



Summer Learning Is...

The Continuing Story of Summer Learning Programs in Ontario 2013 Report

The Council of Ontario Directors of Education, in partnership with the Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat, Ontario Ministry of Education, recognizes the continuing and outstanding work of district school boards through their Summer Learning Programs in:

- Closing Student Achievement and Opportunity Gaps
- Sharing Success Stories
- Building Student and Teacher Confidence
- Connecting with Parents, Teachers, Students and Communities
- Making a Difference in the Lives of Ontario's Children

CODE

Council of Ontario Directors of Education

At A Glance

SUMMER LEARNING 2014

(Estimated numbers based on plans to date)

Number of Boards	65
Number of Summer Learning Sites/ Locations	To be determined by boards
Number of Classes (Literacy, Numeracy and Support for First Nations, Métis and Inuit Students)	338
Number of Students (Literacy, Numeracy and Support for First Nations, Métis and Inuit Students)	Over 5000
Number of Teachers	More than 338

SUMMER LEARNING 2013

(Approximate)

Number of Boards	43
Number of Summer Learning Sites/ Locations	75
Number of Classes (Literacy, Numeracy and Support for First Nations, Métis and Inuit Students)	136
Number of Students (Literacy, Numeracy and Support for First Nations, Métis and Inuit Students)	2153
Number of Teachers	180

The Story of Summer Learning

The 2013 Summer Learning Program (SLP) report reflects the changing nature of the project itself. After four years, summer learning programs are now firmly established in school boards across the province. During that time, the SLP's in-depth research component has consistently shown that summer learning in Ontario makes a difference in the lives of primary students by building confidence, closing achievement/opportunity gaps and minimizing summer learning loss. This year's "Quantitative and Qualitative Research Results" (enclosed) is no exception: the 2013 research findings once again reinforce the fact that SLPs do make a difference. Boards repeatedly told the research team a compelling story of the SLP's impact and influence on student success, parent support and teacher professional growth.

Summer Learning Is...

There is also a fascinating story to tell behind summer learning: what it involves, why it works, and how it successfully brings together students, teachers, parents and administrators in a dynamic, exciting environment that offers learning experiences for everyone involved. That's why, for our 2013 report, we have produced a 10-minute video entitled *Summer Learning Is...* This fast-paced, upbeat exploration of the people, sights and sounds that make up summer learning in Ontario was recorded at SLP locations in north, east, south and southwest regions of the province. It captures significant aspects of the program, including literacy and numeracy classes, FNMI (First Nations, Métis and Inuit) literacy programs, parent engagement strategies and teacher professional development. We encourage you to freely share the enclosed DVD of Summer Learning Is... The video provides both an engaging overview of the 2013 Summer Learning Programs and an invitation for parents, teachers, trustees and school/board administrators to learn more about the success stories and the positive difference SLP makes in Ontario.

Reporting on the Program Findings

(Note: for background on the Summer Learning Program, please refer to the SLP reports from 2010, 2011 and 2012 on the CODE website at www.ontariodirectors.ca)

From 2010 to 2012, there was a continuum of growth in summer programs. Many boards began to expand opportunities for parent engagement, teacher professional development, inquiry based instruction and technology enabled learning. Recognizing the significant strides that boards are making in their SLPs, discussion with board leaders shifted; for 2013, the focus for board and classroom visits centred on these three questions:

1. What core teaching and learning strategies were effective for learning, and how can boards utilize these strategies within the school year for the benefit of more students, teachers and programs?
2. How have summer programs assisted and influenced teachers in their own professional development, specifically in the areas of instructional practices and parent engagement?
3. What processes and plans will be in place to support summer students when they return to school in September?

Board leaders were also asked how the summer programs were aligned with the regular school year, and what influence the programs had on their strategic learning plans to increase student achievement and confidence.

2013 Summer Learning Program & Research Highlights

- The number of classes and boards offering CODE/Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat-supported summer learning programs has expanded significantly over the years. For 2013, 43 boards participated in the program, with over 2000 students attending.
- SLP programs include literacy and numeracy learning, as well as literacy support for First Nations, Métis and Inuit students.
- Summer programs were successful in raising students' skills in French and English Numeracy and Literacy. Numeracy results were particularly promising, especially in French Language summer programs.
- Summer program students narrowed the pre-existing gaps with their peers by 20% to 30%.
- School boards now use SLP as a staff development program to integrate new literacy and numeracy strategies into their student achievement work during the year.
- For the first time, boards not participating in the SLP contacted CODE about possible inclusion in the summer programs for 2014.
- Boards reported expanding their outreach efforts to engage parents through DVDs, blogs, newsletters, face-to-face meetings and classroom visits/participation.
- Community partnerships continue to play a growing role in providing context to the program while enhancing summer students' experiences. Examples include recreation programs, visits from community leaders and First Nations Elders, drama and art activities, and field trips.
- Activities were coordinated for students, and local libraries hosted reading programs. As an example, the prestigious Angus Mowat award was presented to a local school board and community library for their work in engaging students in a reading program during the summer.
- Many boards are now building connections between the regular school program and SLPs into their strategic plans.
- Summer programs provided a dynamic and integrated opportunity for increasing teacher professional development in the areas of literacy and numeracy. In one or more cases, strong connections were made between teacher Additional Qualification courses and the SLP.

Summer Learning: Where We Are Now, Where We Are Going

With funding increased for 2014, current SLP boards will be invited to request additional classes, while boards new to the project will be contacted and asked to participate. As summer learning has always been about building connections, the development of an interactive SLP website is a consideration for this year.

The use of technology in summer learning classrooms continues to be an exciting means of engaging students, parents and teachers alike while expanding the scope of the program's literacy and numeracy offerings. Meanwhile, like the program itself, the research component of the SLP continues to evolve. Now that it can be stated with certainty that summer learning does make a difference, the research focus for 2014 will shift more toward a longitudinal study of the impact of summer learning over time in six English Language boards and three French Language boards.

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“One of the key reasons that summer learning in Ontario has been so effective is the efforts of participating school boards to build on each year's achievements, all with the aim of making the programs more rewarding for students and their parents. The result is more – and better – offerings for students who need that extra boost to become confident learners, greater support and engagement in the education system for their parents, and exciting professional growth opportunities for teachers. In my role as Chief Student Achievement Officer, the Summer Learning Programs continue to be a foundational piece of the Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat's plan to build student success across Ontario. I am proud to be associated with such an important initiative.”

- Mary Jean Gallagher, Chief Student Achievement Officer and Assistant Deputy Minister, Student Achievement Division

“Initiatives like the Summer Learning Program are an important component of the Ministry of Education's efforts to improve student achievement and well-being among First Nation, Métis, and Inuit students and to close the achievement gap between Aboriginal students and all students. Through the First Nation, Métis and Inuit literacy classes of the Summer Learning Program, Aboriginal students across Ontario are receiving the essential supports that they need to succeed. I am pleased with the positive results of this program to date in support of First Nation, Métis, and Inuit learners.”

- Janine Griffore, Assistant Deputy Minister, French Language, Aboriginal Learning and Research Division

“The Summer Learning Program is just one example of how CODE supports boards in the work they do each day to ensure that all students in Ontario have every opportunity to become successful learners. I would like to congratulate the boards for their willingness to support and undertake new educational undertakings such as the SLP, and would encourage you to view and share the enclosed *Summer Learning Is...* DVD. As you watch the video, I know you too will feel the excitement and energy of the students who benefit from your efforts and leadership.”

- Frank Kelly, Executive Director, CODE