

LESSON PLAN

Learning in Summer Study Session #2: Assessing the Needs in Your District

This lesson plan serves as a guide to the presentation on “Assessing the Summer Learning Needs in Your District” and associated materials. It is intended to assist board members seeking to conduct a board study session focused on summer learning.

The goals of this lesson are for boards to identify their needs and goals that can be met through better alignment with their summer programs, develop a cost analysis for current program offerings, and take an inventory of current programs and offerings.

SESSION MATERIALS

- PowerPoint Presentation: Assessing the Needs in Your District: Learning in Summer Study Session #2:
- Video: Summer Learning: Supporting Students to Achieve District Learning Goals
- Video: Summer Learning: Supporting Staff Capacity and Motivation

ASSIGNED READING PRIOR TO SESSION

- District Needs Assessment for Summer Programs

OUTLINE AND SUGGESTED PACING (60 minutes total)

Introduction (5 minutes)

- **SLIDE 1:** Welcome and introductions. Summarize, as appropriate, prior discussions and decisions regarding board support for summer learning programs.
- **SLIDE 2:** Review the focus of this lesson. Summer is valuable time that districts cannot afford to waste. During this lesson, the group will use the *District Needs Assessment for Summer Programs* to:
 - Identify district needs and learning goals that can be met through better alignment with summer programs;
 - Take inventory of existing summer learning programs offered within and outside the district; and
 - Explore untapped opportunities to expand services for more students and better align current programs.

Making Summer Learning a Strategic Investment (15 minutes)

- **SLIDE 3:** Since summer is valuable time that districts cannot afford to waste, alignment with district learning goals is critical.
- **SLIDE 4:** Use talking points to restate opportunities that summer can provide (might have already been covered in Lesson 1). Summer learning programs can help district meet many district needs and goals. These include their potential to:
 - Help students meet learning goals;
 - Keep kids safe, active, and engaged in school;
 - Provide time and space for staff professional learning and skill-building; and
 - Develop and strengthen key partnerships within district departments and with the district and external partners.

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- **SLIDE 5:** The video in this slide highlights how summer learning programs can help to meet many different student learning goals. Ask participants to take notes on the goals identified as being met in the video. Show *Summer Learning: Supporting Students to Achieve District Learning Goals*.
- **SLIDE 6:** Use talking points from the slide to review the goals of the *District Needs Assessment for Summer Programs*. CSBA has developed the *District Needs Assessment for Summer Programs* to help boards and the superintendent think about how to best support and align summer learning programs. This document is meant to be a template to help district staff gather information and make recommendations about how summer programs could best further district goals based on needs, capacity, and priorities. The needs assessment will help the district to:
 - Identify which district goals could be met through summer programs;
 - Take stock of current summer learning programs; and
 - Think creatively about what is possible within a summer program.
- **SLIDE 7:** Review the appropriate role the board plays in supporting the district's work to conduct a needs assessment. It is not the board's role to plan or conduct the assessment. Rather, a board and superintendent can:
 - Identify the questions that need answering;
 - Create a vision for how the days of summer could be used most productively;
 - Insist on accurate and thorough information; and
 - Act as thought partners with district staff.

The questions included in the needs assessment are meant to support the process and prompt deep conversations. They are based on the experiences of school districts throughout California that have been working to create high quality summer learning programs that engage students and support those districts' educational missions.

Alignment with District Goals (20 minutes)

- **SLIDE 8:** Talk about the ways that summer programs can serve learning goals for both students and staff, including teachers and expanded learning staff. In this conversation, encourage participants to look through the questions for student outcome goals and professional learning goals on the first page of the *District Needs Assessment for Summer Programs*. For example, summer programs provide extra time for students to acquire skills, master academic material, and more. They can also be a valuable time for staff, including teachers and expanded learning staff, to work on professional learning goals.
- **SLIDE 9:** Use question on the slide as a discussion prompt and brainstorm a list of positive student outcomes that could result from student access to rigorous and engaging summer learning programs. Get respondents to specify:
 - For which students; and
 - Types of outcomes, which could include academic achievement, for specific subject areas, engagement with school, social-emotional learning, access to enrichment opportunities, and others.

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- **SLIDE 10:** Identify priorities from among the items on the brainstormed list. Use prompts from the slide to inform discussion and priority setting:
 - How do these align with LCAP and other goals?
 - Which could best be supported by a summer program?
 - What needs do families have that would draw them to a summer program?

As a group, identify the priorities that would support goals identified in the LCAP and other district-level goals. Put a star next to those priorities that could be best supported with a summer program. Put a second star by any that you believe families would find particularly attractive given that summer is voluntary.

- **SLIDE 11:** The video on this slide will explore how summer learning programs can support staff skills development and their motivation. Show *Summer Learning: Supporting Staff Capacity and Motivation*.
- **SLIDE 12:** Have participants call-out what the main points that they remember from the video regarding supporting staff capacity. Emphasize that summer can be a learning opportunity for teachers and staff.
 - Ask: Does district have professional development goals that summer could support? Identify some of those goals and discuss how summer can support them. Also differentiate between the different types of district staff that could be supported in a summer learning program, including teachers and non-certificated staff.
 - Ask and discuss the question: Are there professional development funds available that could help staff summer programs?

Take Inventory of Current Summer Programs (10 minutes)

- **SLIDE 13:** Now that the group has explored how summer programs can support both student outcome goals and staff professional learning goals, this sections will focus on the need to take inventory of the current summer programs that are taking place in the district.
- **SLIDE 14:** Use the talking points from the slide and the *District Needs Assessment for Summer Programs* to discuss the questions that the board will want to ask about the current program offerings. It makes sense to begin with the big picture questions regarding the total number of sites and students served, how much the district is spending on these programs, where the responsibility for them lies, and understanding the planning process.
- **SLIDE 15:** Brainstorm other possible questions. Use the “current programs” sections of the *District Needs Assessment for Summer Programs* to discuss the information you wish to include in a report on current summer programs. Highlight and agree upon the questions that are most relevant to your district and work with the superintendent on a plan and timeline for answering them.
- **SLIDE 16:** Use the talking points from the slide to review the various aspects of a program that will help inform a cost-benefit analysis. Discuss whether there are any aspects that should be considered or expanded on in your district when it conducts its own inventory of existing summer programs.

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- **SLIDE 17:** Introduce the “cost analysis worksheet” in the *District Needs Assessment for Summer Programs*. Explain that a separate form should be completed for each individual program operated by the district. Once that is done, the results will be compiled into a summary that provides an apples-to-apples review of the cost of each current program based on the cost per student per hour. This information can be used along with information about program goals, evaluation, and district priorities to look for gaps and opportunities to improve programs.

Looking for Partnership Opportunities (10 minutes)

- **SLIDE 18:** This section will now focus on thinking about partners that could help support summer programs. For this section, participants can reference the “opportunities for more partnerships and resources” section in the *District Needs Assessment for Summer Programs*.
- **SLIDE 19:** Brainstorm possibilities for partnerships using the key points on the slide and questions in the *District Needs Assessment for Summer Programs*. By conducting an environmental scan, district officials may discover opportunities for partnerships and collaboration. That might provide additional resources for the district to offer summer learning to more students or identify programs run by other organizations (such as Boys and Girls Clubs or the local Parks and Recreation Department) that could serve more students with district support. Once the list of current and potential partners is compiled, the group can reflect on which potential partners it makes the most sense to pursue and how these partnerships can be part of a broader community engagement strategy and/or align with district priorities.

Next Steps (5 minutes)

- **SLIDE 20:** Now that the group has started the process of assessing the needs in the district, it is time to discuss next steps.
- **SLIDE 21:** Reflect on what the board can be in supporting effective summer programs. For example, the board can create an expectation that summer programs are part of a school district’s overall educational effort, not just a seasonal offshoot. The board can also help to change the focus of summer learning programs from remediation and test preparation to a blended approach of academic and enrichment activities. School districts and their governing boards should also treat summer learning equally with traditional school year programs and make them part of year-round planning. Planning time is critical, so governance teams should start early in the planning process to secure funding and partners. They should also have the budget and logistics in place by March in order to have sufficient time to secure staffing and recruit students. As a next step, the board can set a deadline for completion of the *District Needs Assessment for Summer Programs*.
- **SLIDE 22:** Review resources for board members to learn more and explore the issue further. CSBA has published multiple resources related to the development of summer learning programs in California. You can visit the CSBA summer learning page to find lesson plans and materials for this study session and two other board study sessions related to summer learning. CSBA also has materials to help board members plan for and implement summer programs, including a Planning Guide and a Guide to Regional Partners and Resources, all available at www.csba.org/summerlearning.

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OPTION: A 2-hour session to combine with *Learning in Summer Study Session#1: Making the Case*, as some of the points made in that lesson reiterate those made at the beginning of this one.