Date: January 20, 2023

Source of Report: MRSA Title 20-A, Section 8803, P.L. 2021, chapter 32, Regarding summer schools

Topic: Summer Educational Programs

Context

MRSA Title 20-A, Section 8803 directs the Department of Education to prepare an annual report on school administrative unit summer educational programs, including, but not limited to summer school and extended school year programs. This report must include the number of school administrative units administering such programs, the nature of the programs, the number of participants in the programs, any partnerships with community-based organizations to provide the programs, and the sources of funding for the programs. The report must also include recommendations on improving summer educational programs and identification of any additional funding needed to endure the success of the summer educational programs.

The effects and impact of the COVID-19 pandemic continues to linger after the original school closures in March of 2020. Maine schools continue to assess and adjust attendance, programming and required actions. As a result of the pandemic, the State of Maine has received additional federal relief funds to support educational programming and needs identified by the state and Maine SAUs.

To support the completion of the survey, a side-by-side guide was developed and provided to SAUs.

Definitions

Unfinished learning/impact of loss of instructional time

> Educational programming provided during the summer to support students who were unable to complete necessary learning as instructional time was disrupted as a direct result of COVID-19. School year instructional models and time varied across the state, within districts and schools.

Extended school year (Individuals with Disabilities Act/IDEA)

> Extended school year services are provided if a child's Individualized Education Plan team determines, on an individual basis, in accordance with §300.320 through §300.324, that the services are necessary for the provision of FAPE for the child.

Summer school & Credit recovery

Educational programming provided during the summer to support students during school summer vacation *c*redit recovery provides an opportunity for high school students to complete necessary high school course credit. This may include "make-up" courses or courses to support accelerated learning.

Social and emotional learning

Educational programs or activities taking place over the summer that teach students critical cognitive, social, and emotional skills. Programs and activities focus on physical and mental health, teaching students about self-awareness, self-regulation, persistence, empathy, and mindfulness.

Educational Enrichment

Educational enrichment programs or activities provide opportunities to expand and enhance learning during the summer through multiple academic content areas. Programs and activities are usually interactive, project-based, and allow students to apply knowledge and skills taught in school to real-life experiences.

Career and Technical Education (CTE) Programs

Career and Technical Education programs provided to students during the summer that allowed students career exploration opportunities while also participating in hands-on activities in various CTE programs such as culinary arts, media technology, automotive, engineering, welding, and carpentry.

Extended Learning Opportunities (ELOs)

Hands-on, credit-bearing experiences outside of the traditional classroom including community-based career exploration. Extended learning means the acquisition of knowledge and skills, using defined objectives, through flexible instruction or study outside of the traditional classroom methodology, including, but not limited to: Internship • Job Shadow • Mentorship • Apprenticeship • Digital Learning • Independent Study • Community Service • Work Based Learning.

High Dose Tutoring

Intensive tutoring that occurs one-to-one or in very small groups on a sustained, daily basis, during the school day, to help all students accelerate their learning in an individualized manner. An intentional use of additional time with a specific focus on building prerequisite knowledge and skills while simultaneously integrating new learning that is part of the grade-level curriculum.

Unique students

The number of students overall. Each student is only counted once even if participating in multiple forms of programming.

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Actions

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To glean the necessary data as outlined and requested by the Legislature, a Qualtrics survey was developed and provided to all Maine SAUs and known entities providing summer educational

programs. Qualtrics is a web-based software that allows the user to create surveys and generate reports. This totaled some three hundred and sixty-five (365) entities of which, eighty-one, (81) or twenty-two point two (22.2%) responded This is a thirty percent (30%) decline in response rate over the 2021 data submission. Entities were notified of the survey and provided four (4) weeks to complete the fourteen (14) question survey. This was extended by an additional seven (7) days. Entities were requested to report on summer 2022 educational programming.

Upon submission, a quality assurance review was conducted to ensure reporting aligns with expected reporting parameters.

Findings

Of the 81 programs that responded, 95% of entities provided summer educational programming. Although 81 programs responded to the survey, each survey was not completed in its entirety - seventy-one entities (71) fully completed the survey.

Educational Programming Offered – 76 respondents

65 schools or 29% provided opportunities for extended school year programming, closely followed by summer school/credit recovery (20%) and unfinished learning/impact of loss of instructional time (15%). The focus on summer educational programming remains clearly on academic related supports and maintains the same three primary focus areas identified in the 2021 report.

Table 1: Educational Programming Provided
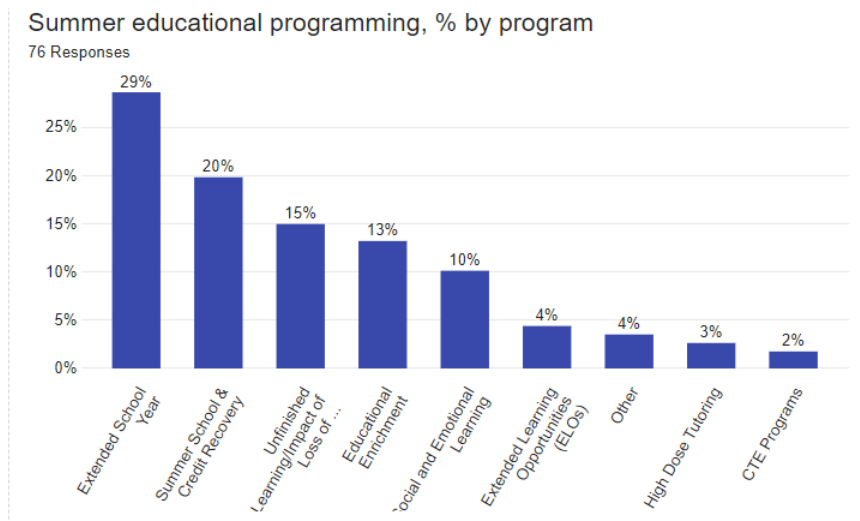
"Other" programming includes multilingual learner extended learning, compensatory education, special education summer services, 21st Community Learning Centers, Kindergarten Jumpstart, Title I summer school, intervention services, and book mobiles.

Funding Source & Amount – 81 respondents

Approximately $5,841,644 in funding was allocated to the provision of summer programing in 2022. This is a decline of $10,000,000 from summer 2021 however, only 81 entities responded to the survey compared to 192 or 52.6% in 2021.

- Federal Emergency Relief funds (ESSER & ARP) accounted for 53.8% of funding to support summer educational programming.
- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Elementary & Secondary Education Act (ESEA), local and state funding combined accounted for 46.1% of funding.

Primary sources of funding included:

- State and local funding - $1,501,617.44
- IDEA/Extended Year funding - $516,08.75
- ESEA funding - $725,290.57

Partnerships – 74 Respondents

- Of the 74 respondents, 31 or 42% partnered with community agencies or entities to offer summer educational programming to students. Of the total community partnerships, community-based organizations were the primary partners to support the provision of summer educational programming. 74% indicated partnering with a community-based organization.
- 3.4% partnered with an institute of higher education
- 8% partnered with another SAU
- 13.7% entities indicated "other

Program partnerships primarily focused on providing supports for educational enrichment with in-kind contributions being provided in the form of materials, resources, or facility/meeting space. Not all respondents indicated further information related to community partnerships in subsequent questions.

Community partnerships include but are not limited to 21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC), libraries, summer camps, youth centers, history centers, recreational departments, regional technical centers, YMCA, Boys & Girls clubs, mental health associations, MELMAC, JMG, UMaine Extension, food banks and National Park services.

Schools Partnering with Outside Agencies Participation

67 entities submitted data related to participation. A total of 7,270 (unique student count) participated in summer educational programming. Although the side-by-side guide asked entities to include the names of community partners for each category of summer educational programming provided within the School Administrative Unit this information was not provided.

Participation in programming within the PK – 5 grade spans have a focus on unfinished learning/impact of loss of instructional time whereas in the middle and high school grade spans, there is a shift in focus to extended school year and summer school/credit recovery respectively.

Respondents shared data related to student population participation. Of the 7,270 unique students who participated in summer 2022 educational programming:

- 26% are identified as economically disadvantaged (53.5% in 2021)

- 1.5% are students who are multilingual learners. (20.5% in 2021) and
- 18% are students with disabilities. (42% in 2021)

Challenges

46% of respondents shared that adequate staffing for summer educational programs remains the primary challenge to implement programming. This was closely followed with 27% of respondents reporting transportation of participants poses a challenge and serves as a barrier to program implementation. Other challenges noted included funding for non-disabled students, family conflicts with program schedules, district coordination and capacity and average daily attendance/student attendance around 50%. Respondents also noted the expiration of emergency federal relief funds may also provide additional challenges in subsequent years.

Recommendations

Currently, the Department has no recommendations for either the programming or funding of summer programs. We share the following recommendations and suggestions to improve reporting efficiency:

1. **Survey timeframe**

Many summer educational programs operate through the month of August. The reporting of accurate expenditures and attendance are challenging as these data have not yet been finalized. Additionally, due to the varying timelines of implementation, the conclusion of programming and availability of staff over the summer months, data collection over the summer is extremely challenging. The Department recommends this data be collected in the fall for a report due June 30. This would permit sufficient time for program reimbursements to be completed, and further data collection and analysis on behalf of the SAUs and Maine DOE. Collection of data in the winter would result in increased participation for more accurate and complete reporting.

2. **Increased specificity regarding reporting**

The Department recognizes continued refinement around the directions provided to ensure consistent and accurate reporting among SAUs. Although a side-by-side guide was provided further instructions around survey completion with examples may be additionally helpful for SAUs.

3. **Identifying a baseline**

As noted above, due to the timing of the report submission, data sets received from SAUs may not be fully complete. Additionally, due to the time constraints and demands currently placed on SAUs still experiencing the effects of the pandemic, 192 entities completed the survey. Participation in the 2022 survey did significantly decline. It will be important to define a baseline year where there is a full and accurate data set reported. It will also be important to establish this survey as an annual survey in Department systems with SAUs required to complete and submit the applicable data.

References

US Department of Education. *Education in a Pandemic: The Disparate Impacts of COVID-19 on America's Students.* Retrieved October 18, 2021 from https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/20210608-impacts-of-covid19.pdf

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