Oregon Summer Learning Report, 2015
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Introduction

Summer Learning Matters

We know that to succeed in school and life, children and young adults need ongoing opportunities to learn and practice essential skills. This is especially true during the summer months. Many Americans have a wonderful image of summer as a carefree, happy time when “kids can be kids,” and take for granted the prospect of enriching experiences such as summer camps, time with family, and trips to museums, parks, and libraries. Unfortunately, many youth face anything but idyllic summer months. When the school doors close, many children struggle to access educational opportunities, as well as basic needs such as healthy meals and adequate adult supervision.

National research shows that while not in the classroom over the summer most students lose about two months of grade level equivalency in math computation skills over the summer months, and low-income students also lose more than two months in reading achievement (Cooper, 1996). Roughly two-thirds of the ninth-grade achievement gap between lower and higher income youth can be attributed to unequal access to summer learning opportunities during the elementary school years (Alexander et al. 2007). Additionally, parents consistently cite summer as the most difficult time to ensure that their children have productive things to do (Duffett et al, 2004).

In the state of Oregon, national research combined with harrowing statistics highlight the need for significant intervention. With more than 50% of Oregon students identified as low-income, the state is at significant risk of not meeting its 40-40-20 achievement goals.¹

The evidence is clear; it is the summer months that create a profound and lasting impact on the lives of all students across Oregon; but it is the low-income students that lack the opportunity to experience meaningful educational activities during the summertime.

“The fact is, summer is actually one of the most important times of the year for young people...Because if you’ve got big dreams -- and I know you all do -- if you want to go to college, if you want to get a good job, if you want to make the most of your potential, then summer can’t just be a vacation. It’s really a time to try to get ahead.”

Michelle Obama, 2015
“Remarks by the First Lady at the Summer Learning Day Event”

¹ Approved by the Oregon Legislature in 2011 in Senate Bill 253, the “40-40-20 Goal” is for 40% of adult Oregonians to hold a bachelor’s or advanced degree, 40% to have an associate’s degree or a meaningful postsecondary certificate, and all adult Oregonians to hold a high school diploma or equivalent by the year 2025.
History of SL3

The SL3 Partnership

The SL3 Project: Summer Learning, Summer Library, Summer Lunch piloted with 4 sites in 2012 by OregonASK with a small grant from the National Summer Learning Association (NSLA). With this grant, OregonASK piloted SL3 and identified 141 potential Summer Learning schools across Oregon that had more than 50% free and reduced lunch rates and 60% or more of students not meeting the 3rd grade reading benchmark.

As SL3 expanded in the upcoming years, the Summer Learning Partnership was established. This partnership began with the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), followed by the Oregon State Library, the Oregon Department of Education – Nutrition, Language Arts, and Migrant Education, Bazillion Books for Kids, the Corporation for National Service, and the School Library Association; each organization playing an essential role as stakeholders in the growth and expansion of summer learning in Oregon.

OregonASK received a data grant from NCSL, which was used in part to survey the 141 potential Summer Learning Sites and to host a Summer Learning Summit for principals, librarians, and legislators across the state.

Summer Learning Survey

Of the 141 Summer Learning sites identified by OregonASK, 69 sites responded to the survey. We found that 65.22% of schools offer summer food programs – meaning 34.78% did not offer summer food. 25% of the sites keep their libraries open during the summer. Of the sites with libraries open, 73% were only open for 1 day per week.

Of the 69 sites, 86.8% responded that lack of funding is the largest cause of library closures in the summer. 84.2% cited a lack of staffing and 28.9% cited a lack of transportation.

Amount of Days Schools are Open for Educational Activities During the Summer
Summer Learning Summit

On February 10th at the Salem Convention Center, the Summer Learning Partnership and OregonASK hosted the Summer Learning Summit to raise awareness and discuss the issues surrounding summer learning loss.

Three panels of learning, library, and lunch experts discussed the importance of summer learning programs in their respective regions. Several panelists were Umatilla School District Superintendent Heidi Sipe, Robin Rolfe of the Oregon Association of School Libraries, and Joyce Dougherty from Child Nutrition Programs of the Oregon Department of Education. In his keynote presentation, Matthew Boulay, founder and chair of the National Summer Learning Association spoke about the importance of expanded summer learning opportunities and the role of the Summer Learning Partnership in Oregon. Krina Lee, executive director of the Salem-Keizer Education Foundation, ended the event with a passionate presentation about childhood hunger and eliminating the summer slide.

Oregon Summer Learning Policy - House Bill 2650

The Summer Learning Summit coincided with the introduction of House Bill 2650 in the Oregon House of Representatives, sponsored by Representatives Komp and Nathanson who both expressed a deep interest in the bill. House Bill 2650 was proposed to expand the SL3 underlying concepts creating strategic investments through a state level Summer Learning Partnership. It proposed to create tiered funding for the State Library and the Department of Education to issue grants to allow schools with summer lunch programs to keep their libraries open for summer months. HB2650 received a Do Pass recommendation by the House Committee of Education and was referred to Joint Ways and Means. It did not make it past Joint Ways in Means in time for summer to begin.

By mid-May, OregonASK decided to take on the project for another year without the guarantee of funding. Because of this decision, thousands of students were served with open libraries at 19 schools across Oregon.

GSK Science in the Summer (2015)

This summer, OregonASK partnered in a grant with OMSI and GSK to provide four SL3 sites across Oregon with a weeklong, cost-free, hands-on traveling program called “GSK Science in the Summer.” In this traveling program, OMSI’s outreach instructors used curriculum provided by GSK to teach a chemistry course to students in grades 2-3 and 4-6, respectively. The locations and dates of our Science in the Summer sites are below:

- Four Corners Elementary School, Salem-Keizer Elementary School | August 10-13, 2015
- Highland Elementary School, Salem-Keizer Elementary School | June 22-25, 2015
- Nellie Muir Elementary School, Woodburn School District | August 3-6, 2015
At three of these schools, Science in the Summer classes were correlated with greater participation and higher book checkout at the library. During Science in the Summer weeks, Four Corners and Highland both saw a substantial increase in the number of students visiting the library and eating lunch at the school, while Nellie Muir and Highland both had more than double the average number of book checkouts.

**SL3 2012-2014 Comparative Analysis**

The project expanded from the 4 pilot schools in 2012 to 14, to 17, and finally to 20 schools across Oregon, respectively. The data essentials from the project’s prior years are listed in the charts below. Please note the data for 2014 was only submitted partially by sites.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Schools</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Participants</td>
<td>278</td>
<td>1948</td>
<td>1026</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Books Checked Out</td>
<td>910</td>
<td>5659</td>
<td>3121</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![Graph 1.1](image)

![Graph 1.2](image)
The project experienced rapid growth from 2012 to 2013, a jump from 4 site participants to 14 site participants. The total student participants more than doubled. The total books checked out increased by nearly 400%.

Within 2013 and 2014, the project grew at a smaller rate from 14 site participants to 17 site participants. The number of student participants stayed at about the same number though there were more sites open - the number of books checked out decreased by 55%.

There were lessons learned from the slowed growth in 2014. In particular, we found a strong correlation between student library participation and lunch service at the site. In the schools that served lunch, the average library participation was 89 students with an average of 461 books distributed. Schools that did not serve lunch had an average of 39 student participants and an average of 206 books checked out.

Moving forward with this new information, OregonASK instated three requirements for 2015 site participants: 50% or more Free and Reduced lunch, 60% of students not meeting the 3rd grade reading benchmark, and the USDA Summer Meal Service Program offered on site during library hours.
**SL3 2015 Data Analysis**

**Schools**

In 2015, OregonASK supported SL3 sites at twenty locations around Oregon. These sites opened their library doors for a minimum of 2 hours a day, 1 day a week, for 5 weeks. Over 90% of the sites exceeded the minimum, often staying open 2 or more days a week for 8 or more weeks throughout the summer. Altogether, the SL3 sites offered 357 hours of library time to students in their neighborhoods. The 2015 SL3 sites and their school districts are listed below.

- Auburn Elementary School
  Salem Keizer School District
- Battle Creek Elementary School
  Salem Keizer School District
- Bridger Elementary School
  Portland Public Schools
- Candalaria Elementary School
  Salem Keizer School District
- Claggett Creek Middle School
  Salem Keizer School District
- Clear Lake Elementary School
  Salem Keizer School District
- East Gresham Elementary School
  Gresham-Barlow School District
- Four Corners Elementary School
  Salem Keizer School District
- Harrison Elementary School
  South Lane School District
- Highland Elementary School
  Salem Keizer School District
- Keizer Elementary School
  Salem Keizer School District
- Kennedy Elementary School
  Salem Keizer School District
- Lamb Elementary School
  Salem Keizer School District
- McNary Heights Elementary School
  Umatila School District
- Nellie Muir Elementary School
  Woodburn School District
- Oak Heights Elementary School
  Sweet Home School District
- Stephens Middle School
  Salem Keizer School District
- Sunrise Elementary School
  Greater Albany School District
- Waldo Middle School
  Salem Keizer School District
- Yoshikai Elementary School
  Salem Keizer School District

**Participation**

SL3 sites offered free book checkout, free book giveaways, and in some cases educational and engaging activities such as group read-a-louds and book clubs. In total, over 1,000 students and more than 200 adults visited their school libraries nearly 4,000 times through the SL3 program this summer. Those students and adults received more than 5,000 books through book checkout, free book giveaways, and book exchanges.
Students of every age group visited SL3 libraries this summer, ranging from age 0 up through 12th grade. Of the 1,062 students who visited SL3 sites, 73% were elementary school-aged students, 15% were children aged 0 thru Pre-K, 10% were middle school-aged students, and the remaining 2% were high school students. Of those 1,062, 58% were students enrolled at the school they visited. This suggests that SL3 reaches beyond the confines of school districts, and penetrates families and children in the wider community.

For specific participation data for SL3 2015, please see the table below:

| Total Library Visits | 3,873 |
| Total student visits (0-12th grade) | 3,297 |
| Total adult visits | 576 |
| Total Student Participants (0-12th grade) | 1,062 |
| Students 0-Pre-K | 161 |
| Students K-5th grade | 776 |
| Students 6th-8th grade | 110 |
| Students 9th-12th grade | 15 |
| Average % of Students Enrolled at Site | 58% |
| Total Adult Participants | 222 |
| Books Distributed | 5,676 |
| Library Books checked out | 4,913 |
| Free Books | 763 |
| Average Daily Percentage receiving lunch | 62% |

### Summer Food

Many low-income children lack access to healthy, nutritious meals during the summer, when they no longer have access to the meals provided at school. The USDA Summer Food Program offers free meals at many schools and community centers in low-income neighborhoods throughout the state of Oregon. SL3 works hard to place our summer library programs at summer food sites, so that we can pair summer learning with summer lunch. Kids and their families can come eat lunch, and then visit the school library to read, check out books, and participate in activities.

This year, 12 of our 20 schools reported serving summer lunches. At those 12 schools, 62% of children and adults visiting the library also ate lunch at the school. The schools that served lunch saw much higher participation numbers than schools that did not serve lunch. On average, schools with summer food had more than double the number of visits to the library and checked out over 150% more books than schools without summer food.

| Sites Reporting Summer Food | 12 |
| Total student visits (0-12th grade) | 2,440 |
| Total adult visits | 324 |
| Average Visits per Site | 230 |
| Average Book Check-Out per Site | 291 |

| Sites Not Reporting Summer Food | 8 |
| Total student visits (0-12th grade) | 857 |
| Total adult visits | 252 |
| Average Visits per Site | 107 |
| Average Book Check-Out per Site | 177 |
Demographics

We know that 1,284 students and adults visited SL3 libraries this summer, but who are these students and adults? To answer that question, we collected in-depth demographic data at a sub-set of 6 sites. Together, the data from all 6 sites represents about 16% of the student participants in SL3, and about 19% of the adult participants. These 6 sites were:

- **Bridger Elementary School**, Portland School District
- **Candalaria Elementary School**, Salem Keizer School District
- **East Gresham Elementary School**, Gresham-Barlow School District
- **Kennedy Elementary School**, Salem Keizer School District
- **McNary Heights Elementary School**, Umatilla School District
- **Waldo Middle School**, Salem Keizer School District

Within this subset of sites, the largest ethnicity groups for students were Hispanic/Latino and White (non-Hispanic), with 49% and 41% respectively. For adult participants, the largest demographics were also Hispanic/Latino and White (non-Hispanic), this time with 21% and 62% respectively.

A large majority (69%) of participating adults were parents chaperoning their children, and another 14% identified as childcare providers bringing their students on a library field trip.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Students</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>African American, African Immigrant, or Black</strong></td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Asian or Asian American</strong></td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Latin or Hispanic</strong></td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Native American or Alaskan Native</strong></td>
<td>&gt;1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander</strong></td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>White (non-Hispanic)</strong></td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other</strong></td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Adults</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>African American, African Immigrant, or Black</strong></td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Asian or Asian American</strong></td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Latin or Hispanic</strong></td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Native American or Alaskan Native</strong></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander</strong></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>White (non-Hispanic)</strong></td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other</strong></td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Adults Identifying as Parents</strong></td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Adults Identifying as Childcare Providers</strong></td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Successes and Stories

After the conclusion of the SL3 program this summer, our site hosts, librarians, and volunteers had the chance to offer feedback through an evaluative survey regarding their experiences, successes, and challenges with the program. We received responses from 9 sites, representing a 45% response rate. Of the respondents, 6 were librarians, one was a principal, one a volunteer site lead, and 2 were summer program managers.

80% of respondents indicated that their SL3 program was successful, and 70% would definitely participate in the program again next year. The remaining 30% indicated that they would “maybe” participate again, citing logistical challenges of staffing and participation. No programs indicated that they would not participate next year.

When asked to rate the successes of certain aspects of the SL3 program, respondents indicated that they had the most success with data collection, library book checkout, and activities offered to students. For each of these aspects, 80% or more of programs reported that their implementation worked at least moderately well. Staffing and volunteer management were not far behind, with 78% of programs agreeing its implementation worked very well or moderately well.

The chart below shows detailed response data for each aspect:

When asked to expand on their successes, many of the stories touched on common themes. Many sites, for instance, reported that providing activities for students to do at the library was successful for their program, while others indicated that communication with the community helped bolster their success. One site partnered with the PTA to send weekly “email blasts” to families to remind them about the program, while another site sent a letter home to families about the program before school let out for the summer.
Below are excerpts from the success stories shared by SL3 sites:

“As I was serving lunch daily, students were always excited to find out if the library was going to be open that day!”

“It was a strong resource for our students to be able to have access to the school library during the summer months, in a time when doors are normally locked, books sit dusty on shelves, and students lose levels of reading ability due to lack of access to books. We noticed many of our English language learning families accessing the library, as well as families who don’t drive and have a hard time making it to the public library. Keeping our school library open during the summer extended the amount of hours that our school was open during the summer and provided a safe space for students to go. It also linked our partnership with the Multnomah County library, the summer reading program, and Books2U. Students were able to check out books at our school library that they could then read and count their minutes on their summer reading game board. It was an easy partnership that we would be excited to continue!”

“For an activity students learned about volcanoes, made one and erupted them. It was amazing!”

“For an activity students learned about volcanoes, made one and erupted them. It was amazing!”

“I had the computer lab set up and at noon we had a staff member come and read for story time at noon each Wednesday. The computer lab was a huge hit!”
Challenges

Certain aspects of the SL3 program emerged as challenges for some sites. According to respondents, student participation, adult participation, and communication and advertising were the most challenging for some sites. For each of these aspects, at least 50% of sites reported that they found the aspect to be at least “a little bit challenging.”

The chart below shows detailed response data for each aspect:

Sites were also asked for their recommendations for future iterations of the SL3 Program. Their responses fell into three main categories:

- Earlier and more consistent communication with families would help increase awareness of the program.
- Providing incentives to students would increase participation.
- Sites without a summer lunch program suggested that providing lunch at the site would increase participation at the library, because it would draw more students and families to the school.
Recommendations

SL3 has accomplished four successful pilots years, and has offered thousands of hours of library time and tens of thousands of books to low-income children across the state of Oregon. As we move forward into future iterations of the program, we have recommendations for improving and strengthening the program. These recommendations have been compiled from discussions with school principals, feedback from librarians and program volunteers, and our own experience.

1. **Stable funding will create a stable and sustainable program.** Stable funding will provide support for:
   - Materials for activities and reading groups for students
   - Incentives and rewards for meeting reading goals
   - Stipends for staff
   - Support for marketing strategy and materials

2. **Focus on developing foundations and sustainability for the program, rather than expanding it.**

3. **Make summer learning a priority year-round.**

4. **Strengthen partnerships.**
   - Summer lunch program: We know that schools with access to the USDA Summer Food program show significantly higher library participations numbers.
   - State and local libraries: Strengthening relationships with local and state libraries will help expand outreach efforts and build community bonds by sharing resources. For instance, expanding the state-sponsored summer reading program into SL3 sites.