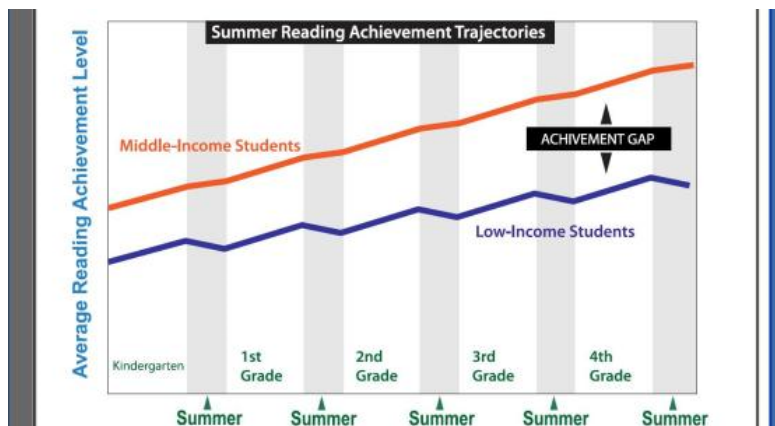


Focus On Summer Learning Loss In Low Income Communities

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Posted by Robyn Gee on June 15, 2011 at 12:27pm



It's the summer. Students are jumping for joy. It's time to play ball, go swimming, and hang out. Right?

According to Steven Wirt at the [Partnership for Children and Youth](#), this traditional idea of summer isn't helping all students. "For a certain segment of the middle class and for affluent families, that's great. But within that, those families can also provide learning opportunities. For low income kids who don't have those kind of opportunities, summer becomes a boring or lonely time, especially if parents are working multiple jobs," he said. "We want to change the thinking and raise awareness of the dangers of summer for low income kids."

According to the [California Report Card](#) completed annually by Children Now and the [Afterschool Alliance](#):

- o Only 27% of California children participate in summer learning programs.
- o 48% of parents making less than \$35,000 did not enroll their child in any summer program.

The Partnership for Children and Youth is trying to reduce the educational achievement gap by focusing on summer learning loss. Senate Bill 429 would remove restrictions on the money set aside for summer learning programs in an effort to help low income communities take advantage of that money.

"We would love to see programs that are six to eight hours for six to nine weeks, but that's a rarity," said Wirt. For many parents, it's not about which program to choose, it's about having any program at all. "Parents don't have a choice because programs don't exist, or programs are cut because of the California budget. But essentially parents should look for programs that provide academics and enrichment - some kind of physical activity," he said.

As part of their campaign for summer learning programs, the Partnership for Children and Youth is holding an event on National Summer Learning Day, June 21, which is part of their social media campaign called Summer Matters 2 You. Student journalism teams will go to Sacramento on June 21 with video cameras to interview legislators, teachers, and community leaders about the importance of summer learning.

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