



UNIVERSITY *of*
DENVER

COLORADO EVALUATION
AND ACTION LAB

A strategic research partner for
government agencies and a bridge
to the research community

A Toolkit to Support the Design and Implementation of K-12 Summer Programs

Learning from Six Denver-area Charter Schools

September 2022

For inquiries contact: Lauren Gase | lauren@coloradolab.org | www.ColoradoLab.org

Report Number: 20-08B. Date: September 2022



About the Toolkit

How the Toolkit Was Developed

This toolkit aims to support school leaders interested in designing, implementing, and evaluating summer programs, especially programs that center academic, social-emotional, and experiential learning.

The toolkit was developed through a partnership between the [Colorado Evaluation and Action Lab](#) (Colorado Lab) at the University of Denver, and a learning community of leaders from six Denver-area charter schools. In 2021, these schools received funding from the Response, Innovation, and Student Equity (RISE) Education Fund to address the academic and social-emotional impacts of COVID-19 by implementing summer programs. These schools offered more than 2,000 of Colorado’s highest-need students—across elementary and secondary grade levels—the opportunity to participate in innovative summer programs that included academic, social-emotional, and experiential components. As the schools implemented their programs over two summers, leaders from each school met quarterly to review progress, reflect, and elevate lessons learned. This toolkit serves as a summary of key insights.



High school students
age 14-21



High school students
age 16-20



How the Toolkit Is Organized

The first thing to consider in planning a summer program: **Do you have funding?** This toolkit is designed to guide school leaders through the process of planning, implementing, and reflecting on summer programs for which funding is already available, whether internal or grant funded.

Next, consider that the **planning process for summer programs begins well in advance** (at least 6 months before summer). We have included a planning checklist that gives school leaders a month-by-month view of key tasks ([Appendix 1](#)) and templates to support planning and reflection ([Appendix 2](#)). These planning templates, and the rest of the toolkit, are organized into four sections:

- Defining the **goals of your summer program**, which should then inform the program’s core components and offerings.
- **Program operations** and logistical factors.
- Considerations for **student outreach and family engagement**.
- Approaches for measuring implementation and outcomes to support **evaluation and learning**.

Throughout, we offer examples that draw from lessons learned from the learning community. We also provide links to complementary resources.

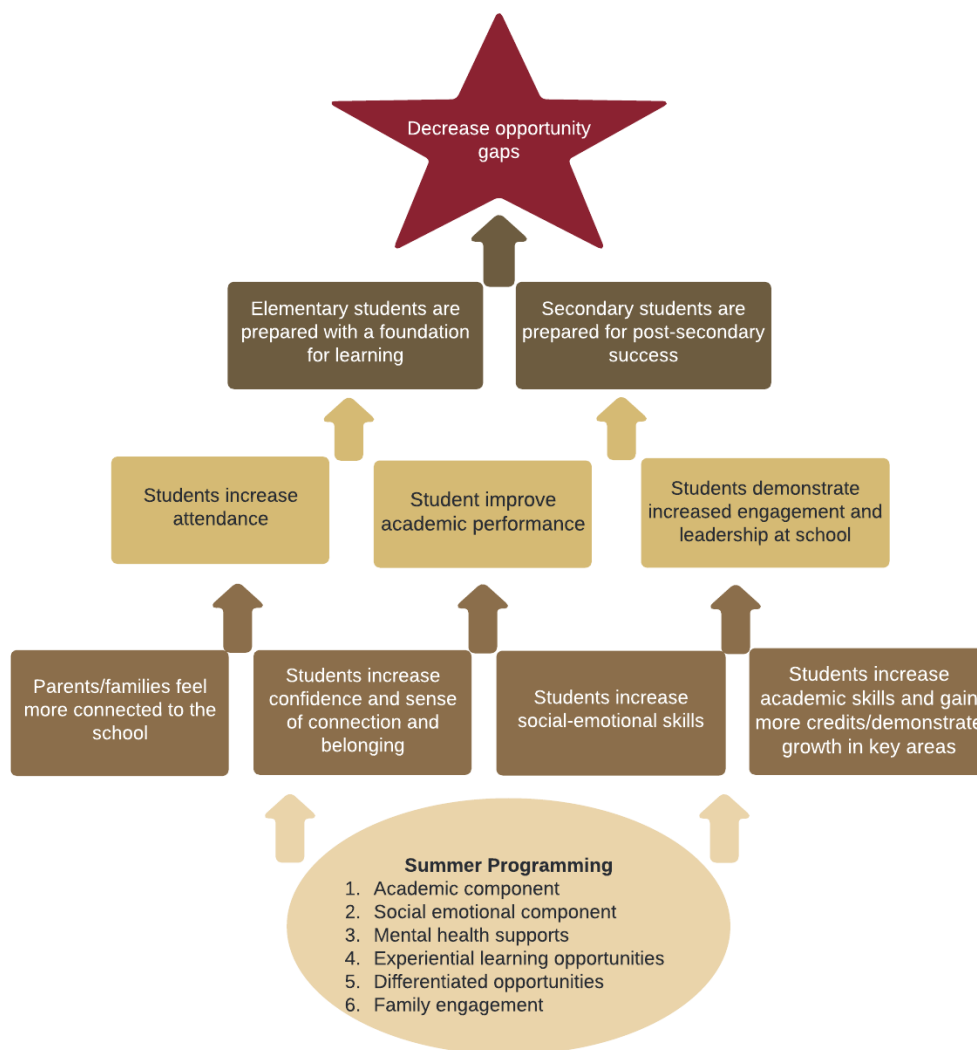


Section 1. Establishing Goals and Program Components

The key first question to answer: What are you trying to achieve with your summer program? The Institute of Education Sciences (IES) suggests that schools first identify the specific needs of their students and community and, relatedly, their intended program outcomes. [This IES resource](#) provides a checklist of options to identify local needs, such as reviewing data and engaging key stakeholders to help define your program’s purpose.

Example Theory of Change for Summer Programs

Programs may have different goals depending on the needs and ages of students. For younger students, in addition to academics, goals might include growing social skills, promoting physical activity and enrichment, or establishing or continuing routine. For older students, goals might focus more on academics, especially in supporting students’ progress on their path to graduation. At both levels, goals may focus on supporting students’ social-emotional development, leadership skills, and sense of connection and belonging with teachers and their school.



It can be helpful to visually display goals through a Theory of Change; the figure (right) provides an example. The schools in the learning community first determined an overarching goal (the “North Star”): decrease opportunity gaps for students.

Goals for elementary students focused on building a foundation for learning, whereas goals for secondary students focused on supporting their post-secondary success.



After identifying goals, the next step is to identify core program components, the key elements of your program that will support you in achieving your goals. To align with their intended goals, summer programs offered to younger students frequently include components such as experiential learning and social-emotional learning (SEL), whereas summer programs offered to older students frequently include credit recovery components.

The IES emphasizes the importance of identifying evidence-based interventions that are aligned with the intended program outcomes. They suggest that a good place to start is the What Works Clearinghouse's [Structuring Out-of-School Time to Improve Academic Achievement](#) Practice Guide.

To center access and inclusion, consider the family populations your school serves in developing program components. For example, [this Summer Learning Best Practice Guide](#) suggests that parent involvement and education, as well as community-based and mental health supports, are especially important components for students supported by migrant education and students experiencing disability.

The schools in the learning community implemented the following six core components, which worked together to support summer programming delivered in each school:

1. A robust **academic component**, focused on learning gains and skill-building.
2. A strong **social-emotional component** to build students' SEL skills.
3. Provision of **mental health supports**.
4. **Experiential learning** that provides fun, connection, and belonging.
5. **Differentiated opportunities** based on students' needs.
6. At least one event or activity per summer that **engages families**.

Data-driven Summer Program Goals

- If your goal is to increase graduation, metrics such as graduation rates and credits earned can help you judge success—and target recruitment toward students most likely to benefit.
- If your goal is to improve social-emotional skills, behavioral data, routine SEL screeners, or measures of student engagement can help you judge success—and target students most likely to benefit.

See [Section 4](#) for further information on measuring progress toward goals.

Summer Programs Can Support Staff Development and Engagement

- For existing teachers interested in expanding or growing their role, summer can provide an opportunity to “try on” a new role in administration or try teaching a new class or project.
- For new staff or potential hires, summer can provide a time to hold “test runs” where teachers can deliver lessons in smaller classes and demonstrate their skills before the school year begins.



Summer Program Components for Schools in the Learning Community

Academic Component. This component included in-person opportunities that targeted learning around core subjects where students needed the most support, like math and reading. Where possible, academic learning in core subjects was paired with options like arts and movement-based learning (see examples like [Math & Movement](#) summer program). Learning community members focused academic components on:

- Credit recovery or the opportunity to get ahead on credits to graduate sooner.
- Supporting students who were on the cusp of getting to the next level in reading or math.
- Mitigating summer learning loss (keeping students on track through continued practice over the summer).

Social-emotional Component. SEL supports students in managing emotions, practicing empathy for others, establishing and maintaining supportive relationships, and making responsible and caring decisions. Learning community members used a variety of strategies to support SEL such as:

- Dedicated time for community-building activities at the start of each day (e.g., “morning circle”).
- Social-emotional curriculum such as Positive Action Curriculum, Zones of Regulation, MindUP, Second Step, Random Acts of Kindness, Conscious Discipline, and Little Justice Leaders—with an emphasis on teachers delivering social-emotional learning lessons, not just mental health professionals.
- Leveraging the more casual feel and smaller class sizes of summer to build deeper relationships and connections with students.
- Using a trauma-informed approach to instruction.
- Providing access to mental health professionals on site (e.g., school psychologist, family therapist).
- Infusing team building into orientation and in dedicated cohorts of participants who work together throughout the summer on project-based learning.

Experience-based Component. Experiential learning and expeditionary opportunities, such as field trips or community-based projects, can help connect lessons from core academic subjects to experiences. Examples of experiential components from the learning community include:

- Doing a tour of murals around downtown Denver and then having students create their own mural.
- A community partner bringing special bikes on site that students used to power music and cooking appliances (e.g., to make smoothies by powering a blender).
- Taking high school students on a 3-day camping trip to a wolf sanctuary.

Check out videos of the summer programs in action [here](#).

Tip: Establish partnerships with community organizations providing experiential learning opportunities. Keep a list of community partner organizations that includes factors such as location/availability of on-site activities, grade levels appropriate for, and cost.



Section 2. Program Operations

Planning a successful summer program requires determining the length and timing of the program, identifying the budget, staffing appropriately and with clear expectations, and arranging facilities and materials.

Length and Timing of the Program

When will you offer your program? On what days and time will it be offered? How many weeks will it last?

- **Student and family considerations:** Design session times that accommodate working parents and family summer plans. This might include full day programs with drop-off/pick-up times close to working hours or offering sessions during weeks and weekdays when families are less likely to have other summer plans scheduled (e.g., offering sessions Tuesdays-Thursdays to avoid conflicts with weekend travel, or avoiding weeks with holidays).
- **Staff considerations:** To protect staff mental health and rest time, consider building in sufficient transition time for staff so that programs do not begin too near to the end of the school year—or end too near to the start of next school year. Alternatively, for some students and staff, starting summer programs near the end of the school year may ease the transition into continued learning; or if new staff will be starting in the fall, offering summer programs closer to the start of the following school year may help onboard and familiarize new staff to the school.

See [Appendix 3](#) for example summer program schedules.

Determine the Budget

How much funding do you have available?

Funding for summer programs may come from a combination of internal funds or grant funds. Common budget categories for summer programs include a) staffing (by position), b) materials and supplies, c) field trip costs (including transportation, registration, and entrance fees), and d) meals/food. Staffing is often the biggest expense. An [example budget template can be found here](#).

Schools in the learning community recommended keeping close track of budgeted and actual expenditures, in order to stay on track. There may be specific templates required for reporting to different funding entities. Do not underestimate the time it takes to manage the fiscal side of program operations! Consider hiring a financial consultant to help manage the budget.

If allocating grant funds to summer programs over the course of several years, budget strategically across the years; for example, consider that “start-up costs” of the initial summer program may surpass second-year costs.

Determine if the Program Will be Self-run or Contracted

Will you run the program yourself or contract with a vendor to staff the program?

Summer program contractors can make life easier for school leaders by bringing a ready-to-implement program to your school site. They provide the staff, content, and supplies; schools provide the students



and facility. Contracting with an outside organization to run your summer program may be a good option if you do not have the desire or capacity to plan and implement the program yourself, or if you do not have enough in-house teachers willing to work over the summer. Alternatively, students may not experience the same level of increased connection and belonging with their school and teachers if they attend a program solely run by an outside organization (with staff who do not typically work in the school during the year).

If contracting, provide sufficient time to address logistical needs like agreeing to terms, ensuring access to buildings, providing internet access, and establishing data sharing agreements.

Identify Staffing

Who will staff the program? Will they work the whole summer or only part?

Schools in the learning community generally hired staff in three categories:

- **Director/Coordinator:** schools found value in having one point person to oversee all planning as well as day-to-day summer program operations. This person can coordinate staff interest and availability and streamline scheduling processes, especially for programs spanning the course of several weeks.
- **Teachers:** summer can be a good time to pilot new ideas your school may want to use during the school year, so consider staffing your program with invested individuals who are confident in trying new things and can be a champion for changes you want to carry into the coming school year.
- **Mental Health Professionals, Nurse Consultants, and Paraprofessionals:** staffing programs with both teachers and these complementary roles can allow for dedicated sessions led by each during different parts of the day, which can shorten daily time commitments for staff overall. Mental health professionals can help meet any behavioral or mental health needs, and nurse consultants can administer medication or take care of medical issues.

Because actual enrollment in summer programs can vary significantly from anticipated enrollment (see [Section 3](#)), schools in the learning community advised against enrollment-dependent staffing. You do not need to build staffing around a set number of anticipated students. Instead, consider essential roles needed to staff the summer program to meet your goals, staff availability, and your budget.

If offering multiple summer program sessions, consider the cost/benefit of having the same or different staff for each session. One benefit of different staff for different sessions could be that it ensures all staff receive a sufficient summer break. Benefits of using the same staff across different sessions include providing continuity and easing the logistics of planning. Some staff may also appreciate the opportunity to earn more money by working multiple sessions.

How much will you pay staff?

Staffing summer programs is considered beyond normal duties and requires adequate compensation.

All six schools in the learning community provided additional pay to staff members for their work on summer programs. Stipends, retention bonuses, and attractive hourly pay structures can support sufficient staffing, especially for regular/returning staff who are well-positioned to cultivate and build on relationships with students and families throughout the school year. The schools in the learning community arranged payment structures that covered staff worktime starting as soon as May and through



the duration of the summer program, to ensure planning and preparation time were compensated. Decide how pay and coverage will work if a staff member needs to take a day off (e.g., whether time off is paid or unpaid during summer sessions). The table below offers example compensation structures.

How Much to Pay Summer Program Staff: Examples from the Learning Community

Time Commitment		Staff Hired			
		Director/ Coordinator	Teachers	Mental Health Professionals/ Counselors	Other
Elementary school	12 hours per week for 5 weeks (60 hours total)	\$40/hour + \$500 bonus	\$2,100 stipend + \$500 bonus for return staff from last summer	\$2,100 stipend + \$500 bonus for return staff from last summer	Grant manager: \$50-\$100 per hour
Elementary school	20 hours per week for 4 weeks (80 hours total)	\$2,000 stipend month before (for planning) + \$5,000 stipend month of (for implementation)	\$3,500 stipend	N/A	Nurse consultant: billed hourly using school year rate
High school	20 hours per week for 4 weeks plus planning time in April-May (~100 hours total)	\$5,000 stipend	\$5,000 stipend	\$5,000 stipend	N/A
Middle + high school	25 hours per week for 3 weeks (75 hours total)	\$7,000 stipend for director and \$3,800 stipend for assistant director	\$3,050 stipend + \$500 bonus for return staff from last summer	\$3,050 stipend + \$500 bonus for return staff from last summer	Para-professional: \$1,350 stipend High school student assistant: \$1,050 stipend for 2 weeks

Other Operational Considerations

A few additional things to keep in mind:

- Arrange for maintenance and cleaning of facilities during summer sessions.
- Coordinate transportation and bussing for day trips. Ensure a sufficient number of staff are licensed to transport students.
- Provide medical training for staff (e.g., heat safety during summer months).
- Provide meals to students.
- Purchase materials for summer learning that can be used again during the school year.



Section 3. Student Outreach and Family Engagement

Engaging students and families in summer learning is critical to facilitate program enrollment, maintain strong family-school connections, and encourage parents/guardians as key supporters of their child’s learning. We have provided a Communications Plan Template ([Appendix 4](#)) to help you identify key messages, how and when you will communicate, and who you will rely on as trusted messengers to help communicate information about your summer program.

Identifying Target Students

Will your summer program target certain students?

Based on program goals, it is important to identify the target audience for your summer program. Intentionally recruiting students—for example, students who are low on credits or in need of additional support, or students who are in key transition years, such as rising sixth graders entering a new school—can ensure that your program reaches the students most likely to benefit.

Consider whether you can leverage existing systems to identify students most likely to benefit. This could include academic records, data from school-based behavioral systems, or records of those who have been disengaged in virtual learning.

Messaging to Students and Families

How will you communicate with students and families to get them enrolled?

To support participation, communicate to students and families throughout the school year about the purpose and intent of summer programs. Early and frequent communication is key, especially after spring break and regularly through May.

Utilize trusted messengers to communicate with families. Trusted messengers are individuals who have strong ties to families and the school and who are likely to be listened to by students and families. They can include individuals in various roles, even if they are not staffing the summer program. Teachers or students who participated in the summer program in previous years can also be important trusted messengers for recruiting students.

Developing Student Friendly Communications

Consider students’ needs and preferences in communicating about the summer program, for example:

- For elementary, frame the summer program as an enrichment or supplementary opportunity.
- For secondary, frame the summer program as a path to get on track for graduation through earning or recovering credit.

Help students and families see the benefits of participation and minimize stigma of participating. For example:

- Use language like “summer learning opportunity,” or “summer camp,” rather than “summer school.”



Aim to reach students and families through a variety of communication mechanisms. For example:

- Make direct phone calls to families, especially those who have been less engaged during the school year.
- Leverage opportunities to talk with families in person, for example, during drop-off/pick-up, or on family nights or parent-teacher conferences. Ask someone who has an existing trusting relationship with the family (e.g., a favorite teacher, the school counselor) to talk with them.
- Highlight the program in your school newsletter, on your social media pages, and during morning announcements.
- Have staff promote the program in their classrooms and during extracurricular activities.

Communication Tips

Focus on the positive. People often remember myths and negative messages more than positive ones. Instead of saying: “We know summer can be a hard time for students who are behind. Come sign up for our summer program to support your path to graduation,” try instead: “Come sign up for our summer program, which will support your path to graduation with small class sizes and project-based learning!”

Build surround sound. Consider that people need to hear the same messages repeatedly over time for information to “sink in.” Use multiple forms of communication and trusted messengers to get families thinking about summer programs all year.

Enrolling Students

When enrolling students, schools in the learning community had three pieces of advice to support robust participation:

- **Enroll students early (in the spring)** to avoid scheduling conflicts with family summer plans.
- **Over enroll students** with the assumption that not all will participate. Schools in the learning community estimate that between 70-85% of students who signed up ultimately ended up participating.
- **Remain flexible to allow late enrollment** if students decide to participate as late as the first day of the summer program. For example, some secondary students’ grades may be entered late at the end of the school year, which may influence their decision to participate for credit recovery.

To facilitate enrollment and up-to-date communications, consider creating a “landing page” or home base website for all things summer program. [This example](#) shows how one school used a Google site to host bilingual information about the program, permission slips, and surveys for students to indicate their top interest areas for activities offered.

Setting Expectations About Attendance

Setting expectations about attendance is critical. Strategies to maximize participation and attendance should be rooted in program goals and components and activated through early communication and enrollment.

Use an attendance tracking system and conduct targeted outreach for families not regularly attending. For example, the program coordinator can call/text family members if students have not shown up for a certain number of sessions.



- For upper grade levels, use clear messaging that communicates how attendance requirements and summer program completion affect the ability to earn credits and the track to graduation.
- For lower grade levels (who do not typically have the same incentives to participate, such as credit recovery), consider other motivating factors to families, such as offering a certificate of completion, requiring a signature on a contract of commitment to the attendance policy, or requiring that students participate in all sessions to attend field trips.

To encourage families to attend all sessions, consider charging a nominal fee or offering a cash incentive for participation. For example:

- Use a sliding scale based on Free and Reduced-Price Lunch status to require a deposit paid by the family at the start of sessions and returned after their child participates in all sessions. Suggested starting rate to calculate deposit: \$5 per session.
- Offer families \$50 if their child shows up every day for all weeks of the program.

For additional examples, see [this resource from the Colorado Department of Education](#) under “Core Component 2: Policies to Maximize Participation and Attendance.”

Engaging Families During the Summer Program

Developing a communication plan early in the planning process will support you in communicating with students, families, and staff. In reaching out to families, use multiple mechanisms and consider family preferences, such as phone, text, email, social media, multimedia (e.g., videos), and/or in person. Ensure availability of translated materials.

Consider opportunities to celebrate success. For example, consider holding an event to showcase student learning at the culmination of the summer program to connect with families and open the door for sustained communication throughout the school year. To support attendance, present this opportunity for families as you are communicating about enrollment, enrolling students in the program, and in the first days of the program.

For the schools in the learning community, successful family engagement was a challenge in part due to the timing of summer programs, which were held during the workday, thus limiting some families’ ability to attend events like end of summer celebrations. The schools were able to incorporate the following family engagement strategies to different degrees:

- Outdoor demonstrations and learning showcases at the end of the program.
- Inviting families to attend different parts of summer programs, such as lunches, movement sessions, and off-campus trips.
- Home visits.
- Newsletters and regular communication to families (e.g., phone calls).

Family Engagement Events

Hold a Family Showcase at the end of the program “science fair style,” with different stations displaying student projects.

Hold Learning Exhibitions at the end of learning cycles throughout the program for students to present their work. Invite community members and family, and/or record the event and share with families and school community.



Section 4. Evaluation and Learning

It is important to evaluate the implementation and outcomes of summer programs in order to support learning and continuous improvement as well as accountability. As part of planning for implementation, the IES framework emphasizes the importance of developing plans for continuous improvement, data collection, and evaluation. To learn more about tips for continuous improvement, see [this IES resource](#).

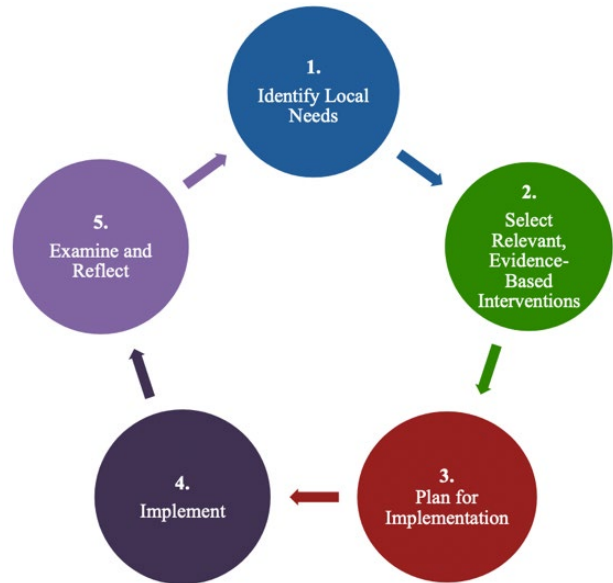
Evaluation and learning should be owned by a specific party. These responsibilities can be handled internally, for example, by administrators or school leaders, or through contracting out with third-party evaluators.

Defining Evaluation Questions and Audiences

Before jumping right into data collection, take the time to ensure you have clarified the evaluation questions you want to answer and the audiences with whom you want to share data (including yourself!). Start first by defining the questions that you are aiming to answer.

Consider a variety of audiences, including school leadership, school staff, students/families, potential future program participants, and funders. If your summer program is grant-funded, be mindful of any grant reporting requirements. Likewise, consider future funders as an audience; evaluating outcomes can support future grant writing.

The Cycle of Evidence Use and Evidence Building



Source: US Department of Education *Strengthening the Effectiveness of ESEA Investments*

Example Evaluation Questions

1. Who participated in the summer programs? Did we reach our intended audience?
2. How did students respond to the program? How can the program be improved?
3. What is the impact of summer programs on student a) academic and/or b) SEL outcomes?
4. What feedback do staff have about their experiences in the program? How can it be improved?



Identifying Indicators

After you have defined the questions of most importance, it is time to think about what information you need to answer each question. The data you plan to collect should be aligned with program goals, intended outcomes, and core components. Go back to your program goals to revisit what you were aiming to achieve.

Example: How to Answer Evaluation Questions

Evaluation Question	What information do you need to answer the question?
Who participated in the summer programs? Did we reach our intended audience?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of students who register for the program • Attendance patterns during the program • Demographic characteristics of students who participate (e.g., age, gender, race/ethnicity, languages spoken)
How did students respond to the program? How can the program be improved?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student/family feedback on communication strategies (e.g., which communications informed their decision to participate) • Students' perceptions of their experiences in the program • Reasons why students stop participating in the program • Factors that facilitated and limited program participation/engagement • What students liked best about the program • How to improve the program
What is the impact of summer programs on student academic outcomes?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes/growth in academic performance • Attendance patterns during the school year
What is the impact of summer programs on student' social-emotional well-being?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes/growth in social emotional assets • Changes/reduction of behavior incidents • Changes/reduction in level of emotional and behavioral risk
What feedback do staff have about their experiences in the program? How can it be improved?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff experiences in the program • What staff liked best about the program • How to improve the program

Data Collection Tools

Now, you are ready to think about data collection mechanisms and tools: how will you collect and analyze the information to answer your questions. There are a variety of ways to collect data, for example:

- Program attendance tracking sheet
- Administrative data on attendance, credits earned, behavioral incidents, etc.
- Student/family surveys, either that you develop or existing instruments, such as Fastbridge's Social, Academic, and Emotional Behavior Risk Screener



- Student focus groups or interviews
- Teacher survey or debrief discussion

Consider the benefits and drawback of different forms of data collection, including feasibility, cost, and quality of information. In thinking about academic testing, consider that testing during summer programs may deter participation. Because there is [mixed evidence](#) on academic gains resulting from short-term summer programs alone, consider using administrative data to track changes in outcomes like academic performance, attendance, and behavioral incidents.

Reviewing and Making Meaning of Data

Make sure to dedicate time to review and reflect on data before starting the next school year. In reviewing the data, consider the following questions:

- What do the results tell us?
- What aspects of our program should we sustain?
- What aspects of our program should we improve?
- What lessons from the summer program can we carry into the school year?
- Who else should we share results with?









Acknowledgements

Thanks to Sarah Jordan and Lauren Gase from the Colorado Lab for facilitating the learning community and authoring this toolkit. Colorado Lab support was made possible by funding from the RISE Education Fund, and additional philanthropic support from the Gates Family Foundation, Gary Community Investments, Wend II, Inc., and the Anschutz Family Foundation.

Thanks to Becky McLean (Academy 360), Karen Ikegami (RiseUp Community School), and Annette Sloan (RISE Grant Coordinator) for their co-authorship of this toolkit. Thanks to Christie McElhinney, Principal of Third Sector Communication Strategies, for providing communication support and developing Appendix 4.



Appendix 1: Checklist for Planning Summer Programs

FALL (SEP-NOV)	JANUARY	FEBRUARY
 <p>Program Operations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Determine internal budget and/or apply for grant opportunities 	 <p>Goals and Program Components</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Determine program goals and aligned program components  <p>Program Operations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Determine who will lead and plan the summer program <input type="checkbox"/> Determine whether you will contract with an outside vendor to administer the program, and plans for staff compensation <input type="checkbox"/> Reach out to establish staff interest, and/or inquire about partnering with an outside vendor 	 <p>Goals and Program Components</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Complete in-depth planning on courses/content that will be offered <input type="checkbox"/> Contact potential partner organizations, and/or work with other schools on partnering to do field trips/excursions (if applicable)  <p>Program Operations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Establish timing/dates of summer program, based on staff and student considerations <input type="checkbox"/> Hire teachers and support staff <input type="checkbox"/> Arrange facilities, materials, transportation, meals, and staff training  <p>Student Outreach and Family Engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Use data to determine which students/families to target outreach to <input type="checkbox"/> Begin planning outreach and communication to students and families



MARCH



Goals and Program Components

- Create calendar of dates when community partners will come on site/field trips or excursions will happen



Student Outreach and Family Engagement

- Disseminate communication to students and families about details of summer program (e.g., when, what offerings, sign up information)
- Begin enrolling students



Evaluation and Learning

- Begin thinking about data collection tools and approach to gather feedback from students, families, and staff to measure program implementation and impact
- Determine who will be responsible for data collection and analysis

APRIL



Program Operations

- Finalize logistics (e.g., building access codes, Wi-Fi, facilities and maintenance, food/meals to be offered)
- Purchase materials needed for summer program
- Protect time for staff planning



Student Outreach and Family Engagement

- Continue to disseminate communication to students and families about details of summer program
- Continue enrolling students

MAY



Student Outreach and Family Engagement

- Continue to disseminate communication to students and families about details of summer program
- Finalize student enrollment



Evaluation and Learning

- Finalize data collection tools and approach to gather feedback from students, families, and staff

JUNE-JULY

Deliver summer program



Student Outreach and Family Engagement

- Engage families at key timepoints (e.g., opportunities to attend learning showcases of student work)



Evaluation and Learning

- Collect data from students, staff, and families

AUGUST



Evaluation and Learning

- Analyze data you have collected
- Reflect on lessons learned and identify actionable steps to translate into the school year and next summer







Student Outreach and Family Engagement

- Gather feedback on effective communication strategies
- Plan communications strategies for the coming year







Appendix 2: Planning and Reflection Templates

Planning: Complete in Spring

	Key Tasks (As relevant, note point person)					
	January	February	March	April	May	June
 Goals and Program Components						
 Program Operations						
 Student Outreach and Family Engagement						
 Evaluation and Learning						



Reflection: Complete in August and Reference for Next Year's Summer Program Planning

	 Goals and Program Components	 Program Operations	 Student Outreach and Family Engagement	 Evaluation and Learning
Successes				
Challenges				



Appendix 3: Example Schedules for Summer Programs

Elementary School (2-week sample schedule of a 4-week program offered Tuesdays-Thursdays)

	Week 1			Week 2			
	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	
9:00 AM SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING (SEL)	Smart Start: Greeting, share out, set expectations and group creed, water bottles	Greeting, share out, Zones of Regulation SEL overview Lesson 1	Greeting, share out, Zones of Regulation SEL Lesson 2	Greeting, share out, Zones of Regulation SEL Lesson 3	Greeting, share out, review Zones of Regulation whole group and team building	Greeting, share out, Zones of Regulation SEL Lesson 4, and Excursion 1 Prep and Departure	
9:30 AM MOVEMENT	Zones Obstacle Course	Yoga Breathing for a Change	Fitness Circuit Station	Parachute Games	EnergiLab: Human Powered Energi Day (community partner biking activity) 9:30 - 11:00am	Excursion 1: Museum of Nature and Science	
10:15 AM EXPLORATION (Outdoor Education/ Science/Art)	Intro to Gardening The Earth: The Sun	Craft: Tie Dye (Send home in Ziplock bag with name)	Bonding to the Beat: Intro to Music	Gardening: Bugs and Weeds The Earth: Temperature			
11:00 AM LUNCH	Lunch/Play Outside	Lunch/Play Outside	Lunch/Play Outside	Lunch/Play Outside			
11:30 AM READING	Reading Instruction	Reading Instruction	Reading Instruction	Reading Instruction			
12:00 PM	Quick Phonics Screener (reading)	Reading Instruction	Reading Instruction	Reading Instruction			
12:30 PM MATH	Math Instruction	Math Instruction	Math Instruction	Math Instruction			
1:00 PM	Place Value Pre-Assessment (math)	Math Instruction	Math Instruction	Math Instruction			PM Reading Program
1:30 PM	Pick Up	Pick Up	Pick Up	Pick Up			Pick Up

**Elementary School (sample daily schedule of a 4-week program offered Mondays-Thursdays)**

8:30-9:00	Teacher planning/breakfast
9:00-9:30	Morning meeting Social-emotional Learning check-in
9:30-10:55	1st block English Language Arts or Math
10:55-11:05	Stretch/snack--teacher switch
11:05-12:30	2nd block Math or English Language Arts
12:30-1:00	Lunch/recess
1:00-1:30	Student dismissal/teacher planning

**Field trips occur every Thursday (example: attending a roller-skating rink to engage in movement/physical activity)*

Middle School (sample daily schedule of a 4-week program offered to 6th and 7th grade students)

8:00 - 8:30	ARRIVAL/BREAKFAST	
8:30 - 9:00	Social-emotional Learning	
9:00 - 10:15	Math	Reading
10:15 - 10:25	SNACK AND RECESS	
10:25 - 11:40	Reading	Math
11:40 - 12:30	LUNCH/RECESS	
12:30 - 1:20	Specials	
1:20 - 1:30	Pack Up	
1:30 - 1:50	Dismissal	

High School (sample daily schedule of a 2-week program offered Mondays-Thursdays)

8:00 - 8:30	Gathering (Divided into two groups of students to do morning check-in)
8:35 - 11:05	Morning Session: Social Studies, Math, English, Leadership, or Health
11:05 - 12:00	Working Lunch (delivered to classrooms)

**Field trips were offered three to four times total (example: white water rafting, or a trip to Home Depot to select supplies for a math project)*



Appendix 4: Communications Plan Template

First Consider

- **Goals:** What are the goals of your summer program?
- **Audiences:** Students and Families
 - What appeals to these audiences about your program?
 - What obstacles do you need to navigate?

Core Messages Template

Use the template below to design the **core messages** about your summer program. Your responses can be used to weave together a full story, for example, a story for your school newsletter. Or you can use specific responses in shorter communications, for example, when writing a social media post, or when providing staff with key talking points.

Guiding Components to Core Messages	Your Response
About Describe your program in 1-2 sentences.	
Value Describe what your target audiences value about your program.	
Barriers/Issues Who is affected by the issue you’re addressing? Why is it important to move past obstacles?	
Solution What does your program do to provide the value described above?	
Benefit What benefits can be achieved with the support of your program?	
Ask! What do you want your target audiences to do? Be clear, make it easy (e.g., “Sign up for the program by following this link”)	

Putting It All Together

1. Develop core messages tailored to students and families.

Examples of **what** you might want to communicate:

- Goals and intent of summer programs, in particular, the program as an “opportunity” instead of a punishment.
- Program offerings (e.g., available “tracks” or topic areas the summer program will offer).
- Instructions and information for families to sign up and participate.
- Opportunities for family engagement throughout summer programs (e.g., celebration showcase).
- Leverage photos and videos from prior years.



2. Identify and engage trusted messengers (people, quotes, testimonials, stories)

Examples of **who** to rely on as trusted messengers:

- Who will students listen to?
- Who will parents listen to?
- Who might not be staffing the summer program, but can still talk with students and communicate the value of the program during the regular school year?
- What stories, testimonials, etc. can earn the trust and interest of students and families?

3. Prioritize most effective communication approaches, within your capacity (less is more; diversify)

Examples of **how** you want to communicate:

- Direct, early outreach (well in advance).
- Use multiple communication strategies, based in family preferences (e.g., phone, text, email, social media, multimedia such as videos, in person such as at school drop-off/pickup/, family events, parent-teacher conferences).
- Ensure availability of translated materials.

4. Create a timeline for your communication activities

Outline when you want to start communicating about the summer program, how often, and any key timepoints or events you can leverage.

5. Develop needed resources/materials (what supports are needed, who can help)

Create flyers, leverage outgoing newsletters and social media posts, and engage those who can help disseminate information.

6. Check in on what's working; make needed refinements

Check in with students and families as you communicate about the summer program, and after the program ends.

- What did they remember hearing about the program? What makes them act?
- Who did not attend the summer program, and why (e.g., those who signed up but did not show, or those who were identified as likely to benefit but chose not to participate)? What got in the way?
- What do students think would help get more students to participate? Are there opportunities to leverage students as key, trusted messengers in talking with other students about the value of the program?
- What do families and other staff want to know about the impacts the program had on their students? Is there an opportunity to share back data or positive outcomes during the year?
How can you refine your approach next year?