

How can summer enrichment experiences support student learning, well-being and success?

Summer offers unique opportunities for students to engage in enrichment learning experiences to reconnect with peers, engage in physical activity and be exposed to new experiences, interests and skills that support learning, well-being and success.

The information in this document was developed to provide flexible, evidence-based guidance for districts to consider as they develop and implement summer enrichment programs.

THINGS TO CONSIDER

Summer enrichment that includes opportunities to [engage in areas of interest](#) for students is [proven to improve academic success and social-emotional well-being](#). Enrichment opportunities can include physical activities and sports, the arts, community projects, outdoor learning, STEM programming, career internships and much more.

Enrichment learning opportunities make the [greatest impact](#) when schools collaborate with existing partners such as tribal nations, libraries, afterschool programs, faith-based organizations, Boys and Girls Clubs, the YMCA, local parks and other community organizations.

Partnering with local businesses, nonprofits or community organizations to offer summer internships can be an effective way to promote career awareness and readiness.

Consider a broad set of activities for summer learning, from [music, art and dance classes](#) to

[college visits](#) and field trips to attend [live theater](#) or history and [art museums](#).

Include outdoor opportunities like [Oklahoma state parks](#) to [hike](#), fish, [bird watch](#) and attend park educational centers. The Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department's [travel website](#) includes kid-friendly destinations to explore. Students might also enjoy starting a [school or community garden](#).

To learn citizenship practices, engage students in community projects in [Citizenscience](#), the [Geo-Inquiry Project](#) and [Project Citizen](#). Project Citizen's useful [student forms](#) can help them get started.

Blending school and community agency staff is an effective way to create and sustain rich learning experiences and can maximize the number of students who participate in enrichment learning opportunities.

KEY INSIGHTS

- Survey community organizations and tribal nations to determine enrichment opportunities in the area and offer to partner with them.
- Design enrichment programs around the interests of students who will be invited to attend summer learning opportunities.
- Form community partnerships to increase staffing and offer students opportunities to engage in a variety of summer enrichment experiences.
- Plan off-site enrichment opportunities at local museums, parks and recreation areas.

SEE ALSO

- [How can schools plan for effective summer learning experiences?](#)
- [How can schools and communities partner to provide summer learning experiences?](#)
- [How can social and emotional learning and mental health supports be incorporated into summer learning?](#)

ATTENDING TO EQUITY

[Research](#) indicates that underserved students have less access to enrichment experiences. When inviting students to participate, prioritize underserved groups including students of color, students in poverty, students learning English and students with disabilities.

Survey students to identify the enrichment activities they are most interested in and design summer learning around those interests. Be intentional about selecting and including activities that represent the interests of historically underserved students.

Families often must choose one enrichment program over another based on job schedules, transportation and cost associated with off-site or field trips. Design programming with family schedules in mind and offer transportation, meals and snacks for off-site activities.

Consider offering opportunities that challenge students' thinking and develop their confidence in pursuing future academic and career opportunities. Remember to focus on opportunities for student agency and growth and check to make sure no bias toward student abilities and achievement is present.

RECOMMENDED ACTION STEPS

- Review Oklahoma State Department of Education guidance and resources for designing summer enrichment programs for [health and physical education](#), [fine arts](#) and [STEM](#).
- [Survey community and tribal nation programs](#) (YMCA, Boys and Girls Clubs, afterschool programs, etc.) already established in the area. Partner with them and consider providing certified staff to support their programs.
- Learn more about how schools can partner with community organizations to provide summer enrichment for students through the Wallace Foundation's [Summer Learning Toolkit](#).
- Engage regional [career and technology centers](#) in summer enrichment programming. Invite instructors to visit the school campus to engage students in specialty fields. For older students, consider partnering to provide credit recovery at career technology centers for those who want to extend their learning in a career technology field of study.
- Hire school-year teachers, contract directly with community-based providers or form a partnership with a local nonprofit organization to offer a variety of enrichment activities for students. Learn more about planning for quality enrichment activities on page 19 of the Wallace Foundation's [guidance for summer learning](#).