

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Dallas Independent School District (Dallas ISD) received federal funds for high-quality summer programming for the summer of 2023 through the Elementary and Secondary Emergency Relief (ESSER) grant. The rationale behind these programs is to provide students with continued learning opportunities during the summer months, so they can maintain and even enhance their academic and social-emotional skills, rather than losing them.

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 and McEachin, 2019). In addition to summer learning loss, well-known literature reviews and meta-analyses on the topic have found that: (a) declines are steeper for mathematics than for reading, (b) the extent of loss is larger at higher grade levels, (c) the test scores of low-income students tend to drop between the spring and the fall, while the scores of middle-class and wealthy students tend to stay the same or show some improvement, and (d) summer programs have positive effects on non-cognitive outcomes (Kuhfeld, 2029; Lynch, An, and Mancenido, 2023; Quinn and Polikoff, 2017).

Within the framework of these discussions, the Extended Learning Opportunities (ELO) Department hosted kindergarten through grade eight summer camps during the summer of 2023. 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 Tutoring 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 2023 summer session. As a result, many campuses elected to provide required tutoring hours to

students during their Summer Cool's Mathematics and Reading hours.

The purpose of the Summer Learning evaluation was to examine program implementation, stakeholder perceptions, and program outcomes. The total budget for the 2022-23 Summer Learning programs was \$2,000,000. This budget was funded through the Elementary and Secondary Emergency Relief (ESSER)¹ grant.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS AND RESULTS

How was the Summer Cool program implemented?

Program characteristics

In summer 2023, 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 2023 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 5, and ending on Thursday June 29 (for a total of 15 days of instruction², with no camp programming held on Fridays). The program was full day.

- Transportation, breakfast, lunch, and participation materials were provided to students.
- The program was held at 50 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.
- The curriculum presented during Summer Cool covered all core content areas and based activities on each week's theme.

¹ The ESSER grant program is authorized in Title VIII, Division B, of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, which was signed into federal law in March 2020.

² The district was closed on Monday, June 19th in observance of Juneteenth.

Teachers

- In 2022-23, there were 558 Summer Cool teachers, across the 50 program sites.
- The majority of teachers were Hispanic (45%) or African American (44%).
- Seventy-four percent of Summer Cool teachers were female and 20 percent of them completed specializations degrees at the time of hire.

Students

- In 2022-23, there were a total of 8,485 students who attended at least one day of Summer Cool.
- The majority of students were Hispanic (74%) or African American (20%) and a large proportion of students were identified as economically disadvantaged (87%).
- Over half of Summer Cool students were identified as Emergent Bilinguals (56%), and 17 percent of students received Special Education services.
- Notably, EB students, Special Education students, and economically disadvantaged students were represented in Summer Cool at a higher rate than the district's population (seven percentage points higher, five percentage points, and four percentage points, respectively).
- Nearly half of students (47%, $n = 3,956$) attended more than 75 percent of program days, while 3 percent ($n = 225$) attended all 15 days.

What were student, teacher, and parent perceptions of the Summer Cool program?

Student Surveys

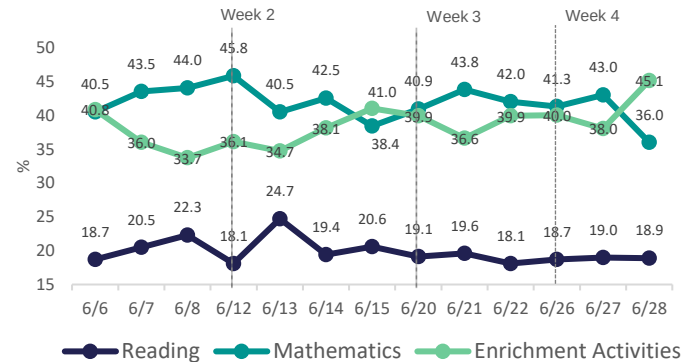
Overall, 1,655 respondents completed the Summer Cool final feedback survey.

- “Extra time to be with friends,” “more sports and games to play,” and “more help from [their] teachers” were the parts of the program they enjoyed the most (average rating of 4.3, 4.0, and 3.9 out of 5, respectively, out of a maximum of five).
- Eighty-five percent of students reported that Summer Cool “helped [them] a lot” or “helped [them] some” better understand their schoolwork.
- Eighty-two percent of students responded that Summer Cool helped them build stronger relationships with adults at their school.
- When students were asked to describe their experience at Summer Cool in a single word, the words that were mentioned the most were related to fun, “cool”, and “good.”
- Eighty-one percent of students reported that they enjoyed Summer Cool or that it was very fun.

Regarding the daily feedback survey for students, a total of 9,675 submissions were collected.

- When asked about their favorite part of the day, 42 percent of surveyed students preferred the Mathematics section, followed by Enrichment activities (39%), and the Reading section (20%) (Figure 1).

Figure 1: 2022-23 Summer Cool Students' Favorite Part of the Day over Time



Source: Summer Cool student survey results file dated 07/12/23.

Note: The survey had 9,675 submissions.

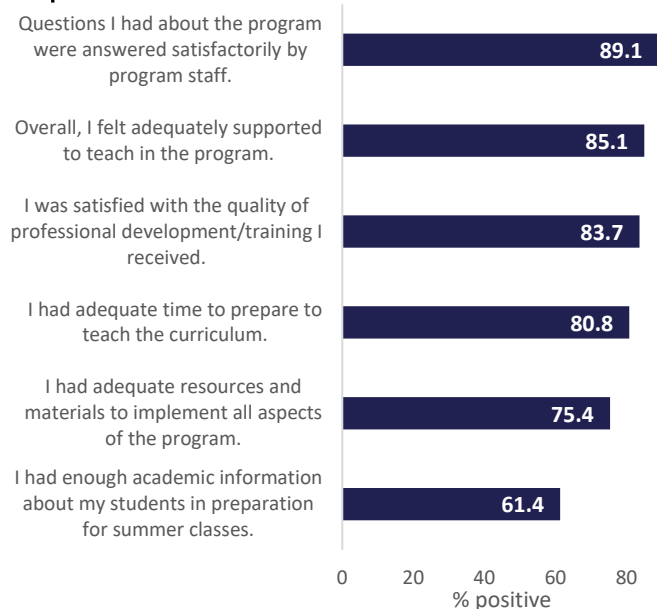
Teacher Survey

In June 2023, 395 respondents from all Summer Cool campuses completed the teacher perception survey.

- When describing their experience at Summer Cool using a single word, the most frequently mentioned words were “fun,” “great,” “long” and “enjoyable.”
- When asked to elaborate on the best parts of the program, the most frequently mentioned themes were the enrichment activities ($n = 72$), the curriculum and provided lesson plans ($n = 47$) as well as the summer school students themselves and the opportunity to get to know them better ($n = 43$).
- When asked to elaborate on what they felt needed to be improved for Summer School programs, many teachers felt no further program changes were necessary (21%), although they mentioned the need for more timely delivery of supplies (17%), a shorter day (11%), curriculum adjustments (10%), and students' access to technology during the camp (7%).
- Eighty-nine percent of surveyed staff members felt that questions they had about the program were answered satisfactorily by program staff and eighty-five percent reported that they were adequately supported to teach the program (Figure 2).
- Seventy-five percent of teachers indicated that they had adequate resources to implement all aspects of the program, echoing the sentiment shared in the open-ended responses.
- Eighty-seven percent of responding teachers felt they would be open to teaching Summer School again in the future.

- Ninety percent of teachers noticed positive academic and social-emotional changes in students to the same degree. Nearly four-fifths of teachers felt that students who attended the program were better prepared to begin the next grade level in the fall (79%).

Figure 2: 2022-23 Summer Cool Teacher Survey Responses



Source: Summer Cool Teacher survey results file dated 07/14/23.

Note: This survey question had 350 respondents.

Parent Survey

Overall, 827 parents from all Summer Cool campuses completed the parent perception survey.

- Eighty-seven percent of responding parents reported that their overall level of satisfaction with the program was average or better.
- Parents and guardians reported that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the participation materials provided to students (94%), the academic support offered to students (93%), the district-provided transportation (93%), the communication from the school leading up to Summer Cool (90%), and the breakfast and lunch served to students during the camp (86%).
- Ninety-six percent of parents ($n = 740$) indicated that the enrollment process was easy to understand and complete.
- Ninety-three percent of parents felt that the summer program created a positive educational opportunity for their students, and 62 percent felt that Summer Cool was academically challenging.
- Ninety-three percent of parents had noticed positive social emotional changes in their students since attending Summer Cool, while 74 percent had noticed academic changes in their students.

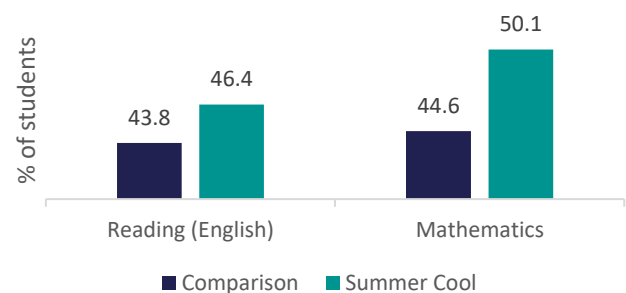
- When asked about their reasons for enrolling their students in Summer Cool, many parents (39%) indicated that their primary motivation was to provide academic support.
- Notably, a large majority (95%) of parents indicated that “Dallas ISD summer programs are a valuable resource for [their] family.”
- Parents and guardians recommended the following improvements: (a) enhancing pre-camp communication, (b) offering early registration, and (c) providing information on completed tutoring hours (HB 4545) to help them monitor their students' progress.

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

MAP Growth Assessments

- Based on 2022-23 EOY and 2023-24 BOY mean RIT scores, district students did not exhibit significant learning losses over summer break. Minor losses were recorded only in specific grades in Mathematics and there was not a substantial difference between Summer Cool students and comparison students.
- While non-economically disadvantaged students demonstrated better academic performance overall, small learning losses were recorded only in Mathematics regardless of students' socioeconomic status and their participation in Summer Cool.
- In MAP Reading (English), 46.4 percent of Summer Cool students met or exceeded BOY projected growth, nearly three percent higher than comparison students (43.8%) (Figure 3).
- In MAP Mathematics, 50.1 percent of Summer Cool students met or exceeded BOY projected growth which was five and a half percent higher than comparison students (44.6%) (Figure 3).

Figure 3: 2022-23 to 2023-24 Summer Cool and Comparison Students MAP Fall to Fall Met Projected Growth Rates - Reading (English) and Mathematics



Source: District BOY MAP data file dated 09/20/23.

- Students attending Summer Cool for 13 or more days had a 21 percent higher likelihood of meeting

or exceeding MAP projected Reading (English) growth in the upcoming fall.

- Students attending Summer Cool for 12 or more days had a 19 percent higher likelihood of meeting or exceeding MAP projected Mathematics growth in the fall.

Social Emotional Learning

Overall, 9,592 students' responses were collected using the OECD (2021) "Big Five Domains and Underlying Social and Emotional Skills" instrument.

- Overall, there was a consistent upward trend in students' positive self-perception responses across all SEL domains (task performance, emotional regulation, engaging with others, collaboration, and open-mindedness) throughout the program.
- Students generally felt more positively about their "task performance" (81%) and "open-mindedness" (80%), although they rated "engaging with others" the lowest (average of 74% positive responses) when assessing their social and emotional skills.
- "Engaging with others" domain showed the most significant self-perception improvement, increasing by 19 percentage points from its lowest to highest daily scores.
- The social-emotional aspect of the program exhibited notable enhancements at both the beginning and ending weeks.

HB 4545 Tutoring Legislative Mandates

While the goal was for 10 percent of the required HB 4545 hours districtwide to be completed during summer programming, eight percent of tutoring hours were completed during 2023 Summer Cool (Hanover, 2023).

RECOMMENDATIONS

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 Reading (English) than their matched peers. Moreover, many parents reported positive social emotional changes in their students after attending Summer Cool, while students showed improved self-perception in all areas of social and emotional learning throughout the program. This shows

commitment to the stated intention of "meeting the needs of the whole child."

Explore solutions for timely delivery of materials and improve pre-camp communication with parents. While during Summer Cool 2023 there was a reduction in supply-related complaints compared to the previous year of implementation, some teachers still noted that materials arrived late on the first day or were not evenly distributed among sites (including technology access). 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. Enhance pre-camp communication, including enrollment confirmation messages, early access to scheduling details, teacher information, pickup/drop-off plans, transportation routes, and concise overviews of students' activities and the curriculum employed. Providing an earlier registration option would enable parents to better prepare for the summer and potentially increase program enrollment.

Encourage consistent attendance. The findings of this report suggest that consistent attendance is a key factor in improving the chances of meeting or exceeding MAP projected growth in the upcoming fall. Results indicate that students attending Summer Cool for 12 or more days have a 19 percent higher probability of reaching or surpassing the expected growth in Mathematics and a 21 percent higher probability in Reading (English) if students attend for 13 or more days. Therefore, attendance of at least 80 percent of the summer program would be crucial to show effects on BOY upcoming academic performance.

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