Summer Learning Opportunities In High-Poverty Schools

LEADERSHIP, ADVOCACY, SERVICE

CCSSO

THE COUNCIL OF CHIEF STATE SCHOOL OFFICERS

COUNCIL OF CHIEF STATE SCHOOL OFFICERS
One Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Suite 700
Washington, DC 20001
Phone: (202) 336-7000
www.ccsso.org

ISBN: 1-884037-95-X

The Council of Chief State School Officers

The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) is a nonpartisan, nationwide, nonprofit organization of public officials who head departments of elementary and secondary education in the states, the District of Columbia, the Department of Defense Education Activity, and five U.S. extra-state jurisdictions. CCSSO provides leadership, advocacy, and technical assistance on major educational issues. The Council seeks member consensus on major educational issues and expresses their views to civic and professional organizations, federal agencies, Congress, and the public.

Division of State Services and Technical Assistance

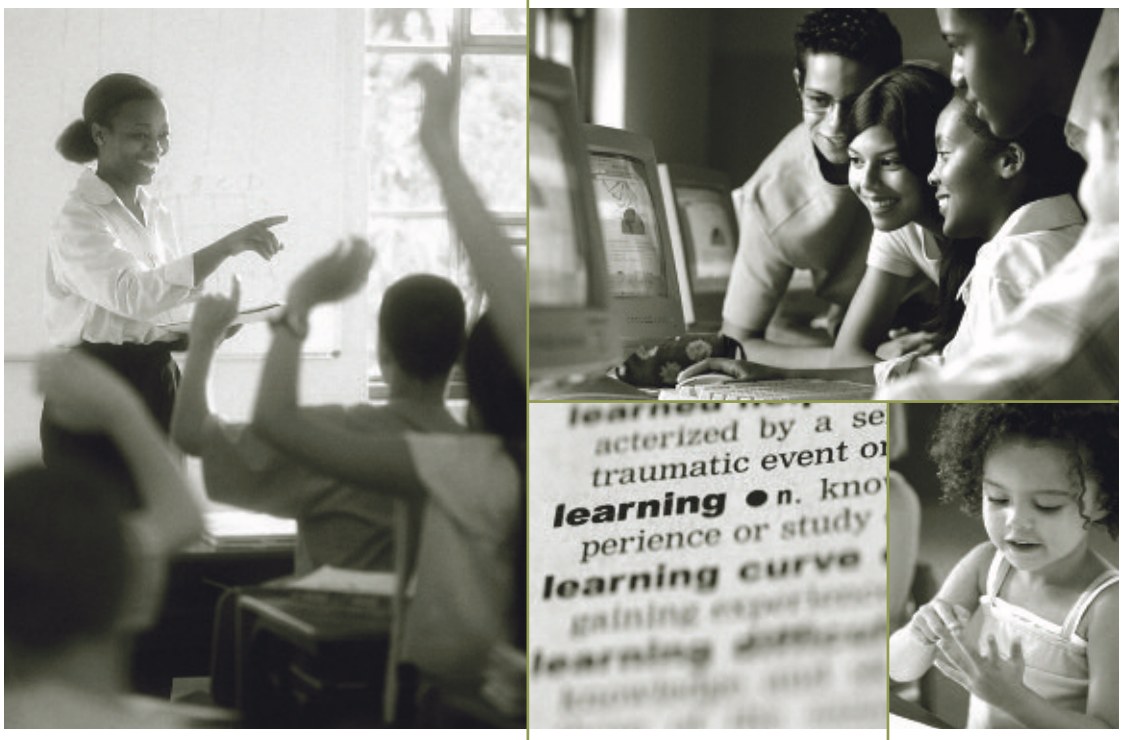
The Council's Division of State Services and Technical Assistance supports state education agencies in developing standards-based systems that enable all children to succeed. Initiatives of the division support improved methods for collecting, analyzing, and using information for decision making; development of assessment re-sources; creation of high-quality professional preparation and development programs; emphasis on instruction suited for diverse learners; and the removal of barriers to academic success.

Extended Learning Opportunities Project

Since 1998, the Council of Chief State School Officers has been actively engaged in research and development activities to gain knowledge about high-quality extended learning and development opportunities in order to build state capacity in the implementation and maintenance of such programs. Our efforts have been focused on developing shared understanding about characteristics of high-quality after-school programs with measurable outcomes and of effective state policies and initiatives that support such programs and providing technical assistance to state education agencies in their work with statewide after-school networks to ensure improvement in both the quality and quantity of extended learning opportunities within their states.

Summer Learning Opportunities In High-Poverty Schools

Selected Program Profiles



January 2005

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SELECTED PROGRAM PROFILES

Acknowledgements

This publication was made possible by a grant from the C.S. Mott Foundation to the Council of Chief State School Officers for the Extended Learning and Development Opportunities Project. The Council is grateful for the foundation's continued support of our efforts in the area of extended learning.

This publication represents an ongoing interest of the Council in documenting the types of extended learning opportunities available to students in high-poverty schools that have focused their efforts on improving student academic achievement. The Council believes that effective extended learning programs can positively impact student academic success and should be an integral part of overall school improvement efforts.

The Council would like to express our deep gratitude to the school administrators and program staff for allowing Council staff to visit the programs as part of the research effort related to this publication and for their invaluable insights and reflections regarding their work with children.

The document was principally researched and developed by Ayeola Fortune with support from Mark E. Emery in the initial stages of the research and subsequent site visits. Ayeola Fortune, Shelley Spaulding, Gitanjali Pande, and Mark Emery are coauthors of this publication.

The Council would also like to thank the following school and district personnel for reviewing and editing the initial draft profiles for accuracy and clarity: Lisa Colvin, Tarrallton Elementary School; Janet L. Dunn, Montgomery County Public Schools; Diane Gibson, Tarrallton Elementary School; Lori Holland, Jefferson County Public Schools; Carol Hylton, Montgomery County Public Schools; Dr. John L. Jackson, Gary Community School Corporation; Carol Miller, John B. McFerran Preparatory Academy; Dr. Cordia Moore, Gary Community School Corporation; Rosemary Moriarty, Miller African Centered Academy; Chrisandra Richardson, Montgomery County Public Schools; and Sharon Webster, Tarrallton Elementary School.

"Time is passing for children, and the further they get behind, the more difficult it is to accelerate and close the gap…. The major issue is that the quality of what we do can't be the same as in the past…. Summer school can't be the same old summer school. The extra support during the school year can't be what didn't work the first time around."

—Thomas Payzant, Superintendent
Boston Public Schools

Introduction

Extended Learning and Development Opportunities Project (Background)

Through the High-Poverty Schools Initiative, the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) works to build the capacity of state education agencies to improve educational outcomes in high-poverty, low-performing schools. Within this initiative, the Extended Learning and Development Opportunities Project assists states in their efforts to implement policies and practices that support the growth of high-quality extended learning programs. Specific activities have included: developing profiles of state-sponsored extended learning opportunities; researching high-quality after-school programs in high-poverty, high-performing

schools; providing timely technical assistance support to states as the 21st-Century Community Learning Centers Program transitions from federal to state administration; and working, as part of the After-School Technical Assistance Collaborative (ATAC), to support the development of statewide after-school networks.[1]

Extended Learning Opportunities (ELO) programs include summer school, before-/after-school, and weekend programs. Such programs provide an increasingly important link between the needs of low-income students and the demands of standards-based educational reforms, as these programs support the academic and social development of students during nontraditional school hours.

About This Report

This report profiles five summer ELO programs that have contributed to improved student achievement in high-poverty schools. The purpose of this report is to highlight successful programs in high-need schools *and* share common elements of success or "best practices" that states and districts should consider when implementing summer programs. The programs selected are not "*exemplary programs*" in that some of them still face "considerable challenges, particularly related to sustainability, parental involvement, and staff burnout. Moreover, several of the schools profiled continue to struggle to raise student achievement, close the achievement gap, and meet adequate yearly progress (AYP) targets. Yet these programs all exhibit *elements* of best practices and therefore are instructive in thinking about state-, district-, and school-level policies and processes that can positively impact the development of successful summer learning opportunities, particularly those that serve students in high-poverty and/or low-performing schools. Information about successful summer ELO programs provides educators and policymakers with useful insight on best practices. Sharing insight about program challenges also sheds light on policy levers that promote the development of high-quality summer programs and policy impediments that inhibit or constrain them.

Extended Learning Opportunities and Student Outcomes

High-quality, academically focused extended learning programs provide time to refine and strengthen the skills of at-risk students. In addition, ELO programs that include enrichment activities provide students with additional opportunities to apply skills learned during the school day. Extended learning programs also offer a safe, structured environment that meets the child-care needs of many single, low-income, and working parents. Recent research on several after-school programs suggests that well-designed programs can positively impact student academic achievement and support other positive outcomes:

- An evaluation of Sacramento START (Students Today Achieving Results for Tomorrow), a regional after-school program that has served low-income children since 1995, found that low-performing students who regularly attended the program significantly improved their performance on the SAT9 compared to students who did not attend the program.[2]
- Students attending the Boys & Girls Clubs Project Learn/Educational Enhancement Program, a community-based program that targets at-risk youth, showed improvements in classroom grades and school attendance and declines in behavioral incidents over a 30-month period.[3]
- Students attending Foundations, Inc. School-Age Enrichment Program gained an average of 38 points in reading and 45 points in math compared to 17 and 26 points for nonprogram students during the 2001–02 academic year.[4]
- An evaluation of LA's BEST After-School Enrichment Program, an after-school program that serves high-poverty communities, found that students involved in the program for more than four years experienced significantly improved standardized test scores in language arts, reading, and mathematics. In addition, participants experienced greater language redesignation rates in comparison to nonparticipating students.[5]

These programs have been in existence for eight years or more and are multifaceted programs that serve educationally at-risk and/or high-poverty youth. Moreover, they *intentionally* focus on providing academic assistance (e.g., tutoring, homework help) *and* enrichment by infusing their programs with activities that reinforce knowledge and skills learned during the school day. In addition, these programs are explicit in their efforts to build on student assets in order to foster greater self-awareness and self-confidence and positive relations with peers and adults. These types of *nonacademic* outcomes are critical for economically disadvantaged and/or academically at-risk students because they are more likely to feel disconnected and unsuccessful in the school setting. Positive developments in these areas often translate into feelings of greater connectedness and sense of belonging—a necessary ingredient for school success.

The evaluation findings mentioned above suggest that well-established after-school programs that explicitly target the academic needs of disadvantaged students can positively impact their academic success in the long-term. In addition, they align with what low-income and minority parents and students say they want from extended learning programs. A recent study, commissioned by The Wallace Foundation, found that low-income and minority parents were more likely than their peers to favor programs that focus on the development of academic skills and offer homework help. Low-income and minority students surveyed as part of the report were also significantly more likely than their peers to desire after-school programs focused on academic preparation.[6]

> Information about successful summer ELO programs provides educators and policymakers with useful insight on best practices.

While the research base is sufficient to indicate a link between high-quality programs and academic outcomes, additional research is necessary to determine which program characteristics matter most in terms of positively impacting student achievement and whether these impacts are sustained over time.

Summer Learning Opportunities

Summer learning programs have the added benefit of offsetting summer slide. Summer slide, or summer learning loss, refers to the tendency of students to regress academically over the summer months. The extended vacation breaks the consistency of instruction, and students require significant amounts of review or relearning of material when they return to school in the fall.[7] On average, children lose one month on achievement test scores over the summer vacation. For *all* students, summer loss is greatest in areas of procedural and factual skill, such as math and spelling. Researchers suggest that students, regardless of family income level, may have fewer opportunities in the summer months to practice mathematical and other skills involving the acquisition of factual and procedural knowledge. However, family income level does impact reading comprehension scores, with middle-class children showing gains in reading comprehension over the summer, while low-income children show losses.[8] Income differences may reflect differential opportunities to practice and learn reading skills over the summer, with more books and reading opportunities available for middle-class children.

These documented gaps have serious consequences for low-performing students. Indeed, the achievement gaps that exist between students of color and their white and Asian peers and between low-income students and more affluent students is exacerbated by summer slide. These gaps also mirror the concerns of low-income and minority parents that their children will fall behind academically during the summer. The Wallace Foundation study mentioned above found that 60 percent of low-

income parents surveyed, compared to 32 percent of high-income parents, expressed such concerns. Moreover, 69 percent of low-income and 79 percent of minority *students* respectively indicated that they "would be interested in a summer program that helped them keep up with schoolwork or prepare for the next grade."[9]

State education agencies rely on reading and math assessment scores to provide indicators of overall school performance. In addition, recent federal accountability measures, enacted as part of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), require schools to demonstrate the AYP of all student subgroups toward state academic standards.

In order to close the achievement gap and support all students in reaching high standards, educators and policymakers must continually seek innovative ways to maximize learning opportunities for students. Many schools can simply no longer afford to see students regress over the summer and have implemented academic summer programs to curtail summer slide. This understanding is reflected in comments by Thomas Payzant, Boston's superintendent of schools, who stated, "Time is passing for children, and the further they get behind, the more difficult it is to accelerate and close the gap . . . . The major issue is that the quality of what we do can't be the same as in the past . . . . Summer school can't be the same old summer school. The extra support during the school year can't be what didn't work the first time around."

Largely in recognition of the need for students to have additional time on task, a growing number of states and localities have increased support for summer programs in the past decade. A scan of state policies in June 2000 found that 14 states at that point had enacted legislation that expanded summer school opportunities in order to assist students in meeting state academic standards. A survey of the nation's 100 largest school districts found that a clear majority (59 percent) offered programming in order to quell social promotion, assist students in meeting state standards, and provide enrichment.

Summer Learning Opportunities and Student Outcomes

Summer learning opportunities have been shown to positively impact student academic achievement. A meta-analysis conducted by Cooper, Charlton, Valentine, and Muhlenbruck (2000) found that summer programs that intentionally focus on "lessening or removing learning deficiencies" positively impact the knowledge and skill acquisition of students who participate. The meta-analysis also provided general insight on the structure and content of effective programs, as well as the types of students who benefit the most. Specifically, the analysis found that

- programs that focus on lessening or removing learning deficiencies have a positive impact on the knowledge and skill of participants,
- programs that focus on academic enrichment have similar effects to those that focus on remediation,
- summer school programs have more positive effects on the achievement of middle-class students than on students from disadvantaged backgrounds,
- programs that focus on remediation have greater impact when the learning community consists of a small number of schools or classes,
- programs that provide small or individuated instruction have the greatest impact on student outcomes.[10]

A recent study conducted by Jimmy S. Kim found that having students read four or five books during the summer months can prevent or offset summer learning loss. Specifically, Kim found that students, regardless of race, socioeconomic background, or previous levels of achievement, who read more over the summer received higher reading comprehension scores in subsequent achievement tests than those children who read one or no books. These effects were large enough to potentially offset summer learning losses in reading. In addition, students who had easier access to books also reported reading more than their peers.[11] This research has significant implications for program developers and policymakers interested in designing

programs that increase student academic achievement in reading and close the achievement gap.

These findings suggest that comprehensive, systemic support for summer ELO programs at both the state and district levels can provide measurable benefits to all children. Yet, they also suggest that summer programs need to be carefully designed, implemented, and evaluated if they are to provide disadvantaged and at-risk students with the support they need to be academically successful. Additional information is needed to fully understand what, if any, *long-term* impact summer programs have on student academic achievement. This is particularly true in high-poverty and/or low-performing schools, where students may be eligible for and participating in multiple interventions (e.g., after-school programs, supplemental educational services, etc.), making it harder to tease out the effects of one individual program.

> ...students, regardless of race, socio-economic background, or previous levels of achievement, who read more over the summer received higher reading comprehension scores in subsequent achievement tests than those children who read one or no books.

The existing research suggests that summer learning programs can help to bridge differences in achievement between wealthy and poor children but that their impact will likely be greatest when they include a structured curriculum that emphasizes the development and acquisition of reading and math skills, provide individuated instruction in a small-group setting, and foster high levels of participation by disadvantaged students attending low-performing and/or high-poverty schools.

Research Methodology

This report profiles five successful summer learning programs. CCSSO staff used national school performance data to identify schools with significant populations of poor and minority students who demonstrated high levels of achievement or significant improvement over time. These schools were surveyed to determine the range of summer learning opportunities offered by schools during the summer months. The Council developed a 58-item survey to elicit information focused on school demographics and background data, summer program goals and content, administrative structure, program evaluation, funding, and the role of parents and the community. These surveys were disseminated to local school districts and subsequently forwarded to identified schools. Survey responses from this group of high-poverty schools were used to identify a subset of schools with summer programs.

Council staff selected five schools to visit based on the following criteria: (1) significant level of poverty, as evidenced by a Free and Reduced Meals (FARMS)percentage of 40 percent or greater, (2) significant level of racial and ethnic diversity, (3) clearly focused program that provided instruction for at least four weeks, (4) high level of district involvement in the planning and implementation of the program, (5) existence of additional programs focused on providing students with academic support (e.g., after-school programs, individual tutoring, early childhood program, etc.), and (6) ability of program and school staff to participate during the actual site visit.

Council staff conducted site visits during the summers of 2003 and 2004. During these visits, Council staff met with district officials, school building administrators, program administrators, teachers, and students. Staff also had the opportunity, in most cases, to observe classroom instruction as part of the site visits. In addition, the Council developed and disseminated a brief questionnaire to district officials in order to further explore the role of the local school system in supporting summer programs. Data collected from surveys, interviews, site

visits, and school performance reports were used to craft profiles of these promising summer programs.[12]

General School Characteristics

The schools selected for inclusion in this report share similar characteristics related to student demographics and academic achievement. These similarities are summarized below:

- All five schools are high-poverty schools, as indicated by their free and reduced meals percentages. Across the five schools, the FARMS percentages range from 43 to 88 percent respectively.
- The schools all receive Title I funds; most of them are applying these funds schoolwide.
- All five schools have significant minority student populations; minority representation as a percentage of total student population ranges from 32 to 99 percent.
- All of the schools profiled have struggled to improve student academic achievement and meet their AYP targets. Some of the schools have been able to sustain these improvements; others have not been as successful.

Best Practices

Implementation of summer programs varied across schools, district, and states. However, the schools highlighted in this report exhibit some or all of the key elements that characterize strong programs. Brief descriptions of these key elements are described below.

District Leadership

- Summer program planning involves all stakeholders: district leaders, school administrators, teachers, parents, community members, and support staff.
- Summer program planning begins early.
- Dedicated district staff guide program development through ongoing dialogue with school administrators.
- District leaders address logistical concerns: transportation, food service, supplies, school maintenance, after care.
- District leadership ensures consistency in summer program content by aligning district and school curricula.

Curriculum and Instruction

- The summer curriculum integrates the standards and goals of the school-year curriculum.
- The summer program maintains an academic focus, distinct from any recreational components.
- Instructional guidelines accompany the curriculum.
- Instructional methods differ from the school year.
- Appropriate supporting materials are available to accompany the curriculum.
- Materials are made available to teachers prior to the start of the program.
- Instruction is differentiated to address the needs of special populations.
- Schools have the flexibility to tailor the curriculum around identified student weaknesses.

Funding

- District and school resources are first targeted to at-risk student populations.
- Multiple federal, state, and local funding sources are used: Title I, 21st-Century Community Learning Centers, Supplemental Educational Services, etc.
- Funding is consistent and equitable across program sites.
- Faculty are paid at comparable rates to school-year salaries.
- Fees are waived for low-income families.

Program Evaluation and Data Collection

- Program design is based on analysis of student performance data.
- Student outcomes are utilized to plan for continuous improvement.
- Assessments measure skills taught in the summer curriculum.

- Program evaluations are routinely conducted to justify funding.
- Student Assessment data is disaggregated (e.g., race, gender, ethnicity, socio-economic status, special education, English language learners) to determine program impact by subgroup.
- Attendance data is collected daily.
- Student participation across all support services is tracked (e.g., summer school, after school, preschool, tutoring, etc.).

Professional Development

- Teachers are provided preprogram professional development.
- Teachers are provided ongoing professional development.
- Professional development focuses on the instructional goals of the summer curriculum.
- Professional development focuses on supporting teachers to prevent burnout.
- Teachers are compensated for professional development activities.

Parent/Student Participation and Community Involvement

- Summer programs coordinate with community groups to provide wraparound complements, so that children have a full-day option.
- Programs are housed in neighborhood schools.
- Programs encourage the participation of community and parent volunteers.
- Parents are engaged in initial program design.
- Students are offered incentives for perfect attendance.
- Student input, as appropriate, is incorporated into program design and content.

Integration with the District's Goals and Focus on Improvement

- Summer programs are viewed as part of a larger continuum of support for at-risk students.
- The summer program is included in the district's/school's improvement plan.

These best practices underscore the critical role that state education agencies and local schools play in developing and sustaining high-quality, effective summer programs. In addition to funding programs, best practices and policies are required at both levels in order to ensure that programs are self-sustaining and produce positive academic outcomes for students. At the district level, establishing a common curriculum, providing for meals and transportation, and integrating the program with the district's overall mission and focus are just a few of the elements that create quality.

Program Profile Summaries

School sites are the focus of the profiles, but general district information is also included to give a comprehensive image of the systemic supports available to the school program. Each summer program profile begins with general school background information, reflecting the school community and student performance. Program beginnings and goals are then described, followed by in-depth information about program participation, structure, and content. Program administration is depicted to provide an idea of the operational responsibilities of the school principal and district staff. Funding sources are listed, and collaboration with community-based organizations is highlighted. If available, information from formal program evaluations is provided. Student outcomes are also given, with attention to both quantitative and qualitative observations of student performance. Finally, challenges to implementation are reviewed, and future program directions are discussed.

The following schools and school districts have been identified for their strong programs: Charles R. Drew Elementary School in Gary Community School Corporation, East Silver Spring Elementary School in Montgomery County Public Schools, John B. McFerran Preparatory Academy in Jefferson County Public Schools, Tarrallton Elementary School in the Norfolk Public Schools, and Weil Technology Institute in Pittsburgh Public Schools. Brief summaries of each program are provided below, and

detailed profiles of these programs constitute the next section of this report.

Charles R. Drew Elementary School

The Gary Community School Corporation established JumpStart, a districtwide summer school initiative, in order to provide additional academic support for students at risk of academic failure and to improve overall student performance. Charles Drew is a Title I school that serves approximately 433 students in grades K–5. The school's success in raising the achievement of the predominantly African American student body has been uneven. The JumpStart program is considered part of a broader strategy to bolster student achievement at the school. Additional strategies include implementing an after-school program, reducing class sizes at the lower grade levels, increasing staff development opportunities, and engaging parents in support of student success.

East Silver Spring Elementary School

Montgomery County Public Schools offers accelerated instructional programming to 5,000 students in the district's 18 Title I elementary schools. The program is open to all students in each of these schools and is considered the "start" of the upcoming school year. East Silver Spring Elementary School educates poor and minority students in grades K–3 in an urban area of the district. Thorough, cohesive planning across schools and targeted use of district resources encourage the academic growth of students in schools such as East Silver Spring. Positive outcomes from the program's pilot year indicate improved performance for students across grades K–3.

John B. McFerran Preparatory Academy

Jefferson County Public Schools provides extended day and summer programming as part of the state's Extended School Services Initiative, a program implemented in 1990 after the state supreme court ruled Kentucky's existing system of education unconstitutional. John B. McFerran Preparatory Academy educates 600 children in grades K–5. At McFerran, a racially diverse school, approximately 90 percent of the students qualify for free and reduced meals. McFerran Preparatory Academy's summer program combines two funding sources, Rising Stars and ESS, to create a unique program that emphasizes staff professional development, wraparound programming for students, and strong community partnerships. The school is only one of two elementary schools in the district that continues to offer the Rising Stars Program.

Tarrallton Elementary School

Tarrallton Elementary School established its summer ELO program in response to the Norfolk Public Schools' mandate for summer programming. Tarrallton students perform well overall, but the achievement gap between white and black students is evident. Participation in the remedial Tarrallton program is only open to those students who are not performing at grade level. Results from a variety of assessments and from faculty observation indicate that the Tarrallton summer program is boosting achievement for the school's lowest-performing students.

Weil Technology Institute

Weil Technology Institute educates 365 K–5 students in the central Hill District of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Weil is a schoolwide Title I school, whose students are predominately African American and poor. Overall, Weil students are not performing at high levels, so the school has sought to expand its ELO programming into the summer in order to offer greater support to struggling students. The summer program is based on Weil's after-school enrichment program. Weil uses community partnerships, district resources, and foundation endowments to operate an extended-year literacy and math program during the summer.

Endnotes

[1] Additional information regarding the Extended Learning Opportunities and Development Project is available at http://www.ccsso.org.

[2] Minicucci Associates. (2002). *Sacramento START evaluation report 2001/2002.*

[3] Schinke, S.P., Cole, K.C., & Poulin, S.R. (2000). Enhancing the educational achievement of at-risk youth. *Prevention Science, 1*(1), 51–60.

[4] Klein, Stephen P., & Bolus, Roger. (2002). Improvements in math and reading scores of students who did and did not participate in the foundation's after-school enrichment program during the 2001–2002 school year.

[5] LA's BEST. (2000). *Proof positive: LA's BEST after-school enrichment program 1999–2000 annual report.*

[6] Duffett, Ann, & Johnson, Jean. (2004). *All work and no play? Listening to what KIDS and PARENTS really want from out-of-school time.* Public agenda.

[7] Cooper, Harris. (2003). *Summer learning loss: The problem and some solutions.* ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education.

[8] Cooper, H. (2001). *Summer school: Research-based recommendations for policymakers.* Serve policy brief. Greensboro, NC: University of North Carolina School of Education.

[9] Duffett, Ann, & Johnson, Jean. (2004). *All work and no play? Listening to what KIDS and PARENTS really want from out-of-school time.* Public agenda.

[10] Based on the data, the researchers also tentatively concluded: (1) programs with some level of parent involvement produce larger effects on student academic achievement, (2) remedial programs may produce larger effects in mathematics than in reading, (3) achievement gains from summer programs may diminish over time, (4) remedial programs positively impact all students' achievement scores, but these effects may be largest in the elementary and high school levels, and (5) programs that are carefully monitored and evaluated may produce larger gains than programs that are not.

[11] Kim, Jimmy. (2004). Summer reading and the ethnic achievement gap. Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk (JESAPR), *9*(2), 169–88.

[12] Please note that site visits were conducted during the summers of 2003 and 2004. Therefore, school level data included reflects the most current data available at the time of the visit and will vary from site to site.

Charles R. Drew Elementary School
Gary, Indiana

Background Information

The Gary Community School Corporation is a relatively small, urban school system located 30 miles west of Chicago in Gary, Indiana. Student enrollment for the 2003–04 academic year totaled 16,861.[13] The district has 4 high schools, 3 middle schools, and 18 elementary schools. Ninety-seven percent of the student population is African American, which is somewhat higher than the demographic makeup of the community.[14] The greater city surrounding the school district is marked by economic stagnation and poverty. Gary covers 47 square miles in Lake County, Indiana. Almost 40 percent of the households in Gary earn less than $20,000 annually. Forty-four percent of

the population aged 16 and over are not presently in the labor force.[15] Forty-five percent of all families in Gary are headed by single females; 38 percent of these families live below the poverty line. Although close to 73 percent of the population aged 25 and older have attained at least a high school diploma, only 10 percent have completed a bachelor's degree or better. The median income for all households is $27,195.[16]

Gary Community School Corporation has struggled to raise student academic achievement and educational attainment. The district has had some successes; the 90 percent high school graduation rate closely matches the state average, and more than 60 percent of graduates go on to pursue a college degree. Preliminary data also indicate that the district's overall school attendance rate surpasses the state average.[17] However, the district has not been as successful in increasing student performance.[18] Average SAT scores are more than two hundred points lower than the state's average.[19] In the 2003–04 academic year, only 39 percent of students in the district passed the ISTEP mathematics assessment; 43 percent passed the English/language arts assessment.[20] In addition, declining student enrollment has resulted in the closing of several schools in the district; a process that began this year and will conclude in the spring of 2005. Despite these challenges, recently appointed Superintendent Dr. Mary Steele explicitly stated in her remarks to the larger Gary community that the district must concentrate its efforts on student achievement:

> At this juncture our focus must now be on the primary charge of improving student achievement. We must rescue our students from mediocrity, failure, and failing schools. Increased student achievement is the only "game in town" and we are the primary players as parents, administrators, and teachers. We must rethink our commitment to student achievement and improve the learning environment for all students. All stakeholders are asked to play their part in developing the success story of the Gary Community School Corporation as we move to improve all of our schools.

Charles R. Drew Elementary School is a neighborhood school that serves approximately 433 students in grades K–5. In the immediate community surrounding Drew approximately 79 percent of the families fall below federal poverty guidelines.[21] Students at Drew are predominately African American (99 percent). In the 2003–04 academic year 79 percent of the student body qualified for Free and Reduced Meals (FARMS).

Charles R. Drew is a Title I school and is fully accredited. Preliminary data places the school's attendance rate at 99.1, above the 95 percentile of the state for 2003–04 school year. Seventy percent of the teaching faculty at Drew have attained certification at the Master's level or above, and overall teaching experience averages 18 years. The combination of a highly qualified teaching staff, schoolwide focus on teaching to state standards, and implementation of numerous support programs for students provides a solid foundation for challenging students to reach their fullest potential.

We must rethink our commitment to student achievement and improve the learning environment for all students.

In recent years, the school has experienced some success in raising student achievement. In the 2001–02 academic year, for example, 83 percent of the school's third graders met state proficiency standards on the ISTEP test (state's criterion referenced test). That same year, 86 percent of third graders met the state's proficiency standards in mathematics. This represented a significant improvement from the previous year when just over a third of Drew third

graders received passing scores on the ISTEP, with 21 percent scoring at proficiency level in reading and 52 percent in math. Student attendance for the 2001–02 school year averaged 98.9 percent.[22] This achievement earned Drew a Four Star School Award for the 2002–03 school year. The Indiana Department of Education established the Four Star Awards Program to recognize schools demonstrating academic excellence during the school year.[23]

Former Drew Principal Florine Lacefield attributes the school's improvement to key resources and supports that were available during the 2001–02 academic year, including after-school and summer school programs, a reduction in class size for the lower elementary grades K–3, individual tutoring for the neediest students, staff development that focused on the alignment of curriculum to state standards, and parental involvement activities.[24]

However, student academic progress at Drew Elementary School has been inconsistent over the past three years. In 2002–03, overall student performance declined; 40 percent of third-grade students scored proficient or better in English/language arts on the state standardized test, and 44 percent of third graders scored proficient or better in mathematics. This past academic year (2003–04), student scores on the ISTEP rebounded somewhat, with 78 percent and 58 percent of third-grade students scoring at proficiency or better on the mathematics and English/language arts assessments, respectively (see Table 1). Because Drew has not been able to sustain student achievement over time, the school remains in school improvement status and is currently slated for restructuring.[25]

TABLE 1. Percentage of third-grade students passing ISTEP in English/language arts and mathematics: 2001–02, 2002–03, and 2003–04 school years.

SCHOOL YEAR	SUBJECT AREA	SCHOOL PASSED	DIVISION PASSED	STATE PASSED
2001–02	Mathematics	86	62	71
	English/Language Arts	83	57	67
2002–03	Mathematics	44	29	67
	English/Language Arts	40	40	73
2003–04	Mathematics	78	57	72
	English/Language Arts	58	56	75

SOURCE: Indiana Accountability System for Academic Progress, comparative results for academic years 2001–02, 2002–03, 2003–04.

NOTE: The numbers displayed in the third column above represent the percentage of students that passed the state assessments administered in English/language arts and mathematics at the Drew school. The division percentages reflect the overall performance of third graders on the English/language arts and mathematics assessments for the Gary Community School Corporation. The state percentages indicate the overall performance of third graders throughout the state in English/language arts and mathematics. State percentages include both public and private schools.

The mission of Charles R. Drew Elementary School is "to challenge each child to develop his maximum potential in all social, academic, and cultural endeavors in order to ensure that the child will acquire a positive character and caring values which will contribute to his developing into a productive citizen for our ever-changing global and technological society." Teachers play a critical role in achieving this goal "by assuming the responsibility to see that each child will succeed in the acquisition of knowledge and skills derived from the use of an interdisciplinary curriculum and effective instructional techniques."

Within this framework, the summer school program at Drew is viewed by the principal and the teaching staff as an integral part of an overarching set of strategies to improve student outcomes.

Program Beginnings and Goals

The JumpStart Summer School Program at Drew is part of an ongoing, districtwide effort to provide summer school programming for all students at risk of academic failure. In past years, the district held "Summer Academies," which housed students from 3 to 4 schools in one building. The JumpStart program is a districtwide initiative that developed out of these earlier efforts. The program is presently in its second year (summer 2004) and differs from its predecessor in that students have the option of attending the program at their home school.[26] JumpStart targets students who are performing at or below grade level on statewide assessments in order to provide them additional, intensive instruction. The district initiated JumpStart for several reasons, including counteracting summer learning loss; providing a safe, structured environment for students during the summer months; lowering the retention rate; and fostering academic achievement. The purpose of the program is to work closely with struggling students in key areas where weaknesses have been identified. The program's explicit goals are to (1) provide academic instruction that promotes improvement in reading, language arts, and mathematics; (2) ensure student readiness for the next grade; (3) provide an opportunity for students to master specific academic standards; (4) help students increase their performance on ISTEP+ and experience success in their classroom performance; and (5) assist students in making a smooth transition from one level of schooling to the next (i.e., elementary to middle school).

The JumpStart program evolved through the efforts of multiple stakeholders in the district who came together to examine research-based best practices that had shown results in other schools and districts. Stakeholders included district staff, principals, teachers, school academic counselors, and parents. What resulted from these conversations is a highly structured program that utilizes specific reading and math interventions while focusing on state and local academic standards.

JumpStart targets students who are performing at or below grade level on statewide assessments in order to provide them additional, intensive instruction.

Program Participation, Structure, and Content

Approximately 98 students attended the summer school program at Drew during the summer of 2004. The JumpStart program at Drew is conducted for four hours a day, four days per week from mid-July to mid-August. A typical day includes one hour and forty-five minutes of reading or math instruction followed by a fifteen-minute break during which students have a snack. Following their break, students regroup into classes for an hour and forty-five minutes of instruction in reading or math (classes switch). Students then have lunch, which is provided by the program, and are subsequently dismissed at 12:00 p.m.

Students in the primary elementary grades (K, 1, 2, 3) participate in small-group direct instruction and tutoring sessions using curriculum-identified activities in reading and language arts. Second-grade students also participate in Early Success, and fifth-grade students attending summer school participate in Soar to Success. Both of these programs are research-based reading interventions that accelerate literacy development for students that are at risk of reading difficulties. At all grade levels, the 8 to 1 student-teacher ratio allows for an intimate setting wherein students can get the individualized instruction they need.

Program planning and development begins in mid-May when the curriculum is developed and/or revised based on the previous summer. During the first week of June, trainers are given the curriculum in order to prepare for their professional development sessions.

Curriculum

Program content for the JumpStart Program is developed by the Gary Community School Corporation in collaboration with teachers who volunteer to work on planning committees devoted to particular subject areas of focus: reading/English/language arts and mathematics. The binders distributed to teachers as part of their professional development workshops contain daily lesson plans that are grouped by subject and grade level. Each lesson plan is explicitly linked to performance indicators and state standards.

Reading Curriculum

The reading curriculum for the summer of 2004 focused primarily on strengthening student skills in several key areas related to Indiana's state standards: (1) reading: word recognition, reading comprehension, literary response, and analysis and (2) writing: process, applications, and English language conventions. Each lesson plan for the reading curriculum includes the unit theme, subtheme, subject area, reading materials, and procedures. The theme for the summer reading curriculum for 2004 was Great Adventures; the subthemes varied (e.g., wolves, journeys). The structure and format of the reading blocks remained constant throughout the summer and followed the sample reading/English/language arts schedule, like the one below, distributed to teachers as part of the professional development sessions.

Sample Reading Schedule (Grade 2)

60 MINUTES

- Quick Write (10 minutes): On the first day of summer school, students use this block of time to brainstorm and write in their journals a list of characters, settings, and problems they might incorporate into a subsequent writing assignment. Thereafter, Quick Write is used as a brief writing activity in which students respond to a writing prompt that is usually related to the day's reading or weekly theme (e.g., second-grade students are asked to write about a problem an insect may have in the human world as part of a larger focus on Great Adventures/Insects). Quick Write is used by the teachers to strengthen identified student weaknesses in writing (e.g., personal narrative, plot development, grammar, etc.). Teachers also share student work during the Quick Write activity.
- Read Aloud (5 minutes): Teachers use this time to read a selection to the students. The teacher makes explicit connections to previous reading and also asks students to synthesize what they have read already. The Read Aloud is explicitly linked to the Reading Instructions and Activity period which follows.
- Reading Instruction and Activity (20 minutes): During this time, students are usually introduced to a new book. As part of introducing a new work, teachers typically ask leading questions (e.g., What is a journey?), do picture walks through the book (without focusing on the words), and work with students to develop key skills (e.g., understanding the parts of a story, recognizing a particular genre, using an index, etc.). Teachers also ask guiding questions and use charts to help students relate the story to works they have previously read. The culminating activity is related to the particular skills or reading selection (e.g., students practice looking up information utilizing an index).
- Vocabulary Instruction (25 minutes): During this time students work explicitly on vocabulary drawn from the reading selections. Activities vary and may involve a student working independently, as part of a small group, or with the entire class (e.g.; students are asked to define words and use them correctly in a sentence).

5 MINUTES
- Break

15 MINUTES:
- Writing Instruction: The writing activities explicitly relate to an aspect of the reading selections and/or from student journals (e.g., choose a person, setting, or problem from your journal list and write a story introducing character and setting). This past summer, teachers used this time to review the writing process (prewrite, draft, revise, edit ,and publish) with students and assist them in developing their own personal narratives. The narratives were completed over the course of four weeks. As with the Quick Write process described above, all of the writing activities related directly to key state standards that the district has selected to focus on for improvement.

25 MINUTES
- Restroom Break and Change of Class

Mathematics Curriculum

Similar to the reading curriculum, math instruction in the JumpStart Program focuses on strengthening student skills in key identified areas. Specifically, the mathematics curriculum reflects the district's intent to improve student achievement in geometry and measurement—two areas where Gary students have not performed well overall on the state's assessment. Daily lesson plans incorporate the use of manipulatives, material review, practice, ongoing student assessment, and explicit connections to literature. Portions of the class period are clearly devoted to practice, review, and basic mathematical operations without the use of paper ("mental math"). For the summer of 2004, teaching staff in the program utilized the text Moving with Math to help students review key concepts. However, each lesson also incorporated hands-on activities. For example, as part of a lesson on classifying, and sorting geometric shapes, students used gumdrops and toothpicks to create shapes. As part of another lesson on measurement, students worked in groups to determine the capacity of containers using smaller units of measure (e.g., one pint, one cup). A sample math lesson follows:

Sample Math Schedule (Grade 2, approximate times)

5–15 MINUTES
- Math Daily Review Problem

20–30 MINUTES
- Lesson Activities
  1) Introduce the concept
  2) Whole class discussion or activity
  3) Engaging activity for practice

5–15 MINUTES
- Practice and Maintenance Activities

10 MINUTES
- Activities/games

25–30 MINUTES
- Literature connection/writing in math/extended response

5–15 minutes
- Assessment
  1) Ongoing (formative)
  2) Summative
  3) Product

Administrative Structure and Staff Responsibilities

The administrative structure of the JumpStart Program illustrates the shared responsibility and spirit of collaboration that exists amongst district staff in planning and implementing the summer program. Every year during the spring semester, a committee meets to focus on planning and implementation for the upcoming summer. The planning committee is chaired by Dr. Myrtle Campbell, the assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction, and includes directors and key staff from departments that have specific responsibilities related to the program. Almost every department has a particular role to play in ensuring the success of JumpStart:

- The curriculum development and management office has primary responsibility for developing

the reading and mathematics curriculum and lesson plans.

- The human resources department processes teacher applications for employment in the summer program and makes placement decisions.
- The department of planning, research and accountability conducts pre/post program evaluation and surveys key stakeholders (e.g. principals) to inform the planning process; the department's analysis of student assessment data is also used to structure summer program content.
- The food service department assigns food service managers to serve lunches at each program site.
- The professional development office plans and provides the training that occurs during the program.
- The public information department disseminates program information to parents and the community.
- The transportation department ensures that transportation to and from summer school sites is available for those students that need it.
- The budget and finance office ensures that sufficient funds are available to cover operational costs of the program.

> ...the professional development offered through the district is "a critical component of the summer program."

At the building level, school principals are responsible for ensuring the smooth operation of the program on-site. This includes ensuring that teachers have the resources and materials they need, making sure that there is sufficient physical space for the program, monitoring and observing instruction, keeping track of student and staff attendance, making sure that teachers attend the professional development sessions, and ensuring that students have signed up for the program. In addition to her specific responsibilities at Drew, Principal Lacefield worked directly with the executive director to plan JumpStart. Teachers are responsible for providing instruction and tutoring for students that attend summer school. Teachers also administer pre-/post-tests to students at the beginning and conclusion of the program.

Professional Development

According to Antonia Rodriguez, who teaches in the summer program at Drew, the professional development offered through the district is "a critical component of the summer program." As part of JumpStart, teachers participate in two days of professional development prior to the start of the program. These professional development days essentially function as an orientation for all teachers that will be participating in the JumpStart program. The overarching purpose of the professional development provided by the district is to familiarize participants with the goals and objectives of the summer program and to share with them the lesson plans in reading and math at each grade level. The actual sessions are lead by those directly engaged in writing the summer curriculum. During these sessions, instructors are grouped by grade level and subject matter and are given binders that correspond to their teaching assignments. The binders contain lesson plans and supplementary resources for each day of the summer program. In these seminars, teachers discuss scheduling, class structure and format, record keeping, evaluation (pre-/postchecklists), lesson plans, and room preparation.

In addition to the professional development sessions that take place prior to the start of JumpStart, the district provides weekly professional development seminars for the duration of the summer program. During this past summer, teachers gathered every Monday afternoon from July 26 through August 9 for two hours to share strategies and resources related to summer school instruction. The professional development seminars took place

off-site at the Ivanhoe Development Center. As with the orientation days described above, teachers were grouped by grade and subject matter. Teachers at Drew commented that this aspect of the professional development gave them an opportunity, away from their school buildings, to collaborate and share what is working in the classroom.

For the duration of the JumpStart Program, teachers also have one hour per week explicitly devoted to planning. This time is devoted to meetings with the principal, lesson preparation, and review of student work. In addition, teachers have three hours of planning time at the conclusion of the program to complete reports and record student post-test scores. All teachers are paid their hourly rate for participating in the professional development and planning sessions.

Funding and Transportation

According to Principal Lacefield, summer school is included in the school's Title I plan. The summer program at Drew is primarily funded with Title I dollars as part of the school's total allocation. In 2003 the program at Drew was supported with $32,000 in Title I funds. The Gary Community School Corporation also reserves some of the state allocation to support summer programming. Each year principals allocate a portion of their total allocation to summer school. If necessary, this amount is then supplemented by district funds.

Transportation is provided for students attending the summer program and is supported with district funds. For many school systems, providing transportation is critical in ensuring student participation in summer programs. This was perhaps even more critical during the summer of 2004 at Drew, as the school opened its doors to students from a closing school. Students in grades K–3 from Riley Elementary School, who would be attending Drew in the fall of 2004, were eligible to participate in the summer program at their new school site. Providing transportation made it possible to offer support to new students prior to the start of the school year.

The school also uses state funds to provide lunch to all children who participate in the program.

Parent Involvement

Parents are engaged in several aspects of the JumpStart Program. They were involved in the initial conceptualization of the program and in shaping program design. Parents serve as volunteer staff to provide additional support for classroom teachers. Parents also provide feedback to district and school staff as part of the program evaluation process. During the summer of 2003, Principal Lacefield asked parents to sit in and observe their children every Friday during the program. Parents were also invited to participate in a culmination activity at the conclusion of the program.

Program Evaluation and General Student Outcomes

Student outcome data, including classroom grades, standardized test scores, teacher-generated assessments, retention rates, student attendance and participation rates, and teacher surveys, are used by the school district to evaluate the program's effectiveness in raising student achievement. In addition, parent surveys, community surveys, and student surveys are used to determine stakeholder satisfaction with the program overall. The school uses the data collected to provide follow-up assistance and plan interventions for students as they matriculate to the next grade level.

The school district conducts an evaluation at the conclusion of the summer to determine if the program was successful in helping students meet articulated learning objectives. The evaluation is also used to strengthen and refine the curriculum for subsequent summers and to inform program improvement. The results of the evaluation are shared with district leadership teams and the Board of School Trustees (local school board). In the fall semester, after Gary students have taken the ISTEP assessments, the Department of Planning, Research and Accountability compares the assessment scores

of students that have participated in the JumpStart program the previous summer to those who have not.[28]

Data from Drew Elementary School for the summer of 2004 indicate that the program was generally successful in improving student achievement in mathematics and reading across all grade levels:

- In grade 2, the average achievement score in mathematics increased 28 percentage points from 58 percent (pre-program average) to 86 percent by the conclusion of the program. Average achievement scores in English/language arts increased only four percentage points from 6 to 10 percent.
- In grade 3, average achievement scores in mathematics, increased 17 percentage points; from 50 to 67 percent. In English/language arts average achievement scores increased 13 percentage points; from 62 to 75 percent.
- In grade 4, average achievement scores in mathematics increased 19 percentage points; from 26 to 45 percent, In English/language arts average achievement scores actually declined 6 percentage points from 52 percent (pre-program), to 46 percent (post-program).
- In grade 5, average achievement scores in mathematics increased 19 percentage points; from 35 to 54 percent. In English/language arts average achievement scores increased 20 percentage points; from 75 to 95 percent.[29]

In addition, the data also suggest that the program was somewhat successful in increasing the number of students meeting established performance standards in reading and math:

- In grade 1 mathematics, 75 percent of the post-test scores met the established standard, in contrast to 50 percent at the start of the program.
- In grades 2 and 3 English language arts, the percentage of post-test scores meeting the established standard increased 42 and 33 percentage points respectively.
- In grade 5 English language arts, 94 percent of post-test scores met the established standard in contrast to 54 percent at the start of the program.[30]

In other instances, most notably fourth grade mathematics and English language arts, students made gains, but these improvements were not sufficient to met established performance standards. The data also indicate that students also attended the program regularly; overall students across all grade levels attended the program an average of 12 days or 75 percent of the time.

Teaching staff at Drew credit the program with giving academically at-risk students a more solid foundation by providing them with a smaller instructional setting focused on hands-on learning. They also like the intentional focus on key areas of student weakness which makes it easier to track student progress. They note that student attendance is high, and there are few discipline problems. On this point, Melody Richards, a second grade teacher at Drew, asserts, "The interaction depends on the teacher. If you treat them [students] with respect, kindness and love—this makes the difference in how they act."

Additional Programs and Initiatives at Charles R. Drew

Principal Lacefield views the summer school program as a part of a larger support system, "a part of everything that we should be doing if we expect students to maintain, retain, and master what they are being taught . . . . These components are a vehicle to help us meet our goals." In addition to the JumpStart Program, Drew has benefited from several key initiatives credited with helping the school raise the academic achievement of its students in recent years. These include full-day kindergarten, small class sizes, an after-school tutorial program, and numerous reading intervention programs.

Full-Day Kindergarten

Drew's full-day kindergarten program is supported with state-level funds. For the 2003–04 academic

year, the Full-Day Kindergarten Grant was included in the approved state budget and appropriated at $8.5 million. The purpose of the grant is to assist public school corporations in funding kindergarten programs that provide students with a minimum of five hours of instructional time as a means of improving the academic and social development of young children. The three-year-old grant program is administered by the Indiana's State Department of Education and is open to all public school districts (corporations) in Indiana.

The regular (morning) kindergarten program at Drew is staffed by five certified teachers who provide three hours of daily instruction in reading, language arts, and mathematics to enrolled students. The funding provided by the state has enabled Drew to expand its programming by also offering an additional three hours of supplementary intensive instruction to support students with the greatest need, as determined by pretest scores in reading and mathematics. Teachers in the program focus on accelerating student learning in reading and mathematics through language development activities, use of manipulatives, teaching concepts, and problem-solving strategies.[31]

Class Size Reduction Initiative (K–3)

Drew's participation in the district's class size reduction initiative is also part of the school's overall approach to fostering academic growth. The initiative provides funding for smaller class sizes in the lower elementary grades. Coupled with the smaller student-teacher ratio is a focus on individualized instruction, guided instruction, the development of individual student portfolios, the use of hands-on activities, and the development of individual learning plans for students with learning difficulties. As part of this initiative, Drew implemented a reading block schedule in order to increase the time students spent on reading instruction and to allow teachers to work collaboratively to organize instructional groups based on student needs.

All schools that participate in the class size reduction program are responsible for developing monitoring plans that describe the strategies and practices being utilized to facilitate improved student learning. Teaching staff in class size reduction schools also participate in district professional development activities. Parents are keep informed of student progress through weekly and monthly progress reports, newsletters, and grade-level cluster meetings.[32]

After-School Tutorial Program

During the regular school year, Drew offers an after-school program for students in grades 1-5. The goals of the program are to help students sustain achievement gains in reading/language arts and mathematics and to provide an opportunity for students to engage in small group instruction. The program meets for 18 weeks out of the school year for 3 days per week. Phase I of the program provides academic remediation for students who have been retained or have failed to meet academic standards in reading, language arts, and mathematics in grades 3, 4, and 5. Phase II includes all students who need reinforcement of basic skills and competencies in order to continue to be successful in their present grades. The program meets weekdays before and after school for two hours.

> "Students are more eager to learn, more cooperative, and more successful because of the environment in the after-school program."

During the 2002–03 academic year, the program served 80 students, approximately 20 percent of the total student body. Participating students also receive a light meal during the program. Principal Lacefield credits the after-school program with helping students to stay focused and finish their homework and with changing students' attitudes and behavior during the regular school day: "Students

are more eager to learn, more cooperative, and more successful because of the environment in the after-school program."

Challenges to Implementation

Despite some success in creating a districtwide summer school program, the district still faces challenges related to student participation and teacher placement.

School outreach efforts to parents of children eligible for the program begin in the spring. In addition to school recruitment efforts, the district actively promotes the program by continually including enrollment announcements as part of the superintendent's newsletter, published monthly. Moreover, student participation in the district's summer program is monitored closely, as weekly attendance sheets are forwarded to the district from individual school sites. Despite these efforts, Principal Lacefield expressed concern that students who are identified in the spring and actively targeted to participate do not always actually attend the program. Although this is changing, as parents are "now beginning to realize the importance," additional outreach efforts might be necessary to bolster student enrollment and continued parental support of the program. In addition, the district might consider providing incentives for perfect attendance and assisting working parents by partnering with community-based organizations to provide full day programming on-site.

Another challenge is working with the local teachers' union to ensure that teachers are placed in schools in a manner that ultimately benefits the students attending the summer program. Teachers who wish to teach in the JumpStart Program complete applications with the district. At the end of this process, teachers are assigned to individual schools based on their seniority within the system. While many staff tend to request their own buildings (i.e., the school at which they are assigned to teach during the school year), they are not required to do so. As such, teachers with the longest tenure and experience in the classroom may not always end up teaching in areas/schools with the greatest need. Conversely, teachers with the least amount of teaching experience may find themselves in classrooms with students that have greater needs and challenges than they can support. In addition, the challenge is to ensure that qualified teachers are teaching summer school in key grade levels where the achievement issues have been most salient, regardless of seniority status. Although Principal Lacefield views the relationship with the teachers' union as an ongoing challenge, she also commented that the district has thus far been able to mitigate these challenges.

At the school level, Drew is undergoing significant transition, including accepting students from a closing school and the departure of Principal Lacefield in the summer of 2004. This is occurring at a time when the school has failed to meet its AYP targets and is targeted for corrective action. Although the summer school initiative is critical in helping students stay on course and in mitigating some of the challenges related to student achievement, it will take much more than the summer program to ensure lasting improvements at Drew.

Elements of Success

Charles R. Drew has successfully incorporated several key student support programs into the everyday business of the school. Thus, the JumpStart Summer Program and the after-school tutorial program, used in tandem with the other strategies outlined above, are reflected in the school's overall approach to improvement. Principal Lacefield reflects this understanding as she asserts, "Summer school is a part of what we do all year in trying to meet the needs of our students."

At the building level, the JumpStart Program is credited with building student confidence by creating a space in which teachers can provide individualized instruction, support, and encouragement. The strength of the JumpStart Program lies in the district's willingness to play a key role in the program's development and implementation. Key aspects of the district's involvement include maintaining the job-embedded professional development provided

to teachers, developing a curriculum that is aligned to state standards, using data to drive program direction and focus, and ensuring program sustainability through the strategic use of Title I funds.

The professional development offered by the Gary Community School Corporation is reflective of best practices in that it

- provides immediate, job-related support to teachers who have already extended themselves by taking on a summer teaching assignment;
- offers a collegial atmosphere for teachers to regularly share challenges, successes, and strategies;
- ensures consistency and continuity in the curriculum across the district by outlining lesson plans and expressly linking them to state standards in advance;
- utilizes teachers to both develop the curriculum and deliver the training, thereby creating a peer-to-peer system of professional development;
- eliminates teacher burden by providing well-scripted lesson plans that still allow for adaptability at the classroom level.

The program's well-articulated curriculum eases teacher burden and potential burnout by providing a general framework for lesson plans while also allowing teachers to make adaptations at the classroom level to suit the immediate needs of their students. Teachers can focus on fine-tuning or adapting the lessons plans, as opposed to creating them entirely. Moreover, the district, by enlisting teachers to both write the curriculum and train other teachers, harnesses the creative talents and expertise of its teaching corps and helps to build buy-in for the program content. Finally, the creation of a districtwide curriculum, clearly delineated by grade level and subject area, creates a consistency across school buildings and classrooms that would be difficult to imitate without district leadership in this area.

The district's explicit focus on specific areas where students need additional support in meeting state academic and performance standards is also noteworthy. Rather than cover a wide range of standards in reading and math in the summer program, the district uses state assessment data to identify student weaknesses and build the summer interventions around those key areas (e.g., geometry, measurement, writing, etc.). Given that a frequent complaint of summer school instructors is the lack of time to cover everything, focusing on specific standards in greater depth is a promising approach to the compressed timeframe.

The program's well-articulated curriculum eases teacher burden and potential burnout by providing a general framework for lesson plans while also allowing teachers to make adaptations at the classroom level to suit the immediate needs of their students.

Drew has also been able to secure sustainable *base* funding for the program by including summer school as part of multiple interventions to improve student performance. Principal Lacefield's remarks suggest that the program has become institutionalized at both the building and district levels. This approach holds significant promise, particularly for high-poverty, low-performing schools. Specifically, institutionalized support reflects a long-term commitment to earmarking funds for program longevity. This type of support is crucial to maintaining programs like JumpStart even when student performance improves and schools are no longer in improvement status. Though it remains to be seen if JumpStart will continue to enjoy widespread district-level support, the long history of the Gary Community School Corporation in providing summer learning opportunities bodes well for the program.

Endnotes

[13] Student enrollment figures as of 1/12/04.

[14] According to the 2000 U.S. Census, 84 percent of the city population is African American.

[15] This number only refers to those individuals who are completely out of the workforce and does not include unemployed persons. If we include both unemployed individuals and those not presently in the workforce, this number increases to 52 percent of the adult population.

[16] U.S. Census data. Retrieved 8/31/04 from http://factfinder.census,gov/servlet/QTTable?_bm=y&-geo_id=16000US18227000&-qr_name=DEC_2000.

[17] Data retrieved from the Indiana Department of Education on 8/26/04 from http://mustang.doe.state.in.us/TRENDS/corp.cfm?corp=4690.

[18] The Gary Community School Corporation is currently in LEA improvement status for failing to meet AYP targets for 2002 and 2003.

[19] For the 2002–03 academic year, the average SAT score in the district was 789; the state average was 1004.

[20] ISTEP results for the Gary Community Schools Corporation. Retrieved on 8/26/04 from http://mustang.doe.state.in.us/SEARCH/snapcorp.cfm?corp=4690.

[21] Charles R. Drew School Profile, accessed 8/25/04 from http://www.garycsc.k12.in.us/drew/html/school_home.html.

[22] Student attendance remains consistently high at Drew, with an average attendance rate of 99.1 for the 2002–03 academic year and 97.7 for the 2003–04 academic year.

[23] The Four Star Awards Program recognizes schools that place in the state's upper quartile (25 percent) in student attendance rates, mathematics proficiency scores, language arts proficiency scores, and percent of students passing *both* language arts and mathematics. The award carries no monetary value and is given on annual basis. Accessed on 8/30/04 from http://www.doe.state.in.us/assessment/fourstar.html.

[24] Florine Lacefield was the principal at Charles R. Drew Elementary School at the time that the summer school survey was completed and forwarded to CCSSO. In the summer of 2004, Lacefield was transferred and currently serves as the principal for Jefferson Elementary School.

[25] According to data from the Indiana Department of Education website, Drew is currently in year four of school improvement (first year of restructuring). LEA restructuring options include replacing principal and staff, contracting with private companies to manage the school, reopening Drew as a charter school, or state takeover.

[26] In the summer of 2004, summer school was offered at every school in the district except those schools that were scheduled to close in June 2004.

[27] Gary Community School Corporation Summer School 2004 Handbook, "Shape Up, Measure Up: Grade Two."

[28] Students with matching characteristics are compared to eliminate variability. This allows district staff to more clearly attribute differences to student participation/non-participation in the summer program.

[29] Average achievement scores were determined by calculating the mean for student pre and post test scores. The gains described above reflect the differences between the pre and post test means and do not represent individual student data.

[30] The established standard in both reading and mathematics is 75 percent. This number is the minimum passing score (or benchmark), established by a cohort of teachers within the district, that students need to achieve in order to be considered as having acquired the knowledge and skills to be successful in the respective subject area.

[31] From Charles R. Drew School Profile and Improvement Plan.

[32] From Charles R. Drew School Profile and Improvement Plan.

East Silver Spring Elementary School
Silver Spring, Maryland

Background Information

Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS), a suburban Maryland school district bordering Washington, D.C., operates the Extended Learning Opportunities Summer Adventures in Learning (ELO SAIL) program in 18 elementary schools. Montgomery County covers a large and varied geographic and socioeconomic region. The school district spreads over nearly 500 square miles and serves 140,000 students in 192 schools. Affluent neighborhoods interweave with high-poverty and immigrant communities, particularly in the urban, southern end of the district. The northern end of the district consists of rapidly growing suburban and rural areas. MCPS ranks 12th in the nation in terms of fastest-rising student enrollment.

There are 125 elementary schools in the district. However, the Montgomery County's ELO SAIL program purposefully concentrates district resources in 18 *high-poverty* elementary schools, mostly located in the more densely populated southern end of the district. Coordinated central planning allows the district to offer accelerated summer learning programs to over 5,000 students in the selected schools. Each of the elementary schools chosen for the ELO SAIL program receive Title I federal funds and have large student populations receiving Free and Reduced Meals (FARMS) or English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) services. It is important to note that MCPS targets resources to these 18 schools based on their Title I eligibility, not necessarily their overall school performance on the state's performance assessment. Thus, it is possible for a Title I school to participate in the ELO SAIL program even if they are making AYP.

East Silver Spring Elementary School, in Silver Spring, Maryland, is one of the 18 elementary schools that participate in the summer ELO program. A fairly diverse urban area on the southern edge of Montgomery County, Silver Spring flanks a major avenue leading to downtown Washington, D.C. The Silver Spring population is 28 percent black, 46 percent white, 22 percent Hispanic, and 8 percent Asian. The median family income in Silver Spring is $60,631, more than $10,000 above the U.S. average. In Silver Spring, 6.4 percent of families live below the poverty level, compared with 9.4 percent nationally.[33] Yet, the apparent economic affluence of the Silver Spring community masks the pockets of poverty surrounding some neighborhood schools in the MCPS district.

East Silver Spring Elementary School is located on a residential street within walking distance of the downtown center of Silver Spring. The school educates approximately 370 students in grades pre-K–3. Most students at East Silver Spring Elementary fall into at least one of the demographic subgroups that place them at-risk for academic failure. Over 56 percent of students receive FARMS, 82 percent are minorities, 19 percent are in ESOL and 12 percent of students are in Special Education. Because the school receives Title I funds and serves an at-risk population, all East Silver Spring students are eligible to benefit from enriched summer instruction, made possible through the district-sponsored ELO SAIL program.

East Silver Spring students have the opportunity to demonstrate their academic skills when they par-

TABLE 1. East Silver Spring Elementary School Grade 3 2002-–03 MSA scores by subgroup. [34]

	SCORE	African American	Hispanic	White	LEP	FARMS	All Students
READING	Advanced	5.40%	0.0%	22.2%	0.0%	3.0%	9.0%
	Proficient	59.5%	15.8%	61.1%	18.2%	39.4%	46.8%
	Basic	35.1%	84.2%	16.7%	81.8%	57.6%	44.2%
MATH	Advanced	16.2%	5.3%	44.4%	9.1%	9.1%	19.5%
	Proficient	51.4%	52.6%	44.4%	54.5%	54.5%	49.4%
	Basic	32.4%	42.1%	11.1%	36.4%	36.4%	31.2%

ticipate in the Maryland State Assessment (MSA) in reading and math. Performance on the MSA is used to determine AYP as required under the No Child Left Behind Act. MSA results for the 2002–03 academic year indicate that East Silver Spring Elementary School successfully met AYP goals for all student subgroups.

Despite this accomplishment, student performance data still indicate that East Silver Spring is affected by the achievement gap between minority students and their white peers. While 22 percent of white third-grade students performed at an advanced level in reading, only 5.4 percent of African American students were advanced and 0 percent of Hispanic students were advanced. Similarly, the rate of African American students scoring at a basic level was double that of white students. However, approximately 60 percent of students, white and black, earned a median score of proficient. This data shows wide discrepancies at the higher and lower ends of the achievement spectrum but indicate that the school is doing a good job at getting most white and black students to be proficient readers. Hispanic students are performing at significantly lower levels than their peers, rating only 16 percent proficient and 84 percent basic. Hispanic performance was likely impacted by the tendency of Hispanic students to also be English language learners.

> ...MCPS launched the ELO SAIL program as part of its strategy to focus resources and supports on Title I schools.

When student data is analyzed by poverty and language proficiency, performance shifts negatively. Only 3 percent of students eligible for FARMS scored advanced in reading. Predictably, no students designated as Limited English Proficient scored as advanced readers. In math, 9.1 percent of LEP and FARMS students scored advanced, 54.5 percent scored proficient, and 36.4 percent scored basic. The strikingly similar low achievement scores for these two student groups at East Silver Spring illustrate the acumen of MCPS district officials in targeting additional support to these students through the summer ELO program.

While the demographics and assessment data at East Silver Spring represent an academically at-risk student population, the instructional leadership at the school reflects a confidence in all students' ability to achieve. The administration fosters a sense of pride and accomplishment for teachers and students. Principal Cynthia Best-Goring oversees the integration of the summer ELO program with the year-round program, so that a continuous vision of academic achievement is maintained throughout the building, throughout the year. East Silver Spring Elementary School prides itself on being an institution "Where Excellence Springs for Every Student Every Second."[35] MCPS support for ELO programs helps to make this vision possible.

Program Beginnings and Goals

The Montgomery County summer ELO program developed through the efforts of district staff, working with the support of the superintendent's office and the board of education. An Elementary Summer School Task Force, representing multiple stakeholders, participated in concept development and planning. The program was piloted at 17 schools in 2002 and became operational in 18 schools in 2003. The program operated at 17 school sites in 2004.

Conceived as part of a comprehensive district effort to address the achievement gap by improving early grades education for poor and minority students, MCPS launched the ELO SAIL program as part of its strategy to focus resources and supports on Title I schools. Academic achievement data for low-income children and English language learners were used to support the targeting of resources to Title I elementary schools. Research shows that student test scores typically regress by at least one month, as measured by grade-level equivalents, when students return to school in the fall.[36] This

summer slide has more pronounced effects on students from poor and minority backgrounds. The ELO SAIL program is intended to proactively prevent summer learning loss by accelerating the academic performance of the children in the district's most needy schools.

The primary mission of the Montgomery County ELO SAIL program is to promote the attainment of high academic standards in the district's low-income elementary schools. Specifically, the program seeks to[37]

- accelerate learning by previewing concepts and skills to be taught in the grade students will enter in the fall,
- strengthen basic skills that are the preconditions of later learning,
- alleviate the loss of academic skills that some students may experience over the summer months,
- provide continuing English language instruction for speakers of other languages.

The Montgomery County Board of Education articulated the goals of the ELO SAIL program as an element of its "Our Call to Action" policy initiative. The "Our Call to Action" policy is a strategic reform plan designed to raise the level of student achievement to rigorous standards of academic performance. The summer ELO program is part of this overall district effort to support heightened achievement in high-poverty schools. The vision of school district staff was not to plan and design a summer school program, but rather to re-create the school system for 5,000 students during the summer. District sponsorship plays a crucial role in aligning the summer program with the academic standards that drive instruction during the traditional school year.

Superintendent Jerry D. Weast was an early and visible advocate for the ELO SAIL program. Strong leadership and centralized planning for the ELO SAIL program lessened the initial burden of responsibility on school administrators. School administrators receive continuous support from the district, through the Division of Academic Support, Federal and State Programs (ASFSP). Division Director Chrisandra Richardson and Coordinator of Extended Learning Opportunities Diana Wollin[38] were actively involved in administration of the 2003 summer program. The ELO SAIL program supports administrators in meeting accountability goals and in attaining high standards in their schools. In turn, administrators are able to act as instructional leaders for teachers, transmitting awareness of the program goals and supporting teachers in moving students toward high standards.

> The primary mission of the Montgomery County ELO SAIL program is to promote the attainment of high academic standards in the district's low-income elementary schools.

In order to accelerate learning, review basic skills, and thwart summer learning loss, MCPS provides a complete summer curriculum for reading and math. The curriculum is designed to offer a preview of the approaching grade and a partial review of the previous grade. For example, a rising second grader will be introduced to elements of the second-grade curriculum during the summer and also receive instruction that reinforces skills taught during the first grade. This curriculum design helps bolster the performance of struggling students but is not intended as remedial. At the same time, the preview curriculum provides a natural and accelerated transition to the next grade level. This format challenges advanced students and gives struggling students a better shot at success in the coming year.

Due to the large English language learner (ELL) population, ESOL services are crucial to the successful attainment of the ELO SAIL program goals. English language development support is available

to students at every school site. This helps to mitigate language attrition often experienced by ELL students during the summer break.

Program Structure, Participation and Content

The ELO SAIL program takes place for four weeks in the middle of the summer. In 2003, the program ran from July 7 through August 1. Students attended five days per week, four hours per day. Breakfast and lunch were served daily, allowing for three hours of daily instructional time. Reading and writing instruction totaled two hours, while mathematics instruction lasted one hour each day. The average student-teacher ratio in 2002 was 15:1, and in 2003 it was 22:1. Small student-teacher ratios allowed for more personalized instruction than is possible in larger school-year classes. Program starting times were staggered between 8 and 9 a.m., and ending times were between 12 and 1 p.m. Many of the program sites incorporated optional after-school recreational activities for students

The ELO SAIL program is open to all students at each school site, regardless of whether reading and math skills are below grade level at the time they enroll in the program.[39] Participation in the program is voluntary and is not linked to grade-level promotion. The summer program is not intended as remediation, but rather as an opportunity to strengthen student skills in preparation for the coming academic year. Therefore, the curriculum provides learning opportunities to all students. District students who do not attend one of the selected ELO SAIL schools may still participate in the traditional, fee-based district summer school programs at other county schools.

In the 2002 pilot year, 73 percent of students at eligible school sites across the district participated in the summer ELO program. This high level of participation came despite a late start in initial program planning and the need to coordinate with other community summer programs after their proposals were completed.

An internal evaluation of the initial 2002 summer ELO program illustrates how important advanced parent knowledge is to the success of summer programs. The pilot program was developed on a hurried timeframe in the spring of 2002. Despite the short planning time, 73 percent of children at the 17 eligible schools participated. A survey of parents whose children did not participate in the ELO program revealed that earlier notification about the program dates would likely have resulted in increased enrollment. Earlier planning on the part of the school district would presumably allow for parents to make plans for vacations and camps that would not conflict with the ELO SAIL program. Twenty-nine percent of nonparticipatory families indicated that the program conflicted with vacation dates, and 34 percent of nonparticipatory families indicated that they planned to enroll their child in the following year. In 2003, efforts were made to provide early notice to families and student participation increased to 82 percent.

Families that did enroll their children in the 2002 ELO SAIL program reported extremely high satisfaction levels. Ninety-one percent of parents planned to reenroll their children in subsequent years. Parent satisfaction on most other aspects of the program was also quite high.

District researchers noted communication with parents as a target area for improvement in 2002. In contrast with high overall satisfaction rates, only a relatively low 75 percent of parents indicated that they received daily information about ELO SAIL activities. Although the district set *weekly* communication with parents as its initial goal, this finding suggests that the ELO SAIL program could do more to facilitate parent involvement and parent-teacher interactions in order to reach the one-fourth of families who reported a lack of daily communication with the school faculty. Since schools with large populations of students from non-English-speaking families were intentionally chosen to participate in the program, language differences may have complicated family-school communications. As during the regular school year, summer programs benefit from on-site bilingual staff or bilingual parent coordinators.

Principal Cynthia Best-Goring suggests that expanded parent services would boost enrollment and participation in the summer ELO program at her school. She envisions a full complement of wraparound services that would reflect the role of schools as community centers. In particular, Best-Goring recommends the addition of family literacy and adult English as a Second Language (ESL) programs to reach more non-English-speaking parents. Wraparound programming would also meet the child-care needs of parents, many of whom are employed full time and need a full-day option.

In a fun and child-centered effort to increase participation, MCPS implemented an incentive program for student attendance. The incentive program is considered a central component of ELO SAIL. At East Silver Spring Elementary, throughout the four-week summer program, two new bikes were displayed in the school entranceway. The bikes were to be awarded to students with perfect attendance at the end of the program.

Basic academic skills are the core of the ELO SAIL program. The curriculum is organized into four-week instructional plans for each grade level. The instructional plans provided to teachers are detailed, differentiated, and directly linked to indicators in the regular county curriculum. MCPS provides daily lesson plans, but the curriculum is not scripted. Instructional plans provide teachers with a solid framework for instruction, leaving teachers an appropriate amount of flexibility to be creative and responsive to student needs.

Summer literacy instruction follows a balanced literacy approach. Teachers integrate phonics, word study, and decoding instruction with holistic language experiences. During the literacy block, children visit literacy centers, learn reading strategies, read for literary experience, and participate in guided reading activities. Teachers combine whole-group instruction with small-group instruction to create learning environments appropriate for children of all levels. Small-reading-group placements are made according to assessment data, but placements remain flexible throughout the program. Variations on the lesson plans, based on assessment data, are included in the plans.

Three fundamental concepts are at the core of mathematics instruction at the K–3 level: number sense, place value, and operations. Mathematics instruction is based on building knowledge of "enduring understandings" and answering "essential questions" that are linked to county curriculum indicators. Sample essential questions in the Grade 3 instructional plan include

- How does the position of a digit in a number affect its value?
- How are patterns in larger numbers similar to those in smaller numbers?
- What strategies can be used to multiply and divide?

The instructional plans are neatly organized into preview and review sections for each grade level. Lesson plans and center packets that correspond to the plans are given to teachers. Teachers at East Silver Spring Elementary praised the MCPS purchase of *Digi-blocks*, mathematics manipulatives that help children develop a concrete understanding of number sense.

Most of the ELO SAIL sites include an optional afternoon recreational component, for which parents pay on a sliding scale. Funds received through the 21st-Century Community Learning Centers program have been used to offer free afternoon recreational activities at 10 of the 18 summer ELO school sites.

Administrative Structure and Staff Responsibilities

One of the most important aspects of the MCPS ELO SAIL program is the joint program administration that occurs at the district level and at the building level. Within MCPS, there is a dedicated staff member responsible for management of the ELO SAIL program, the coordinator of extended learning opportunities. Additional district leadership comes from the Director of ASFSP, who oversees administration of Title I programs. These district leaders play an important role in planning and coordinating

efforts across the school sites. They provide support to school administrators and advocate for the commitment of appropriate district resources.

In addition, the MCPS Office of Staff Development and Office of Curriculum and Instructional Programs works in collaboration with ASFSP to provide staff training on curriculum objectives, outcomes, materials, and instructional guides. A district coordinator recruits summer volunteers and conducts volunteer training sessions with staff from the Division of ASFSP.

At the school level, the principal and assistant principal play important roles in supervision of the ELO SAIL program. The principal coordinates staffing and fulfills preparatory responsibilities for the academic year, while maintaining a presence during the ELO SAIL program. However, Montgomery County taps assistant principals, "administrators-in-training," to serve as ELO SAIL principals. It is the assistant principal who manages the daily operation of the program and who bears primary responsibility during the four-week program. This arrangement provides hands-on administrative training for assistant principals aspiring to become principals and gives them a valuable opportunity, as part of their professional development, to hone key leadership and managerial skills that they will ultimately utilize as principals in their own school buildings.

During the summer, students are often placed with teachers that follow them from grade to grade. This continuity of student-teacher relationships strengthens the program and allows teachers to anticipate and respond to student needs throughout their time together.

Principals at the summer ELO sites select staff beginning in January. All ELO SAIL teachers are fully licensed in the grade and subject areas they teach. Teachers are paid at an hourly rate based on their salary for the upcoming regular school year. Principals hire from within their regular faculty to the extent possible. In 2002, 67 percent of summer school teachers were assigned to teach in the school where they worked during the regular school year. Faculty are able to keep their classrooms over the summer and work with the students they will teach in the fall. This arrangement is attractive to teachers and creates automatic linkages from summer school to the school year. Students are at ease with familiar teachers in a familiar environment, thus reducing anxiety and increasing readiness to learn.

In 2003, at East Silver Spring Elementary, all teachers but one were regular school faculty. An additional best practice encouraged at East Silver Spring is for teachers to loop with their students for two years. During the summer, students are often placed with teachers that follow them from grade to grade. This continuity of student-teacher relationships strengthens the program and allows teachers to anticipate and respond to student needs throughout their time together.

Several mandatory workshop days provide teachers with professional development prior to the commencement of the program. During these days, teachers have an opportunity to become familiar with the goals, expectations, curriculum, and assessments. Ongoing professional development occurs one hour per week through the four-week session. The weekly sessions are devoted to reviewing student work, discussing instructional strategies, and team planning. Teachers are compensated at their hourly rate for participation in all professional development activities and are also paid for classroom setup time at the beginning and end of the program.

Summer support staff is necessary to run the ELO SAIL program. Instructional assistants, ESOL teachers, Special Education teachers, secretarial staff, cafeteria staff, transportation staff, health techni-

cians, and crossing guards join classroom teachers and administrators in ensuring the continuous smooth operation of the school each summer. The Montgomery County Police and Health Departments also provide invaluable support to the program.

Volunteer teaching assistants, many of whom are high school students completing community service requirements, provide helpful support to teachers. The volunteers assist in keeping students on task and provide individualized attention to students. One high school volunteer said, "During part of my summer, I volunteered to help kids in first grade during summer school. I think my action has benefited the students; they were able to learn more from the teacher while I did little things that the teacher didn't really need to worry about." The structured volunteer component is a unique aspect of the MCPS ELO SAIL program that benefits elementary students, high school students, and teachers.

Funding

For the 2003–04 fiscal years, $2.2 million in federal Title I funds were appropriated to support all aspects of the ELO SAIL program. Funding was channeled through the Office of Instruction and Program Development Summer Supplemental Employment funds and the Targeted Poverty Grant I. A stated purpose in the Targeted Poverty funding was to support extended-year and extended-day programs. The intentional targeting of Title I monies toward the ELO SAIL program in high-poverty schools represents an innovative and comprehensive strategy for improving student performance to meet AYP and federal/state accountability measures.

Funding from the 21st-Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) program offers a key complement to the use of Title I funds. The 21st-CCLC funds support a range of afternoon programming options not possible through the use of Title I funds alone. Without the 21st-CCLC afternoon activities, children from working families would be less likely to participate in the half-day summer ELO academic program.

Federal Title I funds are used to provide bus transportation to and from the school for all qualified students. Transportation costs are minimized by use of students' neighborhood school facilities and by staggered arrival and departure times across schools. Additionally, federal funds support the provision of breakfast and lunch to participating students.

Entering its third year in 2004, the ELO SAIL program is likely to be sustainable as long as Title I and 21st CCLC funding is available in these schools. It is likely that as individual school populations and instructional needs change, the district would select schools most in need of ELO SAIL.

Collaboration with Community Organizations

To keep the school operating safely during the summer, MCPS partners with the Health and Human Services Department and with the Montgomery County Police Department. These partnerships are an extension of school-year partnerships. The partnerships place health technicians and crossing guards at the ELO SAIL sites.

Partnerships with community-based organizations are not given an explicit role in the academic portion of the ELO SAIL program. However, since the ELO SAIL program is only a half-day program, it was important to establish links with community groups that are able to provide safe afternoon activities for students. Through the use of 21st-CCLC funds, 10 ELO SAIL schools have paired with community groups to offer a variety of afternoon activities. The 21st-Century grants are used to finance social, cultural, and recreational activities that support the cognitive development of students from disadvantaged backgrounds. Several community organizations partner with MCPS on 21st-CCLC projects. Partners include the Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County; Montgomery County Collaboration Council for Children, Youth and Families; Montgomery County Department of Recreation; and Linkages to Learning.

The volunteer mentoring component of the ELO SAIL program engages the community in the

life of the school. High school and middle school students can volunteer to fulfill required community service hours. Parents and community members are actively recruited to volunteer through the MCPS mentoring program. The district recruits volunteers and hosts volunteer training sessions at the beginning of the summer.

Program Evaluation and General Student Outcomes

Following the ELO SAIL pilot program in 2002, the MCPS Office of Shared Accountability conducted a thorough analysis of student participation and performance. Study results showed that students who participated in the four-week summer ELO program demonstrated measurable academic benefits in the fall.[40]

Program evaluators used attendance data, assessment data, teacher surveys, and parent surveys to carry out a comprehensive review of the 2002 summer ELO program. Three research questions guided the evaluation:

1) Did the four-week intervention produce overall academic benefits in reading and math?

2) Did ELO benefit students in all racial/ethnic subgroups?

3) Did ELO benefit students at all levels of academic need, as indicated by participation in FARMS eligibility and/or ESOL services?

Researchers collected math and reading assessment data for students entering grades K–3 in the fall of 2002. Students were given math and reading pretests in June and post-tests in September. MCPS staff developed their own math assessment, while the reading assessments utilized were part of the evaluation cycle from the MCPS Early Childhood Assessment Program. The reading assessment measured foundational reading skills and text reading proficiency.

Program evaluators compared data across three groups of students: those who did not participate in the ELO SAIL program, those who partially participated in the program, and those who participated in the full four-week program. Assessment data were also disaggregated by race, ESOL, and FARMS designations.

Student achievement results indicated that the ELO SAIL program produced academic benefits for participating students across grades 1–3. All racial/ethnic groups in grades 1–3 benefited from the program. First-grade students in the ELO SAIL program gained the equivalent of one month's reading instructional benefits during the summer. ESOL/FARMS students benefited in grades 1 and 3 but did not show significant gains in grade 2 reading and math.

School leaders use student outcome data to evaluate program effectiveness, to inform instruction, and to monitor student progress. Likewise, district leaders use student outcomes to evaluate the overall

TABLE 2. Overview of student achievement results comparing spring to fall gains of full ELO attendance group to non-ELO attendance group.[41]

MAJOR OUTCOME QUESTION	SUBJECT AREA	GRADE 1	GRADE 2	GRADE 3
Did the ELO program produce academic benefits?	Mathematics	YES	YES	YES
	Reading	YES	YES	N.A.
Did all racial/ethnic groups benefit?	Mathematics	YES	YES	YES
	Reading	YES	YES	N.A.
Did all ESOL/FARMS groups benefit?	Mathematics	YES	NO	YES
	Reading	YES	NO	N.A.

NOTES: Grade 3 reading was excluded because no grade 3 reading measures were available. Results for grade 2 ESOL/FARMS differed for different student groups.

effectiveness of the program. The 2002 program evaluation made several specific recommendations for improving the effectiveness of the summer ELO program. Particular attention was given to teacher dissatisfaction with the curriculum. In 2002, the first full year that the mathematics curriculum was implemented, only 36 percent of teachers in 2002 reported that they were satisfied with the mathematics curriculum. This was the first full year that a revised mathematics curriculum was implemented. In 2003, the math curriculum was modified to fit teacher needs and to blend more effectively with the academic-year curriculum.

The positive study findings were publicized to garner support from district leaders, federal funding sources, and the general public for continuation of the pilot program. Independent external reviews of the district's study added credibility to MCPS's findings on the educational value of the ELO SAIL program.

While quantitative studies provide outside parties with valuable information about the ELO SAIL program's success, qualitative teacher observations also show individual student progress. East Silver Spring teachers reported these positive student outcomes in weekly informal reports to administrators:

Reading

- "Today in reading, I had an ideal guided reading session; I had a volunteer, and everyone was fully engaged."
- "Students are beginning to know what I expect with written responses and trying to meet the standard."
- "One student reading on an early emergent level could not read one word in a book. We practiced using whiteboards, flashcards, and running records, and now the student remembers vocabulary from the story and uses reading strategies."

Math

- "Students were able to use place value when comparing numbers and explaining that digits have place value."
- "Children are becoming more fluent in saying and writing numbers."
- "One particular student now has understanding of place value using Digi-blocks."

Challenges to Implementation

Fiscal challenges are ever-present in MCPS, as in most local education agencies. MCPS had the unique foresight to maximize its Title I spending throughout the year with the ELO program. In order to shore up the financial backing for ELO SAIL, district leaders conducted a systematic program evaluation.

> In documenting the improved academic outcomes for students participating in ELO SAIL, MCPS has provided ample support for its decision to spend money in schools where children are most in need.

In documenting the improved academic outcomes for students participating in ELO SAIL, MCPS has provided ample support for its decision to spend money in schools where children are most in need.

During planning at the district level, several significant challenges had to be overcome. Coordination with the cafeteria service in providing twice-daily meals to all ELO SAIL students proved to be a difficult logistical issue that was ultimately resolved by district leaders. Some of the school facilities used are old and in need of modernization and technology improvements. However, continuous use of the building interferes with renovations and repairs.

At the school level, educators also faced implementation challenges. Some school sites faced problems with recruitment and staff turnover. Staffing was not an issue at East Silver Spring Elementary, likely because of the positive school climate.

Principal Cynthia Best-Goring was able to recruit from her own school-year faculty to staff the ELO SAIL program. Yet, she wrestled with increased teacher burnout. Best-Goring observed that even her truly committed staff tired of teaching through the summer, and many teachers were exhausted on the first days back in school in the fall. The decrease in reflection and planning time makes the school more vulnerable to loss of teachers who would prefer to work in a less challenging school environment. In order to keep staff motivated, the school administrative leadership must make concentrated efforts to support teachers on in-service days and to rally teachers to meet the needs of students year-round.

Future Directions

MCPS has focused on the intense preparation of students in the early grades as a strategy for closing the achievement gap and meeting accountability requirements. The innovative ELO SAIL program is currently only offered to students in elementary schools with the highest poverty levels in the district. District staff acknowledge the expansion of the program to middle and high schools as a future option. However, no current plan is in place to do so.

> Ownership of the program at the district level is instrumental in promoting collaboration and setting high expectations for all students at all selected schools.

East Silver Spring Principal Best-Goring and MCPS district leaders also discussed the future possibility of shifting to an 11- or 12-month school calendar. While the idea is appealing, a shift of this nature would require several major changes. To feasibly operate on a year-round basis, teachers' union contracts would have to be renegotiated, parents would have to be on board for the schedule change, and the district would have to experience a paradigm shift in its approach to instructional time and the role of schools.

Elements of Success

MCPS district leaders and East Silver Spring school administrators detailed the elements they found necessary for the successful operation of the ELO SAIL program. Leaders of the ELO SAIL program found it to be of primary importance that the program is open to all children in high-poverty schools. Particularly relevant in high-poverty schools is the provision of free transportation and meals to all students, which represent a wraparound approach that addresses the total needs of the child.

In addition, school and district leaders believe it is vital for the planning committee to have representation from all stakeholders in the program: administrators, district staff, parents, teachers, community members, volunteer coordinators, etc. Ownership of the program at the district level is instrumental in promoting collaboration and setting high expectations for all students at all selected schools.

The district plays a critical role in planning the summer program curriculum, so that it aligns with the district school-year curricula. A well-planned curriculum is another element crucial to the development and acceleration of academic skills. The summer program should extend and support learning that occurs during the regular school year.

Comprehensive staff development must occur around the curriculum, so that all teachers are equipped to deliver effective summer instruction. MCPS offered professional development to teachers in a three-day session at the beginning of summer and in weekly sessions thereafter. This is a critical and often overlooked element of success in summer programs. Administrators may assume that experienced school-year teachers do not need additional support focused on summer school instruction. However, high-quality, job-embedded professional development helps to sustain summer school teachers and to improve instruction.

District staff should manage program logistics. School leaders and district leaders agree that a district-level coordinator is necessary, so that principals can focus on their work. For the school sites to succeed, there must be readily available materials and seamless transitions to the summer schedule. MCPS found it useful to employ program coordinators that are former principals and can therefore relate to building principals.

Public awareness is another important factor in building a strong summer program. The district and the school share responsibility for publicizing the program. Publicity must take place within the school to build family awareness and participation. Publicity at the district level is necessary to cultivate support and sustainability for the program.

Montgomery County Public Schools took a systemic approach to all aspects of planning the ELO SAIL program. Coordination across the district, with targeted resources and support flowing to the schools, teachers, and students most in need, is necessary to improve the educational success of at-risk youth in high-poverty schools.

Endnotes

[33] 2000 US Census Data.

[34] Source: Maryland State Department of Education, Department of Accountability and Assessment. School Performance Reports are available from http://msp.msde.state.md.us/.

[35] From East Silver Spring Elementary website: http://www.mcps.k12.md.us/schools/eastsilverspringes/.

[36] Cooper, H. (2003, May). Summer learning loss: The problem and some solutions. *ERIC Digest*. Washington, DC.

[37] Adapted from Montgomery County summer ELO concept paper.

[38] The coordinator of extended learning opportunities position is now held by Janet Dunn.

[39] Montgomery County Public Schools Evaluation of the Extended Learning Opportunities Summer Program, Office of Shared Accountability. (October 2002).

[40] The Office of Shared Accountability in MCPS is now referred to as the Department of Shared Accountability.

[41] Source: Montgomery County Public Schools Evaluation of the Extended Learning Opportunities Summer Program, Office of Shared Accountability. (October 2002).

John B. McFerran Preparatory Academy
Louisville, Kentucky

Background Information

Jefferson County Public Schools (JCPS) is a mid-size urban district that serves 99,174 students. JCPS is the largest school system in Kentucky and the 28th largest school district in the United States. In January 2003, Jefferson County and the City of Louisville merged to become the 16th largest city in the nation. The city now covers 385 square miles and is home to approximately 700,000 citizens. Students in Jefferson County Public Schools attend one of 87 elementary schools, 23 middle schools, 20 high schools, or 23 other learning centers. Jefferson County students are 55 percent white, 36 percent African American, 4 percent Hispanic, and 3 percent Asian. Overall, Jefferson

County's residents are primarily white and African American; with whites making up 77 percent and African Americans 17.9 percent of the population, respectively. Eighty-two percent of county residents aged 25 and older have attained at least a high school diploma, with close to one quarter completing a bachelor's degree or better. The median income for all households in the county is $39,457.[42]

John B. McFerran Preparatory Academy, located in the northwest section of Louisville, educates approximately 600 children in grades K–5. McFerran is a neighborhood, inner-city elementary school, serving students from the surrounding community. Most students at McFerran live in poverty. Over three-fourths of students at McFerran are eligible for the federal Free and Reduced Meals (FARMS) program. The school is racially diverse: 40 percent of the students are African American, 40 percent are white, and 15 percent are Hispanic. Approximately 10 percent of McFerran students are English Language Learners (ELL).

The school's demographics are reflective of the immediate community surrounding the school, which stands in marked contrast to the county overall. West Louisville is predominantly African American. African Americans make up 79 percent of the area population; whites are the next largest group, accounting for 19 percent of the population. While 64 percent of community residents have attained at least a high school diploma, only 6 percent have completed a bachelor's degree or better. Forty-eight percent of the population is not presently in the labor force. One-third of families in the area lives below the federal poverty level, with 54 percent of all families with children under the age of five living below the poverty line. In West Louisville, the median household income is $20,118, nearly $20,000 below the median for the county overall.[43]

The mission of McFerran Preparatory Academy is to enable students to become self-sufficient, productive members of society. The school strives to infuse a rich academic environment with the principles of integrity, fairness, respect, and cooperation. Leadership at McFerran demonstrates a commitment to bringing instructional resources and enriching experiences to disadvantaged students.[44]

As evidence of this commitment to enabling the success of all students, McFerran has implemented a number of key programs and initiatives, including operating on-site early childhood education programs, offering Extended School Services (part of a districtwide program), providing ESL classes for students and parents, housing a YMCA child care enrichment program, and implementing numerous literacy focused programs (e.g., reading recovery, accelerated reader, families and books program). The school's consolidated plan for improvement reflects a commitment to improving the quality of instruction for diverse students by focusing on key strategies. These strategies include monitoring classroom instructional practices, disaggregating data to adjust instructional practices, and using current research to accommodate diverse learning styles.[45]

These strategies appear to be working, and McFerran has had significant successes in raising student academic achievement in recent years. The percentage of students scoring proficient or distinguished in mathematics continues to outpace district and state averages. In the 2003–04 academic year, this gap widened as the number of students at McFerran scoring at the proficient and/or distinguished level outpaced by 20 percent the number of students scoring at those levels at the district and state level overall. The school has also made considerable gains in reading; this past academic year 72 percent of students scored proficient or distinguished in reading, an increase of 14 percentage points over last year (see table 1). According to Principal Carol Miller, the school currently ranks 12th out of 87 schools in the district.

Despite the rising achievement levels of all students at McFerran, the achievement gaps between African American students and their white peers and between students of different socioeconomic backgrounds persist. Principal Miller views the summer program and other support services available to students as a critical to the elimination of these gaps.

Program Beginnings and Goals

McFerran Preparatory Academy operates the Rising Stars/ESS Summer Program as part of the districtwide Extended School Services (ESS) program. The Rising Stars/ESS Summer Program has been offered to struggling students at McFerran for more than 10 years. Leaders in the McFerran school community opted to supplement the school-year program with summer learning opportunities in order to foster academic achievement, lower the retention rate, counteract summer learning loss, and provide a safe, structured environment for students during the summer break.

The McFerran Rising Stars/ESS program was developed in coordination with districtwide summer programming that operated at multiple school sites. McFerran has combined two distinct district resources, Rising Stars and ESS, to create a unique, school-based summer program. The JCPS district, the principal, the teachers, the school academic counselor, community-based organizations, community recreational services, volunteers, and parents collaborated to develop a quality summer program that would be responsive to school and community needs.

TABLE 1. Percentage of fourth- and fifth-grade students scoring proficient/distinguished in reading and mathematics: 2000–01, 2001–02, 2002–03, and 2003–04 school years.

SCHOOL YEAR	SUBJECT AREA	SCHOOL PROFICIENT/ DISTINGUISHED	DIVISION PASSED	STATE PASSED
2000–01	Reading (Fourth Grade)	49	52	58
	Mathematics (Fifth Grade)	38	32	34
2001–02	Reading (Fourth Grade)	43	55	60
	Mathematics (Fifth Grade)	48	34	36
2002–03	Reading (Fourth Grade)	58	55	62
	Mathematics (Fifth Grade)	47	36	38
2003–04	Reading (Fourth Grade)	72	63	67
	Mathematics (Fifth Grade)	68	47	48

SOURCE: Kentucky Performance Reports, comparative results for 2000–01, 2001–02, 2002–03, and 2003–04 academic years.

NOTE: The numbers displayed above in the third column represent the percentages of students that scored proficient or distinguished on the state assessment administered in reading and mathematics at McFerran Preparatory Academy. The division percentages represent the overall performance of fourth and fifth graders in reading and mathematics in the Jefferson County Public School system. The state percentages reflect the overall performance of fourth and fifth graders in reading and mathematics throughout the state. The state's test rates student performance using four categories: novice, apprentice, proficient, and distinguished. These categories are based on a scale ranging from 0–140, with 100 being proficient.

Program developers sought to take advantage of funding opportunities provided by the Kentucky Educational Reform Act (KERA), which appropriates state-level funds to support additional instructional time for students at risk of academic failure.

McFerran Preparatory Academy is one of only two schools in Jefferson County that continued to operate the Rising Stars Summer Program in 2004. The district Rising Stars Program was formerly a central-based program with six or seven school sites. Principals were not always assigned to their own school-year buildings and worked with students from other schools. The program once served up to 91 schools but has suffered from poor attendance and lack of participation.

Despite the dismantling of the Rising Stars program at the district level, McFerran continues to receive funding and to run a quality program. JCPS continues to support the Rising Stars/ESS Summer Program at McFerran because of the school's demonstrated success in implementing the program to raise achievement for underprivileged children.

The primary goal of the McFerran Rising Stars/ESS Summer Program is to reduce the number of at-risk readers. To that end, educators at McFerran provide intense, focused reading strategy instruction. Students are then able to apply their improved reading skills across the content areas when they rejoin the whole-school program in the fall.

The instructional team at McFerran has developed specific, school-based goals that include looking at trend data to determine what skills need to be further developed, previewing curricula for next year, and refining professional development for teachers to focus on areas of teacher need. The goals of the Rising Stars/ESS Program are clearly articulated to program staff during regular professional development sessions. Teachers and administrators work jointly to ensure continuity between program goals and program activities. Evaluations of overall program effectiveness are linked to the goals and are based on improvement of student reading levels.

The instructional components of the summer program are explicitly connected to the school curricula, the district standards, and the state standards. The curriculum approach during the summer is aligned with, yet distinct from, the school-year program. In 2004, the school used the summer program as an opportunity to preview the new districtwide reading program.

By employing their own school-year teachers in the summer, McFerran leaders provide instructional continuity and institutional linkages between the summer and the school-year programs. In addition to teachers, the summer program invites participation by other school-year staff. For example, the staff member serving as the Family Resource Center coordinator during the school year oversees the afternoon recreational and enrichment activities in the summer.

Program Participation, Structure, and Content

Each summer McFerran Rising Stars/ESS serves approximately 200 students, reaching approximately one-third of the school's total student population. Only students from the regular academic-year population who are considered to be academically at-risk are eligible to participate in the summer program. Criteria used to determine eligibility include student performance rates below grade level on state assessments and in subject areas. The program primarily serves "first priority" students who have scored within stanines 1, 2, or 3 on the standardized test. Students who are at risk of being retained a grade level or whose instructors recommend them for the program are also eligible for participation.

The Jefferson County Public School District develops the summer program curriculum. In summer 2004, the Rising Stars/ESS curriculum focused on implementing the new, guided reading program that had been adopted by JCPS for fall 2004 districtwide implementation.

Students in the summer program benefit from a low student-teacher ratio of 11:1. Teachers find that the summer school program affords the opportunity to "go deep instead of wide" and to promote themes at a slower pace than during the school year. Teachers also have increased flexibility in the content during the summer. The instructional strategies are constant, but teachers pick fun themes to which children can relate and use these themes to polish skill development.

The McFerran Rising Stars/ESS Summer Program meets six hours per day for four weeks. Students divide time evenly between academics and enrichment activities. Students spend the first half of their day learning in the core content areas and the second half engaged in enrichment, sports, and recreation activities. Individual tutoring is available to aid struggling students.

Students arrive for school breakfast at 8:30 a.m. From 9 a.m. until 12 p.m. each day, students have three hours of academic instruction. Intense and

specific remediation in the areas of math and reading are the main focal points of instruction. Teachers use assessment data and student reading level information to help shape their instructional planning. To that end, students read in a variety of instructional settings that include guided reading, shared reading, and independent reading. Literacy centers support and reinforce reading strategies, word work, fluency, and comprehension. Instructors activate students' prior knowledge and monitor for fluency, accuracy, and comprehension in reading.

> Teachers find that the summer school program affords the opportunity to "go deep instead of wide" and to promote themes at a slower pace than during the school year.

Specific reading strategies employed by students include: (1) understanding the purpose of reading; (2) participating in discussions; and (3) responding, sharing, and understanding questions. In mathematics, students work on number sense and basic facts. Students also participate in hands-on math, using manipulatives in small groups.

At noon, students are served lunch before proceeding to their enrichment activities. Between 12:30 and 3 p.m., students participate in supervised activities, under the direction of the Family Resource Center coordinator. McFerran Preparatory Academy offers a variety of afternoon activities to complement the morning academic program. Primary students are able to engage in art, music, drama, movie watching, nature walks, gym, games, and storytelling activities. Activities are offered on a rotating schedule to maximize opportunities for children and to provide daily stimulation and variety. Intermediate students are offered similar programming; their afternoon program also includes tennis instruction and game show activities such as Jeopardy, Fear Factor, and Math Games.

Students are dismissed at 3 pm. However, from 3 to 6 p.m., the YMCA operates a school-based program. YMCA fees are charged on a sliding scale, making after care more affordable for low-income families.

McFerran provides a full day of programming for several reasons: (1) without transportation only the mobile kids would attend; (2) access to the school library in the afternoons keeps children reading; and (3) partnership with the University of Louisville allows the school to provide enrichment activities that students may not otherwise experience.

Collaboration with Community-Based Organizations

A Family Resource Center operates on-site at McFerran Preparatory Academy throughout the year. The Family Resource Center provides a staff member, Robert Schissler, to coordinate the afternoon recreational component of the McFerran Rising Stars/ESS Summer Program. The Kentucky Education Reform Act funded family and youth resource centers as part of the statewide education reform. The Family Resource Centers provide some on-site support but also refer families to social services outside of the school buildings. The goal of this state-funded and state-mandated program is to assist families in obtaining the services they need to ensure their children's academic success.

In addition to the Family Resource Center, McFerran invites family and community members to contribute to the summer program. Parents participate in the program as volunteers and also provide valuable feedback on program evaluations. Community members volunteer over the summer. Community groups make in-kind donations to the tennis, art, music, and drama components.

Administrative Structure and Staff Responsibilities

McFerran employs the regular school principal during the summer, as well as an instructional coach,

an ESS coordinator, teaching staff, and instructional aides. Continuity between school-year and summer administration and faculty strengthens linkages between academic-year and summer instruction.

The school principal, Carol Miller, observes and evaluates teaching practices. She assists with professional development and also works with small groups of teachers and students as needed. Principal Miller also teaches in the summer school program as needed; in 2004, she taught a fifth-grade class. McFerran has a partnership with the University of Louisville, and Principal Miller has successfully recruited college volunteers to work in the summer program. In addition, Miller attends to budget issues and concerns that relate to operating the summer school program.

An instructional coach, Marty Johnson, is also on-site to provide professional development, model strategies, and to monitor instruction. In this capacity, she helps develop the curriculum and works with teachers and with small groups of students. Teachers have a positive relationship with Johnson and benefit from the ongoing, on-site professional development.

The ESS Coordinator, Carol Gray, has primarily administrative responsibilities and handles daily program operations. The coordinator position is staffed as a half-time position. Gray works full time, beginning at the end of the school year and continuing through the late summer. Gray's responsibilities as a coordinator fall into four domains: record keeping, ordering supplies, scheduling, and program management. She organizes student data, including grades, test scores, attendance, and program eligibility. The coordinator contacts parents of eligible students in the spring. She arranges transportation, manages the budget, oversees payroll, provides materials, and schedules teachers. The coordinator is responsible for completing state and district reports and program evaluations to evaluate and monitor program effectiveness. Gray manages ESS planning through ESS committee meetings, in accordance with school consolidated plan guidelines. As coordinator, it is Gray's responsibility to recruit and provide information to teachers.

Certified teachers, volunteers, and teachers' aides staff the program. All of McFerran teachers are certified in the grade level and subject area they teach. Staff members are all given the opportunity to submit a letter of interest to work in the summer program. However, competing personal priorities sometimes make it difficult for administrators to recruit teachers. Summer school teachers must be at least provisionally licensed in their grade and subject area and are compensated at their hourly rate.

Professional Development

Professional development is offered through the district and the school. The Rising Stars Summer Program differs from other ESS summer schools in that teachers also receive professional development. Teachers participate in professional development activities two hours a week before school, from 8 to 9 a.m. The professional development sessions in 2004 focused chiefly on the district protocol for guided reading instruction.

Teachers work with both a video series and texts to examine explicit strategy and skills instruction. The purpose of the professional development is to refine teaching skills to ensure that all students receive the best possible instruction. Teachers use this time to build their capacity for intentional reading strategy instruction.

> Professional development time also gives teachers the opportunity to carefully examine the progress of individual students and to share student information.

During a professional development session observed on a school site visit, teachers watched a video about activities they can adopt for their students to work on while the teacher runs the guided reading groups. The instructional coach and the

principal then led a discussion on how teachers could apply the ideas in the video to their classrooms. The group discussed the pros and cons of leveled reading groups. Teachers also discussed other issues relating to the personal and instructional needs of their students. The JCPS ESS coordinator, Lori Holland, sought teachers' input regarding materials the district could supply in implementing the guided reading program.

Teachers find the regular professional development time to be beneficial in facilitating the sharing of ideas. Professional development time also gives teachers the opportunity to carefully examine the progress of individual students and to share student information.

Since not all team members teach during the summer program, information from summer is shared informally during team meetings before the start of the school year.

Funding

The McFerran Rising Stars/ESS Summer Program taps several funding streams in order to maximize available resources for students. The federal government provides $30,000 over four weeks through Title I. State ESS funds support the program with $23,500 for the four-week period. In addition, the Family Resource Center that operates during the summer program is state-funded at $5,000 over four weeks. Jefferson County Public Schools provides $27,500 over four weeks.

Jefferson County Public Schools provides Rising Stars funding. The Rising Stars funds have allowed the McFerran program to maintain some key features that are not found in regular ESS programs. These additional Rising Stars benefits include ongoing professional development for staff, all-day programming with an enrichment component for students, and the inclusion of additional students in the program.

Principal Miller has been able to sustain the Rising Stars/ESS Program with support from the district because McFerran has consistently shown increases in student academic achievement. The Jefferson County ESS coordinator explained that when principals demonstrate school improvement, they are able to retain district funding. Principals in successful schools are empowered to make decisions about the most appropriate use of the funds at the school level.

Community resources also lend financial backing to the summer program. The Louisville Tennis Association donates $500. The University of Louisville provides in-kind support through a partnership with the school. The university provides student teachers who fulfill some of their teaching internship requirements by working in the summer program.

A combination of federal, state, and local funds allows the school to provide breakfast and lunch to all children who participate in the Rising Stars Program.

Transportation is provided for students attending the summer program. The district provides transportation funding, which represents 21 percent of the overall program costs. High gasoline costs in 2004 pushed transportation costs to nearly a fourth of the budget. However, Principal Miller sees transportation as a vital program component. Without bus transportation, many children in the Rising Stars program would not make it to school. Miller states, "Students come if I send a bus. If there is no bus, they don't come. So to me, it is worth it."

Program Sustainability

There have been significant cuts to the funding streams that support the McFerran Rising Stars/ESS Summer Program. The McFerran program was incubated with district and state support and has survived while similar programs at other sites have been dismantled. The longevity of the McFerran program can be attributed to a school-level commitment to raising achievement and to tracking student improvement data linked to the summer program. Because McFerran is able to demonstrate success, the district seems willing to find funds to support the Rising Stars/ESS Program.

McFerran supports afternoon enrichment activities by blending funding from multiple sources. At McFerran, there is a sense of ownership regarding the summer program, which is very expensive.

Although the district is generally supportive, there is a tension between school leaders and district leaders over the best way to provide additional learning opportunities through the ESS program.

The district is revisiting the issue of extended learning time. This year, the district implemented an ESS extended-day program wherein students receive intensive instruction during regular class time. Changes in the district approach to ESS programs could affect the McFerran Rising Stars Summer Program.

Program Evaluation and General Student Outcomes

Student outcome data from standardized test scores, teacher assessments, student portfolios, student attendance records, peer relations, and school connectedness measures are used in order to evaluate the program's effectiveness in raising student achievement. Student progress on the standardized tests, as demonstrated by movement across stanines, acts as a primary measure of the program's success. McFerran staff also use parent and student surveys to evaluate the summer program. The school voluntarily collects this data each summer session, reports data to the district, and shares data with the state education agency.

Data from the summer of 2003 indicate that approximately one-third of all students attending the Rising Stars Program that year improved their performance on the Stanford Diagnostic Reading Assessment in the fall of 2003.[46] Students that showed improvement were those that scored higher than stanine 3 after participating in the summer program. Post assessment findings by grade level are summarized below:

- In grade 2, 36 percent of students scored above stanine 3 on the fall assessment;
- In grade 3, 45 percent of the students scored higher than stanine 3 on the reading assessment;
- In grade 4, 22 percent of students scored above stanine 3 on the reading assessment;
- In grade 5, 44 percent of students scored above stanine 3 on the reading assessment.

Schoolwide benefits from the supplemental programs are also clear. Since the year 2000, McFerran has continually made progress toward school improvement through the Kentucky Commonwealth Accountability Testing System. The number of McFerran students scored as proficient or distinguished on the Kentucky Core Content Tests surpasses the district averages in all areas and surpasses the state averages in most areas. Likewise, McFerran has fewer students scoring at the novice level than do other elementary schools in the JCPS district. The attendance rates at McFerran surpass district and state averages, while the retention rate is lower than the district and state levels. Only 2.5 percent of McFerran students are retained at grade level, compared with a district average of nearly 5 percent. These school outcomes are a testimony to the benefits of focused, extended learning opportunities and supplemental services to at-risk students when incorporated as part of a cohesive strategy to drive school improvement.

The Jefferson County Public School District provides the school with an initial list of students eligible for supplemental services, based on low achievement scores. The district provides the data keeping and documentation of services to at-risk students as required under the No Child Left Behind Act. Throughout the year, the school monitors the progress of students who participated in Rising Stars/ESS, to determine if the program has impacted student achievement. The school uses summer student outcome data to provide support services and special instruction during the year. School-year report card grades and standardized test scores provide valuable feedback on the impact of the summer program.

Positive student outcomes attributed to the program include improved student ability in reading and increased class participation. Staff commented that children who are less confident and who struggle in class during the school year often shine in the summer program. Teachers also noted that students benefit from attending summer school in the same building that they attend school during the

year. Students and teachers have a greater sense of continuity and schoolwide motivation. As a result of participation in Rising Stars, many students become leaders in their classrooms during the following academic year.

School leaders attest that the Rising Stars/ESS Summer Program is responsible for increases in student reading comprehension and fluency. Teachers report that participating students are better able to use strategies that help them read independently and read for pleasure.

School leaders also report that English Language Learner students benefit from participation in small groups in which they receive language support and cultural adjustment assistance in a more comfortable setting.

McFerran faculty value the program and observe that children in the program enjoy coming to school during the summer. Many of the participating students are from disadvantaged backgrounds and do not tend to go on summer vacations, camps, or visits to the library. Without program participation, many of the students would not otherwise read or participate in summer learning activities. The Rising Stars Program offers a safe place for children during vacation, with a combination of academic and fun enrichment activities.

> ...children who are less confident and who struggle in class during the school year often shine in the summer program.

Challenges to Implementation

The continuous changing of assessment instruments is a problem for the McFerran instructional team. The school has recently begun using a new Diagnostic Reading Assessment. Switching assessments hampers the school leaders' ability to determine the impact of summer school on student progress in the fall because the test scores are not aligned. When assessment tools are replaced, the principal must rely on teacher assessments rather than test data to demonstrate improvement.

The staff and leadership at McFerran have experienced difficulty in sustaining parental involvement. Teachers sometimes have to stay after the program to wait with students whose parents have not yet picked them up. Parents sometimes participate in school activities, such as cookouts, and tend to become more involved in smaller groups. School leaders want new strategies for maintaining parent involvement and have considered mandating parent participation for certain activities.

Future Directions

Principal Miller hopes to be able to expand the Rising Stars arts program. She envisions one day incorporating martial arts, music, and dance lessons. Her program ideas include offerings that many of her students would not likely have access to without school support. Miller's "dream" activities include piano, ballet, tap, and jazz lessons for her students.

Miller's vision for extracurricular activities is grounded in her determination to build the academic potential of her weakest students. Miller would like to be able to diagnose each child's specific reading problem in order to provide more focused remediation. She envisions expanding the program to reach all of her students, not just those in the lowest reading stanines. Miller states, "I have so many students that could use enrichment activities, and to be back in the school environment for four weeks. That long 12 weeks off, is just too much time away from academics."

Miller would also like develop a larger, more committed staff. The program is in need of both an ECE and an ESL teacher.

Elements of Success

Several elements are necessary in order to operate the Rising Stars program successfully. Miller works to attract the best teachers in her school. An excellent teaching staff—committed to good teaching,

open to suggestions, and willing to work during the summer months—is of fundamental importance to the success of summer programming.

McFerran encourages small-group instruction and maintains a narrow, but deep, focus on reading and mathematics. In order to keep students engaged academically, it is important to provide children with fun opportunities, such as reader's theatre. In reader's theatre, students bring books to life by practicing lines, putting on costumes, and performing for others. The afternoon sessions provide activities that the children look forward to, including golf, tennis, soccer, games, arts, and crafts.

Overall, the school program creates a warm, friendly environment. Teachers are able to focus attention on the learning needs of individual students. As a result, students feel that summer school is a pleasure, not a punishment. Students are given rewards and are recognized for the good things they do. Attendance and reading awards are powerful motivators for students.

Additionally, McFerran students are fed breakfast and lunch through the summer program. Poverty rates at McFerran are very high. Meals are an indispensable part of the service to students because for some students, the school meal is the only meal they may have on a given day.

Program Benefits

Principal Miller has found that the length of time that the students are out of the building during the summer months is not conducive to learning. The McFerran Rising Stars/ESS Summer Program serves students whose parents are not engaged and who are not involved in intentional learning opportunities during the summer months. For 20 days, the school offers students a safe learning environment, which is particularly important for at-risk youth.

Principal Miller views the expenditure of sufficient summer educational funds as a preventative action. Public money spent on keeping poor children safe and educationally engaged during the summer ultimately will lessen the need for public spending on remediation and juvenile justice.

Summer school is an integral part of McFerran's overall success; it is a piece of a larger puzzle that has improved student achievement at this high-performing, high-poverty institution. If these summer programs disappear, Miller believes the achievement gaps will reappear.

> An excellent teaching staff—committed to good teaching, open to suggestions, and willing to work during the summer months—is of fundamental importance to the success of summer programming.

Principal Miller believes firmly in making resources for summer school more readily available to poor communities:

> Those of us who are a little further up the ladder know how to access the system and services. My students and their families don't call the board of education, won't complain, and don't ask for anything. As educators if we don't stand up, highlight the positive, and help these kids, no one else will. The days of having summer off are over.

Endnotes

[42] 2000 US Census Data.

[43] 2000 US Census Data.

[44] McFerran Preparatory Academic School Plan 2005.

[45] McFerran Preparatory Academic School Plan 2005.

[46] A total of 170 first- through fifth-grade students participated in the Rising Stars Program during the summer of 2003.

Tarrallton Elementary School
Norfolk, Virginia

Background Information

The Norfolk Public School District educates 37,000 students in pre-K through 12th grade in Norfolk, Virginia. The district has 35 elementary schools, 8 middle schools, and 5 high schools. Norfolk, a large port town, is home to the world's largest naval base. The maritime and military industries make important contributions to the city's economic and social fabric. This southeastern Virginia city is part of the larger Hampton Roads metropolitan area. Forty-four percent of Norfolk's 241,000 residents are African American, and 48 percent are White. The median family income in Norfolk is $36,891, and 15.5 percent of families in Norfolk live below the poverty line.[47]

Tarrallton Elementary is an inner-city neighborhood school that is part of the Norfolk Public School District. Tarrallton Elementary School serves students in grades preK–5. Tarrallton accepts all children in the attendance area and also accepts some non-neighborhood students for the school's gifted and talented program. Tarrallton is a relatively small school with a total student enrollment of 360. Student daily attendance averages 97 percent, just above the state average of 95 percent. Seventy-eight percent of Tarrallton's teachers meet the state licensure requirements for the grades and subject areas that they teach. Collectively they participated in more than 1000 hours of professional development during the 2002-03 academic year. A high level of teacher stability (83 percent) combined with above average student stability (71 percent), and overall teacher, parent and student satisfaction with the school climate, make Tarrallton an ideal learning environment.[48]

Students at Tarrallton are predominantly White (60 percent) or African American (26 percent).[49] A small proportion of Asian (4 percent) and Hispanic (2 percent) students attend the school. Most students are in regular education classrooms (88 percent). Fewer than 10 percent of students are Limited English Proficient. In the 2002–03 academic year, 43.6 percent of students qualified for Free and Reduced Meals (FARMS).[50]

Tarrallton Elementary is not a Title I school and is fully accredited. Although a large percentage of Tarrallton students come from low-income families, students at Tarrallton perform well academically. While the Norfolk Public School District did not make adequate yearly progress (AYP), Tarrallton Elementary made AYP in 2002–03. The overall academic performance of Tarrallton students surpasses both district and state averages in reading and mathematics (see table 1).

However, racial comparisons reveal that the above average school performance masks gaps between African American and white student performance at Tarrallton. In 2002-03, 96 percent of

TABLE 1. Percentage of third grade students achieving at proficiency level or better on the Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL) in the school year 2002–03: mathematics and reading/language arts.

SUBGROUP	SUBJECT AREA	SCHOOL PASSED	DIVISION PASSED	STATE PASSED
ALL THIRD GRADE STUDENTS	Mathematics	88	79	83
	Reading/Language Arts	82	68	72
BLACK	Mathematics	63	74	72
	Reading/Language Arts	63	62	58
HISPANIC	Mathematics	–	86	78
	Reading/Language Arts	–	71	62
WHITE	Mathematics	96	92	88
	Reading/Language Arts	88	82	79

SOURCE: Virginia Statewide Achievement Results for 2002–03 (based on 2001–02 assessment results): Tarrallton Elementary School, Norfolk Public Schools.

NOTE: The percentages displayed on this table reflect performance of students at or above the proficient level on statewide assessments administered in this subject area at this school. The percentages for achievement at the division and state levels reflect performance of students at or above the proficient level on statewide assessments administered in this subject area at all grade levels.

Annual measurable objective for mathematics: 59%.

Annual measurable objective for reading/language arts: 61%.

White third grade students achieved proficiency level or better in mathematics on the statewide assessment in contrast to 63 percent of African American third grade students. On the third grade reading assessment, 88 percent of White students achieved proficiency level or better compared to 63 percent of African American students.[51] This disparity in performance is evident at both the third and fifth grade levels and across all subject areas; with the exception of history/social science and writing in the fifth grade, where African American students perform at levels equal to or better than their white peers.

"Since the goals of the program are to build reading, writing, and math skills, and SOL drives the goals, a major part of the summer program is to improve student performance on assessments as well as on class grades."

The mission of the Norfolk Public School District is "to ensure the success of each student in a safe, stimulating, and challenging environment supported with a committed workforce that focuses on quality teaching and learning." Educators at Tarrallton Elementary School are actively pursuing the district vision by using district resources to offer school-based extended learning opportunities. The summer program at Tarrallton is part of a district mandate to provide summer programming at all elementary schools. The creation of an academic summer program for struggling students has enabled Tarrallton Elementary School to work toward success for every student throughout the entire year. The summer program offers a promising approach to closing the achievement gap by advancing the performance of the school's most at-risk students.

Program Beginnings and Goals

The Tarrallton Elementary summer program is part of a districtwide initiative, called the Elementary and Middle School Summer School Program. Currently every elementary school in the Norfolk district has a summer program. The district has had summer programs for nearly 20 years; summer school at Tarrallton has been in existence for more 10 years.

Tarrallton Elementary offers a remedial program to strengthen the skills of students who perform below grade level and are at the greatest risk of academic failure. Primarily, the program aims to counteract "summer learning loss" wherein student mathematics and literacy skills regress over the course of the summer. The program also aims to close the achievement gap and to lower retention rates.

The local education agency, school principal, and teachers were involved in the planning and development of the Tarrallton program. The district summer program used to combine several schools into one summer school site. However, an increased emphasis on the Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL) assessments has led educators to focus on the performance of students at individual school sites. Currently, almost all summer programs serve children that attend the school during the regular academic year.

Administrators use the summer program to cultivate improved school performance on key educational indicators. Tarrallton Interim Principal Diane Gibson highlighted the importance of state assessments in summer program planning: "Since the goals of the program are to build reading, writing, and math skills, and SOL drives the goals, a major part of the summer program is to improve student performance on assessments as well as on class grades."

Program Participation, Structure, and Content

Approximately 60 students were enrolled in the school's summer program in 2003, and approximately 20 percent of the Tarrallton's regular school-year population attends the summer program.[52] The sum-

mer program is not open to all Tarrallton students. Specific criteria used to determine student eligibility are

- performance below grade level on statewide assessments,
- performance below grade level in all subjects,
- risk of being retained a grade level,
- teacher recommendation or evaluation.

The Tarrallton summer program is conducted for four hours a day, four days per week, over the course of six weeks in summer.[53] The program takes place between May and July. The month of May is devoted primarily to staff training, student pretesting, program planning, and other administrative duties. In May, families of eligible students are notified, and registration occurs over a two-week period. In May and June, staff development is staggered across subject areas so that center leaders start with training in reading, writing, and mathematics, followed by science and social studies. Summer school instruction begins the third week of June, and post-tests are administered at the end of July. On August 1, summer school attendance, assessments, and student data are submitted to the district. A summer report card is provided to families to ensure that parents receive feedback on their children's academic performance.

The school utilizes pretest scores and spring report card grades, to properly place students within the program and provide instruction in their areas of weakness. Summer lessons reinforce the basic skills necessary for success in core academic subjects, so that students may improve their performance. Tarrallton summer program Co-Center Leader Sharon Webster describes the program: "It focuses on repetition in an effort to maintain student scores/skills to ensure that when students return in the fall there is no drop off in learning." Thus, maintaining the students' skill level is viewed as an accomplishment in itself in the summer program. The goals are articulated to the program staff, and there is continuity between the explicit goals and the activities offered by the program.

The main goal of the summer program is to provide remediation in core academic subjects. The Tarrallton summer program is aligned with grade-appropriate Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL), which provide explicit connections to state and district standards. District staff design the summer program curriculum guidelines to ensure continuity across schools, while still allowing for flexibility at the building level in developing lesson plans. This structure allows teachers to concentrate on crucial mathematics and reading skills throughout the year. In addition, housing the program in the school building allows many teachers to work in their own classrooms, providing an instant link to the regular school year.

Summer school staff find the summer program to be beneficial for students during the start of the school year. Summer school teachers work with school-year teachers to identify weak skill areas and to incorporate student needs into the summer school program. In this way, instructional objectives from the regular school year become part of the summer school lesson plans. Teachers collaborate by using similar lesson plans, comparable homework assignments, and classroom pacing in both the summer program and during the regular school year. This practice ensures consistency, alignment, and closer involvement between the summer and the school-year program staff.

Although the Tarrallton teachers and center leaders find continuity between the school year and summer school program, this is largely due to their own initiative and interest in strengthening school year to summer school connections. There is no specific planning time devoted to sharing information between school-year staff and summer program staff.

Curriculum

Four days a week, students participate in small-group and whole-group remediation in core academic areas. Reading, writing, and mathematics skills are emphasized, with science and social studies integrated in this basic curriculum. Reading is taught through a balanced literacy approach, and writing is taught

across the curriculum. Mathematics emphasizes the development of basic skills using manipulatives.

The summer program follows a well-established reading differentiation format for its students. Reading is differentiated as part of the summer school and school-year curriculum. Students are placed into guided reading groups based on the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) assessment. STAR testing is done quarterly (with continual regrouping). This is an indicator for summer school placement that helps the teacher identify the students' levels.

The Tarrallton summer program makes an effort to address the needs and issues of special populations. The principal explained that the school's instructional approach is varied because it uses a curriculum designed to accommodate the needs of diverse students. Center Leader Lisa Colvin explained that "there are test modifications for special education students, and the school uses an inclusion model." Summer program leaders encourage teachers to treat both special education and regular education students the same way. Students are not "singled-out," even when they have difficulty comprehending or completing their work, but teachers are encouraged to read aloud to special education students. Tarrallton also has special education resource teachers to assist regular education teachers.

A list of activities and strategies that guide instruction as laid out in the Summer Basic Skills Handbook (2002) and supplemented by information from the Center Leader Handbook (2003) are summarized briefly below.

Language Arts

To guide instruction in reading and writing for students during the summer program every effort is made to

- model strategies, assignments, or techniques;
- encourage peer learning through flexible grouping strategies;
- preview in context and build a background for reading;
- provide prereading, reading, and postreading activities;
- use a variety of fiction and nonfiction to teach text structure strategies;
- develop open-ended questions that require use of high-level thinking skills;
- differentiate classroom instruction and use flexible grouping to meet all students' needs;
- incorporate the SOLs into every lesson and teach mini lessons; and
- use graphic organizers, anticipation guides, and other forms of scaffolding.

Mathematics

In mathematics the emphasis is to provide students with concepts and skills in the core strands of the curriculum. Every effort is made to

- use manipulatives, such as unifix cubes, place value blocks, pattern blocks, and geoboards. to enhance concept development;
- construct number meanings through real-world experiences and the use of physical materials;
- integrate the use of calculators and computers into students' mathematics problem-solving experience;
- use writing for learning in mathematics and develop the ability to read math;
- develop concepts and skills in problem solving and reasoning in mathematics;
- connect ideas within mathematics to other curriculum areas; and
- develop the ability to solve nonroutine problems.

Science

Science lessons emphasize using methods of scientific investigation, reasoning, and logic to master

each science SOL objective. Active participation is required for deep conceptual learning. Every effort is made to

- use observations to group and compare objects and organisms;
- develop questions and make predictions based on observations;
- communicate data through the use of graphs, pictures, and written statements and draw conclusions based on data tables and graphs;
- use standard and nonstandard measurement tools, such as thermometers, rulers, etc., to gather and record data; and
- connect science concepts to other curriculum areas.

Social Studies

The social studies curriculum is designed to help students develop knowledge and skills in history, geography, civics, and economics. Every effort is made to

- connect content and skills to the real world;
- plan and implement activities based on problem solving and a sense of inquiry;
- help students connect lessons of the past to the present;
- use primary source materials in addition to the textbook;
- teach students to recognize, pose, and answer various levels of questions;
- use debates, presentations, and discussion activities; and
- use flexible grouping and differentiate classroom instruction.

Teachers use the curriculum requirements established by the district as guidelines in developing their daily lesson plans. The district provides a skeletal framework for instruction, but trusts teacher discretion in lesson planning and curriculum implementation. While the program goals emphasize remediation, some teachers use the summer program to start the subsequent school year early. For example, one fifth-grade teacher at Tarrallton introduces the rising fourth graders to the fifth-grade curriculum during the summer program.

Administrative Structure and Staff Responsibilities

Norfolk Public Schools plays an important role in designing, funding, and sustaining the summer program. Key departments and district personnel are actively engaged in ensuring that the program operates smoothly each year:

- Coordinators within the Human Resources Department develop the center leader, teacher and other staff applications.
- The budget director develops and revises the budget to fit current program allocations.
- The director of transportation supplies buses, traffic guards, and organizes bus routes.
- The director of child nutrition services provides program sites with breakfasts and/or snacks.
- Content area specialists for communication skills (reading) and mathematics develop program guidelines and content, determine reporting procedures, hold summertime meetings for center leaders, supervise procedures for closing centers and plan procedures for final reporting to parents and schools.
- The director of research, testing and statistics compiles enrollment and submits a report to the state.

Although Norfolk Public Schools provides overarching support for the summer program across the district, the site-based management system holds principals responsible for supervising the program at the building level. The principal selects center

leaders, plans use of the facility, signs payroll reports, assures that materials are distributed, and oversees the program. However, for the duration of the program, the principal takes a back seat to the center leaders who manage ongoing daily operations, planning, and development. The center leaders function as the primary building coordinators and contacts for the summer program.

At Tarrallton Elementary School, Center Leaders Lisa Colvin and Sharon Webster are supported by a school secretary and supervise four teachers. Both are responsible for ensuring that the center runs smoothly and efficiently, focusing particular attention on developing good relations with the school principal, students, teachers, parents, and other staff members. The center leaders' primary responsibility is to supervise and monitor summer teaching and learning. To that end, the center leaders use assessment data to accurately place students according to academic need. Prior to the summer, Colvin identifies students who may be retained, are marginal, or are tentatively enrolled for the upcoming school year. She makes sure that all eligible students are invited to participate in the summer program. Both center leaders then assist in selecting staff, oversee instruction, provide professional development to teachers, counsel disruptive students, monitor attendance, and administer the daily operations of the school. The center leaders also supervise the order, distribution, and collection of summer school materials.

Sharon Webster, the co-center leader, addresses discipline issues, maintains contact with parents, and ensures that the program is operating smoothly. She also provides professional development activities for the summer school staff. Webster makes herself accessible and available to teachers in order to make it easier for them to work with students during the summer months. She also is responsible for ensuring that all teachers receive their testing materials and forms. Webster closes the program at the end of the summer by supervising testing and planning teacher conferences to determine student placement in the fall.

Four credentialed teachers instruct the 60 students in the Tarrallton summer program, creating a 15:1 student-teacher ratio. Teachers are responsible for providing high-quality instruction that meets the individual needs of each student. They are expected to make highly efficient use of instructional time, keeping disruptions to a minimum. Summer program faculty teach for 4.5 hours a day. This is a part-time job, and teachers are paid $20 an hour for 4.5 hours a day. Center leaders are paid $21 hourly, the librarian is paid $20 an hour, and the secretary receives $7 an hour.

Professional Development

One hour each week for five weeks, the center leader provides professional development to teachers. In week one, the teachers discuss expectations, teaching philosophies, mathematics procedures, reading and writing, and guidelines for instruction and address additional questions. This first session is one of the major opportunities to review with summer school staff the summer curriculum and related guidelines. In week two, teachers engage in a "Book Talk for Teachers" during which they discuss a selection that deals with individual motivations, blame, and personal accountability. The theme for week three is "Newspapers In Education," during which in-service meetings illustrate how teachers can incorporate periodicals into their lesson plans. Week four focuses on administrative procedures wherein teachers review the process for closing the summer program (paperwork, grades, etc.). In week five, decisions are made on student promotions to the next grade. Teachers meet to discuss the summer progress of individual students to make collaborative recommendations on whether the student should matriculate to the next grade level.

Parental Involvement

Tarrallton Elementary School does not have a parent engagement component as part of the summer school program. According to Lisa Colvin, parents are initially contacted about the program during the previous spring. In addition, they are informed

when students fail to show up for the program or are absent. Parents do not participate in the process of determining matriculation to the next grade level. They are informed at the end of the summer regarding student retention or matriculation to the next grade level.

Funding and Transportation

Funding for the summer school program is part of the budget item in city schools. Funding for the summer program is equitably distributed based on a percentage of the average number of students who failed any SOL test in the spring of 2002. Teacher allocations are based on a student-teacher ratio of 15:1 in the elementary schools. In addition, funds are distributed based on projected student enrollment at each site.[54] A 20-year history of summer program funding in Norfolk suggests that funding is allocated in a sustainable manner.

Summer program transportation is paid for by the local school district. The summer program is held in the same facility as the students' base school. Students who are eligible for transportation during the school year are also eligible during the summer. Students who are transferring into the school the following fall and live outside of the district do not qualify for district transportation.

Program Evaluation and General Student Outcomes

The district does not systematically analyze student assessment data to evaluate the summer programs. However, the Norfolk Public School District Department of Leadership and Capacity Development Office collects this data annually. At the school level, student achievement data is used to gauge the effectiveness of the summer program and to help refine and target future instruction. However, there is no data comparison at the school level between those who attend summer school and those who do not. Teachers use summer school data to gain background information on students in their classroom.

The outcome data available includes grades, standardized tests scores, student portfolios, teacher-generated assessments, student attendance, and participation. Each student has a summer school file that includes a writing sample, examples of classroom work, and assessment scores. Teachers use student writing portfolios and assessment scores to make decisions at the conclusion of the summer program regarding matriculation to the next grade level. In addition, at the end of the summer program, the student's teacher, the school principal, and the center leaders have a conference to determine whether students will be retained or promoted.

In order to differentiate instruction for students and to provide essential data on the summer school program, preassessments and postassessments are administered and recorded for all students in attendance. The regular school-year classroom teacher and the center leader administer the preassessments in the spring. Preassessment tools used at different grade levels include the Phonological and Literacy Skills (PALS) assessment; Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) reading level assessment; the test for higher standards in reading, writing, and mathematics; and the Standards of Learning (SOL) tests. Results from these preassessments provide valuable diagnostic information to summer school teachers.

Postassessments are administered in the final week of summer school. Most of the postassessment tools are the same as the preassessment tools used in the spring. However, students only complete the portions of the assessments on which they have not previously met the spring benchmarks. The summer school teacher is responsible for administering the postassessments and recording results. Promotion responsibility rests with the principal, but the summer school teacher and center leaders make recommendations to the principal during the last week of summer school.[55]

A brief summary of the key findings from the pre- and postassessment scores of students at Tarrallton Elementary School illustrate the effectiveness of the summer school program. It is important to recall that a variety of assessments are used and

that all students do not take all assessments, but rather retake assessments only in their demonstrated areas of weakness.

Pre- and postassessment findings from the summer program are summarized below:

- A majority of kindergarten reading and writing students either improved or maintained their communication (reading)skills.
- Almost all kindergarten mathematics students (6 of 7) either improved or maintained their scores in all the math areas (1 of the 6 who improved their scores was a student with an IEP).
- One-half of the six first graders who took all the mathematics pretests and post-tests showed improvements in all the mathematics areas (1 of the 3 was an IEP student).
- Grade 2 scores showed that three-fifths of second-grade reading students improved their reading skills, one of whom was an IEP student.
- Grade 2 scores showed that three-fifths of second-grade writing students improved their writing skills.
- Grade 2 scores showed that three-quarters of second-grade math students improved their scores, one of whom was an IEP student.
- Grades 4 and 5 scores showed that three-quarters of reading students (6 of 8) improved their reading skills, three of whom were IEP students.
- More than three-quarters of grade 4 and 5 writing students (7 of 9) improved their writing skills, three of whom were IEP students.
- Seven of nine math students in grades 4 and 5 students improved their scores, three of whom were IEP students.

The above results suggest that the instruction provided during the summer school program contributed to overall improvements in student reading and mathematics skills.

Additional Extended Learning Programs at Tarrallton

Students at Tarrallton benefit from a comprehensive school approach to raising achievement. In addition to summer school, Tarrallton also offers an additional extended learning opportunity during the school year called the "We Can Solve It" after-school program. The primary goal is to improve or to keep up the SOL scores for students in third and fifth grades via acceleration/remediation. The program takes place two days a week, two hours a day, for 18 weeks. Approximately 45 students were served in the 2001–02 after-school program. The program provides academic remediation for students who need additional help in core subjects, academic acceleration for students seeking enhancement in core subjects, academic enrichment activities that enhance classroom learning, and additional time to complete regular course assignments. Classroom assessments and standardized test data are used to evaluate the effectiveness of the program.

Challenges to Implementation

Despite clear successes, there are some challenges that remain. Ongoing concerns include: (1) dealing with differing teaching philosophies within the summer program, (2) enforcing attendance when there is no penalty, (3) addressing parental lack of interest in enrolling students, and (4) alleviating large class sizes.[56]

Although there is a shared basic curriculum for each grade level, teaching philosophies differ within the program and teachers take varying approaches to summer instruction. While the program is intended as remedial, some teachers approach the program as preparation for the next school year. This inconsistency of expectations across classes raises questions about whether teachers follow the curriculum guide and are adequately prepared to focus on the appropriate student skills. There are also school level differences in philosophies about what approach works best for special needs students; differentiation versus inclusion. Although these goals are not mutu-

ally exclusive, Lewis feels that the challenge at the school level is to allow for flexibility in the classroom but still have accountability for results.

In this regard, district and school level leadership around the summer program goals might be strengthened to increase consistency and accountability across the school. A tighter accountability system and standards-based professional development would ensure that students who appear to be "falling through the cracks" are identified in the summer program and that effective strategies are devised to accommodate the students' academic needs.

Leadership must also reinforce the need for instructional differentiation and must support teachers in inclusive instruction. Teachers are asked to accommodate a whole range of disabled students in summer school. Although there is a separate Extended Annual Summer Year Program for very severely disabled children, emotionally disturbed (ED) or learning disabled (LD) students don't fit into that program. Student that are ED or LD or that have individual educational plans (IEP) also may not be a good fit with the school-based summer program. This is a systemic weakness because IEPs are not in effect for the summer, unless students are enrolled in the extended-year program. While some summer schools accept these children, others put them on the waiting list. Regular education teachers who instruct children with special needs during summer school must have the support and the capacity to make appropriate accommodations.

Tarrallton summer program teachers and administrative staff both noted the challenge related to student enrollment and attendance. Specifically, the school has encountered difficulties in getting parents to enroll their children, even when there is a clear academic need to do so. Staff also shared that parents of at-risk students who have been promoted sometimes do not always understand the benefits of the program for their children. In addition, custody issues and vacations can also interfere with summer participation.[57] The summer program is viewed by some of the teaching staff as too informal, with no homework, and voluntary attendance. They assert that some students need the whole continuum of teaching and may regress academically over the summer if they do not attend summer school. A structured parent outreach component through which program leaders could disseminate information about program benefits might prove helpful to parents and teachers. Offering student incentives for perfect attendance might also bolster student participation for the duration of the program. Some of the teaching staff commented that making the summer school mandatory would be helpful. As one teacher asserted, "we want you here because we want you to learn."

> ...the challenge at the school level is to allow for flexibility in the classroom but still have accountability for results.

Elements of Success

Tarrallton Center Leader Lisa Colvin stresses that the key characteristics of any successful summer program are "qualified teachers, pre- and post-test assessments, adequate teaching and learning materials, sufficient effort to identify students most in need of support, and appropriate outreach to their parents." The Tarrallton summer program meets many of these requirements by providing a small-group setting for students to concentrate on learning the basic academic skills necessary to enter the following grade level. It also provides extra time for retained students to master the necessary skills in order to pass that grade level successfully.

The program builds on the expertise of and experiences of school level staff by hiring year-round personnel to serve as center leaders for summer school. During the regular academic year, Sharon Lewis is a special education teacher; Lisa Colvin serves as a communication skills specialist. As co-leaders, each brings a unique perspective to their

administrative roles, combined with a deep understanding of the context in which they are operating.

Staff responses and student data indicate that the summer school program successfully prevents summer learning loss. Summer school staff note that the program gives students reinforcement, previews skills that they will need for the next grade level, and helps to maintain their level of achievement from the previous academic year. In addition, teachers commented that throughout the school year, students who attended recalled concepts more readily. Another teacher added that the summer program boosts the confidence of some students who had no mastery of even basic mathematics skills before entering the program.

The summer program also builds interest and enthusiasm for learning. One teacher observed that over the course of the summer students became more positive and receptive to the learning process. Several teachers mentioned that having a smaller group of students made a difference because they were able to provide extra attention to students in need of support. The intense individual attention given to students is not surprising, given the student-teacher ratio that varies from 15:1 to 11:1, which is smaller than the school-year ratio of 24:1 to 18:1.

Another staff response pointed to the added advantages of having the summer program at their own school site. Students seemed to feel more connected to the program because they know all the summer school teachers from the regular school year. Teachers can use their own school supplies and are also able to share expectations and teaching styles in advance; a significant contributor to the success of the short 24-day program.

Future Directions

Some of the future needs identified by the Tarrallton center leader included (1) incorporating more technology, (2) purchasing a school curriculum rather than having teachers use district guidelines to write their own, (3) hiring at least one teacher per grade level, (4) purchasing a guided reading program for the school, (5) providing books to reduce preparation time for the teachers and (6) expanding the program to five days a week. Staff added that there is clearly a need for additional resources to accomplish these tasks.

It is evident that the district has played a crucial role in the programs' development and sustainability by providing schools with financial support, instructional guidelines and the key supports (e.g. transportation, meals) necessary for successful implementation. In addition, district-level staff are usually accessible to school staff, and there is a shared level of trust. The district has also been supportive of teachers without excessive micro-managing and paperwork demands.

A long and successful history of providing students with additional academic support during the summer months provides Tarrallton with a solid base from which to strengthen and deepen their efforts in this area. Although the summer program cannot solely eliminate continuing achievement gaps in school-year student performance; it is possible that the program, with additional district support, could play an even bigger role in addressing and alleviating these gaps.

Endnotes

[47] 2000 US Census Data.

[48] Taken from 2002–03 Tarrallton Elementary School Performance Report.

[49] There is a decrease of 8 percent from the 2001–02 survey report to the 2002–03 performance report in the percent of African American students attending this school.

[50] From the 2002–03 Tarrallton Elementary School Performance Report.

[51] 2002-03 Tarrallton Elementary School Performance Report.

[52] The center leader, Lisa Colvin, added,

> Some students were transferring to the school in September of that year. The program was open to such students because participating in this program gave them the opportunity to get to know other students and future teachers. However, these students have to be registered in the previous spring in order to be eligible to attend both the school in September and the summer program.

[53] During the summer of 2004, the program operated for five days a week.

[54] Taken from "Elementary Summer School Packet," 2003.

[55] Taken from "Elementary Summer School Packet," 2003.

[56] Additional issues include the requirement that center leaders deliver paperwork by hand to the district, a time consuming task; inefficient payroll that is not always timely and site-based management which requires schools to pay for most of the program materials themselves.

[57] A noted exception to this are students that are "promoted with exception." Teachers commented that these students, because their matriculation to the next grade level depends on successful completion of the summer program, regularly attend the program.

Weil Technology Institute
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Background Information

Pittsburgh Public Schools is an urban school system located in western Pennsylvania. The district has 10 high schools, 17 middle schools, and 53 elementary schools. Fifty-nine percent of the student population is African American; White students account for the remaining forty-one percent. Pittsburgh is a small post-industrial city of approximately 334,500 residents; Whites constitute the majority of the population at 68 percent, while African Americans make-up 27 percent. The median family income is $38,795. Fifteen percent of city residents live below the federal poverty line.[58]

Weil Technology Institute is a K–5 elementary school located in the central Hill District of

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. It is one of four elementary schools in the Hill District and draws the majority of its students from the surrounding community. Nearly all the students walk to school. Weil Technology is a pre-World War II three-story structure that has been renovated recently. The classrooms are large in size, bright and modern, and well equipped. At Weil Technology Institute, the curriculum for all subjects is integrated with technology. Weil is the only elementary school in Pittsburgh to be designated a "Technology Institute."

The institute opened in September 1997 with a new faculty and administration. The building has been completely wired to provide Internet access in every classroom and other areas where students may work. Both the computer labs and classrooms are connected to a Local Area Network (LAN), so students have access to their work throughout the building. Teachers and staff have received extensive training to use the technology and to integrate it into their daily lesson plans.

Weil serves approximately 365 students. The student population is 99 percent African American and 1 percent Caucasian, which reflects the demographics of the surrounding community. Fewer than 10 percent of students are Limited English Proficient. In the 2001–02 school-year, school enrollment was up to 416 students.[59] The Hill District is a predominately African American neighborhood rich in culture and history. However, the cultural and commercial center of the "Hill" was replaced by a large civic arena in 1961, and the neighborhood never regained its economic strength. Although some sections of the Hill District are now undergoing revitalization with new housing and new commercial buildings, much of the district, including the neighborhood surrounding Weil Institute, is marked by abandoned buildings, high unemployment rates, and high mobility rates. In the immediate community surrounding Weil, 38 percent of families live below the poverty level, 60 percent of residents are not presently in the labor force and the median income, at $19,167, is nearly half that of the city overall.

The student mobility rate at Weil is nearly 39 percent. The student population at Weil has been dropping recently with a loss of nearly 100 students over the past three years. Almost all (93 percent) students qualify and participate in the Free and Reduced Price Lunch Program, and nearly the same percentage participates in the free breakfast program. In 2001–02, the school attendance rate was 93 percent, the district rate was 90 percent, and the state rate was 93 percent. The percentage of students from low-income households is 87 percent. Weil is designated as a schoolwide Title I school.[60]

Weil Technology Institute is staffed with a principal, assistant principal, 26 classroom teachers and subject/support specialists, 5 educational assistants, 4 reading tutors, and 6 support staff (nurse, social worker, psychologist, etc). Through the use of Title I funds and city support, the principal has been able to keep class size small with an overall average of 20 students per class. Class sizes for the primary grades (K–3) are kept to less than 20:1 with the

TABLE 1. Percent of students achieving scores in the following score groups (2001–02).[63]

	GROUP	Proficient	Basic	Below Basic
FIFTH GRADE READING	All Students (Black)	11%	18%	71%
	Male	6%	13%	81%
	Female	16%	24%	60%
	With IEP	—	—	100%
	Without IEP	13%	22%	65%
FIFTH GRADE MATH	All Students (Black)	11%	25%	61%
	Male	9%	22%	66%
	Female	12%	28%	56%
	With IEP	—	—	100%
	Without IEP	13%	30%	52%

SOURCE: Pennsylvania System of Assessment (PSSA), Pittsburgh School District: Disaggregated Data (http://www.paprofiles.org).

addition of two class-size reduction teachers. This has allowed staff to provide more focused and differentiated instruction on a regular basis.

At Weil, technology is integrated throughout the curriculum. The Waterford Early Reading Program[61] is a key element of the reading initiative for students in grades K–2. Students at the primary level also participate in lessons enhanced through the use of SMART Boards and software that support reading and mathematics instruction. Each classroom at the intermediate level is equipped with clusters of computer banks, SMART Boards, and video projectors, which students use in accelerated and enrichment activities in reading, writing, and mathematics.

TABLE 2. Comparative figures for mathematics and reading scores: School, district, and state levels (2002).

	LEVEL	Proficient	Basic	Below Basic
FIFTH GRADE READING	School	11%	18%	72%
	District	27%	29%	35%
	State	39%	23%	20%
FIFTH GRADE MATH	School	11%	25%	61%
	District	20%	25%	42%
	State	27%	22%	25%

SOURCE: Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA), Assessment Results, 2002 (http://www.paprofiles.org/profiles/assessment5.asp).

Teachers have received extensive professional development and work collaboratively to develop technology-based, cross-curricular activities in physical education, music, arts, and science. Weil Technology Institute's central purpose is to "create a learning community which promotes equity and excellence…. Our students' success is our collective success; their failure is our failure; therefore, we must resolve to take the necessary steps to ensure that our students are academically and socially successful."[62]

Despite the significant investments in technology, professional development, and small class sizes, Weil has struggled to raise student academic achievement. Although female students generally outperform their male peers, the majority of both male and female African American students are performing at below basic levels in reading and mathematics. Students with disabilities struggle the most compared with other subgroups; all students within this category performed at below basic level on the state assessment (see table 1). The table below shows Weil student achievement scores in comparison to the district and state. The key finding from table 2 is that students from the Weil Technology Institute perform at levels significantly below those of students in other schools and districts in the state. This is the case in both reading and mathematics and at both the proficient and basic levels.

To increase academic achievement and provide additional opportunities for student enrichment and engagement, Weil Technology Institute, in collaboration with local partners, has developed and implemented comprehensive afterschool and summer school programs.

Program Beginnings and Goals

The Pittsburgh Public Schools' sponsored Extended-Year Program was developed by district office staff, and its primary goal is to focus on improving the literacy and mathematics skills of some of the schools' neediest students, that is, those at-risk of academic failure. The summer school program is designed to be an early intervention tool to provide additional time and instructional support to students who are struggling academically. In addition, community and school needs assessments reflected a strong desire for a summer program. Additional goals included lowering the retention rate, counteracting summer learning loss, and providing a safe, structured environment for students during the summer break.

Although the Extended Year Summer Program existed prior to his tenure, Superintendent John Thompson significantly expanded the program by allocating resources throughout the district; in previous years, summer school was only available to high school students. The program is currently funded by resources available through the No Child Left Behind Act that are earmarked for summer school initiatives ($1.5 million). The elementary program (for K–3 students) is now available in 29 centers across the district and serves approximately 1,400 to 1,500 students. Although any student may request to participate in the summer school program, participation is based on assessment results and is designed to provide learning activities that reinforce and strengthen literacy and mathematics skills for students performing at the basic and below basic levels on the spring 2003 Reading Standards Based Assessment. Thus, less than 20 percent of students enrolled during the school year attend the summer school program.

Summer 2003 is the second year for the Pittsburgh Public Schools' sponsored Extended School Year Summer Program at Weil Technology Institute. Principal Annette Shrager initiated a summer school program three years ago through a partnership arrangement with the Ebenezer Baptist Church.[64] Classes were held at the church facility as the school was undergoing renovation. The purpose of the program was to curtail summer learning loss as Principal Shrager asserts:

> Research evidence shows that when our kids walk out of school in June they're fairly well armed with what they have acquired during the school year. Because many of our kids just hang out, watch TV, or are with caregivers who may not be able to provide that academic thrust, many of those gains are diminished during the summer over time. Their counterparts in more affluent areas have many opportunities in the summer to maintain—or even improve—their level of academic success through a wide array of enrichment experiences. So there is a real need to keep our children engaged in an educational setting—as long and as much as possible—during the summer and after school.

The Extended-Year Literacy and Math Learning Initiative at Weil is currently offered through a full partnership with the Hill House Association, a local nonprofit organization that has been serving the residents of Pittsburgh for over 30 years.[65] Weil Technology Institute also has an extensive after-school program sponsored by the Hill House Association. Hill House has formed collaborative partnerships with both Weil and Miller Elementary Schools and provides an extensive after-school program five days a week from 2:45 p.m. to 6 p.m. Hill House sponsors the after-school program for students in grades K–3. Pittsburgh Public Schools' Alternative Education Program sponsors the after-school program for fourth and fifth graders. The Hill House program and key elements of their working partnerships are discussed in more detail below.

…there is a real need to keep our children engaged in an educational setting—as long and as much as possible—during the summer and after school.

Program Participation, Structure and Content

At Weil, the summer school program has two distinct components: the PPS-sponsored academic component, offered from 8 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday, and the Hill House enrichment component, offered from 12:30 p.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Thursday and all day on

Friday. The program is offered five days a week and runs from July 1 to August 1 from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. This is one of two elementary summer programs in the Hill District. The program is restricted to students in grades K–3, and class size is limited to 10–15 students. Typically, two teachers are assigned to each grade level (subject to adequate enrollment). Preference is given to teachers in the grade level at the assigned sites. Usually, there is one paraprofessional assigned to each site. At Weil, there are two classes for each of the grades K–2 and one class for third grade.

The program runs over the course of five weeks, for more than six hours a day, for five days a week. The students begin arriving about 7:45 a.m. for an 8 a.m. start. The free breakfast and lunch programs are funded through Pittsburgh City Parks and Recreation. Students report to the classroom at 8:15 a.m. and begin their day with a 15-minute "community time." The students' academic day ends at noon. They have lunch in the cafeteria where the Hill House staff greets them, and they begin their afternoon activities.

Approximately 12 Hill House staff work with the children, providing a multifaceted program of recreation, arts, games, entertainment, and creative activities. The staff is quite adept at working with young children, reducing anxieties and stress, and generating a relaxing atmosphere. The children also take part in other activities during the week including swimming, videos, mathematics and reading games, and sports activities.

To encourage student participation and effectively target at-risk students, classroom teachers begin developing a list of potential summer school students as early as February based on district assessments in reading and mathematics. The program is standards-based and assessment driven. District standards-based reading and mathematics assessments are given to all students, except kindergartners, in the spring. The results of these assessments are then utilized to develop a list of students recommended for summer school. Letters are sent out to parents of students performing at the basic and below basic levels in late March/early April. An open letter of invitation is extended to all who may wish to participate in the program. In the summer of 2003, approximately 65 students registered for the extended-year program.

Curriculum

The program is viewed as intense remediation designed to impact student success and is explicitly connected to state and district standards and to the school curricula. Class time is equally devoted to literacy and mathematics. Classroom lessons are highly prescriptive. The curriculum is rigorous, remediation driven, and differentiated to meet the needs of the students. The literacy program focuses on phonemic awareness, comprehension, word building, and writing skills. Worksheets are used at a minimum. Mathematics instruction focuses on basic skills and exploration activities. The curriculum is based on the premise that an academic program that runs only until noon should be tightly focused and targeted.

Reading

Teachers provide explicit and systematic instruction in the five core elements of reading: phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, oral fluency, and comprehension and writing skills improvement activities. The reading curriculum is based on the Harcourt's First-Place Reading program.[66]

The literacy program reflects a very intense and focused set of activities. Although the curriculum is scripted and highly directed, teachers utilize multiple activities to address multiple learning styles. For example, at the kindergarten level, students start by listening and responding to songs, poems, literature readings, and finger plays, as well as build background reading experiences. They develop reading and listening comprehension and respond to guided questions. Students learn to read and understand a variety of high-frequency words through games and sentence-building activities. There are writing opportunities for students to participate in shared, interactive language experiences and/or independ-

ent writing activities. Flexible grouping is used to reinforce skills using additional Word Work lessons or Early Word Building Lessons. In Direct Reading students practice high-frequency words in context and learn strategies and comprehension skills while reading from the *Get Ready Book*.[67]

In the first grade, there are similar types of activities as in kindergarten, but at a more intense, higher level. As observed in one class, the first-grade teacher worked with students on identifying words that began with a certain letter using large easel charts and individual worksheets. Students colored those words on their sheets; they spelled out the words as a group as the teacher wrote the word on the easel; and they individually wrote out the words next to the pictures on their worksheet as the teacher walked around the room helping those who were struggling. Students were transitioned into reading a story and discussing the themes, characters, and plotline of the story to enhance their comprehension skills. At this level, students develop phonemic awareness and phonics skills; the skills are applied as they read *Phonics Practice Readers*. A journal writing opportunity is also provided daily. Students use the *Get Ready Book*, but they reread for fluency following Direct Reading sessions. The program also fosters school-home connections by giving students a "take-home" book to read in school and then practice with at home.[68]

In the second grade, students write daily as part of an independent writing activity. In addition to using Word Work or Beck Word Building, students engage in independent reading from the *First Place Reading Library* or a self-selected book. The foundation in phonemics is more developed at this level and is applied to reading a selection in the *Pupil Edition*. Following Direct Reading, there is rereading for fluency, which helps to build automaticity through motivating activities, such as partner reading, dramatic role-playing, and skits. In the third grade, the above-mentioned activities intensify, in addition to systematic, cumulative reviews that are built into each week.[69]

Mathematics

Mathematics instruction is focused on basic fact knowledge, mathematics fluency, efficiency, and problem solving. The mathematics curriculum is based on *Everyday Mathematics*, which has been supplemented with additional problem-solving tools and basic concepts games developed by the school district.[70]

The numeracy initiative is a well-blended set of activities that address basic arithmetic skills as well as problem-solving strategies. A problem is posed to the class, and each student works briefly to solve the problem alone. Students then work in groups of two to four to find a solution, which are subsequently shared with the rest of the class. Students also work on a class storybook. They write and illustrate number stories for other students in the class to solve.

Administrative Structure and Staff Responsibilities

The administrative structure of the summer program reflects the shared responsibilities that both district and building staff have in implementing the program. At the district office, the program is housed under the executive director for elementary schools who has overall responsibility for program administration. The program coordinator, hired by the district, provides daily oversight of the program. These responsibilities include:

- providing training of staff on the assigned dates,
- assisting with preparation and review of program documentation,
- reviewing teacher lesson plans, conducting routine site visits,
- observing individual classrooms to ensure that best practices are being implemented,
- working collaboratively with the testing office to prepare the final evaluation of student progress and attendance,
- assisting with the preparation of summer payroll for teachers and paraprofessionals,

- ensuring that each site puts in place the arrangements necessary for successful program implementation.

Annette Shrager, the principal at Weil, is the site coordinator for the summer school program. As site coordinator Shrager is responsible for overseeing and implementing all program activities at the school level. Site coordinators are paid a half-day per diem rate. The school district gives preference to principals in selecting site coordinators. The program staff is composed of credentialed teachers, volunteers, teachers' aides, and community-based organization staff.

About 80 percent of the classroom teachers come from Weil, and the others come from Vann Elementary School also located in the Hill District. Teachers staffing the summer school program must be elementary certified. However, they are not required to be certified in the subject area taught. Both the principal and in-school staff receive additional compensation for providing the summer program.

One second-grade student said: "I like summer school. It helps me read better, and I like working on the computers. And we do lots of fun things in the afternoon."

Professional Development

Staff training is provided by the district. All staff receive two full days of professional development where the focus is on delivering the scripted curriculum and providing extensive remediation and differentiated services. The after-school staff also participates in the professional development program. In-school staff has 30 minutes of planning and professional development time every day. On Fridays, they must provide the principal with their lesson plans for the next week. All the staff meet weekly to dialogue and debrief on the program, discuss any challenges or concerns that may have arisen, and assess student progress.

"We try to hire staff who are interested in teaching, who may be pursuing degrees in teaching, or who may have their degree already but, for one reason or another, haven't, as yet, found a position. We provide extensive training on how to deliver remediation services." (Joyce Keyes, Program Coordinator, The Hill House Association)

Classroom teachers seem well prepared to deliver both the mathematics and reading initiative; they are attentive to students' needs, incorporating a myriad of approaches and pedagogies to help the students learn. One second-grade student said: "I like summer school. It helps me read better, and I like working on the computers. And we do lots of fun things in the afternoon."

Collaboration with Community-Based Organizations

An excellent working relationship and collaborative partnership exists between the administration and teaching staff at Weil and the program coordinators and staff at Hill House. This is reflected in the comprehensive nature of supports the Hill House has worked together with schools in the Hill District to provide area students; including afterschool and summer school programs:

> We, for a long time, have had accidental relationships with many schools in the Hill District. The relationships have become much more deliberate. We have established strong, positive relationships with the schools. We have learned what the schools' and the students' needs are and have aligned our efforts with the mission of Pittsburgh Public Schools. Now the teachers and facilitators are talking the same language. When we write proposals we dialogue with school

staff so that our agendas match one another's needs. (Ed Jackson, Technology Coordinator, Hill House Association)

The After-School Homework and Enrichment Program, discussed earlier, provides elementary-aged children with academic enrichment, personal development, and social and cultural awareness activities. The program also incorporates a character education curriculum that helps the children to become productive citizens in their community.

A key element of the after-school program is the K–3 Literacy Project. With a grant from the Heinz Endowments, the Hill House Association established a literacy and numeracy support program for children in grades K–3 who are not performing at grade level. Hill House developed a high-quality literacy partnership with Miller and Weil Elementary Schools. The principals and faculty of both Miller and Weil Elementary Schools have participated in all aspects of the program evaluation and its ongoing improvement. The literacy program is housed at Weil Technology Institute, with children from Miller Elementary School being transported to that facility. The mission of the program is to help primarily at-risk students improve their reading, writing, and mathematics skills, as well as to boost their confidence in their ability to learn.

The successful collaborative arrangement between the schools and Hill House is also evidenced through contiguous professional development, similar reading and mathematics materials and assessments, and ongoing dialogue. Pittsburgh Public Schools provides the training and materials to the Hill House after-school staff. The program coordinator at Hill House has worked closely with the publisher of the reading materials so that the language is consistent and there is continuity from one setting to the next. The Hill House staff initiated a program with Weil and Miller Elementary Schools, whereby they worked with the administrators and staff of both schools to review reading and mathematics standards and to develop a program and curriculum that would support those standards. The respective staffs hold a planning session one night a month to coordinate activities and programs and to develop strategies to address the needs of individual students.

Although the portion of the summer program provided by the Hill House Association does not have the same intense academic focus as the after-school program during the school year, the emphasis on collaboration and coordinated service delivery is still in evidence. There are good working relationships between the regular teaching staff and the providers of the Hill House program. During the summer, the Hill House program is more relaxed and focused on enrichment which compliments the morning program's emphasis on academic remediation and support.

Program Evaluation and General Student Outcomes

At the conclusion of the summer, the school district conducts a program evaluation. Each site's data is collected at the end of the program for the purpose of preparing the final evaluation report. In addition to the spring assessment administered prior to the start of the summer, similar but not identical reading assessments are given at the conclusion of the program. The summer mathematics assessment is the same as that given during the school year. Kindergarten students are given a pretest at the beginning of the summer program as there is no state assessment given at the kindergarten level. The results of the two sets of exams (pretest and post-test) are then utilized in the evaluation of the summer school program and as a measure of student progress.

Although individual school-level data was not available in 2003, initial district-level data collected from all regional sites showed positive academic gains for most students at every grade level. Specifically, students showed growth in literacy, with a majority of students improving their skills in phonemic awareness, uppercase/lowercase recognition, letter/sound relationships, and listening comprehension (table 3). In mathematics, a smaller percentage of students showed growth in problem solving and basic skills; these gains were most pro-

nounced at the kindergarten level, with 86 percent of all students showing some level of improvement in both areas (table 4). Thirty-five percent of all students attending the summer school program across the district also had perfect attendance, a notable accomplishment considering many districts and schools struggle with student participation during the summer months. In addition, the executive director of elementary schools for the Pittsburgh District commented that "although this is only the second year of the extended year program for elementary students, last year's evaluation results [also] indicated positive academic growth across the district" (Dr. Delphina Briscoe).

TABLE 3. Percent of students showing growth in literacy and maintaining a 75 percent attendance rate.

SOURCE: PowerPoint Presentation, "Pittsburgh Public Schools Elementary Extended-Year Summer Program 2003."

NOTE: The numbers above reflect the percentage of students showing growth in specific literacy areas. The *amount* of growth for individuals or groups of students was not available in 2003.

GRADE LEVEL	LITERACY COMPONENT	% OF STUDENTS SHOWING GROWTH
KINDERGARTEN	Phonemic Awareness	56%
	Uppercase Recognition	81%
	Lowercase Recognition	77%
	Letter/Sound Relationships	73%
	Listening Comprehension	79%
FIRST GRADE	Psuedowords	83%
	Oral Fluency	63%
	Comprehension	77%
SECOND GRADE	Psuedowords	80%
	Oral Fluency	88%
	Comprehension	80%
THIRD GRADE	Psuedowords	70%
	Oral Fluency	77%
	Comprehension	57%

TABLE 4. Percent of students showing growth in mathematics and maintaining a 75 percent attendance rate.

SOURCE: PowerPoint Presentation, "Pittsburgh Public Schools Elementary Extended Year Summer Program 2003."

NOTE: The numbers above reflect the percentage of students showing growth in mathematics. The *amount* of growth for individual or groups of students was not available in 2003.

GRADE LEVEL	MATHEMATICS COMPONENT	% OF STUDENTS SHOWING GROWTH
KINDERGARTEN	Basic Skills	86%
	Problem Solving	86%
FIRST GRADE	Basic Skills	51%
	Problem Solving	28%
SECOND GRADE	Basic Skills	46%
	Problem Solving	44%
THIRD GRADE	Basic Skills	Data Not Available
	Problem Solving	

These results suggest that the summer program, *considered in the aggregate*, is positively impacting student performance by reducing summer learning loss and by giving additional academic support in basic mathematics and reading skills, especially for students below the basic proficiency level and for students with disabilities. However, additional information is needed in order to assess the impact of the summer program at the school level.

Additional Programs and Initiatives at Weil

There are two additional major support initiatives available for students at Weil. The first is an individualized reading tutorial program delivered by certified teachers who are training as reading specialists at the University of Pittsburgh, and the other is Project LISTEN, a technology-driven reading tutorial initiative delivered by Carnegie Mellon University students.[71]

Approximately 20 students participate in the one-on-one tutorial program on a daily basis with the reading specialists from the University of Pittsburgh. These are students who are struggling with many of the basics of reading, and the tutorial program is designed to provide the students with additional tools and techniques to improve their reading and comprehension skills. The tutorial program is supported through the Reading Excellence Program grant.[72] Approximately 30 teachers, from both the University of Pittsburgh and Duquesne University, participate in the program during the school year and six University of Pittsburgh teachers participate in the summer program.

The certified teachers are skilled in the latest reading research and employ a wide range of techniques and methodologies to address the needs of reading-resistant children. They employ multiple assessment tools to drive the instructional program. They also work with the parents of their students and assist them by providing support and training on how they can help boost their children's reading skills at home. They send notes home describing what they are doing in the class and suggestions to the parents as to what they should work on with their children to supplement their efforts. Many of the parents appreciated the support and suggestions on how to better work with their children.

At the end of the summer the tutors write a letter to each of their students, identifying both their strengths and areas of need, and provide suggestions on how they can continue working to improve their reading and writing skills. A detailed progress report is written for each child, including pre- and post-test assessment results, and a letter is also sent home to parents. The tutorial sessions are typically 30 minutes in length and are designed to address a particular weakness in the student's knowledge.

Project LISTEN (Literacy Innovation that Speech Technology Enables), the second initiative, is an interdisciplinary research project at Carnegie Mellon University working to develop a novel tool to improve literacy—an automated Reading Tutor that displays stories on a computer screen and listens to children read aloud. Project LISTEN's Reading Tutor is a computer program that uses automated speech recognition to listen to a child read aloud and gives spoken and graphical assistance. Reading Tutor intervenes when the reader makes mistakes, gets stuck, clicks for help, or is likely to encounter difficulty. The software monitors student progress and provides a record of improvement and areas where the student may need additional support. Students at Weil spend approximately 30 minutes a day with the automated Reading Tutor.

The Carnegie Library BLAST[73] program provides an additional component to this summer literacy initiative. A library staff person visits the school and works with students for a 45-minute period. He or she reads to the students and stresses the pleasures of reading. There is a different theme each week, and the staff person reads from different genres (fiction, nonfiction, prose, poetry) related to the theme. The highlight of the visit is the wide selection of free books that students can borrow to read for the week. The child can take the book home, return it the following week, and select another. At the end of the summer session, the student is allowed to take a book home to keep.

Challenges to Implementation

Despite initial success in creating a targeted program to meet student needs, the Weil summer program faces several challenges related to funding and expanding the program to serve students in the upper grades. Because of limited resources available from PPS, participation in summer school is limited to students performing at basic and below basic levels in grades K–3. Although claims are made that the program is open to all, mandated small class size essentially limits participation to those struggling academically as they have first priority. Only those students attending the morning academic program can take advantage of the Hill House Association's afternoon program. Many additional students at all grade levels could benefit from a high-quality, academically rich summer program in a safe learning environment that would help address summer learning loss and improve academic, social, emotional, and physical competencies. Expanding student participation would mean developing additional programs (academic and enrichment) as the scripted nature of the remedial effort would not necessarily be suitable for those who are more academically successful.

An important component of the summer program is the daily one-on-one tutorial sessions with the reading specialists from the University of Pittsburgh. The tutorial program provides essential tools to help improve the reading and comprehension skills of students who are performing significantly below grade level. This particular component of the program is supported with grant funds, and it is unclear as to whether the school district will continue to support this initiative once the grant period expires.

Elements of Success

The PPS-sponsored Extended School Year Program at Weil for students in grades K–3 appears to be quite effective. The program is concise, tightly focused, and designed to address the gaps in learning of at-risk children. PPS has designed and implemented a program specifically attuned for summer school. The teaching staff remarked on the effectiveness of the approach and the noticeable improvement in students' literacy and mathematics skills. The district commitment to summer school is also reflected in their efforts to use evaluation data to continually improve program structure and content and serve more students. Specific recommendations for the program, based on 2003 data, included refining lesson plans to better align with updated assessments, designating resources for mathematics materials to increase student computation and problem-solving skills, and expanding the program to serve students in the fourth grade with an increased focus on assisting schools in meeting AYP goals.

There is much in place at Weil Technology Institute that addresses the needs of the students and of the families in the school community. The administration and staff have built a continuum of support that helps the most needy, at-risk students improve their reading, writing, and mathematics skills and that also provides a safe and caring environment for most of the summer and during the after-school period. The school's primary partner, the Hill House Association, has invested significant time and resources in professional development and training and outreach efforts to the schools and community. The effective partnership that has evolved has led to a common language and commitment to children focused on improving learning for all the children on the "Hill."

Teachers and staff were enthusiastic about the summer school program and had high praise for the training and the clearly defined and scripted curriculum. They were able to employ new techniques and approaches to address different learning styles in the small-group setting of summer school. Another positive aspect was the assessment-driven nature of the summer school program. Through the assessment process, the teachers and staff were able to develop lesson plans to meet the individual needs of their students.

The administrators and staff at Weil have supplemented the PPS summer program with effective one-on-one and technology-driven tutorial initiatives.

Individualized tutoring is provided by certified teachers with a reading specialty. By employing the latest research-based pedagogies and correlating their work to what is taking place in the classroom, the reading specialists are able to accelerate classroom learning. The technology-driven Project LISTEN further builds on this initiative with a focus on word identification, word comprehension, and overall reading fluency.

There is a high level of professionalism and dedication among the staff at Weil. The strong staff coupled with an excellent curriculum should, in the future, sustain and drive academic improvement and positively address summer learning loss. There is continuous communication among administrators, teaching staff, program coordinators and program deliverers, reading specialists (tutors), and technology specialists. They all participate in the same professional development and are committed to the vision and goals of the summer program and to meeting the needs of the students at Weil Technology Institute.

Many of the students on the "Hill" come from low-income families that often come from resource-poor social and economic conditions. Their parents/guardians are struggling to provide a safe and supportive environment for their children. As a result, when many of the students begin their education at Weil, they have already fallen behind their more affluent peers. The multiple levels of supports and services in place at Weil are designed to address the gaps in learning through early intervention, a focus on improving basic skills, and accelerating student learning through multiple methodologies including individualized tutoring, more time on task, and effective use of technology.

Summer school at Weil is critical to the district's and the state's efforts to end social promotion, reduce retention rates, and address the academic needs of underperforming students. Students who are at risk of failure are identified early and are provided with timely, effective, individualized help and additional time to work on their literacy and numeracy skills.

Endnotes

[58] 2000 US Census Data.

[59] Downloaded from Pennsylvania Department of Education SEA website at: http://www.paprofiles.org/profiles/index.asp.

[60] Downloaded from Pennsylvania Department of Education SEA website at: http://www.paprofiles.org/profiles/index.asp.

[61] The Waterford Early Reading Program is a computer-based instruction model that adapts to an individual user's learning pace, regardless of primary language or preliteracy exposure. It is a comprehensive, research-based curriculum that teaches children how to read, write, and use the keyboard. For further information, see http://www.pearsonedtech.com.

[62] Part of Weil's Philosophy Statement.

[63] 2001-02 data is the most current school level data available from the Pennsylvania State Department of Education website.

[64] Annette Shrager was the principal at Weil Technology Institute at the time that summer school survey was completed and during CCSSO's subsequent site visit to the school. She has since been transferred to another school in the district.

[65] The Hill House Association (established in 1962) was the first agency in one of Pittsburgh's predominantly low-income, African American communities to combine health, welfare, recreation, and community programs. Its multiservice model provides services to community residents from young children to senior citizens.

[66] First-Place Reading is a program developed by Harcourt specifically for summer school. It provides a complete instructional package of targeted, daily instruction of all the phonics elements to build a strong, systematic reading foundation. For further information, visit http://www.harcourt.com.

[67] Taken from The Extended School Year Schedule: Kindergarten, First Grade and Second Grade, Literacy Plus, 2003.

[68] Taken from The Extended School Year Schedule: Kindergarten, First Grade and Second Grade, Literacy Plus, 2003.

[69] Taken from The Extended School Year Schedule: Kindergarten, First Grade and Second Grade, Literacy Plus, 2003.

[70] Everyday Mathematics is a comprehensive pre-kindergarten through sixth grade mathematics curriculum developed by the University of Chicago School Mathematics Project and published by SRA/McGraw-Hill. The curriculum encourages teachers and students to go beyond arithmetic—to explore more of the mathematics spectrum by investigating data gathering and analysis, probability, geometry, patterns, and algebra. For further information, visit http://everydaymath.uchicago.edu/.

[71] Project LISTEN is an interdisciplinary research project at Carnegie Mellon University working to develop an automated Reading Tutor that uses automated speech recognition to improve a child's reading ability. Project LISTEN is supported by the NSF under IERI Grant REC-9979894 and by the Heinz Endowments. For further information, visit http://www.cs.cmu.edu/~listen.

[72] The Reading Excellence Program is a U.S. Department of Education initiative that competitively awards grants to state education agencies, which in turn award subgrants to eligible local school districts to help improve the reading skills of children in grades pre-K–3.

[73] BLAST is a program sponsored by the School Outreach Department of the Carnegie Library System. Library staff visit elementary schools throughout Pittsburgh, reading to students, promoting reading for enjoyment, explaining the library system, and providing free books to young children.

Selected Readings on Summer Learning Opportunities

Boss, Suzie, & Railsback, Jennifer. (2002). *Summer school programs: A look at the research, implications for practice, and program sampler*. Portland, OR: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory.

Cooper, Harris. (2003). *Summer learning loss: The problem and some solutions*. ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education.

Cooper, Harris. (2001). *Summer school: Research-based recommendations for policymakers*. Serve policy brief. Greensboro, NC: University of North Carolina School of Education.

Cooper, Harris. (1996). The effects of summer vacation on achievement test scores: A narrative and meta-analytic review. *Review of Educational Research, 66*(3), 227–68.

Denton, David R. (2002). *Summer school: Unfulfilled promise*. Atlanta, GA: Southern Regional Education Board (SREB).

Denton, David R. (2002). *Summer school and summer learning 2002: Progress and challenges*. Atlanta, GA: Southern Regional Education Board (SREB).

Fairchild, Ronald A. (2002). *What if summer learning loss were an education policy priority?* Presentation at the Annual APPAM Research Conference.

Kathy, Christie. (2003). Making use of summer school time. Education Commission of the States (ECS). Reprinted with permission from *Phi Delta Kappan*.

Kim, Jimmy. (2004). Summer reading and the ethnic achievement gap. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk (JESPAR), 9*(2), 169–88.

Mass Insight Education. (2002). Schools alone are not enough: How after-school and summer programs help raise student achievement. Boston, MA:. Author.

Council of Chief State School Officers
One Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Suite 700
Washington, DC 20001
Phone: (202) 336-7000
www.ccsso.org