

NSLA Perspectives on Summer Learning

RIASPA Summer Learning Symposium

March 16, 2011



National Summer Learning Association Vision and Mission

- Our **vision** is for every child to be safe, healthy and engaged in learning during the summer months.
- Our **mission** is to connect and equip schools and community organizations to deliver quality summer learning programs to our nation's youth to help close the achievement gap.



NSLA Policy Goals

- Increase public investment in high-quality summer learning programs
- Make summer programs an essential component and strategy of education reform

www.SummerLearning.org



Why Focus on Summer Learning?

9

3

97



Why Focus on Summer Learning?

- 9 months of school year learning and achievement
- 3 months of summer learning loss
- 97% of American students attend school on a traditional nine-month school calendar



Research Evidence

- All young people experience learning losses when they do not engage in educational activities during the summer months
- Most students lose 2 months of math skills
- Low-income students lose 2-3 months of reading skills, despite the fact that their middle-class peers make slight gains

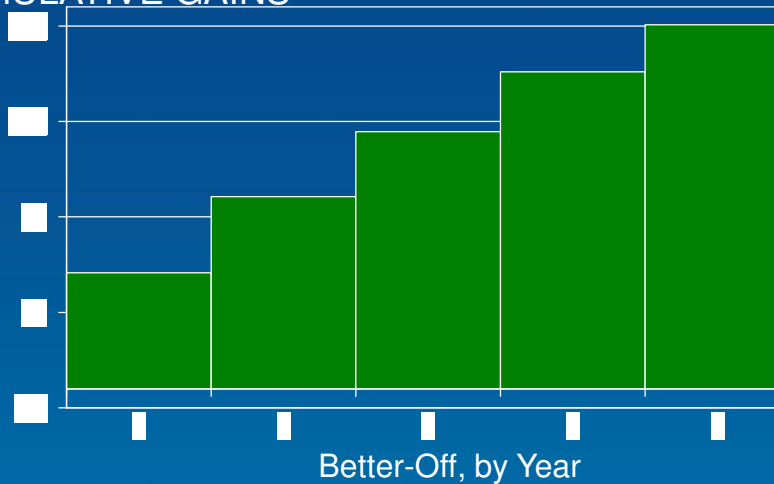
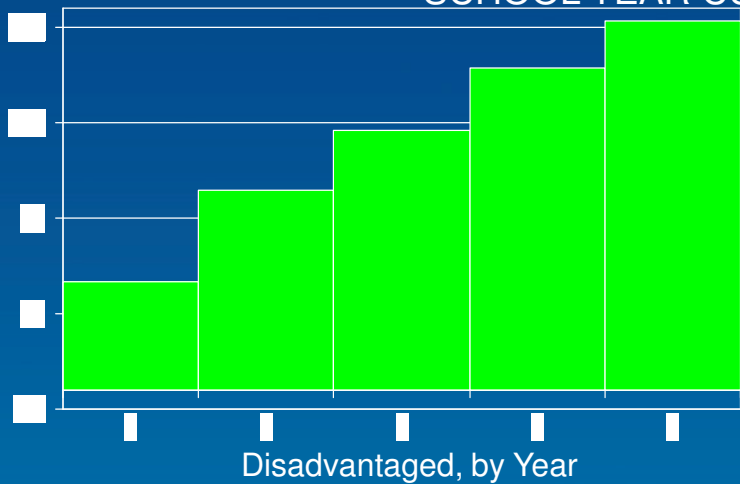


The Achievement Gap

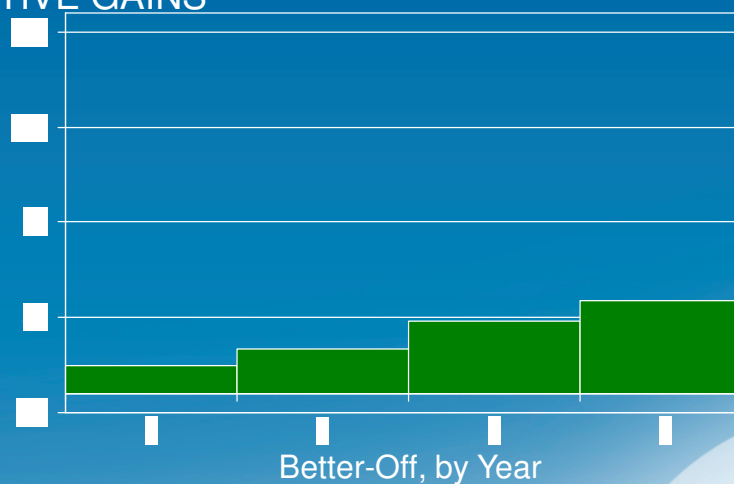
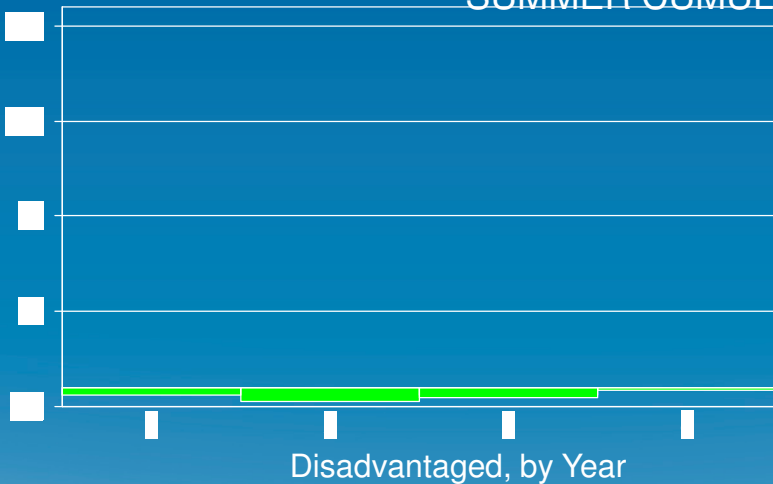
- There is no other time of year when inequalities are greater in the United States than during the summer months.
- School-based guarantees evaporate during the summer
 - Breakfast and lunch
 - Academic classes
 - Teachers and other caring adults
 - Physical education
 - Afterschool programs and extra-curricular activities



SCHOOL YEAR CUMULATIVE GAINS



SUMMER CUMULATIVE GAINS



*Cumulative gains on California Achievement Test in reading over elementary school years and summers. Sample consists of Baltimore Public school students who entered first grade in 1982. Test "scale scores" are California Achievement Test Scores calibrated to measure Growth over a student's 12-year school career.

Sources: Doris Entwisle, Karl Alexander, and Linda Olson, *Children, Schools, and Inequality*, 1997, Table 3.1



Achievement Gap

- **About two-thirds of the ninth-grade achievement gap between lower and higher income youth can be explained by unequal access to summer learning opportunities during the elementary school years.**



International Competitiveness

- U.S. students are falling to average or below average relative to their peers around the world
- U.S. Representative George Miller (D-CA), formerly chair of the House Education and Labor Committee, said, “Average won’t help our students get the jobs of tomorrow. Average is the status quo and it’s failing our country.”



Policy Landscape

- Good News, Bad News
 - Many districts and states cutting or eliminating summer program due to budget cuts
 - Several districts and states investing new funds in innovative programs
 - Current window of opportunity



Why do we need a new vision of summer school?

- Summer is an untapped resource in education reform
- Remedial model of summer school is insufficient
- Summer can be a “bridge” between various approaches to expanded learning and education reform
- **Goal is to make summer school an essential component of education reform**



What is the New Vision?

- Transcends the punitive, remedial model of summer school
- Provides comprehensive, engaging learning activities for students and teachers
- Looks and feels different than the regular school year



Beyond Programs...

- High-impact, low-cost programs
- Modified school calendars



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