



State of New Jersey

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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Governor

SHEILA Y. OLIVER  
Lt. Governor

ANGELICA ALLEN-McMILLAN, Ed.D.  
Acting Commissioner

May 26, 2021

Dear Fellow Educator,

As a result of the Novel Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) global health pandemic, New Jersey educators in March 2020 made an unprecedented shift from teaching in school buildings to delivering instruction remotely to students. Educators and support staff have exemplified professionalism and dedication as they transitioned between remote, hybrid, and in-person instruction throughout the 2020-2021 school year, all the while ensuring continuity of instruction and services for all students. Given the impact of protracted disruptions to in-person instruction on student learning, the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) encourages Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) to utilize summer learning experiences to support the social, emotional, and academic needs of students prior to the return of more widespread and consistent in-person instruction in the 2021-2022 school year.

New Jersey parents, caregivers and educators have identified significant student academic and social emotional challenges to learning over the past year necessitating a concerted focus on the availability and quality of ongoing programs. School districts have an opportunity to streamline, prioritize, and personalize summer experiences based on intimate knowledge of their students in order to build meaningful academic and emotional connections for New Jersey students and their families in summer programming. Opportunities to maximize in-person summer programming is vital in the effort to reacclimate students to in person instruction while supporting recovery efforts academically and in concert with mental health supports.

LEAs are encouraged to use ESSER funds to expand the scope of summer programming beyond mandated programs and remedial courses and offer learning acceleration courses to more students. Exposing students to introductory one, two, or three-week pre-course options can catapult student learning. In addition, summer programming can serve as the pilot to monitor, evaluate, document, and potentially scale-up improvement strategies that could continue into the next school year and beyond. This *Summer Learning Resource Guide* offers considerations based on what has been implemented successfully during shifts to remote learning as well as

research regarding improved efficacy of summer learning programming.

LEAs should ensure summer learning opportunities aim to address academic and social emotional gaps between the 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 school years. Thoughtfully planned, quality summer learning can serve as a foundation for long-lasting, strategic systems of support. LEAs are encouraged to use relevant resources found on the NJDOE website, and in consultation with current health and safety standards, in planning and implementing summer learning programs for in-person learning (or via a hybrid format as appropriate under the current health guidelines). When planning summer programming, it is crucial to consult the latest [COVID-19 guidance from the New Jersey Department of Health](#) to ensure compliance with health and safety guidelines. We remain at the ready to assist you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Angelica Allen-McMillan, Ed.D." The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'A' and 'M'.

Angelica Allen-McMillan, Ed.D.  
Acting Commissioner