

Summer Learning Grants

Why Do We Need Summer Learning Grants?

Many students, but especially those from historically disadvantaged student groups, experience a significant decline in academic levels over the summer months – two months of math skills and two to three months in reading. This “summer learning loss” is a major contributor to Connecticut’s achievement gap.

The Learning Season, a 2007 report by Dr. Beth Miller, discusses the “faucet theory”, which essentially states that while children have access to learning resources throughout the school year, during the summer months these resources are largely turned off for low-income children, which results in gaps in reading and math that continue to widen over time. Summer learning programs can completely reverse this trend, with program participants improving their skills instead of losing them.

What would the grants provide?

This initiative would create a new competitive grant program to begin to address this need based upon the state’s successful After School Grant program. Grant amounts would range from \$50,000 - \$300,000 depending on the size of the district and number of students served and would require community partnerships and well-rounded programs with recreation, enrichment and academic components. For fiscal year 2019, the program would be started in a limited number of sites as a pilot phase, which will give the State Department of Education adequate time to develop a request for proposals and hold a grant competition for programs for the summer of 2019.

How much will it cost?

No additional funding would be required this year for the initial pilot phase. We recommend shifting some existing funding from the Alliance districts’ Education Cost Sharing line item that would be set aside in a separate non-lapsing account specifically for the summer learning grant program. As many Alliance Districts already use this funding stream for summer programming, this funding shift would not only improve the way summer programming is conducted in these towns but also increase accountability for student outcomes. In future years, further investment could allow more students to benefit from these programs; expanding the program would require an additional investment at an average cost of \$1,200 per student.

