Summer learning loss creates a permanent drag on the US education system. In a 2012 survey of 500 teachers, 66 percent said it typically takes them at least three to four weeks to reteach the previous year’s skills at the beginning of a new school year. Twenty-four percent said reteaching takes them five weeks or more. But without adequate resources, programs cannot provide access for all the students who need meaningful learning opportunities over the long vacation from school.

While summer learning is an emerging strategy for accelerating student success, uncertainty over how to pay for it, especially in an environment of tough budget choices, poses a barrier for school districts and community partners alike. But for those who know where to look and how to devise creative strategies to combine funding streams, substantial opportunity exists.

No single funding stream is risk-free, and few are likely to provide sustained adequate funding. The challenge is to pull together multiple streams from federal, state, and local public funds, foundation grants, and cash and in-kind support from businesses. With the generous support of the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, the National Summer Learning Association (NSLA) developed *Moving Summer*
Learning Forward: A Strategic Roadmap for Funding in Tough Times
to provide out-of-school time programs, school districts, and other
stakeholders strategies for obtaining and sustaining funding for
summer programs. The roadmap highlights opportunities at the
federal, state, and local level.

FEDERAL RESOURCES

Federal policy is becoming increasingly flexible on how school
districts, their partners, and other program providers achieve federal
objectives, even as it rewards programs with well-documented
positive outcomes. While many federal funding streams do not
specifically refer to summer, the focus on results and increased flex-
ibility offers opportunities for providers of high-quality summer
learning programs.

Program providers should analyze the multiple ways summer learning
could address the broad goals outlined in federal grants. If a grant
program does not specifically prohibit funding for summer learning,
but summer learning fits the broader eligibility requirements and
goals, then a summer program should be eligible. For example, if
a competitively awarded federal grant is to be used to address areas
that states or districts have prioritized in order to increase student
achievement, a summer learning program addressing those priorities
would be a match. Advocates can say with evidence-based confidence
that providing additional time for student learning during summer
will help improve student achievement.

This goal-based approach to seeking funding implies that, when
visiting www.grants.gov or otherwise searching out federal funding,
searches should be extended beyond the keyword “summer.” And
even if an organization deems it is not eligible for a particular
funding stream, a partner might be eligible and could collaborate
to seek funds.
NSLA’s funding road map details federal funding that can support summer learning programs from a variety of agencies:

- **US Department of Education**
  - Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA, also known as No Child Left Behind)—Title I, Part A—Education for the Disadvantaged
  - ESEA—School Improvement Grants (SIGs)
  - ESEA—Title II, Part A—Improving Teacher Quality
  - ESEA—21st Century Community Learning Centers
  - ESEA—Title I, Part C—Education of Migratory Children
  - ESEA Waiver flexibility
  - Promise Neighborhoods

- **US Department of Health and Human Services**—Temporary Assistance for Needy Families

- **US Department of Housing and Urban Development**—Community Development Block Grant Program

- **Corporation for National and Community Service**—AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps*VISTA programs

- **US Department of Labor**—Workforce Investment Act

- **US Department of Agriculture**—Summer Food Service Program

- **National Aeronautics and Space Administration**—Summer of Innovation Initiative and others

### STATE RESOURCES

Summer learning funding varies from state to state. Funds for summer programs may be available in a state’s primary education funding formula or in a special category. As with the federal government, it is always important to look at opportunities across agencies, including health, juvenile justice, work force development, libraries, and others.

The one federal program that explicitly funds after-school and summer learning is the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) program. The US Department of Education provides funds to states on a formula basis, and the states in turn conduct competitive grant processes for school districts and community-based organizations. A growing number of states require that grant proposals include summer components.

State policy to support summer learning can take different forms. Below are four examples.

### State Policy Supporting Summer Learning

**CALIFORNIA**

In California, Senate Bill 798, signed into law in 2010, says that in fiscal years when the state’s 21st Century Community Learning Centers appropriation exceeds the 2008–09 level, the state must allocate 15 percent of the additional funding to summer learning programs for elementary and middle school students. Other “supplemental” funds can be used for programming on any non-school day, including summer. In addition to SB798, a small portion of California’s state funding for after-school programs (known as the After School Education and Safety, or ASES, Program) and part of existing 21st CCLC funding can be used for summer programming. These funds, known as “supplemental” grants, can be used for programming on any non-school day.

**FLORIDA**

The Supplemental Academic Instruction fund was created in 1999 as part of the A+ Education Plan in Florida. Since 2000, it has been funded through the Florida Education Finance Program. The funding helps districts provide supplemental instruction to K-12 students. The instruction can be provided during school hours or beyond the traditional school day, week, or year. The funds must be used to help students gain at least a year of knowledge for each year in school and to keep students from falling behind. Supplemental instructional strategies may include, but are not limited to, after-school instruction, extended school year, and intensive skills development in summer school.
LOCAL RESOURCES

Great diversity of potential resources exists at the local level. For a community-based program, partnership with the local school district can prove tremendously important, not only for aligning summer offerings with the school-year curriculum and for data sharing, but also potentially for shared support of teaching staff and in-kind provision of space, transportation, and other resources. Partnerships with other public agencies, including the mayor’s office, parks and recreation department, libraries, and health agencies may provide a wide variety of assets.

For school districts, partnerships with other public agencies as well as community-based organizations serving children and youth, such as Boys and Girls Clubs and the Y, can yield great benefits.

There may also be strong local education collaborative initiatives, such as the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading, that are already bringing together numerous public and private partners.

Finally, local private support from either foundations or businesses can help not only provide direct funding for activities but can also serve as a “match” (cash or in-kind) to leverage public investment. Private funds—particularly business donations—may underwrite program features not allowable using public funds. They may also support planning and resource development and bridge time gaps between public funding cycles. Businesses are often eager to provide in-kind support—from food for events to accounting services.

Faced with a challenging fiscal environment, state leaders committed to using summer learning to improve student outcomes and reduce achievement gaps need to be aware of all available resources so communities can maximize their impact and work to ensure that every child has a memorable, enriching summer.

For more ideas on resources and strategies, including case studies of blended funding, download Moving Summer Learning Forward: A Strategic Roadmap for Funding in Tough Times from www.summerlearning.org/funding, or contact Bob Seidel at bseidel@summerlearning.org.

Bob Seidel is senior director, strategic initiatives and policy, at the National Summer Learning Association. The original version of this article was published in AfterSchool Today magazine—The Official Publication of the National After-School Association (naaweb.org), Spring 2014.

Minnesota has funded education programs to support at-risk students under the Graduation Incentives Law (GIL) since the 1960s. Included in this measure is funding for local school districts to offer 20 percent extra instructional time to eligible students. Minneapolis Public Schools administrators recognized that the GIL could support summer learning and won the support of local political leaders. The district used these funds to expand summer learning for GIL-eligible students in 2009. By 2011 the Minneapolis summer program had a budget of approximately $6 million to support about 9,000 preK-12 students (about 35 percent of those eligible). Ninety percent of the funding came from the GIL.

In 2012 and 2013, the Rhode Island General Assembly approved $250,000 in new funding for innovative summer learning partnerships as part of the Hasbro Summer Learning Initiative. This funding was a direct result of the work of Rhode Island’s Joint Legislative Taskforce on Summer Learning and Leadership of the Rhode Island After-school Plus Alliance (RIASPA). RIASPA's ability to come to the table with matching funding from the United Way of Rhode Island and Hasbro Inc. was critical (See “Rhode Island’s Innovative Solutions to Summer Learning Loss, page 24.”)