

**DATE:** June 23, 2015  
**TO:** Board of Trustees  
**FROM:** Darrel Robertson, Superintendent of Schools  
**SUBJECT:** Summer Programming Opportunities for Socially Vulnerable Students  
**ORIGINATOR:** Sandra Stoddard, Executive Director Governance and Strategic Supports  
**RESOURCE STAFF:** Marlene Hanson, Nancy Petersen  
**REFERENCE:** Trustee Service Request #223

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### ISSUE

Trustee Martin requested information around programming supports for the District's most vulnerable students, particularly those in the Eastglen catchment, during the summer months.

### BACKGROUND

Research has demonstrated that the summer learning gap, when students are no longer actively engaged in schooling, results in academic loss for students (see [Canadian Council on Learning Summer learning loss – June 12, 2008](#), RAND Corporation [Making Summer Count – How Summer Programs Can Boost Children's Learning](#) and National Summer Learning Association Research in Brief [Summer Can Set Kids on the Right – or Wrong - Course](#)). Some studies have found that all students have equivalent to a minimum of one month of learning loss and students from more socially vulnerable backgrounds experience an even greater rate of loss than their middle class peers. Research has also identified that summer programming is a critical strategy to reduce the impact of the summer learning gap.

There are many effective options to the nature of summer programming that will lessen the summer learning gap. The following types of programs or activities have all shown to have a positive impact on reducing the learning gap amongst students:

- Summer camp programs;
- Summer work experience programs;
- Summer learning programs; and
- Summer family vacations that expose children to new and engaging experiences.

Some of the research provides direction to school boards to consider the following actions in terms of the role they can play in reducing the impact of the summer learning gap:

- Provide summer learning programming opportunities;
- Partner with community groups who can offer summer programming for children and youth; and
- Provide community groups with access to school and playground space to host summer programming.

The research also identifies the following as key components of quality summer programming that will reduce the impact of the summer learning gap:

- Programming that runs daily for several hours a day;
- Programming that includes recreation, the arts, enrichment and leadership experiences;
- Programming that has a daily literacy component to it;
- Programming that reflects trained, qualified adult instructors;
- Programming that is well planned and organized;
- Programming that has a nutrition component; and
- Programming that engages with families.

### **CURRENT SITUATION**

The District works strategically with community partners to ensure students in our most complex school communities have access to quality summer program opportunities. Some examples of the programming supports available to students across the Eastglen and City Centre catchments include, but are not limited to the following opportunities:

1. Summer at City Centre Education Partnership (CCEP): This program is coordinated through the partners of Partners for Kids and serves the students across the four CCEP schools (Delton, John A. McDougall, Norwood and Spruce Avenue). It runs for the first four weeks of the summer break and has recreation, art, culture, nutrition, youth leadership and field trip opportunities for the students. The partners are focused on building literacy and school readiness skills and have strategically developed programming that reflects this focus.
2. Schools as Community Hubs (SACH): This initiative provides out-of-school time programming in several district schools, including presence in the Eastglen catchment at John D. Bracco School. In addition to after school programming offered September to June, SACH runs a summer program. SACH programming is informed by research around intervention and prevention related to community safety. Keeping children and youth engaged in schooling is a critical prevention strategy of community safety work. There are multiple community groups and agencies who work together under SACH to provide programming for students and engage with families. SACH staff work directly with schools to coordinate the use of school space and engagement with families.
3. Out-of-School Time Table (OST): In the Edmonton area there are multiple stakeholders who have come together around quality summer programming for vulnerable youth. These include: The City of Edmonton, Edmonton Catholic Schools, Edmonton Public Schools, youth program service providers and community groups. The mandate of OST is to support and facilitate access for families to quality summer programs in socially complex communities. This work has a strong presence in the Eastglen and City Centre catchments. OST works closely with schools to ensure vulnerable families are aware of and logistically able to participate in the programs available for their children over the summer. They also work to build capacity of the program service providers. Nutrition, literacy, recreation, cultural diversity, the arts and school readiness are all a focus of OST summer programs. These programs include, but are not limited to: community facilitated summer camps, the green shack program, Boys & Girls Clubs Big Brothers Big Sisters Club House programming and school-agency camp initiatives.

4. Schools also receive information about community camps, such as DiscoverE at the U of A, Catholic Social Services camp for newcomers, Camp Fyrefly, or Action for Healthy Communities’ summer partnership with Metro. Principals work with their staff to make sure students in need of these services are able to participate. Many of these opportunities have sponsorship for families who would not be able to pay.

The District offers the following summer program learning experiences to all students and families through Metro College:

- Summer School for students wishing to take various 10, 20 and 30 level courses. This programming is offered to students wishing to complete required credits or upgrade an existing mark. Summer School is offered across 10 District high schools and there is a cost to participate.
- Summer Cool School is a camp experience combining fun activities and academic experiences that promote review of prior learning or promote skills preview in readiness for the coming school year. This summer Cool School is offered at D. S. MacKenzie and Londonderry Schools. There is cost for families to access this program for their children. Historically Metro College was able to partner with the CCEP schools and run Summer at CCEP and Cool School alongside each other. This gave families who normally would not be able to afford Cool School camp the opportunity for their children to participate. Funding to support this dual hosted summer program is no longer viable.

**KEY POINTS**

- Quality summer programming is a key strategy to mitigate the summer learning gap.
- Access to free quality summer programming is critical for families experiencing high social vulnerability.
- School districts have a role to play in support of summer programs.

**ATTACHMENTS & APPENDICES – n/a**

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