

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Dallas Independent School District (Dallas ISD) received federal funds for high-quality summer programming for the summer of 2022 through Title I, Part A, as authorized under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Texas Education Agency waived promotion/retention requirements for the 2020–21 school year. Students were promoted to the next grade based on teacher and parent input. House Bill (HB) 4545, 87th Regular Legislative Session, became effective June 16, 2021, and permanently eliminated grade retention requirements.

Studies have found that the average student loses 17 to 34 percent of the prior year's learning gains during summer break, and a student who loses ground in one summer is more likely to lose ground in subsequent summers (Atteberry & McEachin, 2019). In order to mitigate this phenomenon, the district implemented a summer learning program incorporating academic and social emotional learning, along with enrichment.

The Extended Learning Opportunities (ELO) Department hosted kindergarten through grade eight summer camps during the summer of 2022. Dallas ISD provided a comprehensive set of offerings to students, with a goal of allowing them time to connect with their peers, engage in rigorous tasks, accelerate learning, and improve their social and emotional wellbeing. For two months this summer, the District provided students the opportunity to participate in various summer learning offerings, advertised as “Summer Breeze.” During the month of June, students attended a District created summer learning program at designated campuses advertised as “Summer Cool.” In July, District partners provided enrichment activities for students. This evaluation focuses on the Summer Cool program only. All district students were eligible to attend, and invitation was not prioritized by or contingent upon academic need. All grades were recorded as “pass” or “fail”. HB 4545 also established new requirements for schools implementing accelerated instruction for students who did not pass state assessments. One requirement was that this additional instruction must occur during the 2022-23 school year or the 2022 summer session. As a result, many campuses elected to provide required tutoring hours to students during their Summer Cool enrichment hours.

The purpose of the Title I Summer Learning evaluation was to provide context and implementation data so that program managers could assess the implementation of program components and operations, determine effectiveness, and plan future efforts. The total budget for the 2021-22 Summer Learning programs was \$4,154,934. This budget was funded through the Title I, Part A grant¹ along with general operating funds.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS/OUTCOMES

How was the Summer Cool program implemented?

In summer 2022, Dallas ISD provided a comprehensive set of offerings to students across the months of June and July. Summer Breeze was designed to meet the academic, physical, and emotional needs of district students and prepare them for future learning opportunities while inspiring enthusiasm for the upcoming school year. Overall, Summer 2022 programming options for students emphasized Acceleration, Enrichment, College and Career Preparation, and Legislative Mandates.

The Summer Cool program was a major acceleration component of Summer Breeze, aimed at elementary and middle school. The program was open to all district students in grades kindergarten through eight. The program intended to provide an opportunity for students to engage in activities that support academic growth and promote involvement in extracurricular activities and their social emotional wellbeing.

Summer Cool was held in-person over four weeks, beginning on Monday June 6, and ending on Thursday June 30 (for a total of 15 days of instruction, with no camp programming held on Fridays). The program was full day.

- Transportation, breakfast, and lunch, and participation incentives were provided to students.
- The program was held at 57 district elementary and middle school sites.
- During each Summer Cool day, two hours each were devoted to Reading and Mathematics, with the remainder of the day allotted to other core content areas and enrichment.

¹ Title I, Part A (Improving Basic Programs) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), provides supplemental funding to state and local educational agencies to acquire additional education resources at schools serving high concentrations of students from low-income

homes. These resources are used to improve the quality of education programs and ensure students from low-income families have opportunities to meet challenging state assessments.

- Curriculum presented during Summer Cool covered all core content areas but had a primary focus on a lead content area based on each week's theme.
- All grades were recorded as "pass" or "fail". Students were promoted to the next grade based on teacher and parent input as established in House Bill (HB) 4545.

What were the demographic characteristics of students and teachers who participated in the Summer Cool program?

Students

- In 2021-22, there were a total of 9,903 students who attended at least one day of Summer Cool.
- The majority of students were Hispanic (74%) or African American (21%) and a large proportion of students were identified as economically disadvantaged (67%).
- Over half of Summer Cool students were identified as EB (55%), and 16 percent of students received Special Education services.
- Over half of students (57%, $n = 5,605$) attended more than 75 percent of program days, while 22 percent ($n = 2,180$) attended all 15 days.
- Notably, EB students and economically disadvantaged students were represented in Summer Cool at a higher rate than the district's population (nine percentage points higher, and 17 percentage points, respectively).

Teachers

- In 2021-22, there were 531 Summer Cool teachers, across the 57 program sites.
- The majority of teachers were African American (44%) or Hispanic (38%).

What impact did participation in the Summer Cool program have on student achievement?

MAP Growth Assessments

- Analysis of mean RIT scores found no measurable difference between 2021-22 EOY to 2022-23 BOY scores for Summer Cool and comparison students in Reading (both English and Spanish) or Mathematics. At every grade level, as well as overall, the student groups differed by two or fewer RIT points.
- MAP Reading – English results showed that 46.4 percent of Summer Cool students met or exceeded projected growth from fall 2021 to fall 2022, which was less than one percentage point lower than comparison students (46.9%). However, 47 percent of students who attended 12 or more Summer Cool program days, met or exceeded projected growth, which was on par with comparison students.
- MAP Mathematics results showed that 54 percent of Summer Cool students met or exceeded projected growth from fall 2021 to fall 2022, which was three percentage points higher than comparison students (51%). Similarly, 55 percent of students who attended

12 or more Summer Cool program days met or exceeded projected growth in Mathematics.

- A statistically significant relationship was found for MAP Mathematics overall as well as for students who attended 12 or more days, indicating that students who attended Summer Cool were more likely to meet or exceed projected growth on the MAP Mathematics assessment than their matched peers.

What were student, teacher, staff, and parent perceptions of the SDR program?

Student Survey

Overall, 2,333 respondents completed the student perception survey. When asked,

- "How much you enjoyed these parts of the program," "extra time to be with friends," "brain breaks," and "more help from my teachers" were the highest rated responses (average rating of 4.4, 4.0, and 3.9 out of 5, respectively).
- "Has coming to Summer Cool helped you understand your school work better?", 91 percent of students responded that it "helped a lot" or "helped some."
- "Has attending Summer Cool helped you build stronger relationships with adults at your school?", 82 percent of students responded that it had.
- "What is ONE word that describes your experience at Summer Cool?", the most common responses given were "fun," "cool," and "good."
- "Has Summer Cool been fun for you?", 75 percent of students reported that they "enjoyed it" that "it was very fun!"

Teacher Survey

In June 2022, 279 respondents from all Summer Cool campuses completed the teacher perception survey. When asked,

- "What is ONE word that describes your experience at Summer Cool?", the most common responses given were "fun," "long," "awesome" and "good."
- "Elaborate on the best parts of Summer Cool," the most frequently mentioned themes were the curriculum/provided lesson plans (65 teachers) and the summer school students themselves (53 teachers).
- "Elaborate on what you feel needs to be improved for Summer School programs," 48 percent of teachers who responded to the item ($n = 105$) mentioned the need for more timely delivery of supplies and materials.
- "[Were] questions about the program answered satisfactorily by program staff?", 89% of teachers responded positively.
- "[Were you] adequately supported to teach the program?", 88 percent of teachers responded positively.
- "[Did you] have adequate resources to implement all aspects of the program?" fewer teachers (66%; $n = 124$)

responded positively, echoing sentiment shared in the open-ended responses.

- “Would [you] be open to teaching Summer School again in the future,” 82 percent of responding teachers selected “yes.”

Parent Survey

Overall, 745 parents from all Summer Cool campuses completed the parent perception survey. When asked,

- To “rate your overall satisfaction with the program,” 91 percent of parents reported an average or better overall level of satisfaction.
- “Were you satisfied with the communication from the school leading up to Summer Cool?”, 77 percent reported that they were “satisfied” or “very satisfied”.
- “Was the enrollment process easy to understand?”, 92 percent said yes.
- “Did [Summer Cool] create a positive educational opportunity for [your] student?” 73 percent of parents stated that it had, and 81 percent felt that the quality of the activities provided during the program was high.
- “Have you noticed positive social emotional changes in your student since attending Summer Cool?”, 77 percent said yes.
- Notably, a large majority (92%) of parents indicated that “Dallas ISD summer programs are a valuable resource for [their] family”.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Continue to offer free, full day summer programming. ELO’s summer 2022 programming was offered to all district students, not prioritized by or contingent upon academic

need. Designing districtwide programs to be free and full day, including meals and transportation, removes barriers to access and promotes equity. It is commendable that parents view the District’s summer programs as “a valuable resource.”

Continue to incorporate academic and SEL content into summer programming. The literature supports that the most effective summer programs address social-emotional learning. Incorporating District-created curriculum that included both academic and SEL content capitalized on the valuable extended learning time that summer afforded. As a result, students who attended Summer Cool were more likely to meet or exceed projected growth in mathematics and over three-fourths of parents reported positive social emotional changes in their students after attending Summer Cool. This shows commitment to the stated intention of “meeting the needs of the whole child.”

Explore solutions for timely delivery of materials. Since teachers explained that the late arrival of supplies and materials created challenges to implementation of the program, program managers should explore adjustments to ordering and/or delivery for future years with the goal of having materials in place before the first day of programming.

REFERENCE

Atteberry, A., and McEachin, A. (2019). School's Out: The Role of Summers in Understanding Achievement Disparities. (EdWorkingPaper: 19-82). Retrieved from Annenberg Institute at Brown University: <https://doi.org/10.26300/2mam-bp02>

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