

Equity for Summer Learning

TOOL



We stand firm in our commitment to ensure that every student has the access, opportunities and support to achieve their potential, no matter their circumstance. We also recognize that we are in the midst of difficult conversations across the country about how to heal from and address long-standing inequities, while creating the conditions for every student to achieve their very best. Schools and districts are at the front lines of these debates, and leaders are navigating multiple challenges and a wide range of perspectives on what education should look like. We hope that this tool offers an entry point to identifying concrete, evidence-based practices and strategies that center student learning, while also serving as a tool to strengthen community.

This planning tool is designed to support districts in determining key equity priorities in the vision and design of summer learning, where to begin, and how to get there. We encourage you to contextualize and adapt the questions as necessary. It is intended to help you make informed planning decisions that take into account any inequities that you may choose to address and that you can build upon over time.

The tool is organized around six design principles for holistic learning environments:

- 1 [A foundation for equity;](#)
- 2 [High quality teaching and learning](#)
- 3 [Relationships;](#)
- 4 [A culture of affirmation, inclusion, and belonging;](#)
- 5 [Meaningful engagement of students and families;](#) and
- 6 [A transformative approach to professional development.](#)



Getting Started

A Summer Planning Tool

Explore and document your district’s current approach to designing environments and opportunities, especially for summer learning, so all students can thrive. Refer to summer learning data (e.g., enrollment, attendance, surveys, completion) and other evidence of outcomes.

What has summer learning looked like?	Who is the audience?	How is learning measured?
What has summer learning historically looked like? How have assumptions about the purpose of summer learning shaped this? How are resources and staffing determined?	What assumptions exist about who summer learning is for? What does data tell us about who enrolls in, completes, is excluded from, or stops attending summer programming? How have data been disaggregated and analyzed in the past?	How have summer learning outcomes been measured in the past? What student/family data has been used? What outcomes should be measured moving forward? How should data be disaggregated and analyzed to measure these outcomes?

Planning for Equity

Creating Summer Learning Programs That Meet Students' Needs

We encourage you to select a few focus areas for this year so your plan is realistic and achievable. Then return to this tool as you plan for subsequent summers to help you consider new goals and actions and to deepen or expand your focus on incorporating equity goals in your summer programming.

1. A Foundation for Equity

Guiding Questions	Look-fors <i>Some examples of practices and structures that align with these questions.</i>	Three-Year Vision <i>What would we observe in summer learning that would serve as evidence of growth in this area?</i>	Actions for Current Summer <i>What are one or two focus areas for this summer's program that could have a positive impact on student learning?</i>
<p><i>Does your district have an equity policy?</i></p> <p><i>Is your school board committed to equity?</i></p> <p><i>Is there political support for equity work?</i></p> <p><i>How accessible/robust are summer learning data?</i></p>	<p>Practices and structures may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A shared definition and understanding of equity • This shared definition is used to ground conversations about equity across stakeholders • Educators are developing capacity to understand how “identity markers”¹ and bias impact teaching and learning 		

¹ Identity markers refer to our intersecting social identities (e.g., racial, cultural, or ethnic identity; gender; age; class background; physical identity).

2. High Quality Teaching and Learning

Guiding Questions	Look-fors <i>Some examples of practices and structures that align with these questions.</i>	Three-Year Vision <i>What would we observe in summer learning that would serve as evidence of growth in this area?</i>	Actions for Current Summer <i>What are one or two focus areas for this summer's program that could have a positive impact on student learning?</i>
<p><i>Does the quality of student learning ensure that there is no predictability of success or failure that correlates with any social or cultural factor related to a student's background?</i></p> <p><i>How are data used across the district to identify disproportionate progress and performance outcomes?</i></p>	<p>Practices and structures may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Tier 1 instruction is aligned to rigorous college- and career-ready academic standards ● Summer learning promotes inquiry and fosters multiple skills and mindsets ● Academics, enrichment, and supports are integrated to build self-awareness and confidence ● All students are encouraged and provided with opportunities to enroll in advanced coursework ● Learning tasks engage students in community-based projects where they present to authentic audiences ● Curriculum and instruction emphasize higher-order thinking skills ● Curricular and career-preparation activities reflect the changing world of work (e.g., exposure to diverse careers, technical and soft skills) ● A plan to determine how teachers are assigned, and systems to monitor which students have access to the most effective teachers ● Rubrics are used across disciplines so students can work toward understanding and achieving high expectations ● Prioritization in scheduling students who may need the most supports <p>Data practices may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Disaggregation of student performance data to identify disproportionate outputs and outcomes ● Assessment of teacher performance based on multiple measures (e.g., value-added, class performance/growth, student work, surveys, etc.) ● Regular classroom observations, with teachers given feedback on equitable instructional practices (e.g., unbiased questioning, on-grade level work, engagement in learning) ● Formal and informal structures to gather student feedback on the learning environment ● Surveys of employers or other local partners for any work-based learning opportunities 		

3. Relationships at the Center

Guiding Questions	Look-fors <i>Some examples of practices and structures that align with these questions.</i>	Three-Year Vision <i>What would we observe in summer learning that would serve as evidence of growth in this area?</i>	Actions for Current Summer <i>What are one or two focus areas for this summer’s program that could have a positive impact on student learning?</i>
<p><i>What do the relationships between the district and families look like?</i></p> <p><i>What are the expectations for how district/school staff engage with and build strong relationships with students and families?</i></p> <p><i>What is the district’s approach to student behavior and conduct?</i></p>	<p>Practices and structures may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A formalized structure where each student has a strong relationship with at least one adult in their building (e.g., through mentoring, advisory, home room, etc.) ● Community and trust-building activities ● Interdisciplinary teams of teachers (and community partners) working with the same group of students ● A district-wide restorative approach to classroom management and student behavior to support students in becoming positive members of the community <p>Data practices may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Disaggregating school climate data across demographic subgroups to determine if inequities exist ● Regularly surveying and/or interviewing students, parents, community partners, and staff on perceptions of community-building efforts, cultural competency practices and approaches to student behavior 		

4. A Culture of Affirmation, Inclusion and Belonging

Guiding Questions	Look-fors <i>Some examples of practices and structures that align with these questions.</i>	Three-Year Vision <i>What would we observe in summer learning that would serve as evidence of growth in this area?</i>	Actions for Current Summer <i>What are one or two focus areas for this summer's program that could have a positive impact on student learning?</i>
<p><i>To what extent do students and families see themselves represented across the school community?</i></p> <p><i>To what extent do students see themselves represented among staff and other adults?</i></p> <p><i>How connected/responsive is the school culture and curriculum to the lived experiences of students?</i></p>	<p>Practices and structures may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Knowledge-building is connected to personally relevant topics and lived experiences ● Real-world application and issues that matter to students ● Structures that promote student agency/leadership ● Introducing new concepts through discussion and inquiry ● Opportunities to build reasoning and debate skills and foster intellectual inquiry and engagement ● Community partnerships provide new ways to expand <i>where</i> learning occurs ● Staff is representative of the student population across the range of identity-markers ● Spaces that allow students and families to see themselves, their cultures, experiences, and ideas represented ● Texts that offer “windows” and “mirrors” to all students, so they learn about cultures beyond their own and see themselves reflected in literature ● Responsiveness to students’ SEL needs (e.g., trauma, pandemic stresses, bullying, and other psychosocial challenges) <p>Data practices may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Actively monitoring staff hiring and retention data ● Use of student surveys, focus groups, interviews to gather information on their school-based experience ● Monitoring processes that ensure equity (e.g., comparison of discipline or special education referrals across student subgroups) ● Data dashboards or other tools that support analysis of trends ● Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) to ensure students receive appropriate interventions 		

5. Meaningful Engagement of Students and Families

Guiding Questions	Look-fors <i>Some examples of practices and structures that align with these questions.</i>	Three-Year Vision <i>What would we observe in summer learning that would serve as evidence of growth in this area?</i>	Actions for Current Summer <i>What are one or two focus areas for this summer's program that could have a positive impact on student learning?</i>
<p><i>To what extent are students and families informed, engaged and able to fully participate in school-based activities and programming?</i></p> <p><i>How does the district identify and navigate barriers to participation?</i></p>	<p>Practices and structures may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities for students and families to participate in the design and development of the summer learning program • District considers the needs of students and families when making decisions about transportation, activity/supply fees, etc. • Staff make every possible effort to communicate with families across linguistic differences • There are no patterns of disparity between how different groups of parents are contacted, and parent communication is done equitably (e.g., flexible conference times to accommodate different work schedules) • Consistently and regularly employ multiple channels to invite family perspectives and input • Ensure communication materials are presented in a language, format and modality that maximizes engagement and demonstrates a respect and embrace of families • All learning activities incorporate speaking, writing, interacting, reading, and listening with a focus on content-rich language to support culturally and linguistically diverse students • The norm is to allow for sufficient wait time • Staff use language scaffolds (e.g., visuals, repetition, gesture) <p>Data practices may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structures for gathering data from students and families that informs planning and design of new initiatives and programs • Analysis of student, family, and staff surveys occurs on a regular basis with key stakeholders invited into the process 		

6. A Transformative Approach to Professional Development

Guiding Questions	Look-fors <i>Some examples of practices and structures that align with these questions.</i>	Three-Year Vision <i>What would we observe in summer learning that would serve as evidence of growth in this area?</i>	Actions for Current Summer <i>What are one or two focus areas for this summer's program that could have a positive impact on student learning?</i>
<p><i>How prepared do staff feel to navigate the wide-ranging needs of students?</i></p> <p><i>What does professional learning look like to address issues of bias and/or disproportionate outcomes?</i></p> <p><i>What resources are available to teachers to keep abreast of research-based innovations to maximize student engagement and learning?</i></p>	<p>Practices and structures may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administration invite staff to co-create a shared understanding of the vision for summer learning, what success looks like, and how it is measured • Educators are trained to use research-based instructional practices such as: re-teaching, extending concepts, differentiated questioning, options in how to express understanding, student feedback and support • Provide all staff (e.g., educators, social workers, enrichment partners) with training on research-based social emotional strategies and focus and supports to ensure fidelity of implementation • Provide opportunities for district and partner staff to learn and plan together • Training in analyzing data and using it to inform planning and instruction • Professional development on cultural competence and universal design for learning <p>Data practices may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing observations, coaching, and feedback helps educators practice and build capacity in the practices and expectations set forth in professional development • Structures and practices that encourage staff to individually and collaboratively use data to examine and challenge their own assumptions and biases • Protocols and practices to support teachers in disaggregating data by student subgroups to identify disparities by race, ethnicity, language ability and other characteristics 		