

GFE OST Impact Group Covid-19 Response Series

Week 3: COVID-19/Impact on Summer Learning

Watch/listen to the recording [here](#).

Speakers

- Aaron Dworkin, executive director, National Summer Learning Association:
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- Chris Smith, president and executive director, Boston After School & Beyond,:
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- Marlyn Hughes, corporate vice president, New York Life Foundation, facilitator:
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HIGHLIGHTS

What providers are saying:

- The biggest focus of summer programming has to be social, emotional and mental health of kids.
- Re: making up for lost academic time: keep expectations realistic about what we can accomplish in the context we are in.
- We need mental health partners.
- We need investment in training staff across the state on positive learning environments and SEL – absolutely critical to helping young people cope with everything
- There is a significant role our community can play in helping get kids prepared to go back to classrooms --whenever that happens. Enormous benefit to school systems if we can help with this.

Opportunities for funders:

- *National Summer Learning Association*: Hoping to launch a National Task Force and support local task forces to plan & implement with cross-sector stakeholders.
- Invest in local OST and youth development organizations now so they can keep staff connected to young people now through summer – avoid furloughing and destabilizing the workforce
- Focusing on virtual social and emotional, mental health connections with young people – need to develop resources that are accessible, high quality, curated, and streamlined. Ways that leverage the asset of youthworkers' connections to young people.

- Help the field figure out how to take advantage of this moment to expand public awareness about summer learning as a policy issue - not just this summer but every summer; and to understand and act on the idea that summer learning is part of universal public education.
- Recognize unique challenges facing rural vs. urban places. Rural – fewer resources, connectivity issues.

READOUT

Marlyn Torres, New York Life Foundation

Out-of-school time has taken on a new meaning in today's world. How can we leverage this moment? Let's reimagine education, out-of-school time, summer learning, school and community-based partnerships

We are not starting from scratch. We have research on what works, we have an infrastructure and system we have invested in the last decade.

What's top of mind, what should funders know, and what should funders consider doing?

Aaron Dworkin, National Summer Learning Association

It's possible that the next chance young people have to meet with each other and caring adults will be in summer learning programs. The nation is in immediate crisis now but soon one of the key issues gaining attention will be: *what are we going to do with America's young people this summer?*

It is a moment of empathy. This community has long cared about inequities and what happens to marginalized young people in the summer – now, everyone is feeling what the challenges are – in access to digital connectivity, in realizing learning loss, realizing lost opportunities for social connection.

We are getting a lot of new partners and new funders. So we have to have opportunities for them to plug in and help.

Let's take a longer view: we are planning for more than one summer. And we are planning for the time when students might start school, but have to stop again.

Opportunities to help now

Although summer learning is an allowable use under the \$13.5 billion Ed funding in the CARE legislation, it is only one of the uses and districts do not have to spend any of the resources on summer.

There is an opportunity for philanthropy to nudge people to the table to plan in a multi stakeholder way. We could achieve this by creating a National Task Force and local task forces right away. Convening the stakeholders. Developing a Playbook that can be disseminated by the National Task Force, and taken up locally.

We could launch a Campaign for Summer – NSLA could be a pass-through to localities.

We also have a messaging marketing challenge. Parents are overwhelmed with the outpouring of resources. They need help making sense it and understanding good quality.

We have a lot of communications partnerships – including with Nickelodeon, I Heart Radio and Clear Channel; need to leverage these.

Chris Smith, BASB

Report released by National Academies in 2019: [Shaping Summertime Experiences – Opportunities to Promote Healthy Development and Well-Being for Children and Youth](#), showed that summer is a window into the inequities that exist in society. Every year when schools close for the summer, parents lose access to child care and kids lose access to learning and food. [Report was supported by Wallace Foundation and RWJF].

Boston has been building a system of summer programming for 10+ years, now serves 14,000 kids in 160 programs.

We don't choose between skills-based enrichment and academic remediation. We combine them and make the entire city a classroom. So that kids are engaging in fun activities that keep them coming: tennis, boating, island exploration, visiting college campus and work experiences. Key funders include The Boston Foundation, the Boston Opportunity Agenda and the Wallace Foundation.

[National research conducted by RAND](#) found that high-attending participants in summer programs outperformed their peers on state standardized tests in math and ELA and have better SEL skills.

As we take a pause and lift the curtain on inequities we are well placed to be part of the solution to make up for lost learning time and also time outside time in physical activity and time in social settings.

In Boston – we are planning to ramp up our network and serve more kids this summer – assuming we get the greenlight from public health officials.

In partnership with Boston Public Schools, our goal is to get every single young person access to summer learning and for teenagers that means a job and we are working with or local workforce board on this.

We are going to use April to solidify the network of programs. We want to plan for hit the ground running after July 4.

We also are planning to reach out to families when the time is right (not now).

If we are not able to run in-person programs we will pull together the best of the virtual learning opportunities. We have a lot of great content focused on SEL but we know that our best asset is the relationships adults have with young people. We are figuring out how to best leverage that.

Q&A and DISCUSSION

How will kids eat?

Lots of people addressing the hunger now – in creative ways and we will expect this to continue.....

How can non-profit providers deliver summer programs when they are economically devastated now?

Providers are applying for SBA loans, raising money and getting ready. It's a bit of chicken and egg: if people know that summer learning is happening they will try to plan. Whatever the probability of in-person summer programs we have to be ready. It may be 10 percent, it may be 50 percent but we have to be ready.

Can people who have been laid off get hired into summer programs?

There will be openings for example many programs import international staff, this will not be happening. But we need investments in organizations so they can keep staff connected to young people right now to support them through to summer.

SEL and sense of belonging, how do you create that? How ready is the field to provide virtual programming and how can funders better prepare the field for this?

Chris Smith: So many resources out there. We have started [Enrichment At Home](#). Whatever we use, we need to focus on getting these program staff who are trusted and known to kids and their families in touch with the kids.

Boston has given away 20,000 chrome books and is working on connections. Even in the best of circumstances this is tough. We need resources that are accessible and high quality and curated. Streamline it and put it in a scope and sequence. We are trying to stay in our lane: complementary enrichment and skill building.

Aaron Dworkin:

Rural communities have challenges with wifi dead spots, access to hardware.

Difficult to adapt curriculum to different needs. And how do you get kids to engage?

We can look outside our space: Pelaton, other corporate partners – what can we learn about engagement?

What kind of coordination is happening between school districts and summer programs? What if they extend the school year? Start school earlier in the fall?

Chris Smith: In MA it is decided that the school year ends June 30 no matter what. The school district funds BASB as an intermediary to fund partners who deliver the programs. A partnership among CBOs and district is critical because we are going to try to make up for so much. A lot more is going to be asked of and expected from these programs. We are happy to share tool and agreements we use.

Aaron Dworkin: Have been planning with our [New Vision for Summer School Network](#). We have to recognize they are all at home too and overwhelmed. That's why Rapid Response Task Forces

could help. Multi-sector planning - not just non-profit providers but need to bring in libraries, parks and rec, youth employment.

Jennifer Peck, Partnership for Children and Youth, California

We ran the [Summer Matters](#) campaign in CA for 7 years.

This is what we are hearing from providers:

- The biggest focus of summer programming has to be social, emotional and mental health of kids.
- Re: making up for lost academic time: keep expectations realistic about what we can accomplish in the context we are in
- We need mental health partners.
- We need investment in training staff across the state on positive learning environments and SEL – absolutely critical to helping young people cope with everything
- There is a significant role our community can play in helping get kids prepared to go back to classrooms --whenever that happens. Enormous benefit to school systems if we can help with this.
- We are seeing so many creative ways that kids and families are getting access to meals and this will need to continue in summer. Public housing organizations are eligible to serve meals and they should be doing so.
- Our key partners are the association of school administrators and the LEAs. They need help in figuring out summer.

What would the Task Forces look like?

Aaron: The National Task Force can model the diversity of stakeholders that need to be at the table. We could create a playbook with planning scenarios, stakeholders, key questions that need to be answered, elevate examples like Boston.

If NSLA had resources for Local Task Forces that could catalyze cross-sector collaborative planning and making sure voices get heard. Definitely need to expand public health and mental health voices at the table. Leveraging Children’s Cabinets is another idea.

What about communications and narrative?

Aaron: We need to figure out how to leverage the empathy of the moment to sustain momentum to combat inequity

We need to reach families about enrollment opportunities, particularly Reaching marginalized populations – multiple languages etc and also the general public.

Expand public awareness about summer learning as a policy issue - not just this summer but every summer.

And it’s a huge window for everyone to come on board to understand and act on the idea that summer learning is part of universal public education

Chris: wish we could give programs some confidence that if they plan with us there will be some money available for them to run the programs.

Rural challenges?

Aaron: transportation is a challenge. There are assets we need to re-engage. Sometimes colleges. Sometimes summer camps (American Camp Association), 4H. Technology is an issue, also family unemployment.

Jaci David, Blandin Foundation: rural MN: strengths are our network and known communities; but challenged because the OST staff is almost all furloughed already

Amy Mastin: United Way of Greater Atlanta: We have raised \$20 million for our local COVID response fund. Focused first on food, housing, shelter and emergency child care for medical workers. Trying to be methodical step by step. This week we are supporting getting students connected to schools (40% of kids in some districts have not had any contact since schools closed) But we can't fill all the gaps. United Way, Community Foundation and Georgia Afterschool Network working together. We will have a huge percentage of our population who will have no communication at all with their school between the school closing and when it reopens.