



# ARRA, School Improvement, and Summer Learning

## *Funding Blueprint for States and Districts*

SEPTEMBER 2009

POLICY BRIEF # 1

### Background

Over the next several months, there will be over \$30 billion in ARRA funds available to states and districts to support innovative education reforms. Much of this funding can be used to support high-quality summer learning programs, providing an unprecedented window of opportunity for states and districts to invest in an innovative reform proven to help close the achievement gap and turn around low-performing schools. It also provides an opportunity for non-profit organizations to partner with their districts and schools to provide seamless, comprehensive programming for students in low-income communities.

There is growing support for the expansion of summer learning programs at the national, state, and local levels. Many districts utilized ARRA funds this summer to create innovative summer learning programs that successfully engaged students, teachers, and community organizations in a variety of academic and enrichment activities. Such innovation was applauded by U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, who when recently asked about summer programs and ARRA funds, stated, **“Not only can states and districts use recovery money to do this, we are asking them to think very, very seriously about doing this. We think this is one of the best investments they could make.”** (*Education News Parents Can Use, June 16, 2009*)

### Why invest in summer programs?

Extensive research confirms the concept of “summer slide,” where students lose up to two months of grade level equivalency in reading and math over the summer vacation. The summer slide has particularly harmful consequences for low-income students, who lose ground in reading while their higher-income counterparts make gains. In fact, recent research from Johns Hopkins University shows that **two-thirds of the achievement gap in reading by ninth grade is directly related to unequal summer learning opportunities.** High-quality summer learning programs have been proven to eliminate the summer slide and many successful programs result in **gains of two to five months** in reading and math for low-income students. As Secretary Duncan recently stated about summer learning loss, **“...we don’t need more research, we need to do something about it.”** (*Education News Parents Can Use, June 16, 2009*)

**Using ARRA to fund summer learning programs**

Following is a brief overview of key ARRA funding streams that can be used to support school improvement through summer learning programs.

<b>Funding Stream</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Summer angle</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
<b>Title I School Improvement Grants</b>	\$3.55 billion to low-performing schools with 5% state set-aside	Summer learning programs as key component of school improvement plans	-Draft RFP in, August, 2009 -Final RFP in Fall, 2009
<b>Title I, Part A</b>	-\$10 billion (ARRA) -\$14 billion (Annual FY2009 appropriation)  \$24 billion total to districts with 5% state set-aside	Summer programs to accelerate learning for low-income students, with flexibility for academic enrichment and community partnerships	-50% ARRA awarded April, 2009 -Remaining 50% September 1st -FY2009 funds released in two rounds- July and October, 2009
<b>Race to the Top</b>	\$4.35 billion to Governors with 50% to districts	Summer learning programs as part of state and district strategy to turn around low-performing schools as outlined in RTT RFP	-Phase I apps due December, 2009 -Phase 1 awards, February, 2010 -Phase 2 apps due May, 2010 -Phase 2 awards September, 2010
<b>Innovation Fund</b>	\$650 million to districts and district/non-profit partnerships	Develop, implement, replicate, evaluate, and scale up successful summer programs	- Draft RFP in September, 2009 -Grants in early 2010

**How can funding be sustained beyond ARRA?**

A major concern for states and districts is ensuring that ARRA funded programs can be sustained when ARRA funding runs out. Fortunately, summer programs can draw from a variety of existing funding streams that can lead to long-term sustainability. These funding sources at the federal level include:

- 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers
- Annual Title I, Part A appropriations
- Workforce Investment Act/Summer Jobs
- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)
- AmeriCorps
- Child Care and Development Block Grants

Additionally, a variety of state and local funding streams can be used to support and leverage summer learning programs, including those that fund:

- Summer school
- Parks and Recreation
- Libraries
- Juvenile Justice
- Youth Workforce Development

### **How can states and districts best utilize ARRA funds for summer learning?**

State and local policymakers can most effectively utilize ARRA funds for summer learning by considering the following policy recommendations:

- 1) Encourage and/or require districts and schools receiving **Title I School Improvement Grants** to include summer learning programs as a component of their school improvement plans
- 2) Encourage districts and schools to utilize **Title I, Part A** funds to support summer learning programs, including those that include academic enrichment and community partnerships
- 3) Include summer learning programs as a component of your state and district plan to turn around low-performing schools as part of your **Race to the Top** application
- 4) Districts and district/non-profit partnerships with successful summer programs should apply for the **Investing in Innovation** fund and align their application with the state **Race to the Top** application
- 5) Leverage **existing state and local funding sources** for summer programs, such as summer school, parks and recreation, libraries, and juvenile justice to create comprehensive and cost-effective summer programs
- 6) Use a portion of the **state set-aside for Title I** (both Part A and SIG) to fund technical assistance and capacity building efforts at the state and district level
- 7) **Use ARRA funds to invest in one-time costs** that build sustainable infrastructure for summer programs such as professional development, data collection, materials, and policy development.
- 8) Consider the creation of a **legislative or community task force on summer learning** to study existing funding streams, supply and demand, and other key issues to inform the use of ARRA and other funds for summer learning programs.

### **Additional Information**

The National Summer Learning Association can help states and districts effectively utilize the above funding sources to invest in high-quality summer learning programs. For more information, please contact Jeff Smink, Vice President of Policy at 443-986-1151 or [jsmink@summerlearning.org](mailto:jsmink@summerlearning.org)

*The National Summer Learning Association is a newly created 501 (c)3 organization, which includes all of the staff who recently separated from the National Center for Summer Learning at Johns Hopkins University. The Association serves as a network hub for thousands of summer learning program providers and stakeholders across the country, working to connect and equip schools and community organizations to deliver quality summer learning opportunities to our nation's students.*