

SUMMER 2022

SUMMER LEARNING TOOLKIT

Best practices and resources to develop, promote, and sustain high-quality summer learning programs in Michigan.

**MICHIGAN
AFTERSCHOOL
PARTNERSHIP**



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SUMMER.

For many of us, it means long, warm days filled with sunshine and fun. But for a lot of Michigan children and youth, it's a time when much-needed opportunities for learning, adult connection and daily structure are lost.

As our state and nation continue to move beyond the COVID-19 pandemic, we know our young people have a good deal of academic, social and personal ground to make up. Right now, summer learning is more important than ever.

And it's essential that we get it right.

That is why the Michigan Afterschool Partnership is delighted to collaborate with the National Summer Learning Association to deliver the 2022 Summer Learning Toolkit. We are eager to support local leaders as they prepare to deliver programs that are truly second to none.

Youth across Michigan are fortunate to be able to access extraordinary opportunities for growth, thanks in large part to the skilled, resourceful adults that work so hard to build them. But is there room for growth? Absolutely. From new program visionaries to seasoned teams looking to hone their craft, this toolkit offers valuable insights and resources for all caring adults who are ready to make a positive difference in the lives of youth this summer.

- Learn what sets the best programs apart, and how to give your program—and the students and families it serves—a leading edge.
- Make a plan for hiring and training the best team members in ways that make a lasting difference.
- Address the special learning needs of English language learners.
- Devise a winning strategy for marketing your program to local participants and communicating your success stories to the media and others.

On behalf of MASP and NSLA, we are so excited to support you as you begin planning for an amazing summer!

Best,

Erin Skene-Pratt
Executive Director
Michigan Afterschool Partnership

A VISION FOR SUMMER LEARNING

High-quality, equity-driven summer experiences can be transformative for young people of all ages and backgrounds. They develop closer relationships with their peers and teachers, and gain academic and social-emotional skills that help set the foundation for success in school and life. Students of all socio-economic backgrounds can explore the outdoors, participate in sports, and hone their creativity in the arts. Summer also can serve as a gateway into internships and other career opportunities for older students as they enter a fast-changing employment marketplace. As we have witnessed throughout the pandemic, well-run summer programs have significant, positive impacts on multiple domains of learning and thriving, according to a new report: [Building Resilience in Youth Through Summer Experiences](#). This approach to summer learning and growth marks a significantly different mindset from traditional “summer school” which is seen as both remedial and punitive.

“LET’S USE THIS MOMENT TO REIMAGINE WHAT FUN, ENGAGING SUMMER PROGRAMMING CAN LOOK LIKE, MAKE IT ACCESSIBLE FOR ALL STUDENTS, AND WORK TOGETHER TO MAKE SURE OUR COMMUNITIES RECOVER AND REBUILD STRONGER THAN THEY WERE BEFORE THE PANDEMIC.”

U.S. Secretary of Education, Dr. Miguel Cardona on the launch of the Summer Learning and Enrichment Collaborative, April 2021.



MOVING TO EQUITY-DRIVEN SUMMER LEARNING PROGRAMS

TRADITIONAL SUMMER SCHOOL	EQUITY-DRIVEN SUMMER LEARNING PROGRAMS
Targeted only to those with academic need	Accessible, equitable, diverse, and inclusive
Deficit-based and remedial	Strength-based and enriching
Academic, drill, and skill	Well-rounded, integrated, project-based, and hands-on
Academic and teacher-centered	Relationship and student-centered
Disengaging and punitive	Exciting, fun, young people want engaging, and attractive programs to attend
Designed solely by a few district and school staff	Co-created with students, families, and community partners
School building and district-based	Can take place in a variety of settings and locations

KEY ELEMENTS OF QUALITY SUMMER PROGRAMS

Attendance at a summer program alone, however, doesn't guarantee these benefits for youth. Excellence is, of course, an essential component of any summer learning program, and an experience all leaders and team members aim to deliver. Below are key strategies and best practices drawn from the latest research on designing and implementing high-quality summer programs that can serve as a north star for summer programming in 2022 and beyond.

1



ELEVATE RELATIONSHIPS & ENRICHMENT

Positive, supportive relationships and rich, stimulating environments ignite the brain to form connections that promote learning. Developing the conditions for connection and development—including opportunities to play, explore new skills and experiences, and connect with peers and caring adults—can help cultivate relationships and support higher levels of growth. Effective summer programs go well beyond classroom skills remediation and invest in enriching experiences that can be life-changing. Supportive learning environments are also key to helping young people shape their voices and sense of purpose.

2



DEEPEN COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Creating a community system for summer learning and growth opens the door to collaboration, reduces duplication of efforts, and results in stronger shared investment and support for student learning and well-being. It's often very helpful to collaborate with local governments, community-based organizations, business and industry leaders, and summer program providers. These partnerships will help your program broaden student participation, deepen culturally responsive learning experiences, and achieve stronger learning outcomes.

3



PUT THE CUSTOMER FIRST

An effective community approach starts with **thinking of families and communities as co-designers of summer programs**. What do youth and families want and expect from their summer learning opportunities? Doing your market research first and developing your program in response to local need will help ensure not only a higher level of demand for the services you offer, but also ensure a strong sense of investment and ownership on the part of the youth you serve.

4



INTEGRATE WELL ROUNDED LEARNING & WORK THAT MATTERS

A well-rounded education moves beyond the courses students take and into essential life skills. It provides the knowledge and skills to live, learn, work, create, and contribute to society. It also ensures that every student is known, heard, and supported. The goal is to establish and actualize a definition of a well-rounded education that focuses on the whole student and their community, the knowledge and skills they learn, and the beliefs and attributes they develop.

5

ENSURE MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Building relational trust, care, and connection among families, staff, and students is fundamental to summer programming. Summer programs must attend to students' physical, emotional, mental, behavioral, and relational health needs for individuals to reflect, connect, and learn. This includes creating conditions for racially, culturally, and linguistically affirming practices and building safe, intentional, and inclusive spaces where students can reflect and make meaning of their experience. Students' mental health and well-being must be a primary driver in planning summer learning

6

COMMUNICATE CONSISTENTLY WITH YOUR COMMUNITIES

Effective outreach activities are necessary to boost enrollment and maintain regular attendance. Summer programs are voluntary, and without intentional effort, it can be difficult to interrupt old, outdated images of summer school that may deter attendance and reinforce outdated stereotypes. But even better, community exposure—whether through the media or through creative partnerships—can help build awareness of the need for (and effectiveness) of your program and all it offers.

7

PURPOSEFUL PLANNING AND QUALITY PROGRAMS

To realize summer's full potential, it is essential to start planning early. Launching a summer program is akin to starting a new school year and ending it within weeks. Quality summer programming requires advanced planning that typically starts the prior school year in September. An early and robust planning process might be one of the most important characteristics of a strong program. Families make plans for summer by mid-April, meaning schools, districts and partners must move quickly to determine summer plans.

ESTABLISH CLEAR AND REALISTIC GOALS TO SUPPORT YOUR SCHOOL'S VISION OF A DYNAMIC AND SUPPORTIVE SUMMER.

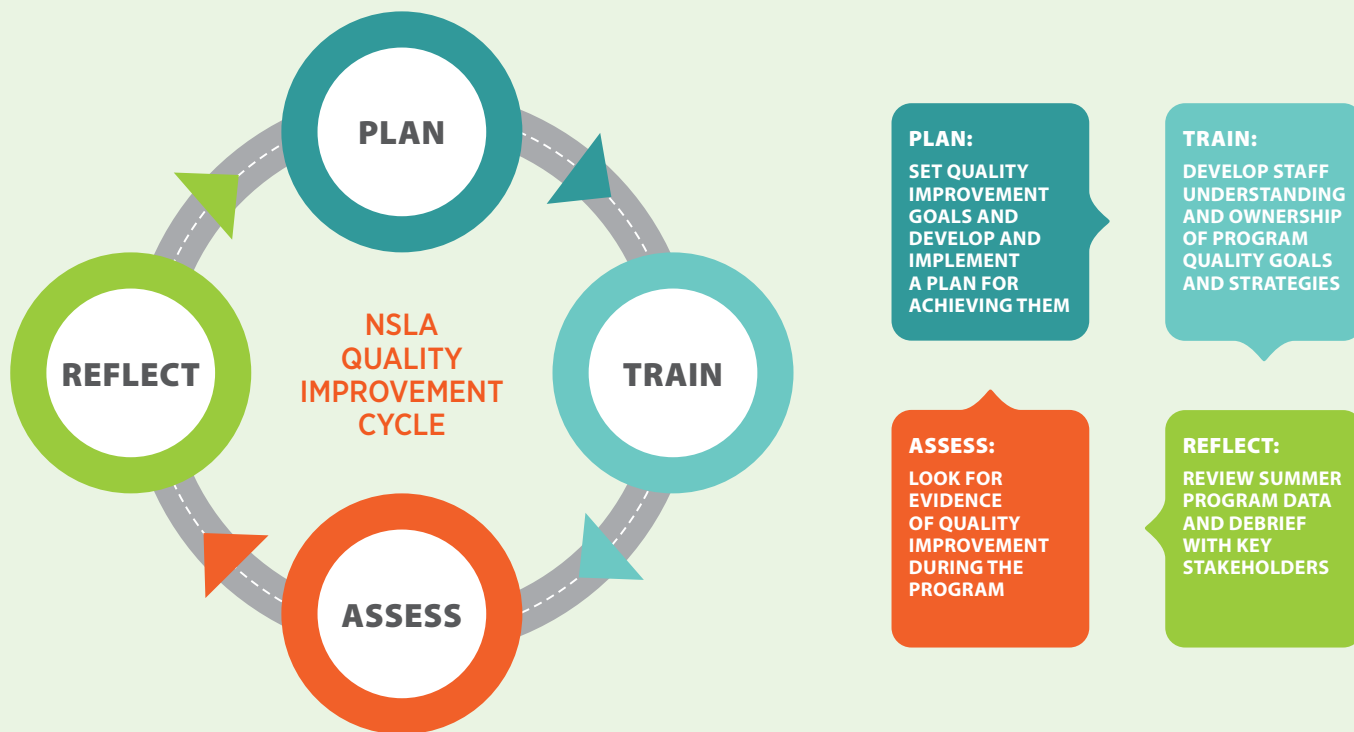


WHY DO WE SAY SUMMER STARTS IN SEPTEMBER?

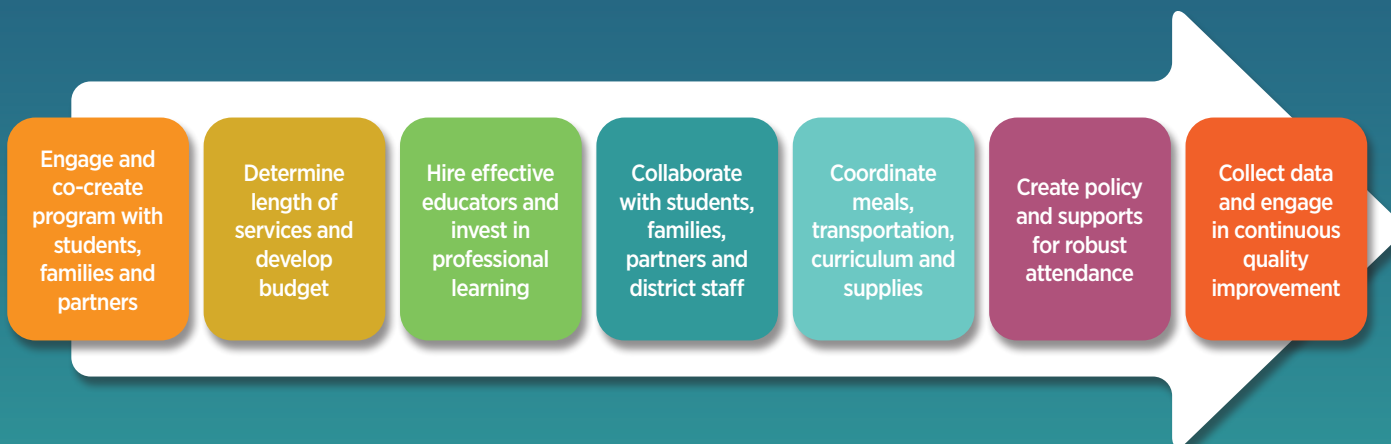
We say “SS in S” because the process of planning, delivering and improving summer learning programs is continuous. So just as the summer program ends, planning for the next year should begin!

NATIONAL SUMMER LEARNING ASSOCIATION (NSLA) QUALITY IMPROVEMENT CYCLE

NSLA supports programs and networks to continuously improve their programs through a four-part annual quality improvement cycle.



COMPONENTS OF PLANNING EFFECTIVE PROGRAMS

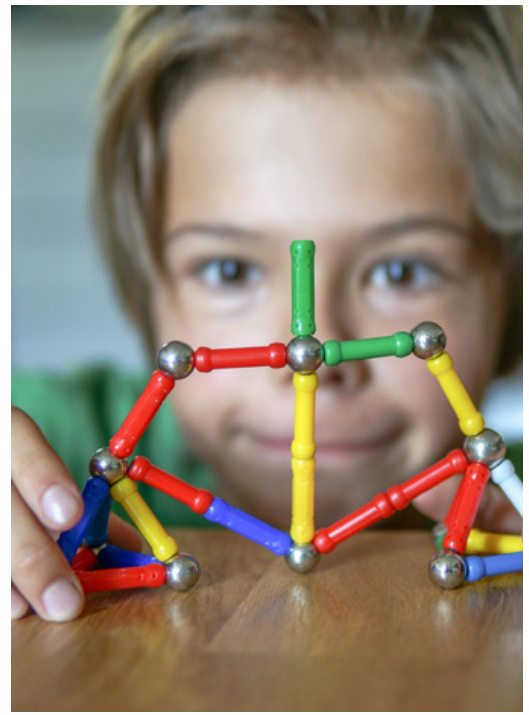


STANDARDS OF QUALITY

MOST (MICHIGAN OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME) STANDARDS OF QUALITY

What makes a high-quality out-of-school time (OST) program? While the makeup of summer learning programs is as diverse as the communities they serve, we recommend adhering to the **MOST (Michigan Out-of-School Time) Standards of Quality** whenever possible. The MOST Standards may be used as a guide for developing and evaluating OST programs for all children and youth in grades K-12. These standards indicate very high quality, age-appropriate practices. The MOST standards are voluntary for OST programs. Programs specifically mandated by their funding source/law/rule/regulation must follow these standards to the extent practicable.

Click [here](#) to access the MOST standards.



CRITICAL COMPONENTS FOR OST PROGRAMS FOR WHICH QUALITY STANDARDS HAVE BEEN ESTABLISHED

- Health and Physical Safety
- Positive Climate and Emotional Safety
- Program Staffing
- Program Environment
- Program and Activities
- Administration
- Single Purpose Programs

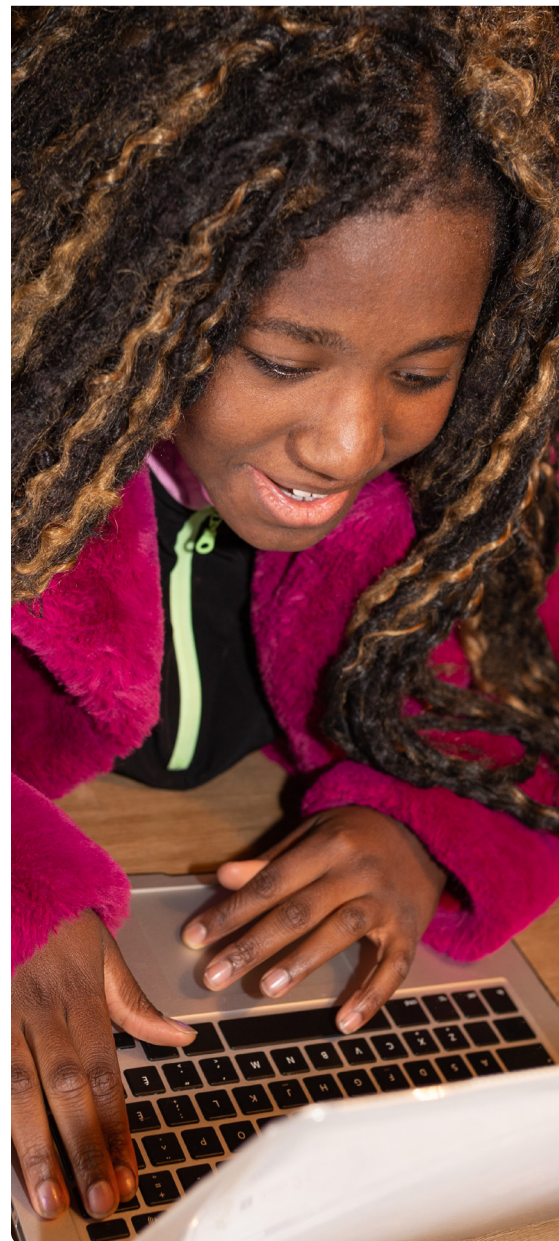
HIRING EFFECTIVE EDUCATORS AND PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

According to research, teaching quality has the largest impact on student outcomes of any school level factor. Hiring effective summer staff and giving them the support they need are critical steps to maximizing student success ([RAND, 2021](#)).

Recruiting and hiring effective team members will require program leaders to consider school and community staff, partners, and volunteers: educational assistants, high school students on the pre-educator pathway, students in teacher preparation programs, community-based organizations, tribal education programs, mental health professionals, college faculty, and members of business, industry and trades unions. These individuals can teach enrichment activities, provide career-connected learning, explore content from a different perspective, or supervise enrichment activities.

PROGRAMMING FOR STUDENTS WHO ARE EMERGENT BILINGUAL

Successful summer programming for emerging bilingual or multilingual students uses an asset-based approach, honoring students' primary languages, cultures, and lived experiences. Multilingual students, especially those beginning to learn English, should receive multilingual support and have access to rich curricular content in multiple languages (in person or virtually). Additionally, hiring language specialists to provide co-teaching and push-in language support increases access for emergent bilinguals and strengthens the instructional experience for all students.



GET THE WORD OUT ABOUT SUMMER



OUTREACH STRATEGIES FOR STRONG ATTENDANCE

Research shows that students with high attendance in quality summer learning programs gain an advantage in math and reading. But getting kids to sign up for voluntary summer learning programs isn't easy. Download the [Wallace Foundation's Summer Learning Recruitment Guide](#) for tips and insights on how to promote and grow your program for maximum impact. In this guide, you'll learn from five school districts how to launch a summer learning recruitment effort.



FIVE OUTREACH STRATEGIES FOR OBTAINING STRONG ATTENDANCE

DEVELOP	Develop an outreach message that has compelling and accurate information about the program with enrollment information, transportation routes, and the program schedule.	1
ESTABLISH	Establish a clear communications plan that includes multiple methods, is personalized to students and families, and is coordinated across the community.	2
ACKNOWLEDGE	Acknowledge the potential no show rate, and plan for it in continued recruitment, incentives and programming.	3
PROVIDE	Provide rich well-rounded learning experiences that are built on caring relationships, academics and other enriching, fun activities that spark joy and matter to students.	4
MONITOR & ASSESS	Survey students and families after week two of programming to: (i) understand the student and family experience, (ii) analyze results, and (iii) share resources that inform future outreach plans.	5

Source: RAND Corporation/The Wallace Foundation: *Getting to Work on Summer Learning* (2019)



BRING FAMILIES IN EARLY

As noted previously, having youth and families work with you to develop your program up front helps ensure strong buy-in and support for all you are building. It also gives you a strong set of local champions to help talk up your work in the community and support your recruitment and communication activities through the generation of always-helpful “buzz.”

BECOME A POWERFUL SUMMER STORY-TELLER!

There's nothing like a good story. Understanding your families in a granular way will help your program craft content that speaks to their unique needs and aspirations, and entice them to take action, whether on your website or after reading a direct mail piece.



THE ART OF CONTENT: THE FOUR STAGES IN THE CONTENT MARKETING USER JOURNEY

People connect with people. Bring your program to life through people stories that vividly show the positive impact your program is having on individuals' lives. Develop content that creates an immersive communications experience through feature stories, video vignettes, and photo galleries. While every organization is different, and requires a specific approach, here are some helpful tips as you explore the four stages in the content marketing buyer journey.

1

ATTRACT

Increasing the amount of relevant and quality content your organization publishes will improve the likelihood of a customer finding you through organic searches on the topics you are covering. So by learning what really matters to your customers, and matching content with the right keywords, you will be attracting new visitors, and expanding opportunity in no time!

2

ENGAGE

Use relevant imagery, copy, and tone to make this happen. Develop and offer content offerings, such as downloadable resource guides. This approach will not only empower your visitors with helpful information, it will enable you to collect their email address, which you can use to create automated and customized emails.

3

CONVERT

Create a steady drumbeat of customized emails and other communications to maintain brand visibility and entice them to take action. Creative and relevant communications will increase your chances of cutting through the clutter and getting noticed.

4

CHAMPION

Keep your organization top-of-mind through continuous emails, targeted social media and other digital marketing ads, along with a steady stream of organic posts. Continuously positioning your organization as a committed community partner and thought leader in your space will keep families connected and empowered.

Source <https://www.crespocommunications.com/contentmarketing>

TYPES OF CONTENT

Content can take many forms in today's digital world, including:

Website pages • Blog posts • Social media posts • Blog post • Videos and photos • Press release • Emails

CELEBRATE NATIONAL SUMMER LEARNING WEEK AND STAY IN TOUCH WITH FAMILIES



National Summer Learning Week is a celebration dedicated to advocacy and awareness around elevating the importance of keeping kids learning, safe, and healthy every summer, ensuring they return to school in the fall ready to succeed in the new year. You can join millions across the country in sending a powerful message that summers matter and demonstrating how summers can make a difference in the lives of young people.

Click [here](#) for more information.

COMMUNICATION TIPS!

- Create a communications calendar to stay connected with families over the summer.
- Use tools like Hootsuite or Sprout Social to pre-schedule posts and monitor activity so you too can still enjoy your vacation time
- Post on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn and any other social media channel at least two times per week
- Use photos and videos as often as possible to tell your story in a compelling way
- Text parents with summer tips or community activities if possible
- Include posts about summer goal-setting, resource links, and make sure to tag other organizations in shout-outs
- Encourage families to sign up to your e-newsletter
- Encourage user-generated content such as reviews, and social media posts from families that highlight their summer success stories
- Monitor and engage with your audiences through on-going communications!



FUNDING STREAMS FOR SUMMER LEARNING



MICHIGAN

Community Foundations provide a simple, powerful, and highly personal approach to giving. They offer a variety of giving tools to help people achieve their charitable goals – and create lasting good work in their communities. Find your local community foundation [here](#).

Many local **United Ways** provide resources for children’s programming. Get more information and find your local United Way [here](#).

Michigan Community Service Commission – Find funding available for new and returning AmeriCorps programs that could support your work [here](#).

The **Michigan Department of Education** administers the 21st Century Community Learning Centers grants, which are awarded through a competitive process to local and intermediate school districts, universities, and other public or private community-based agencies, organizations, and programs, including faith-based organizations. These grant programs provide comprehensive community learning center services. The next 21st CCLC grant cycle will begin in July of 2022. More information and a request for proposal will be available in the December of 2021. Learn more on the [MDE website](#).

Council of Michigan Foundations – You can view facts and figures about Michigan philanthropy [here](#), or you can browse funders listed in the CMF directory [here](#).

FEDERAL FUNDING STREAMS FOR SUMMER LEARNING

Districts can use federal funds from the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Funds (ESSER I, II & III), the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act (Perkins) to support summer programming.

Click [here](#) for National Summer Learning Association’s COVID-Relief Funding for Public Schools (FAQ).

BRAIDING FUNDS

Combining federal funds with other state and federal money is a strategy that ensures consistency, eliminates duplication of services and allows districts to strategically direct federal grants, especially those that may not have been expended during the school year because of impacts due to COVID-19. Commonly referenced as the “braiding of federal funds,” this approach helps to ensure maximum benefit to students and flexibility to districts.

BRAIDING AND BLENDING FUNDS

RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES FOR SUMMER PROGRAMMING	I A ¹	1003a ²	I C	I D ²	II A	III ²	IV A ²	21st CCLC ²	VI	McKinney Vento ²	REAP/RLIS	ESSER I, II, III	Perkins	IDEA ³
Fund reengagement specialists whose primary work is connecting with and engaging students; and cultivating belonging and relationship.	X	X	X	X			X	X		X	X	X		X ³
Design programming to address racism, oppression, and injustice including racial healing practitioners, youth-led peace circles, and recruitment of authors and speakers representative of all students in Michigan.	X			X			X	X	X		X	X	X	X ³
Focus on mental health and wellness by hiring school social workers, family liaisons, school psychologists, professional school counselors, licensed mental health counselors, and/or community outreach coordinators.	X			X			X	X	X	X	X	X		X ³
Design summer activity and wellness camps to engage students physically around fun team/group activities.	X	X	X	X			X	X		X	X	X		X ³
Provide high-dose tutoring for individual students and small groups of students who would receive the most benefit following an equity analysis.	X	X	X	X			X	X		X	X	X		X ³
Support students transitioning between critical grades (K-1, 5-6, 8-9) by designing bridge or boost programs around student leadership, peer mentorship, community service and/or academic acceleration.	X		X	X			X	X		X	X	X		X ³
Develop and implement project based learning aligned to student interests.	X			X			X	X		X	X	X	X	X ³
Provide instruction to support students' biliteracy skills.						X		X	X	X	X	X		X ³
Create additional opportunities for students to explore hands-on learning and real-world problem solving through CTE and STEM.	X		X	X		X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X ³
Develop and implement intentional and creative professional learning opportunities for teachers.	X		X	X	X	X		X	X	X		X	X	X ³
Reduce barriers and promote community by: providing transportation; including on-site childcare and parent education; feeding families breakfast and lunch; and designing community gathering spaces that offer resources to support students and families, including but not limited to technology, laundry facilities and clothing closets.	X	X	X	X		X	X	X		X	X	X		X ³

- Where Title I-A funds are marked, the use of funds is only allowable in Title I-A schools operating schoolwide programs.
- The specific program requirements must be met for eligible school, teacher and/or student activities.
- IDEA funds can only be used on costs that are an excess cost of providing special education and related services for students eligible for support under the IDEA. If the program's primary purpose is the education of children experiencing disabilities, IDEA funds may be used even if the program benefits those children not experiencing disabilities.



The Michigan Afterschool Partnership champions statewide access to quality and equitable out-of-school time programs to ensure that all children and youth succeed.

Ready to make a difference? **Get involved today!**

miafterschool.org