

Creating a VT Summer of Connection, Healing, and Learning

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Research on Summer

- Every summer, low-income youth lose **two to three months in reading** while their higher-income peers make slight gains. Most youth lose about **two months of math skills** in the summer.
- These reading and math losses add up. By fifth grade, summer learning loss can leave low-income students **2.5 to 3 years behind their peers**.
- Research shows that while gaps in student achievement remain relatively constant during the school year, **the gaps widen significantly during the summer. By 9th grade, more than ½ the academic achievement gap can be attributed to differences in summer learning opportunities.**
- Nationally, low-income youth lose access to healthy meals over the summer. **Six out of every seven students** who receive free- and reduced-price lunches **lose access** to them when school lets out.
- In Vermont, **1 in 4 children** received a summer lunch in July 2019 when compared to participation in the 2018–2019 school year free and reduced-price National School Lunch Program (NSLP).
- **Summer meals are often the driving factor in children participating in a summer program.** When summer meals are available, kids are more likely to participate in programming that can provide additional learning opportunities. With proper nutrition for their developing brain, they can better benefit from the activities and return to school ready to learn.

Source for bullets 1-4: National Summer Learning Association

Source for bullet 5: Food Research and Action Center, Summer Nutrition Report 2020

Source for bullet 6: Hunger Free Vermont

Summer and the COVID Slide

The COVID-19 slide: What summer learning loss can tell us about the potential impact of school closures on student academic achievement

April 2020

Dr. Megan Kuhfeld and Dr. Beth Tarasawa, Collaborative for Student Growth

“Preliminary COVID slide estimates suggest students will return in fall 2020 with roughly 70% of the learning gains in reading relative to a typical school year. However, in mathematics, students are likely to show much smaller learning gains, returning with less than 50% of the learning gains and in some grades, nearly a full year behind what we would observe in normal conditions.”

After a year of hybrid and remote learning, and then another summer, what will learning gains and losses look like for Vermont's students in fall 2021?



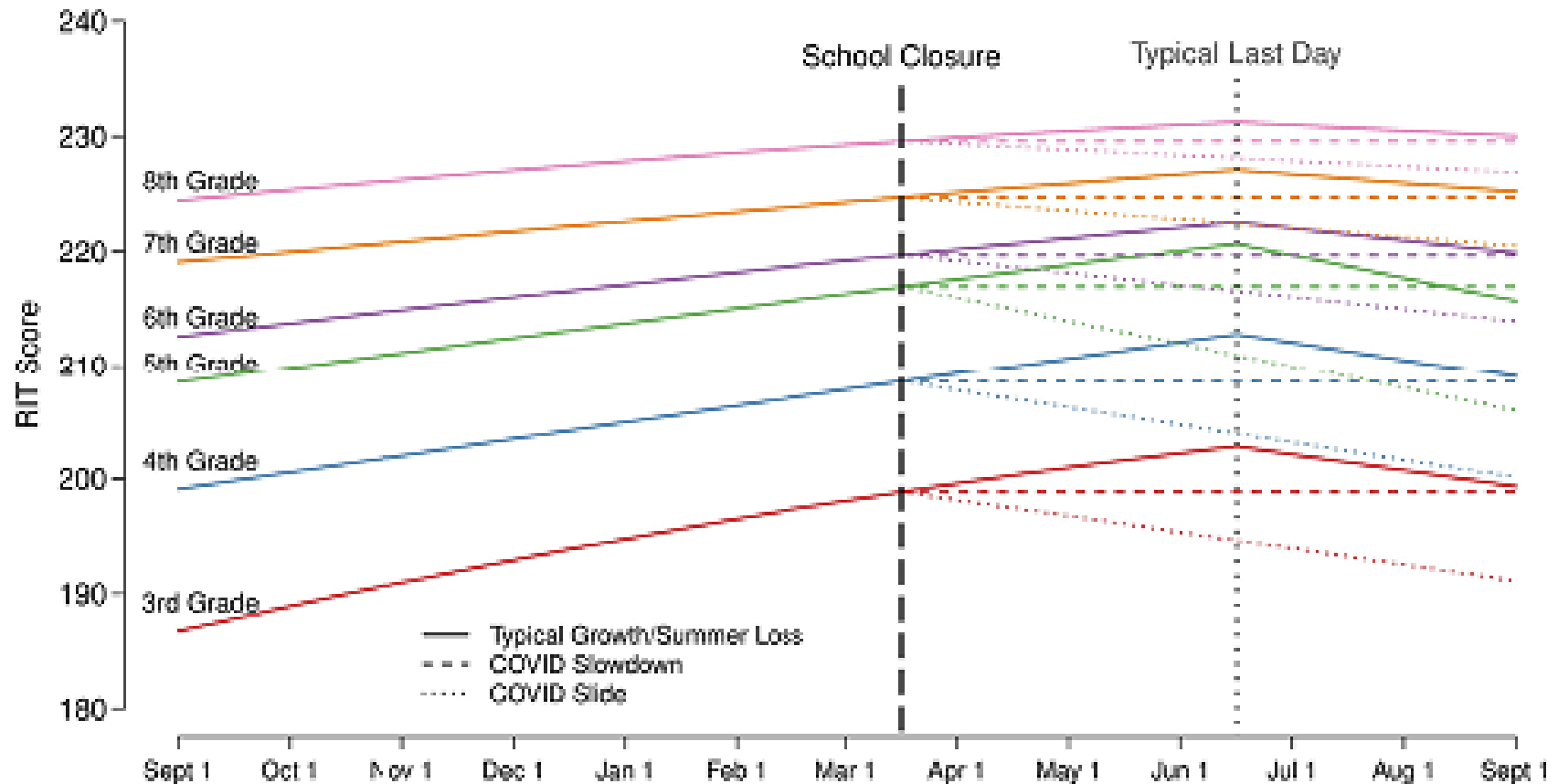


Figure 1. Mathematics Forecast

Source: *The COVID-19 slide: What summer learning loss can tell us about the potential impact of school closures on student academic achievement.* April 2020.

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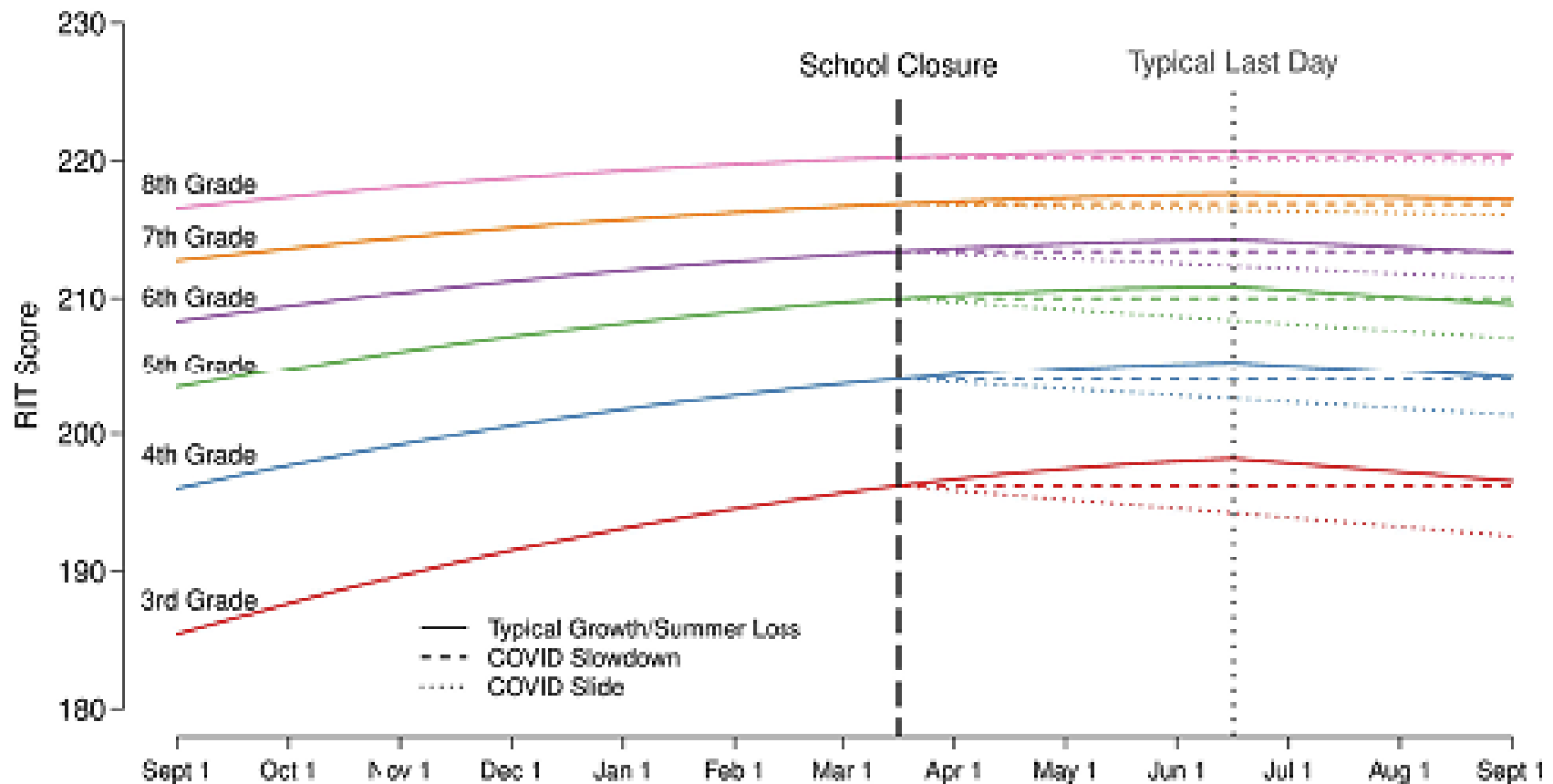


Figure 2: Reading Forecast

Source: *The COVID-19 slide: What summer learning loss can tell us about the potential impact of school closures on student academic achievement.* April 2020.

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Quality Summer Programs

- Great Staff
- Access to Food
- Learning and Enrichment
- Literacy and the Arts
- Social-emotional learning (SEL)
- Relationship-Focused
- Active and Outdoors
- STEM and problem-solving challenges
- Community-based
- Youth voice and leadership

Making the most of
summer in Vermont



What Happened in 2020 in VT

- Estimates of summer program capacity in Vermont in 2020 were around 50% of available slots; slots and need were not always lined up
- With strong local leadership, some communities and organizations were able to offer in-person programs with reduced numbers
- Many summer program providers struggled to find access to appropriate indoor and outdoor spaces; schools in large sections of VT would not let their buildings be used; programming focused on being outdoors
- Afterschool programs, community partners, and Parks & Rec Departments played key roles
- Planning was delayed and often reactive making it difficult for parents/families to make choices
- Vermont Dept of Health was a major support for the field as was the Child Development Division
- The learning that happened in the summer about how to operate under COVID health guidelines was essential to VT's recovery efforts

What Data Looks like for 2021

Recent Survey to the Field February 2021 (n=74)

Likelihood that they will run programs in summer 2021:

- 90.54% Most Likely Yes
- 4.05% Most likely No
- 5.41% Completely Undecided

Mix of afterschool, parks and rec,
youth-serving organizations,
licensed childcare

Top Challenges and Concerns

- **Staffing (over 50% reported concerns)**
 - Finding Staff
 - Training for Staff
 - Programming Ideas given COVID limitations
 - Supporting Staff (vaccines, burnout, pay, testing)
- **Town and School Support (approx. 33%)**
 - Access to Appropriate Spaces
 - Collaboration with Schools
- **Health Guidance**
 - Enrollment / modified numbers/ pods
 - Transportation / Field Trips
 - Safety and Cleaning Supplies
 - What will parents/families choose to do

Why 2021 is so Important

- **Supporting Working Families**
- **Stemming Learning Loss**
- **Addressing Lack of Connection**
- **Providing Access to Food**
- **Recognizing Mental Health and Well-being**
 - In the past month 28% of youth never felt confident in their ability to handle their personal problems and 29% never felt like things were going their way
 - 38% of youth report that they felt difficulties were piling up so high that they could not overcome them sometimes or often in the past month
 - 45.5% of high schoolers say that COVID has made their mental health worse
 - 47% of high schoolers report that COVID has worsened school connections and 57% of 11th/12th graders say it hurt their educational experience
 - 52% of 11th/12th graders say that they are lonelier due to COVID and 48% feel more anxious
 - 41% of youth had nervousness in the last week and 35% had sleeping problems



(Source: Data from Oct 2020 Planet Youth Survey)

What Does Access Look Like

- Depends on who is in that Third Space
- Examples:
 - Larger, school-run systems through 21C (e.g., Franklin County, Northeast Kingdom, White River Valley)
 - Parks & Rec (e.g., Rutland, Essex Junction)
 - YMCA's (e.g., Greater Burlington YMCA, Meeting Waters YMCA)
 - Community Organizations/ B&G Clubs (varies)
 - Private providers (e.g., Chittenden and Washington counties)
 - Arts and Specialty Camps (varies)
- Challenges where existing partnerships and programs are fewer
- Challenges where schools are providing less in-school days
- Definite geographic gaps (e.g., Barre, Champlain Islands, Poultney, etc.)



Drawing on Lessons Learned

- Teachers and schools are often maxed out
- Parents/families are stretched thin, and money is tight
- The afterschool and youth-serving field is exhausted as well; many have provided consistent programming and care from March 2020 on
- Flexibility is key; different communities have different gaps and needs
- Timing is crucial; the earlier plans can be communicated the more likely families can take advantage and programs will succeed
- Collaboration with schools is important, especially around learning supports but also around space, schedules, etc.
- Training around SEL, resilience, learning supports, enrichment
- Resources for recruiting and supporting staff



Vision for Summer 2021

Summer 2021 as a Summer of Connection, Healing, and Learning

- Addressing learning loss, strengthening community connection, building resilience
- Getting children and youth together, outdoors, and engaged
- Providing opportunities for self-advocacy, exploration, leadership, relationship-building, skill-building

Universal Afterschool Task Force-
Providing bridge funding for Summer 2021
and School Year 2021-2022 is critical



Recommendations

Strategies

- Supplement and reinforce the existing system
- Provide funds for expansion where needed
- Ensure learning loss, SEL, food are addressed
- Encourage school-community partnership and collaboration
- Provide targeted funds to expand programming in underserved areas
- Offer statewide vision/messaging, training, and technical assistance

Two Components

- Summer Connection Grants (150 programs)
- Summer Partnership Expansion Grants (50 programs)



Recommendations (cont.)

Summer Connection Grants (150 programs)

- 150 programs for k-12, estimated 50 children/youth each
- \$10,000/program * 150 programs = \$1.5 million (grants of \$5,000-20,000)
- Grants targeted to existing afterschool and summer programs to collaborate with schools to support learning, behavioral health needs, and parent and family involvement of vulnerable student populations.
- Funding can be used for transportation, staffing, supplies, enrichment activities, and professional development.

Proposed Requirements:

- Must be a school, non-profit organization, town rec, or licensed childcare center closely partnered with a school
- Must offer programming at low or no-cost to parents/families
- Must run a minimum of 5 weeks full-day (8 hours/day) for 5 days/week
- Must provide healthy snacks and meals
- Must integrate SEL and STEM programming
- Must include outdoor activities and enrichment
- Should use qualified instructors to support at least 2 hours/day of math and literacy*

Recommendations (cont.)

Summer Partnership Expansion Grants (50 programs)

- Build new programs where needed
- 50 comprehensive summer programs in where community does not currently have 21C funding or an established, low-cost summer program
- \$50,000/program * 50 programs = \$2.5 million

Proposed Requirements:

- Must be a school, non-profit organization, town rec, or licensed childcare center closely partnered with a school
- Must offer programming at low or no-cost to parents/families
- Must run a minimum of 5 weeks full-day (8 hours/day) for 5 days/week
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Vermont Afterschool's Role

In the Works

- State forums and field calls with VT Dept of Health
- Spring Speaker Series
- Summer Prep Community of Practice
- Partnering with VT Rec & Parks on Summerama
- Staff Training on Social Emotional Learning and Youth Voice
- STEM Programming with VSAC

Offered in 2020 and Could Possibly Offer Again

- Summer Learning Supports (e.g., Activity Packets)
- Statewide Staff Hiring Campaign
- Staff Thank You funds



Examples from Other States

MN HF 4

\$5 million to Ignite afterschool - Grant funds must be used to provide academic and enrichment activities in the 2020-2021 school year and the summer of 2021 to elementary and secondary school students who experienced learning loss during the 2020-2021 school year. Programs receiving funds must provide student supports through social and emotional learning. Ignite Afterschool must use half of the grant funds to expand existing after-school and summer programs, and half of the grant funds to develop new partnerships with organizations that provide after-school programming.

NJ A5147

Alleviating Learning Loss in New Jersey Grant Program in DOE –discusses background reasons for bill – virtual learning does not achieve same levels of effectiveness as in person, challenges of reliable internet access, and lack of social and emotional development when away from classmates and not able to engage in extra-curricular activities. Expected to use CARES funding “to the extent possible”. Funding for summer learning programs and “and other student support programs during the 2021-2022 school year, which seek to mitigate student learning loss resulting from COVID-19”. Applications can include integrated supports and “how the instruction and other services and supports provided to students participating in a summer learning program may be continued during the 2021-2022 school year”

Examples from Other States

Governors Emergency Education Relief Fund (GEER)

- Delaware created a fund so LEAs can apply for subgrants to address unfinished learning related to the coronavirus State of Emergency for activities such as additional tutoring, summer programs, afterschool/weekend programs, and supplemental in-school programs with an emphasis on disadvantaged populations.
- Florida has advised school districts they may include extended learning options, where services can be offered on Saturdays or afterschool. Additionally, the Governor's funds will be used in part for Summer Recovery Program (\$64 million); additional Strategies to Support Summer Learning (\$1 million); and Civic Literacy (\$1 million).

Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER)

- Ohio is providing mini-grants targeted to existing federally funded and other afterschool and summer programs to collaborate with schools to support learning, behavioral health needs and support parent and family involvement of vulnerable student population.
- Washington's state afterschool network is managing the state funding competitive grant program for school age afterschool programs

Child Care and Developmental Block Grant (CCDGB)

- Arkansas is using funds to increase reimbursements for school-age care providers.
- Iowa is using funds to support increased costs incurred by school-age care providers.