

The primary goal of Summer Literacy Camp is to prevent the “summer slide,” or summer learning loss, by identifying and inviting students who can most benefit from a summer enrichment experience.

Research shows disadvantaged students are especially in need of summer enrichment opportunities. As a district with a 66% unduplicated population, providing a summer reading program to help close the achievement gap is one of LEUSD’s most significant LCAP commitments. It represents a district wide opportunity to support all primary students who are six months to a year behind in reading level based upon a Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA). For this Golden Bell submission, we are narrowing program discussion and results to incoming second grade students. The program began with second and third graders, and was recently expanded to first grade.

Boosting English literacy skills of students who are below grade level when starting second grade is the emphasis of a themed *Summer Literacy Camp* introduced in 2016. The program integrates art, STEM, and Language Arts as students set off to explore a different world during their six-week interactive reading adventure. This summer students are *diving into deserts*—last year students explored many wonders *under the sea*.

Summer Literacy Camp was conceived to meet five goals: 1) Under the LCAP, to provide a self-contained literacy program to benefit students who are up to one year behind in reading; 2) to build this new program upon an evidence-based learning model; 3) to offer the program at all 14 neighborhood elementary schools for maximum student access; and 4) to make it unique and engaging for kids. The fifth goal includes feeding participating families during a shared breakfast and lunch, at no cost, to build community between schools and the families we serve. Summer Literacy Camp is meeting these goals on all 14 elementary school campuses after two years, with a third session currently underway.

Students experience up to 84 hours of motivating lessons and activities each summer. A pre and post-test is administered to document student progress and program success. Student selection is based

upon DRA levels (comprehension). Literacy Camp offers a rich learning environment that features small classroom size (20 pupils), high quality instruction and a structured daily schedule, thematically integrated curriculum materials using Art and STEM activities, and engaging pedagogy. The classroom student ratio per adult is 8:1, and in groups, 6:1. The district set a program duration of six weeks, with a sufficient dose of instruction at 3.5 hours, four days per week. Community meals for students and their families are served before and after instruction. Theming differentiates regular school lessons from Summer Literacy Camp—an important factor in holding kids' interest and rewarding progress. To encourage steady attendance, students earn one book per week to start their own home library.

Summer learning programs have been shown to mitigate summer learning losses and can accelerate skill development. Assessment plays a huge role in identifying summer literacy camp invitees. Incoming second grade students selected for Summer Literacy Camp are grouped within two bands: the first group based on DRA level during 2nd trimester is approximately 1 year behind; the second group is approximately six months behind grade level reading. The student invitation letter makes clear to parents that their child can benefit from this optional summer learning opportunity, offering a positive alternative to retention.

Literacy Camp begins at 7:30 a.m. and ends at noon. Every day during instruction, learning center activities focus on fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, and technology. To stimulate inquiry, STEM activities are offered each Monday and Tuesday. To nurture a child's creative side, Art is offered every Wednesday and Thursday. The summer themes (*under the sea, diving into deserts*) are brought to life as STEM and art activities unlock a child's curiosity, while stimulating reading interest.

Expectations were exceeded in our first and second years. At the conclusion of our first season, a mother of a new second grader stated her child finished Summer Literacy Camp with more confidence in her reading ability. This mom's enthusiasm for her daughter's success is emotionally bittersweet as she

recounted the struggle her daughter experienced the year before. A significant benefit is the learning connection between participating teachers who get to work with many of their incoming students. In certain cases, in lieu of retention, a child's Student Study Team (SST) referred students to Summer Literacy Camp. Building self-esteem has occurred; many teachers (and parents) report a "transformation" in behavior and attitude in students who have gone to Summer Literacy Camp. An unexpected outcome reported by para-educators involved in Literacy Camp is feeling better equipped to manage small student group instruction during the regular year. Success is a point of pride for teachers, parents, and the students themselves!

Over a two-year period, the number of participants entering second grade after Summer Literacy Camp totals 429. After the first year, the average growth across the district's 14 elementary sites was one month (four weeks) of reading during a six-week program. One site had an average of three months of reading growth. Future longitudinal analysis between first and third grades will be possible since the program was recently expanded to include grades 1-3 starting in the summer of 2018. At this grade span, nearly 845 students can be served each summer.

LEUSD takes a customized approach in theming and equipping staff with all the materials they will use over the six-week program period. Years one and two were themed "*under the sea*." The newest theme of "*dive into the desert*" launched this summer. Themed Instructional kits are bundled for each classroom and given to teachers during a ten hour paid orientation, with training split over two days (5/5). All curriculum materials and program logistics are handled internally by district staff.

The template for recreating Summer Literacy Camp has been refined each year through close collaboration between Facilities, Personnel, Fiscal, Food Services, and Administrative & Instructional Technology Support Services. Each year, the District's Personnel Division recruits and hires a combined total of 70 certificated and 140 classified employees for Summer Literacy Camp.

To facilitate the program and to build leadership capacity within the district, four Summer Literacy Camp administrators are recruited from within LEUSD's pool of administrator designees. They divide 14 schools among them. Each has oversight and responsibility over three to four schools. A central training is provided for all Summer Literacy Camp workers, teachers and support staff. During this training, teachers are given the opportunity to tryout Art and STEM lessons in several practice sessions. Summer Literacy Camp uses available space, including food preparation and outside dining areas, and an average of four classrooms per school site.

LEUSD's Governing Board was united in approving the LCAP goals and budget for Summer Literacy Camp. Through the Governing Board's lens, Literacy Camp is as much about showing students what success feels like, as it is about closing the achievement gap. LEUSD Board members actively visit and observe Summer Literacy Camp classrooms and provide program feedback. The Board's investment in summer literacy compliments ongoing intervention for students, which the Board has also approved.

Said Board President Juan Saucedo during his inaugural visit, "Summer Literacy Camp builds successful readers and more confident students in their grade level transition and beyond." He added, "Parents have told us their children are more enthusiastic about going to school as a result of the program."

Summer Literacy Camp provides an effective, replicable enhancement to first instruction. The LCFF provides the necessary funding to ensure a sustainable, robust program each year. The program affords teachers and classified support staff the opportunity to benefit kids during the summer, preventing students from sliding further behind, a likely outcome without the Literacy Camp experience.

After two years, the program has been more than successful in stemming the "summer slide." In fact, data shows participating students grew incrementally, reading at grade level as a result of the program. Behavioral and attitudinal improvement in participating students has been noticeably improved according to parent feedback and teacher observation and discussion during weekly PLC meetings.