's [Virtual Mentoring Portals](#) created in partnership with iCouldBe and CricketTogether; tips for applying a mentoring mindset to interactions with young people, wherever they are; and mentoring programs using [e-mentoring best practices](#) and strategies this summer and beyond.

**Subject Matter Expert:** David Shapiro, Chief Executive Officer, MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership

## HIGHLIGHTING THE PEOPLE ENSURING RELATIONSHIPS PERSIST.

This summer, there will be lots of great profile opportunities to tell the stories of youth development professionals and volunteer mentors who are ensuring this is a reimagined summer of connection versus a lost summer of isolation for young people.

**Subject Matter Expert:** David Shapiro, Chief Executive Officer, MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership

## **SUMMER YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS (SYEPS) ARE CRITICAL INCOME GENERATING PROGRAMS FOR LOW-INCOME STUDENTS THAT OFFER SKILL DEVELOPMENT, CAREER EXPOSURE, NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES, AND ENTRY POINTS INTO JOBS.**

Summer Youth Employment Programs (SYEPS) serve as vehicles to provide meaningful employment experiences for youth between ages 14 and 24 with programs ranging in scale (Missoula, MT serves 50 youth, New Orleans serves 600, Boston serves 10,000, and NYC serves over 75,000 youth). SYEPs gained increased attention after the Great Recession to reduce youth unemployment when the 2009 federal stimulus bill allocated \$1.2 billion to the states for training and employment of youth. Nationwide, over 4.5 million youth are neither in school or at work over the summer, so this program has served an important strategy to address this issue. SYEPs help young people gain an understanding of career options, facilitate entry into the local workforce, support the needs of low-income youth (earnings, savings account, financial readiness), develop a broad range of skills that can help youth succeed in the workplace, reduce criminal justice involvement, and improve school attendance and graduation rates.

The COVID-19 crisis and shutdown has created major revenue shortfalls for cities, forcing many to reduce support for youth programs like SYEP. Many cities are fighting to keep these programs and will continue to pay youth the stipends they expected to receive this summer, but programs will look different. All of them are offering virtual programming since youth can not go to job sites. Additionally, cities have seen many of their employers unable to participate because they are experiencing economic constraints and layoffs. With social distancing in place, cities are quickly transitioning to providing online opportunities for participants to receive credentialing/certification. The National League of Cities' recent survey of large cities found that 65percent of cities said they were moving forward with SYEP as of April 9 with 30 percent stating that they would not be hosting programming this summer.

How is your city supporting youth employment this summer?

**Subject Matter Expert:** **Bela Shah Spooner**, Program Director, Education and Expanded Learning Institute for Youth, Education, and Families, National League of Cities

## **HOW CAN YOUNG PEOPLE FROM LOW-INCOME COMMUNITIES ACCESS QUALITY SUMMER EXPERIENCES DURING COVID-19?**

The Fresh Air Fund, a nonprofit organization in New York City, has served more than 1.8 million children since 1877. Each summer, children from low-income communities visit volunteer host families along the East Coast and Southern Canada or attend The Fund's six overnight camps in New York's Mid-Hudson Valley. Through immersive outdoor adventures, campers gain self-confidence and take on new challenges. Recreational activities are layered with experiential learning.

The Fresh Air Fund was founded when tuberculosis was a public health crisis and "fresh air" was considered a treatment for children who were growing up in crowded tenements. Through public health crises and national emergencies, The Fund has continued to serve children from New York City's low-income communities. This summer will be like no other, and The Fresh Air Fund will be here to open new doors of learning and horizons of opportunity. The Fund understands the power of fresh air and is designing an engaging virtual programming season which will be focused on bringing the outdoors inside with enriching and interactive online experiences. The Fund is also exploring ways to engage children in outdoor experiences while keeping them healthy and safe during this challenging time. This summer, new and different memories will be made through our commitment to provide hope, joy, new experiences, and more to Fresh Air children.

**Subject Matter Expert:** **Fatima Shama**, Executive Director, The Fresh Air Fund





# National Experts

The National Summer Learning Association is the only national nonprofit exclusively focused on closing the achievement and opportunity gap by increasing access to high-quality summer learning opportunities. NSLA has experts and a network of partners who can identify high-quality local programs to meet the needs of any learner, provide information on summer program practice and policies, offer tips for families and share the national context of summer's essential role in education.

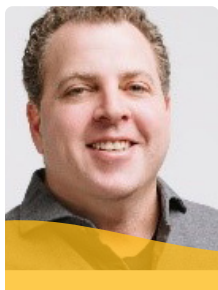


## KARL ALEXANDER

*John Dewey Professor Emeritus of Sociology,  
Johns Hopkins University*

Karl Alexander served as president of the Southern Sociological Society, was editor of the journal *Sociology of Education* and is a fellow of the American Educational Research Association and a board member of the National Summer Learning Association. With Doris Entwisle, he led the Beginning School Study (BSS), which

tracked the life progress of 790 Baltimore children from first grade into mature adulthood. The culminating publication of that work is *The Long Shadow: Family Background, Disadvantaged Urban Youth and the Transition to Adulthood* (Russell Sage 2014), recipient of the 2016 Grawemeyer Prize in Education. His studies of summer learning loss helped bring attention to the problem of "summer slide" among low-income children. With the leadership of NSLA, he is co-editor of *The Summer Slide: What We Know and Can Do About Summer Learning Loss* (Teachers College Press, 2016).



## RICHARD BERLIN

*Executive Director, DREAM*

Executive Director at DREAM since 1997, Richard Berlin is also a founding member of DREAM Charter School. Berlin began his connection with DREAM as a volunteer baseball coach in 1994. Under his leadership, DREAM has grown from a seasonal recreation program with one staff member to a thriving community-based organization recognized locally and nationally

with numerous awards for programmatic and operational excellence. Rich holds a Bachelor's degree in political science from the University of Wisconsin at Madison and attended a master's program in political theory at the London School of Economics and Political Science.



## ROBIN BERLINSKY

*Executive Director, Engaging Creative Minds  
(ECM)*

Robin Berlinsky has been involved in reimagining the summer learning space for years. As a founding board member and the first Director of Education for the Children's Museum of the Lowcountry in Charleston, South Carolina, she created hands-on arts-integrated afterschool/summer programs for over 10,000 visitors and their families.

Since joining ECM in 2013, Berlinsky has led the organization in meaningful partnerships with the arts and STEM community to deepen student engagement and learning during the school year and summer. In 2016, ECM's Summer STEAM Institute received the NSLA New York Life Foundation Excellence in Summer Learning Award. She has also served as a member of the adjunct faculty at the College of Charleston's School of Education Health and Human Performance since 1996.



## MATTHEW BOULAY, PH.D.

*Founder, National Summer Learning Association*

Matthew Boulay is the founder of the National Summer Learning Association, a nonprofit organization headquartered in Baltimore, Maryland. A former elementary school teacher in New York City, Boulay earned a Ph.D. in sociology and education from Columbia University's Teachers College and was recently named one of the 25 most influential people in out-of-

school-time learning. He recently published, "How To Keep Your Kids Learning When Schools Are Closed," a new e-book that aims to provide practical advice to parents who are asking urgent questions about how best to support, nurture, and educate their children during periods of social distancing and quarantine. A former Marine and veteran of the war in Iraq, Boulay was a leader in the push for a new G.I. Bill and continues to advocate on behalf of veterans. He lives in Oregon with his wife and two children.

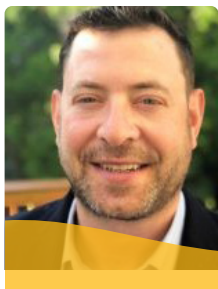


**LAURIE BROWNE, PH.D.**

*Director of Research, American Camp Association*

Laurie Browne, Ph.D., is ACA's director of research. She specializes in ACA's Youth Outcomes Battery and supporting camps in their research and evaluation efforts. Prior to joining ACA, Browne was an assistant professor in the Department of Recreation, Hospitality, and Parks Management at California State University–Chico. She received her Ph.D. from the University of Utah, where she

studied youth development and research methods.



**AARON PHILIP DWORKIN**

*Chief Executive Officer, National Summer Learning Association*

Aaron Philip Dworkin joined the National Summer Learning Association as Chief Executive Officer on June 3, 2019, having most recently served as president of the After-School All-Stars National Network – a nonprofit organization providing free afterschool and summer programs to 90,000 low-income students in more than 450

Title I schools in 20 major cities across the United States. He is a graduate of Tufts University and holds master's degrees from Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs and Harvard University Graduate School of Education.



**LESLIE GABAY-SWANSTON**

*Director of Program and Systems Quality, National Summer Learning Association*

Leslie Gabay-Swanston joined NSLA in 2015 as Director of Program and Systems Quality. She is responsible for translating NSLA's strategic priorities into services, projects, and partnerships that strengthen summer learning programs and build capacity for providers, intermediaries, and communities. Prior to joining NSLA, she worked

as a research analyst and program evaluator at Carson Research Consulting.

Gabay-Swanston received her master's degree in public health with a concentration on health education from Emory University and a bachelor's degree in biopsychology from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. She completed a master's degree in education with a concentration in measurement, evaluation, statistics, and assessment through the University of Illinois at Chicago.



**CLARISSA HAYES**

*Senior Child Nutrition Policy Analyst, Food Research & Action Center*

Clarissa Hayes joined the Food Research & Action Center (FRAC) in February 2015. As Senior Child Nutrition Policy Analyst, she works with anti-hunger organizations as well as with local, state, and national groups to expand access to and participation in the Afterschool and Summer Nutrition Programs. Before joining FRAC, Hayes

was an anti-hunger program associate at Maryland Hunger Solutions (an initiative of FRAC) and worked to increase participation in the child nutrition programs across the state. She has also completed two years of national community service through AmeriCorps NCCC and AmeriCorps VISTA. Hayes earned a bachelor of arts in English and anthropology from the University of Wisconsin.



**JASON D. KING**

*Senior Vice President, Corporate Communications, Clear Channel Outdoor*

As Senior Vice President, Corporate Communications for Clear Channel Outdoor, Jason D. King oversees and executes communications and media relations strategies for Clear Channel Outdoor North America's 38 markets plus Clear Channel Airports.



**ABRA LYONS-WARREN**

*Senior Program & Policy Manager, Council of Large Public Housing Authorities*

Abra Lyons-Warren is the Senior Program & Policy Manager at the Council of Large Public Housing Authorities (CLPHA) where she leads the Housing Is initiative, an effort aimed at better aligning housing with other systems like education and health to improve life outcomes for low-income children. Lyons-Warren previously analyzed

and advocated for housing, education, and place-based, early childhood, and dual-generation initiatives with the Center for the Study of Social Policy and Illinois Rep. Barbara Flynn Currie's office. She also served low-income and homeless individuals at Thrive DC, where she designed and managed the Real Opportunity Employment Training Program and bolstered the nonprofit's workforce-development efforts. At the same time, she also advocated for emergency shelter policies in D.C. Lyons-Warren holds a Master's of Public Policy from the Harris School of Public Policy and a master's in social work from the School of Social Service Administration, both at the University of Chicago, as well as a bachelor of arts in sociology and women and gender studies from Brandeis University.



**DAVID PARK**

*Senior Vice President, Strategy & Communications, Learning Heroes*

David Park has extensive experience in communications, partnerships, and community engagement. Since 2016, he has been with Learning Heroes, a national nonprofit aimed at helping parents and guardians support their child's social, emotional, and academic success.

Prior to Learning Heroes, David was vice president of mission advancement at America's Promise Alliance, where he helped develop and lead the GradNation campaign to increase the national high school graduation rate. Park managed the GradNation communications strategy and helped drive implementation nationally through partnerships between nonprofit organizations, the business community, philanthropic leaders, and media organizations.

Park also held senior level positions at several communications firms including Ogilvy Public Relations Worldwide and Porter Novelli International, and taught communications at Georgetown University. He graduated from American University with a BA in communications, and completed the UC Berkeley Executive Leadership Program.





#### ERIK PETERSON

*Senior Vice President, Afterschool Alliance*

Erik Peterson joined the Afterschool Alliance in July 2009 and currently serves as Senior Vice President of Policy, advancing the organization's policy efforts at the federal level by helping develop policy goals and implementing strategies that advance access to quality afterschool and summer learning programs for all students. The Afterschool Alliance is a

DC-based nonprofit public awareness and advocacy organization working to ensure that all children and youth have access to quality, affordable afterschool and summer learning programs. Peterson works to build and strengthen relationships with policy makers and allied organizations to increase public support and funding for quality, local school- and community-based programs. Prior to coming to the Afterschool Alliance, he worked for the School Nutrition Association (SNA) in the Washington DC, area and as both an AmeriCorps VISTA and staff for the Sustainable Food Center in Austin, Texas. He received his Master's in Public Affairs from the LBJ School at the University of Texas, and also has a bachelor's degree from Georgetown University in Washington, DC.



#### DR. TANJI REED MARSHALL

*Director of P-12 Practice, The Education Trust*

Dr. Tanji Reed Marshall is director of P-12 practice at The Education Trust – a civil rights education organization dedicated to closing opportunity gaps for students of color and those from low-income backgrounds. Marshall is a long-time educator and advocate for traditionally underserved students. She holds a doctorate in curriculum and instruction with an emphasis

on teacher practice with high-achieving African American students from Virginia Tech; a master's degree in English education with a focus on critical literacy from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte; and a bachelor's degree in psychology from Boston College.



#### TOM ROSENBERG

*President and CEO, American Camp Association*

As president and CEO of the American Camp Association (ACA), Tom Rosenberg is a leading voice for young people today, advancing the public's understanding of the value of camp for everyone as an essential developmental and educational experience. Tom advances the collective field of camp in its battle against the prevalent tide of depression, anxiety, and social

disconnection affecting today's youth, while teaching the mindsets, skills, and dispositions everyone needs to thrive in school, work, and life. Rosenberg has led ACA's bold strategic plan to accelerate ACA's organizational growth and sustainability by expanding its reach, relevance, and equitable accessibility; championing quality; and amplifying the value of camp experiences in youth education and development. Prior to serving as president and CEO of ACA, Rosenberg had a distinguished 27-year career leading nonprofit and for-profit camps. As a volunteer, he served in diverse leadership capacities at ACA, including national board treasurer. He graduated with distinction from the Marshall School of Business at the University of Southern California with an MBA and from the AB Freeman School of Business at Tulane University with a BS in management. Rosenberg and his wife, Pam Sugarman, and their son Daniel live in Atlanta, Georgia.



#### FATIMA SHAMA

*Executive Director, The Fresh Air Fund*

Fatima Shama is the Executive Director of The Fresh Air Fund. Prior to joining The Fund, Shama served in Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg's administration as the commissioner of the NYC Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs from 2009 through 2013. From 2007 through 2009, she served as mayor's senior education policy advisor, and in 2006 when Shama joined Mayor

Bloomberg's office, she worked on a special initiative on the intersection between health care, language access, and literacy. Immediately after the administration and prior to joining The Fund, Shama served on the senior team at Maimonides Medical Center in Brooklyn, New York, overseeing their External Affairs department and special projects. Shama serves as a Trustee on the New York Foundation board, on the Board of Coro Leadership New York, and the New York Immigration Coalition. She earned a BA from Binghamton University and a Masters in Public Administration from Baruch College's School of Public Affairs Executive Program.



#### DAVID SHAPIRO

*Chief Executive Officer, MENTOR*

David Shapiro is CEO of MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership, the national organization unifying and elevating the youth mentoring field through expertise, advocacy, and recruitment. For more than 13 years, he has dedicated his career to driving equity through the power of relationships and is a servant leader for the mentoring movement.

Under Shapiro's leadership, MENTOR has partnered with leading global brands including the NBA family, Nike, Starbucks, LinkedIn, and others to expand the mentoring movement through recruitment; grew its national footprint to include 24 local affiliates in communities nationwide; and has worked extensively with the Obama Foundation to center mentoring through My Brother's Keeper Alliance. Additionally, the U.S. Department of Justice Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention selected MENTOR to establish and lead the National Mentoring Resource Center.

He is a husband, father, and mentor. Learn more about MENTOR at [www.mentoring.org](http://www.mentoring.org).



#### CHRIS SMITH

*Executive Director, Boston After School & Beyond*

Chris Smith has devised and led education, youth development, and college and workforce strategies at the city, state, and national levels. At Boston Beyond, he has led the creation of Boston's data-driven network of 300 programs reaching 20,000 students and the nationally-recognized Boston Summer Learning Project, which has served 50,000 since 2010 and improved

skills and academic performance. This project is among the Top 100 worldwide solutions in the MacArthur Foundation's 100&Change initiative.

Smith worked at the Boston Private Industry Council for nearly 10 years, where he collaborated with business leaders to integrate academic learning and employment for more than 1,000 teenagers who failed state graduation tests, coordinated Boston's first-ever study of college graduation rates of its high school graduates, and developed legislation to decrease the dropout rate in Massachusetts. He also worked at the US Department of Education in Washington, DC on the Secretary of Education's education partnerships initiative. He earned an MBA from Babson College and a BA from Trinity College.

**BELA SHAH SPOONER**

*Program Director, Education and Expanded Learning Institute for Youth, Education, and Families, National League of Cities*

Shah Spooner is the Program Director for Education and Expanded Learning in the Institute for Youth, Education, and Families at the National League of Cities (NLC). For over 15 years, she has worked at NLC helping cities create citywide afterschool and summer learning

systems, develop community schools, and impact local, state, and federal policy. She speaks nationally about expanded learning opportunities as equity strategies to catalyze policy, program, and practice change. In 2019, her portfolio broadened to address postsecondary basic needs.

She previously worked for the Coalition for Community Schools at the Institute for Educational Leadership. Her early career includes various education policy positions at the Center for Educational Opportunity & Innovation, the Institute for Education & Government, and the National Center for Children and Families at Teachers College.

She holds her master's degree in sociology and education with a concentration in education policy from Teachers College, Columbia University and her bachelor's degree in psychology and Spanish from the University of Pennsylvania.

**DR. RACHEL THORNTON**

*Associate Professor, Johns Hopkins School of Medicine; Associate Director for Policy, Johns Hopkins Center for Health Equity; Associate Medical Director for Pediatric Managed Care, Office of Johns Hopkins Physicians*

Rachel Thornton, MD, Ph.D., is Associate Professor at Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, Associate Director for Policy for the Johns Hopkins Center for Health Equity, and Associate

Medical Director for Pediatric Managed Care in the Office of Johns Hopkins Physicians, where she works to advance healthcare system transformation responsive to children's health. A practicing primary care pediatrician, she studies the impacts of social and behavioral factors on child health and health equity and the impacts of non-health sector policies child health and family well-being. She has experience translating research into policy at the local, state, and federal levels, serving as Health Policy Advisor at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development from 2011 to 2013. Dr. Thornton's work linking Baltimore's comprehensive zoning code revision with neighborhood health impacts was spotlighted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Her research is funded by multiple government agencies and private foundations. She received her BA from New York University and her MD and Ph.D. from the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine and the Bloomberg School of Public Health, respectively. She also completed pediatrics residency and fellowship training at Johns Hopkins.

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**SCIENCES  
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DIVISION OF BEHAVIORAL AND SOCIAL SCIENCES AND EDUCATION  
*The Board on Children, Youth, and Families*

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**national summer  
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#### **ABOUT THE NATIONAL SUMMER LEARNING ASSOCIATION**

The National Summer Learning Association 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.