

8 Key Summer Learning Practices for Elementary School Districts



Start Planning Early 1	Structure Program for Sufficient Academic Time on Task 2	Use Effective Student Recruitment Practices 3	Hire Effective Instructional Staff 4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Start cross-department planning by January Make key programmatic decisions, such as targeted student population and program duration, upfront Meet regularly and plan for engaging academic and enrichment activities that meet students' needs and interests Engage in a continuous improvement process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schedule academic instruction for three to four hours per day Schedule the program to span five to six weeks Provide teachers with strategies for maximizing instructional time Ensure smooth site operations from Day 1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop clear and timely recruitment materials that explain program requirements and features Personalize recruitment of students and their families Follow up with enrollees before the program starts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop rigorous processes to recruit and hire effective, certified teachers with grade-level and content experience for academic classes Incentivize educators to teach in the summer For enrichment classes, hire instructors with strong content expertise Train enrichment instructors in positive behavior management strategies
<p>Additional guidance on summer program planning</p> 	<p>Additional guidance on academics</p> 	<p>Additional guidance on student recruitment and a summer learning recruitment guide</p> 	<p>Additional guidance on staffing</p> 
Provide High-Quality Academic Instruction 5	Foster a Positive Summer Site Climate 6	Maximize Attendance 7	Strive for Cost Efficiencies 8
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Select curricula that are aligned to school-year standards and students' needs Instruct in small classes or groups Hire special education teachers and staff to provide support to students with special needs Give teachers sufficient training and ongoing support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a positive behavior management policy that outlines expectations for students and adults Train all staff on the importance of positive adult engagement with students throughout the day — not only in classes Develop a clear, positive message about the summer site culture and ask staff to consistently convey it to students If resources allow, consider hiring staff to support positive student behavior 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish firm enrollment deadlines and keep electronic student records Establish a clear attendance policy and track student-level attendance data Provide free meals and transportation If resources permit, provide field trips, prizes, and other incentives to attendees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capitalize on existing district experts and systems Hire staff based on projected daily attendance, not on the initial number of enrollees Adapt the school-year curricula for the summer Partner with community-based organizations to provide enrichment activities
<p>Additional guidance on curricula and on providing professional development</p> 	<p>Additional guidance on site climate</p> 	<p>Additional guidance on attendance and resources</p> 	<p>Additional guidance on budgeting for summer and enrichment partnerships</p> 

KEY: ● Academics & Enrichment ● Student Recruitment & Attendance ● Staffing & Professional Development ● Site Climate ● Planning & Management

Source: *Getting to Work on Summer Learning: Recommended Practices for Success*, 2nd Edition, RAND 2018, updated in 2023. <https://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/summer-learning/toolkit/pages/default.aspx>

summerlearningtoolkit.org

