

Summer Learning Plan Review: Meeting the Needs of All Students

Drew McNaughton, MPA Candidate

School of Public Administration

University of Victoria

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Client: Chris McAdam, Superintendent
York Region District School Board

Supervisor: Richard Marcy
School of Public Administration, University of Victoria

Second Reader: Catherine Althaus
School of Public Administration, University of Victoria

Chair: Kimberly Speers
School of Public Administration, University of Victoria

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Students can experience significant learning loss over the summer months. Depending upon a student's Socio-Economic Status (SES), student learning loss over the summer can range from 1-3 months worth of skills/knowledge (Borman & Dowling, 2006, p. 132; Cooper, Charlton, Valentine & Muhlenbruck, 2000, p. 6). Furthermore, such losses accumulate from year to year and ultimately widen the achievement gap between students (Alexander, Entwisle & Olson 2007a, p. 178). A well-developed summer learning plan may help to prevent summer learning loss for students (Cooper, 2001, p. 5).

Most studies to date have focussed on student achievement and more specifically, using large-scale test scores to assess and guide summer learning development. No major studies to date have interviewed all four key stakeholder groups (students, parents, teachers, administrators) about summer learning.

The purpose of this research project is to help York Region District School Board (YRDSB) enhance its current summer learning plan. A summer learning plan may include, but is not limited to, student programs (e.g., summer school, camps), family programs (e.g., family literacy programs, accessible school libraries), and school based resources (e.g., June and September classroom programming, summer learning packages). Research of this type is important because it will help to develop a better understanding of summer learning and may therefore benefit students who participate in summer programs. Furthermore, an enhanced summer learning plan may also benefit the Board as a whole in helping to achieve some of the goals outlined in the Board Improvement Work Plan.

Both provincial legislation and local school board policies guide summer learning programs in the province of Ontario. Summer learning programs and strategies across the province of Ontario vary greatly from one school board to another as it is not mandatory that school boards provide summer learning programs. In YRDSB, summer programs are available throughout the region and support elementary and secondary school-aged students. While most of these programs are funded through government grants, some programs are supported through cost recovery¹.

In order to fully understand the complexities and realities of an effective summer learning program, a qualitative research design was used with this research project. While field notes and documents were collected and analyzed, interviews and focus groups provided the majority of data. Sixty-nine students, parents, teachers and administrators from eight different elementary schools participated in interviews and focus groups. Analysis of data involved the identification of recurring themes through an inductive and comparative process. Based on this analysis, the following five key themes emerged:

- student achievement and well-being,
- accessible programs and resources,
- community partnerships,
- communications, and

¹ Cost recovery programs include a fee.

- local autonomy.

These five themes represent the foundation of an effective summer learning plan. Based on these themes, an extensive list of recommendations was developed to help YRDSB enhance its summer learning plan. These recommendations include:

Student Achievement and Well-being

1. Summer programs must focus on the following groups of students: exceptional learners, English Language Learners, low SES, early learners, and students performing below the provincial standard.
2. Where possible, summer programs should maintain a low student-teacher ratio.
3. Develop responsive programs that focus not only on literacy and numeracy, but other subjects that are of interest to students. Such programs need to be developed and delivered in a manner that is both engaging and enjoyable for students.
4. To support student engagement and wellness, summer programs need to include a recreational component.
5. Summer programs need to provide enriching opportunities to students. This is particularly important for students of low SES who may not have the opportunity to participate in such activities during the summer.

Accessible Programs and Resources

6. Summer programs, particularly those in areas of low SES, need to have a low cost or no cost and be within close proximity of student homes.
7. Incorporate a systematic, system-level approach to school/student participation in summer programs that reflects the needs of specific communities and demonstrates equitable distribution of Board resources. Low SES and underachieving schools need to be the priority.
8. Maximize all available resources for summer learning. At the district level, this includes maximizing Board resources and establishing partnerships with local community groups. At the provincial level, this includes working with the Ministry of Education to explore additional funding for summer learning.
9. At the school level, resources need to get into the hands of students and families.

Community Partnerships

10. Work with community partners to develop, deliver, and communicate summer programs.
11. Increase staff awareness of community based summer learning options. Once this has been accomplished, help parents and students access community based summer programs and supports.

Communication

12. Strong lines of communication need to exist between the Board and its schools and the school and its families. This communication needs to be early and often to give all stakeholders the necessary time to make appropriate plans.
13. The communication methods that are used by schools must reflect the preferred communication methods of each specific school community.

Local Autonomy

14. Schools need to be given the opportunity to develop summer programs that meet the specific needs of their students, schools, and communities.

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INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Across the province of Ontario, schools and school boards have begun to utilize plans to support their improvement efforts. This practice includes a comprehensive needs assessment, development of specific and measurable goals, and the identification of evidence-based strategies and resources. In York Region District School Board (YRDSB), this process continues to focus on student achievement and well-being and the steps schools and the board can take to have a positive impact on the whole child. While improvement efforts have historically focussed on traditional, school-year activities, some educators are now starting to look at alternative strategies and resources to improve student achievement and well-being.

One area of concern has been the learning loss of students over the summer months. Depending upon a student's Socio-Economic Status (SES), student losses over the summer can range from one to three months' worth of skills and knowledge (Borman et al., 2006, p. 132; Cooper et al., 2000, p. 6). Furthermore, such losses can accumulate from year to year and ultimately widen the achievement gap between students (Alexander et al., 2007a, p. 178). A well-developed summer learning plan may help to prevent summer learning loss with students and have a positive impact on their school-year achievement (Cooper, 2001, p. 5).

1.2 Project Objective

The primary objective of this research project is to help YRDSB enhance its summer learning plan to better meet the needs of all of its students². A summer learning plan may include, but is not limited to, student programs (e.g., summer school, camps), family programs (e.g., family literacy programs, accessible school libraries), and school based resources (e.g., June and September classroom programming, summer learning packages). While YRDSB has already established an extensive summer learning plan³, this research project will help the Board improve its current plan by incorporating locally gathered data and new research – more specifically, data that comprises the beliefs, opinions and behaviours of stakeholders, as collected through interviews and focus groups. In doing so, it is hoped that the research project will identify new areas of need that YRDSB may then address to enhance its summer learning plan.

1.3 Methodological Approach and Findings

Given these project and conceptual parameters, and in order to address the primary objective of the research project in the most comprehensive manner, this project focused on the general population of YRDSB summer learning plan stakeholders as well as populations who at times, may be marginalized (e.g., families of low SES). Students, parents, teachers, and administrators from eight different YRDSB schools participated in focus groups and interviews. Documents, field notes, and a literature review added to the rich data collected from the interviews and focus groups. Through an inductive and comparative qualitative analysis of the data, five recurring themes emerged:

² In meeting the needs of students, achievement and well-being need to be addressed.

³ See section 2.2 for a summary of YRDSB summer programs.

- student achievement and well-being,
- accessible programs and resources,
- community partnerships,
- communications, and
- local autonomy.

Based on these five themes, a list of summer learning recommendations was developed.

1.4 Rationale

As a YRDSB administrator, the principal researcher identified three disparities that motivated the research project. The first disparity was a lack of rich data. If improvements needed to be made to the YRDSB summer learning plan, there was little data to draw upon that included stakeholder voice. Secondly, and with regards to the YRDSB summer learning plan, there was a lack of regional focus. This lack of regional focus would not only make it difficult to improve the summer learning plan, but develop a plan that was sustainable. Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, was a lack of focus on some lower SES communities.

Research of this type is important because it will help to develop a better understanding of summer learning and may therefore benefit students who participate in summer programs. An enhanced summer learning plan may also benefit the Board as a whole in helping to achieve some of the goals outlined in the Board Improvement Work Plan⁴. Some of these goals include improved reading achievement and greater student engagement. More specifically, and in addition to the YRDSB Board Improvement Plan, the research project will also support many of the goals found in the YRDSB Director’s Annual Plan (see Appendix 1 for a full copy of the Director’s Annual Plan). The Director’s Annual Plan includes the following goals that target:

- Student Achievement and Well-Being
 - establish a strong early learning foundation
 - continuously improve student achievement in targeted areas
 - increase the level of student and parent engagement
- Effective and Sustainable Education Programs
 - provide engaging programs for differentiated learning
- Stewardship of Board Resources
 - increase resources to support equitable and inclusive practices throughout the system

In addition to the Director’s Annual Plan, it is the collective responsibility of educators to continually improve programs to support student achievement and well-being. Furthermore, and with a lack of rich summer learning data available, this research will also add to the current state of knowledge both academically and locally in YRDSB. As a result, this research may also support other Boards who are looking to develop summer learning plans.

1.5 Organization of the Report

⁴ The Board Improvement Work Plan is the working document that identifies YRDSB’s goals.

This report is divided into eight sections. Following the introduction is background information on the client, YRDSB, as well as the Ministry of Education's involvement with summer learning. Section three provides a brief literature review of summer learning, exploring related issues, approaches, and methodologies. Section four presents the methodology used in the report, with a focus on qualitative research design. Sections five and six share the findings and discussion, which includes the five key themes that emerged from the research. Section seven presents fourteen recommendations. And lastly, section eight, the final section, summarizes the report in the conclusion.

BACKGROUND

2.1 York Region District School Board

YRDSB is a public school board located in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) of Ontario and includes nine municipalities. The Board is divided into four Community Education Centres that support the North, West, Central, and East parts of York Region. This area includes a wide variety of racial, ethnic and cultural groups in suburban, small town, and rural neighborhoods (Thurston, 2011, para. 2). YRDSB is the third largest board in Ontario with over 119,000 students in 166 elementary schools and 31 secondary schools. With YRDSB located in a high growth area of Ontario, 94 new schools have been opened since 1999 (Thurston, para. 1). In addition to offering a wide variety of inclusive elementary and secondary in-school programs, YRDSB also delivers a wide variety of other programs and services to York Region residents.

Three system plans support continuous improvement efforts in YRDSB. The Trustee Multi-Year Plan, a three to four year plan developed by Trustees, guides system direction and aims to reach goals based on student achievement and well-being, effective and sustainable educational programs, and stewardship of board resources. The Director's Annual Plan, which includes some of the Board's strategic priorities for the upcoming year, incorporates the Trustee's three goals to identify areas of need for the following five areas: literacy and numeracy, equity, environment, engagement, and well-being. Lastly, the Board Improvement Work Plan⁵ shares the Board's key goals and includes implementation and monitoring strategies.

In order to support the learning needs of all YRDSB students and meet the various goals outlined in the system plans, YRDSB has a number of programs that identify and support lower performing schools and students. Two programs in particular are Performance Plus and Intensive Support. The Performance Plus program helps students and families who are in greatest need of support. Schools are identified as Performance Plus by using the following criteria: student achievement, income levels, mobility and educational backgrounds of parents, to name a few ("Performance Plus", n.d., para. 5). The program supports student achievement and well-being by addressing the specific needs of individual communities and investing the necessary resources to address such needs (e.g., assigning additional Performance Plus staff to schools). There are 20 Performance Plus schools in YRDSB; three of the four Community and Education Centres have Performance Plus schools.

There are 33 elementary and secondary schools that are identified as Intensive Support Schools. Schools are selected based on their Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) assessment results⁶, SES data, and Student Success indicators⁷ ("Report on Curriculum Implementation", 2009, p.10). Intensive Support Schools receive a number of supports to assist them with their literacy programs. These resources include: a Curriculum Consultant (1/2

⁵ The Director's Annual Plan also reflects the Board Improvement Work Plan.

⁶ Province-wide tests are administered by the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) in Grades 3, 6, 9 and 10, and assess student achievement in Reading, Writing and Mathematics.

⁷ Student Success indicators include graduation rates, secondary school credit accumulation, and school-year marks to name a few.

day/week), release time for teacher professional development, and a wide variety of professional resources.

2.2 Summer Learning in YRDSB

Both provincial legislation and local school board policies guide summer learning programs in the province of Ontario. While the Ontario Education Act defines summer programs⁸, outlines program requirements (e.g., types of class or course, student eligibility) and provides a majority of the funding required to run such programs, local policies and procedures such as *YRDSB Policy and Procedure 325: Continuing Education*, provide more specific Board-based information (see Appendix 2 for the YRDSB Continuing Education Policy). Summer learning programs and strategies across the province of Ontario vary greatly from one school board to another as it is not mandatory that school boards provide summer learning programs.

In YRDSB, six different summer programs support students from pre-Junior Kindergarten to Grade eight⁹. Summer programs are available throughout the region and are primarily offered during the month of July. While most of these programs are funded through government grants, some programs are supported through cost recovery. Although *Grade Seven and Eight Summer School*, *Summer School for Students with Developmental Disabilities* and *Summer Institute* have been in existence for well over a decade, *Grade Eight Reach-Ahead*, *Building Blocks for Kindergarten* and *Literacy Tutoring* are in the early stages of development¹⁰. See Table 2.1 below for a full list of Junior Kindergarten to Grade eight summer programs in YRDSB.

Table 2.1: YRDSB Summer Programs

PROGRAM	GRADE(S) / AGES	PROGRAM DESCRIPTION
Reach-Ahead	Gr. 8	- full day, credit bearing course, that focuses on: literacy and numeracy reinforcement, technological studies, and the development of essential workplace skills - \$50 field trip and resource charge
Elementary Summer School	Gr. 7 – 8	- ½ or full day literacy and/or numeracy reinforcement program for current year Gr. 7 and 8 students - reinforcement program (for students below the provincial standard), Individual Education Plan (IEP) program for exceptional students, and an English as a Second Language (ESL) program for English Language Learners (ELL) - no cost
Summer	Ages 8 – 20	- ½ day summer program that focuses on language/

⁸ The Ontario Ministry of Education defines summer programs as “summer school course or class”.

⁹ Summer programs in YRDSB support elementary and secondary summer school aged students. This report will focus on pre-Junior Kindergarten to Grade 8 students.

¹⁰ Grade 8 Reach-Ahead, Building Blocks for Kindergarten, and Literacy Tutoring have all been piloted and developed within the past 4-6 years.

School for Students with Developmental Disabilities		mathematics skills, life/social skills, fine/gross motor skills, self-awareness, problem solving and decision making - \$40 field trip and resource charge
Summer Institute	SK - Gr. 8	- full day summer program that offers academic, recreational, and athletic activities - \$115/week charge
Literacy Tutoring	JK - Gr. 6	- ½ and full day extended school based program that assists students with literacy and/or numeracy skill development - no cost
Building Blocks for Kindergarten	Pre-JK	- ½ day school based program that builds literacy skills, personal and social development, and supports student transition into school (program is intended for children with no or limited pre-school/daycare experience) - no cost

2.3 York Region Demographics

Based on 2006 Census data, the following is known about York Region (Abankwa-Harris, 2008, p. 3):

- since 2001, the population grew by 22% (third highest rate in Canada),
- 33% of residents between the ages of 25-64 have degrees (third highest rate in Canada),
- 5th highest median family income in Canada, and
- 88% of housing is owned.

Despite such positive demographic data, York Region is also home to a growing high-risk population. The following 2006 Census data highlights some of the challenges facing high-risk populations in York Region (Abankwa-Harris, 2008, pp. 4-7):

- since 2001, the number of lone parent families grew by 37% (12.1% of total population),
- 43% of York Region residents are immigrants,
- Since 2001, unemployment rates increased in all nine York Region municipalities,
- since 2001, the number of children in low income households increased by 62% (15% of York Region children live in low income households), and
- 5,000 households were on a waiting list for social housing (York Region had the second lowest number of social housing units per capita in Canada).

Demographic data can be used by Board and school staff to gain a better understanding of respective school communities as well as inform programming and the allocation of resources and supports.

LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 Leading Research

Since the beginning of the twentieth century, researchers have been examining the effects of summer learning loss on student achievement. According to a meta-analysis study by Harris Cooper, thirty-nine studies since 1906 have examined the effects of summer vacation on student achievement (Cooper, Charlton, Greenhouse, Lindsey & Nye, 1996, p. 227). Based on the most recent research, we can conclude that students may experience summer learning losses that average about one month¹¹ (Alexander, Entwisle & Olson, 2001, p. 173; Borman, Benson & Overman, 2005, p. 132; Cooper et al., 2000, p.6; Entwisle, Alexander & Olson, 2001, pp. 1-2). We also have literature which suggests that a well-developed summer learning program can have a positive impact on student achievement (Borman et al., 2005, p. 14; Jamshidi, 2008, p. 5).

For the purposes of this research paper, the literature review will examine key works in the field, YRDSB literature as it relates to local studies, the concept of “summer slide”, the relationship between low SES and summer learning loss, characteristics of well developed-summer learning programs, and limitations to the literature that currently exists.

In addition to Cooper’s 1996 study, two of the most influential research projects in the field include the works of Barbara Heyns and Doris R. Entwisle. In her 1978 book titled *Summer Learning*, Heyns¹² explored the reading scores of over 1,000 students in grades five to seven in Atlanta (Alexander et al., 2007a, p. 167; Alexander et al., 2001, p. 173). Heyns’ research focused on the seasonal differences in student achievement and was instrumental in making early connections between summer reading, low SES and student achievement. Her study found that children from high SES families experienced greater academic gains over the summer months than students of lower SES (Alexander, et al., 2007a, p. 167). Also, the level of student and family engagement in reading over the summer had a direct impact on vocabulary scores (Kim, 2007, p. 505).

The work of Doris R. Entwisle was grounded in her early 1990’s work with the Baltimore School Study. The longitudinal study included nearly 700¹³ Grade one students from high-poverty schools in Baltimore (Borman et al, 2006, p. 26). The Baltimore School Study found that multi-year programs during the summer months can offset the effect of summer learning loss in the reading scores of students of low SES. (Borman et al., 2005, p. 147). It also showed that learning loss of students of low SES could be compounded over their first few years of formal education, and as a result, fall further behind students of higher SES (Borman et al, p. 132).

3.2 Low Socio-Economic Status Literature

Most summer learning literature focuses on students and families of low SES. Building on Heyn’s research, learning loss over the summer for students of lower SES can exceed the one month mentioned earlier and can be as high as three months (Alexander et al., 2001, 173; Borman

¹¹ This trend is also known as the “summer slide”.

¹² In Cooper’s meta-analysis study, Heyns work was the most cited research (5).

¹³ Of the nearly 700 students, 438 were treatment group students and 248 were non-treatment group students.

et al., 2006, p. 25). Research also suggest students of middle to high-SES actually show gains in reading and other academic areas over the summer, widening the achievement gap between students of low and high SES even further (Borman et al, p. 25).

3.3 Shortcomings with the Literature

Despite the increase in summer programs over the past 10-15 years, and the variety of research to draw upon, there are some significant gaps in the research. To begin with, most studies to date have focussed solely on student achievement¹⁴ to assess the effectiveness of summer programs. There are a number of shortcomings in using this approach to measure program effectiveness. Firstly, there are some methodological concerns with some of the studies that exclusively used student achievement results to measure the effectiveness of a summer program (Cooper, 1996). As with most educational research, it is difficult to assess the impact of external variables that positively or negatively impact student achievement. Furthermore, and with summer learning in particular, there are also some concerns with the length of testing intervals (Cooper, p. 229). If follow-up assessments are not done until October, a month after students have started school again, it is difficult to measure the true impact of the summer program.

Second, with such an intense focus on student achievement, there is no consideration of other, equally important goals such as student well-being, parent and family engagement, student transitions¹⁵, school improvement efforts, and community involvement.

Third, and perhaps most discouraging, is the lack of stakeholder voice. There is little or no consideration of student feedback in most of the research studies that have been conducted. Similarly, no major summer learning studies have obtained feedback from other key stakeholder groups such as parents, teachers, and administrators.

A final shortcoming is the lack of Canadian based data. The majority of available summer learning data is United States (U.S.) generated. Based on Cooper's meta-analysis, only three significant Canadian studies have been conducted. These three studies occurred between 1981 and 1992 and focused on student achievement in the areas of reading comprehension, math computation, and spelling (Cooper, 1996, p. 246). While there are some parallels between the Canadian and US education systems, they are also different in many ways¹⁶. When using U.S. based data in a Canadian context, researchers need to be aware of these differences as well as applicability of such data in a different system.

3.4 YRDSB Literature

To account for some of these gaps in the literature, many small scale YRDSB research projects have looked into the effectiveness of summer learning programs. In a 2008 research project that

¹⁴ Student achievement with summer programs is typically measured using large-scale assessments at the end of the school year (exit data) and at the beginning of the next school year (entry data).

¹⁵ Transitions may include entry into Kindergarten or Secondary school.

¹⁶ Some of the key differences between the two education systems include: the role of colour in U.S. education, funding, and the impact of standardized testing in the U.S.

measured the reading levels of 143 Kindergarten to Grade six students who attended a Board sponsored summer literacy program, found 88% of primary students and 96% of junior students retained or increased their reading levels over the summer (Jamshidi, 2008, p. 5).

In another 2008 project, the effectiveness of a Board run pre-Kindergarten program was evaluated. Similarly to the other YRDSB project, student achievement was the focal point of the research. This research project however, used a variety of assessments that measured letter identification, concepts about print, social development and writing vocabulary. At the completion of the program in early August, all assessments showed an increase in overall score, with letter identification and concepts about print also showing an increase in September when students returned to school (Backlund, Russiello & Sinyard, 2008, pp. 6-11).

While all of the research projects focused on student achievement, and are thus subject to some of the limitations discussed earlier (e.g., length of testing variable, impact of external variables), they also included a qualitative component and collected parent and staff feedback. The feedback captured parent perceptions of the programs and parent/student outcomes (e.g., comfort level with school curriculum, interacting with other children), and staff reflection. (Backlund et al., 2008, pp. 12-14; Jamshidi, 2008, p. p. 7).

3.5 Conceptual Framework

Like many Boards in Ontario, YRDSB is focussing on student achievement and well-being as their key goals of success. The literature review provides an introduction into the effects of summer learning loss, the role of low SES in particular, the impact of summer learning loss on students of low SES, and the characteristics of well-developed summer learning programs. The results of the interviews and focus groups provided insight into how YRDSB may develop a summer learning plan. As shared earlier in the paper, the guiding question for this research project is, how can the current YRDSB Summer Learning Plan be enhanced to better meet the needs of *all* of its students?

This research project was based on the premise that we can learn from stakeholder experiences as they relate to summer learning. In order to capture this feedback, an inductive approach was used, engaging stakeholders in interviews and focus groups. The inductive process allowed for open responses from stakeholders who are typically not included in such a process.

The interview and focus group questions, as with the research project as a whole, were guided by Doris R. Entwisle's Faucet Theory (Entwisle, et al., 2001, p. 2). The faucet theory states that, "when school was in session, the "resource faucet" was turned on for all children and all gained equally; when school was not in session, the school "resource faucet" was turned off" (Entwisle, p. 2)¹⁷. This is supported by research that shows little or no school-year differentiation of academic achievement gains between students of low and high SES (Alexander et al., 2001, p. 174). Children of low and high SES make comparable academic gains during the school year (Entwiste et al., p. 1).

¹⁷ An assumption is made by the principal researcher that in-school learning is effective and students are able to make gains with regards to their wellness and achievement.

Although low and high SES students make comparable gains during the school year, lower SES students experience greater summer learning loss. While reasons for this are varied, Entwisle believes that children from higher SES families learn more during the summer than lower SES students (Alexander et al., 2007a, p. 168). In many cases, low SES families lack the necessary resources in their homes or communities to sufficiently support their children during the summer months. In particular, this includes opportunities to practice reading and learn new literacy skills (Borman et al., 2005, p. 132). Students of higher SES on the other hand, have greater access to resources that will support their achievement and well-being during the summer months. As Geoffrey Borman notes, “the greater the value of parental resources, the larger the investment in children and the greater the children’s educational attainment.” (2005, p. 133).

With York Region having a growing population of low income households¹⁸, the need to recognize and act upon this theory is critical (Abankwa-Harris, 2008, p. 7). Many of YRDSB’s vulnerable communities need “the faucet” turned on in the summer so that their children can be given equal opportunities to learn and make academic gains¹⁹. As a result of this focus, one of the key components of the research is the extraction of key stakeholder perspectives on summer learning and the allocation of YRDSB resources.

¹⁸ Since 2001, the number of children in low income households in York Region has increased 62% (15% of York Region children now live in low income households).

¹⁹ As will be shared in the findings section of the paper, many parents that participated in the project indicated a need for low or no cost programming.

METHODOLOGY

4.1 Research Design

In order to fully understand the complexities and realities of an effective summer learning program, a qualitative research design was utilized. A qualitative research design allowed for the gathering of detailed responses through the use of interviews and focus groups. In collecting detailed feedback from a wide variety of respondents, the project highlighted the voices of a wide range of YRDSB stakeholders, including those from some of our most vulnerable communities. In helping YRDSB enhance its summer learning plan, and putting forward recommendations that will better meet the needs of *all* YRDSB students, these voices needed to be heard. In order to accomplish this the principal investigator focused on collecting individual information that would capture the beliefs, opinions and behaviours of not only those involved in the research, but York Region at large.

4.2 Data Collection & Analysis

Data collection primarily included a combination of interviews and focus groups (see Appendix 3 for interview and focus group questions). The principal investigator recruited schools by seeking interest and approval from school administrators. All administrators, two teachers, three to four parents, and four to five Grade eight students from each school were invited to participate. School administrators supported the principal investigator in the recruitment of teachers, students and parents through the random distribution of participant consent forms. All participants signed a participant consent form and forwarded it to the researcher if they chose to participate in the research project. For students under the age of 18, parental consent was required (see Appendix 4 for the Administrator Participant Consent Form, Appendix 5 for Parent Participant Consent Form, and Appendix 6 for Student Participant Consent Form).

All interviews and focus groups took place between April 23 and May 29, 2012 in the schools of the participating stakeholders. While 15 administrators and 14 teachers participated in semi-structured interviews, 18 parents and 22 Grade eight students participated in separate focus groups²⁰. In addition to gathering detailed responses, interviews and focus groups were chosen as a data collection method to ensure a high response rate. Focus groups were specifically used with parents and students to encourage participation and promote open dialogue among participants. Questions for both the interviews and focus groups were open-ended and focused on accessibility to programs and resources, programming, student achievement and well-being, communication, and parent and student perceptions of summer learning.

Given the inherent limitations in time and available resources, purposeful sampling²¹ was utilized. Based on prior knowledge of the Board, the principal investigator strategically recruited a sample of schools that would provide “information rich cases” (Merriam, 2009, p. 77). This sample selection was non-random and relatively small compared to the number of schools in the

²⁰ In addition to the 29 interviews, the research project included 6 parent focus groups and 7 student focus groups.

²¹ Purposeful sampling is based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand and gain insight, and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned (Merriam, p. 77).

Board²². The eight participating schools represented all four geographic areas of the Board²³, and a variety of communities (e.g., population density, socio-economic status). Sixty-nine students, parents, teachers and administrators from eight YRDSB schools participated in the research.

During the interviews and focus groups, the principal investigator took notes and recorded the sessions using a digital recorder. The interviews and focus groups yielded a high response rate and highlighted the voices of a wide range of stakeholders. While a survey may have reached a greater number of people, one concern with utilizing surveys was the number of stakeholders whose first language was not English and their ability to understand the questions. During the semi-structured interviews, the principal investigator was able to change the language of the questions so that all participants comprehended the questions. A computer database stored and organized all data.

In addition to the interviews and focus groups, data was also collected through observations and various other documents. This included a literature review in the area of summer learning, YRDSB related documents and research, and field notes taken while observing YRDSB summer programs in 2011. This data assisted with the triangulation of emerging findings from the interviews and focus groups, and helped shape and organize the findings and recommendations. Furthermore, and as a principal and former teacher, the principal investigator was also able to utilize his internal knowledge about education and YRDSB when determining the recommendations.

The principal investigator transcribed all interviews to gain a deeper understanding of the data. As each transcript was completed, detailed notes were recorded, information was broken into smaller units of data, recurring patterns were identified, and codes were assigned. This information was then assigned to a variety of categories that captured the common elements of each unit of data. While the process of developing categories proved to be an intuitive process in some regards, the principal investigator also used his prior knowledge, the purpose of the research, and the conceptual framework to help name the categories and identify the key themes (Merriam, 2009, p. 183). At this point in the research project, data analysis was both inductive and comparative.

Once all of the data were collected, a more holistic level of analysis was initiated. Tentative findings were explored further and categories were modified to address new insights and emerging themes. All data were then reassigned to the revised categories by hand using a colour coded scheme that represented each of the final categories.

4.4 Ethical Considerations

Due to the nature of some of the data collection procedures (e.g., interviews, focus groups) it was not possible to maintain the anonymity of participants during the data gathering phase of research²⁴. Similarly, and again due to some of the data collection procedures that were utilized

²² There are 161 elementary schools in YRDSB.

²³ Two schools in each Community Education Centre participated in the research project (North, Central, West, East).

²⁴ Anonymity will however be maintained during the dissemination of results.

(e.g., interviews, focus groups), the confidentiality of participants and their associated data could only be protected with the following limitations: due to the nature of group activities (e.g., focus groups) the researcher cannot guarantee confidentiality, due to size of the sample from which participants are drawn makes it possible to identify individual participants within a school, and due to the procedures for recruiting, participants may compromise the confidentiality of other participants.

These limitations were addressed in several ways. A separate coding sheet to identify participants' names was used and kept in a separate location from interview and focus group transcripts. All forms of data were only viewed and listened to by the principal investigator and the data collected for this project will only be used for this project. Data was stored on a password protected computer, all data will be destroyed at the completion of the research project. Finally, participants will not be named in the report.

Participants were informed about the research project on two separate occasions. The first occasion was when participants received the participant consent form. The consent form included the purpose of study, importance of research, participants selection, description of study, what is needed from participants, inconvenience, risks, benefits, voluntary participation, researcher's relationship with participants, anonymity, confidentiality, dissemination of results, disposal of data, and contacts. The second opportunity to be debriefed occurred at the beginning of the interview or focus group when the researcher reviewed the participant consent form. A consent form was signed by all participants. If a participant was under the age of 18, parent consent was required. Participation in the research project was completely voluntary and participants were able to withdraw from the research project at any time without any consequences or any explanation.

Apart from the dual-role of the principal investigator as a YRDSB Principal and researcher, there was no conflict of interest with the principal investigator or the research. As a YRDSB Principal however, the principal investigator is in a position of authority (e.g., power-over) with YRDSB teachers, students, and parents. In order to minimize inducement, coercion or potential harm, research was not done in any of the schools that the principal investigator has worked at as an administrator or teacher. The principal investigator was also transparent and informed all participants that he is a YRDSB Principal.

4.5 Validity and Reliability

As Sharan Merriam writes, "all research is concerned with producing valid and reliable knowledge in an ethical manner" (2009, p. 209). When considering qualitative research, it is important to recognize the human nature of qualitative research and the role of the principal investigator as the primary instrument for data collection and analysis (Merriam, p. 213). As a

result, a number of strategies need to be used to enhance the validity and reliability of this type of research²⁵.

Internal validity looks to examine the credibility of the data and asks the question, does the data align (Merriam, 2009, p. 213)? As noted earlier, and with the principal investigator playing such a large role with data collection and analysis, internal validity can be one of the most positive elements of qualitative research (Merriam, p. 213). Since the principal investigator is collecting data first-hand, he or she is closely connected to the research and the reality of the environment they are collecting data in (Merriam, p. 213).

While it is difficult to capture reality in an ever-changing world, there are some strategies that can be utilized to increase the credibility of findings (Merriam, 2009, p. 213). The following strategies were utilized by the principal investigator:

- Triangulation - a variety of methods and data sources were utilized in the research project. In addition to interviews and focus groups, the principal investigator also conducted a literature review and utilized related documents and field notes.
- Member checks - the principal investigator e-mailed emerging findings to participants to seek feedback. With only one principal investigator involved in the research project, member checks were critical to ensure participant input was not misinterpreted and that potential researcher biases were identified. Eight participants responded with feedback²⁶.
- Saturation - during the interviews and focus groups, data collection reached a saturation point near the end of the data collection process as few new insights were shared.
- Peer review - two colleagues with extensive knowledge and experience in research reviewed the first draft of the research project²⁷.
- Researcher biases - as both an educator and employee of YRDSB, it was critical that the principal investigator acknowledged his biases that were related to the research. This was done by outlining all potential and related biases before the data collection process began. This list was referred and added to throughout the data collection and analysis process. Some of the biases the researcher brought to the research project included: student perceptions of summer learning, possible summer programs and resources parents would support, and the impact of community based summer programs on student well-being.

Reliability refers to the replication of findings. If a similar research project were to be done, would it obtain the same findings? Since the replication of qualitative research projects rarely yield the exact results, reliability is often measured through the data and whether findings are consistent with the data collected (Merriam, 2009, p. 220). The strategies the principal investigator utilized to determine the dependability of the research project were similar to those

²⁵ With qualitative research, validity and reliability are also referred to as credibility (internal validity), consistency (reliability), and transferability (external validity).

²⁶ The 24 participants who provided a legible e-mail address on their consent forms were included in the member check.

²⁷ Both colleagues hold a Doctor of Education.

noted above. In addition to triangulation and peer review, a detailed description of the actions taken with data collection and analysis was also shared.

External validity explores the transferability of findings from one study to another. While the small sample of the research project provided the principal investigator with an opportunity to collect detailed responses from participants, it also provides some challenges as it relates to the transferability of findings. To support this concern, the principal investigator has provided descriptive findings that include direct quotes from the participants. The principal investigator also included a variety of schools and school communities in the research, as well as four different stakeholder groups. In conclusion, and due in large part to the small sample size, there are some limitations with regards to the transferability of the findings. While all district school boards may be able to utilize some of the recommendations listed, the findings are only transferable to those boards who share similar demographics to YRDSB.

4.6 Summary

With most summer learning research focussing on student achievement, and more specifically, using large scale test scores to assess and guide summer learning development, there was a need for rich qualitative data that address stakeholder perceptions across the users of summer learning programs in YRDSB²⁸. As noted earlier in the paper, there are some methodological concerns related to the exclusive use of student achievement to measure the effectiveness of summer programs²⁹. By using a qualitative research design, the principal investigator was able to collect and analyze perceptual data, which up to this point had not been a major consideration with previous summer learning research. In utilizing perceptual data, the principal researcher was able to capture the values, beliefs, understandings, and observations of stakeholders, thus adding to the richness of the data. As a result, this research will not only support YRDSB in enhancing its summer learning plan, but add to the current state of knowledge in this area for other district school boards that share similar demographics to YRDSB.

While the research project yielded detailed data for the principal investigator, and despite great support for the project by both YRDSB and the participants, there were a number of limitations associated with the research, in addition to the shortcomings listed in section 4.5. These limitations include:

- Sample Size - given the broad scope of the project, inherent limitations in time, and available resources, purposeful sampling needed to be utilized. This sample size was

²⁸ An extensive on-line search revealed no major summer learning studies had collected qualitative data from all of the four key stakeholder groups in education - students, parents, teachers, and administrators.

²⁹ As with most educational research, it is difficult to assess the impact of external variables that positively or negatively impact student achievement. Furthermore, and with summer learning in particular, there are also some concerns with the length of testing intervals. If follow-up assessments are not done until October, a month after students have started school again, it is difficult to measure the true impact of the summer program. On another note, and with such an intense focus on student achievement, there is no consideration of other, equally important goals such as student well-being, parent and family engagement, student transitions, school improvement efforts, and community involvement.

relatively small considering the total number of schools in YRDSB. And while the sample size included the four key stakeholders in education (administrators, teachers, parents and students) and represented the four geographic areas in YRDSB, the participant's SES was not identified. As a result, the principal researcher could not confirm the participant's SES. Lastly, and due in large part to the random selection of participants, there was a gender imbalance with teachers and parents³⁰. For both of these groups, the majority of participants were females.

- Interview and focus group questions - not all of the interview and focus group questions yielded detailed feedback. Future studies are advised to conduct pilot interviews that would ensure all questions would yield useful data.
- Interviewing - one of the most challenging aspects of such a project is conducting the interviews and drawing detailed responses from the stakeholders. With more skill and experience in the area of interviewing, the principal investigator may have drawn additional feedback from the participants.
- Objective observations - due to the fact that the principal investigator is also a Principal with YRDSB, there is a concern that his presence affects what is observed³¹. As a result, field notes that had been collected were not used as a primary data source but rather a secondary source to assist with triangulation and the development of recommendations.

With qualitative research, the principal investigator is the primary instrument for collecting and analyzing data. To produce insightful and useful data, the investigator needs to utilize a research design that analyzes data on an ongoing basis, summarizes and clarifies findings, confirms accuracy of data with participants, and explores unanticipated responses (Merriam, 2009, p. 14). Equally important, the principal investigator needs to acknowledge shortcomings and possible biases rather than trying to eliminate all of them.

³⁰ Gender representation (female/male) for each stakeholder group included: administrators 7/8, teachers 13/1, parents 17/1, and students 11/11.

³¹ As noted earlier, this 'insider expertise' also provided added insight into education, and more specifically, YRDSB.

FINDINGS

The findings represent stakeholder responses to the interview and focus group questions. Based on these responses, the following key themes emerged:

1. Student Achievement and Well-being
2. Accessible Programs and Resources
3. Community Partnerships
4. Communication
5. Local Autonomy

Table 5.1 below explores the five key themes in greater detail and shares the secondary themes that were presented by the respondents. This table is followed by a short description of each primary and secondary theme and related stakeholder quotes from the interviews and focus groups (see Appendix 7 for all interview and focus group responses).

Table 5.1: Themes from Interview and Focus Group Responses

Primary (Key) Themes	Secondary Themes Presented by Respondents
Student achievement and well-being responses = 255	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • literacy and/or numeracy • engaging programs • fun programs • summer slide • at-risk students • student interactions • early intervention • recreational opportunities
Accessible programs and resources responses = 103	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • low cost or no cost programs • summer access to school resources • close proximity or transportation • equitable distribution of school and system resources
Community partnerships responses = 70	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • parent awareness of community based programs • administrator awareness of community programs • board staff to support community partnerships • variety of community-based programs
Communication responses = 126	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • communication methods • administrator awareness of YRDSB summer programs • effective board-wide communication • parent awareness of YRDSB summer programs • early and timely communication • school-home communication

Local autonomy responses = 23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • wide variety of preferred programs and resources • focus on student needs and interests • August summer programming • addressing school and community needs
Other responses = 40	
Total = 617	

Student Achievement & Well-being

The interviews and focus groups yielded a wide variety of responses that highlighted the importance of student achievement and well-being in relation to summer learning. This theme also gathered the largest number of stakeholder responses, with 41% of all responses. The following secondary themes helped to develop this critical theme:

- *Literacy and/or Numeracy*
Summer learning needs to focus on literacy and/or numeracy. This can be accomplished through summer programs or the distribution of resources. All stakeholders acknowledged the need for literacy and numeracy summer support. For literacy, this includes reading, writing, and oral language. Based on student responses in particular, it is also important to integrate other subject areas into a literacy/numeracy-based program. Students expressed an interest in Science, Social Studies, the Arts, and French.
 - “(There were) lots of opportunities to explore books, different texts, speaking, listening, lots of oral language.”
 - “My son went to Summer Institute for two weeks and really enjoyed it because it was camp-like and they had a literacy component which was great and helped him with his writing. I think the structure of the program was really good for him.”

- *Engaging Programs*
In order to recruit and retain students, summer programs need to be engaging. Some of the specific examples given during the interviews and focus groups include the use of technology, providing authentic experiences, and developing higher order thinking skills with students.
 - “So I think engagement is a much bigger factor so if we can start to use some of our technology more effectively, get the iPads out, get them reading and writing using media, then that’s much more of a hook and it’s something that they might not be experiencing during the school year.”
 - “I think children would enjoy working on problems. You get a big piece of chart paper and everybody gets to be involved. To me it seems more fun than sitting at a desk with just a pencil and your paper.”
 - “Make it more interactive, not just sitting around the classroom and learning by a book. For example, do more experiments and hands-on activities.”

- *Fun Programs*

All stakeholders shared the fact that summer holidays need to be fun for children. In addition to being enjoyable experiences, programs need to provide students with enriching opportunities that they may otherwise not have had exposure or access to, such as field trips.

- “Broadening their (students) experiences in any area would be great for our kids.”
- “I did the Grade 6 summer learning camp a few years ago. It was fun and we had different opportunities to do stuff.”
- “If it (summer program) were smaller groups because classes are so big and you could have more focus on you. More hands-on and field trips so you could really experience it. Not just writing on the board and copying it down.”

- *Summer “Slide”*

As shared in the literature review, research shows that students can experience significant learning loss over the summer months. Parent, teacher and administrator responses supported this research and the need for summer programs to help prevent the summer slide.

- “As teachers we always have kids coming back in September who have slipped over the summer holidays. For the most part, they usually drop 1-2 (reading) levels at least.”
- “The two month break is huge for some kids.”
- “I find it (summer programs) very helpful because two months without instruction is really bad for kids. By the time they get back to school in September they can’t get back on track quickly.”

- *At-Risk Students*

Three groups of students were identified as potentially requiring additional support through summer learning. These three groups include: English Language Learners or newcomers to Canada, students performing below the provincial standard (below a B or 70%), and students with exceptionalities (e.g., students with a learning disability).

- “Anything literacy or numeracy based, especially for our at-risk kids who are struggling.”
- “The main problem is the language so I think if YRDSB can offer language programs for them during the summer that would be great. As you can see, many of them (students) here do not speak the language.”
- “I think it is very important to target kids that need the help.”

- *Student Interactions*

Many of the respondents spoke of the importance of socialization and giving students the opportunity to interact with one another and develop their social skills. A concern was raised by some of the respondents that some children spend the majority of their summer with caregivers such as grandparents and do not have many opportunities to interact with other children.

- “I think the summer camp-type program, where kids have a mixture of fun, socialization, and learning is beneficial.”
- *Early Intervention*
An early intervention focus would provide pre-school and primary students with additional support. Respondents raised the need for early intervention as a preventative measure to reduce greater needs in the student’s education later in time.
 - “Perhaps programs could target kids when they are younger...we start it young and then hopefully we don’t have such a big load of kids trying to get into that program.”
 - “There aren’t a lot of programs for kids in JK or SK.”
 - “I think we see how important it is to get to those early learners with programs like BBFK (Building Blocks for Kindergarten) and continue with them with tutoring programs.”
- *Recreational Opportunities*
Many of the respondents recognized the importance of recreation in order to improve the health and well-being of students. The students in particular raised the need for recreational opportunities with summer learning. Parents also raised the need for recreational activities to maintain a camp feel and to ensure enjoyment for the children. Some of the recreational activities suggested included: outdoor games, team building, hiking, swimming, and sports.
 - “Include a lot of physical activities and academic support in areas that people are struggling in like math and French.”

Communication

The theme of communication garnered the second highest response rate, entailing 21% of all responses. In many regards, and due to the importance of communication in most large organizations, the theme of communication is critically linked to the other four themes. Effective communication in education must include two important lines of communication: communication between the Board and school, and then school and home. The following secondary themes emerged:

- *Communication Methods*
A wide variety of preferred communication methods were raised by parents, teachers, and administrators. Thirteen different communication methods (e.g., e-mail, newsletters, website, personal invitation to attend) were shared during the interviews and focus groups.
 - “For our specific programs that we offer, we invite kids and it’s based on criteria, the support we know they need, the support they may or may not get when they are at home.”
 - “We can put it in our newsletters or on the website, but the phone calls home from staff is the most effective means of communication. The school administrators will follow-up if there was no response from home.”

- *Administrator Awareness of YRDSB Summer Programs*
Administrators are aware of the summer programs YRDSB offers. All fifteen administrators interviewed indicated that they were aware of YRDSB summer programs.
 - “Administrator awareness of the programs can spread benefits to our community members.”
 - “I am a conduit rather than a booster.”

- *Effective Board-Wide Communications*
On a similar note, all fifteen administrators interviewed felt that the Board effectively communicates summer programs to YRDSB staff. Board-wide communications includes administrator meetings, e-mails, memorandums, and websites.
 - “I think the system level to the school is pretty efficient, pretty effective. We are quite aware of what the programs are, and helping us to be able to communicate that to parents. From us to parents it could be better. I think we focus so much on what we do day to day that I think summer learning sometimes falls by the wayside.”

- *Parent Awareness of YRDSB Summer Programs*
Unlike the high level of administrator awareness, parents do not share the same level of awareness regarding YRDSB summer programs. Of the 18 parents who participated in the focus groups, eleven of them did not have an understanding of YRDSB summer programs.
 - “I just don’t think that some families, particularly those at-risk, are aware of the programs.”
 - “Parents also may not have a good understanding of what the program may offer the students.”
 - “I also haven’t received much information about summer school in the past.”
 - “I think sometimes the communication at the school level stops and doesn’t get passed on.”

- *Early and Timely Communication*
In order for parents to make appropriate summer plans for their children, summer programs need to be communicated early to parents and students. Based on stakeholder responses, this may include communication before the Winter Break in December or when Term One report cards go home in January.
 - “It (summer information) also doesn’t come out early enough in the school year and parents have already made plans for them (students).”
 - “They should start to advertise at Christmas when people are starting to make their summer plans.”

- *School-Home Communication*
Based on many of the responses, there are some limitations with local, school to home, communication. All stakeholders agreed that this is an area that needs attention in order for all parents and students to receive the appropriate summer learning information.

- “Market the programs as learning and having fun. That is really important for kids and families.”
- “To get to the students you are targeting, our at-risk students, it really needs to be a joint effort with the teachers, principal, and support team.”
- “You need to make those individual phone calls as schools, to mobilize that information and get it into the right hands.”

Accessible Programs and Resources

The theme of accessible programs and resources received over 100 responses from stakeholders, the third highest total of the five key themes. While some student responses contributed to this theme, the majority of responses came from parents, teachers and administrators. Without a deliberate and intentional plan to provide accessible programs and resources, it will be difficult for YRDSB to reach all of its students. Four secondary themes support the need for accessible programs and resources. They are as follows:

- *Low Cost or No Cost Programs*

Parents made it clear that programs need to be low-cost or have no associated cost for their children to be able to attend. Teachers also highlighted the need for low-cost programs so that all children can participate in summer learning, regardless of social economic status.

- “Yes, sometimes the programs are really expensive, especially if you have two or three kids.”
- “I would like to put my daughter in the summer institute but we can’t afford it.”

- *Summer Access to School Resources*

Administration and teachers shared that many school resources are under-utilized during the summer. They also shared a concern regarding the distribution and supervision of school resources and in particular, the cost of replacing lost or damaged resources. Parents raised a need for resources such as reading materials (e.g., library books, levelled books) and technology (e.g., assistive technology for exceptional students) to help support their children.

- “Over the summer, as far as I know, none of our resources would be available to parents and students at this point. Everything is shut down.”
- “Given that school is really a hub of the community and should be an accessible facility for community, ideally that would mean the resources should be shared.”
- “Levelled books are going cold in my cupboard...there are absolutely resources that are under-utilized...I have proprietary concern for the resources and effective use of the resources.”
- “I think having a computer is really important because there are some good things you can do, like math games.”
- “If there is some way to get the levelled readers to kids at home that would be great since that is the only way to assess how they are reading. Maybe an exchange program where every week you come and exchange the books.”

- *Close Proximity of Programs or Provide Transportation*
 Similar to the need parents expressed for low-cost or no-cost programs, parents need summer programs to be close to their homes or have transportation provided.
 - “I have had my kids in the community centre programs and TEAM Camp at Forest Run PS. I liked that they were both close to home, inexpensive, and the kids had a lot of fun.”
 - “I wouldn’t drive to far. If it is nearby it would be better.”

- *Equitable Distribution of System Resources*
 Both parents and administrators want to see summer programs in their schools. With limited system and provincial resources available however, not all schools can host a summer program. As a result, there needs to be an equitable system in place to distribute system and provincial programs and resources.
 - “Is there any way we could get more funding for our most needy kids and families?”
 - “Have the schools open. I feel like it is such a waste of space in the summer. I would love to see the schools be open in the summer so parents and students could use them.”

Community Partnerships

Community partnerships yielded the second lowest response rate of the five key themes. Due to a number of constricting factors (e.g., current budgetary restraints in public education, program availability), partnerships are, and will continue to be an essential element in providing high quality summer programming to students and families. Partnership with a community based group may involve co-planning and/or co-delivery of programs, the exchange of financial or human resources, as well as communications, to name a few. The secondary themes that were raised are as follows:

- *Parent Awareness of Community Based Programs*
 Parents are aware of the community-based programs that are available to them and their children. Many of these parents are made aware of such programs through annual or semi-annual mailings, as is the case with most community recreation guides that are sent to households by municipalities. Parents are also aware which programs have little or no cost such as public library programs. Some of the community-based groups that parents utilize for summer programs include places of worship, municipal recreation departments, public libraries, youth services, and charitable organizations.
 - “I don’t have more money so I say no for more summer school programs so I have to go to the library.”

- *Administrator Awareness of Community-Based Programs*
 Administrators do not have the same level of awareness of community-based programs as parents do. While this is understood considering many administrators do not live and work in the same municipality, it is important that they have the knowledge to direct parents to appropriate programs that take cost and family needs into consideration.

- “I don’t think I need to know specifically what programs are offered, I just need to know what they offer and direct parents to them.”
- *Board Staff to Support Community Partnerships*
Administrators noted the need for Board-level support such as community resource facilitators to help maintain and develop new summer partnerships with community groups.
 - “I am not sure we work well enough with our community partners with summer learning.”
- *Variety of Community Based Programs*
Administrators, parents and students shared a variety of community groups they can access for summer programs. Many of these groups are listed above in *Parent Awareness of Community Based Programs*.
 - “They (parents) can’t see schools as the only entity for learning. They have to be able to see the other supports that are available to them in the community that can help them.”

Local Autonomy

While the theme of local autonomy had the lowest response rate of all five themes at 4%, the need for localized programming was clearly shared by respondents when outlining their preferred programs and communication methods. Four secondary themes support the need for local autonomy with summer programming.

- *Wide Variety of Preferred Programs and Resources*
Nineteen different programs and thirteen preferred communication methods were shared by respondents. This suggests great variance from school to school and within each school community. While these were not reflected in the theme of local autonomy, it was clearly embedded within the themes of Student Achievement and Well-being and Communication, and represents a significant secondary theme with regards to local autonomy.
- *Focus on Student Needs and Interests*
Administrators, teachers and students raised the need for programs to focus on student needs and interests. Based on stakeholder responses, and by focussing on student needs and interests, summer programs may have a greater chance of impacting student achievement and well-being.
 - “Finding out what they (students) want to get out of the program, especially if they are older students, is really important.”
 - “Focus on student’s interest. One size does not fit all.”
 - “It (summer programs) should focus on what you need to know. “
 - “Let students choose what information is going to be in the course and what course. Give students the choice like in high school. You know what is best for you.”

- *August Summer Programming*

Rather than having summer programs during the month of July, some parents and teachers would rather have summer programming take place in August to help prepare students for the new school year. All of YRDSB's summer programs currently occur between the start of summer (early July) and mid-August.

- "Once we get back to school in September it is really hard for him to get back into routine, so some structure in the summer would be good for him, maybe in late August to get him back into routine."

- *Address School and Community Needs*

Summer programs ought to address the needs of the school and community. As shared by respondents, some of our school communities rely on summer programming to support students and families during the summer months. It is also important for schools to use this critical time of learning to address school goals that are found in their respective improvement plans.

- "I think the most important thing is that it's not just helping the school; it's supporting your community. Finding activities that a community may not have available for their children."
- "I know that within our community, families and students want summer learning; it has become engrained in our school community and culture."
- "Summer learning opportunities...they need to be ones that are specific to the needs of communities."

DISCUSSION

The research project's findings present a variety of perspectives on summer learning in YRDSB. In using interviews and focus groups as the primary source of data, the study was able to collect individual information that captured the beliefs, opinions and behaviours of key stakeholders. Most of these findings aligned with the data collected through other, more secondary means such as the literature review, YRDSB documents and research, websites of various school boards in Ontario, and field notes. However, some of the data collected through interviews and focus groups did represent new and emergent findings as they were not found in any of the other data sources used in the research project.

As presented in the Findings section, five key primary themes were identified. They are student achievement and well-being, accessible programs and resources, community partnerships, communications, and local autonomy. The following is a discussion of the five themes, and in particular, their relationship to the other data sources used in the research project.

6.1 Student Achievement and Well-being

Not surprisingly, student achievement and well-being was the most well-represented theme of the five presented. In many regards, student achievement and well-being is the core business of any educational organization, including YRDSB. Along similar lines, all stakeholders in education typically want what is best for their learners – healthy students who achieve to the best of their ability.

Based on the findings, and in order to have a positive impact on student achievement and well-being, summer programs need to address the summer slide. In addition to the interview and focus group responses that expressed concern for summer learning loss, other data sources yielded similar findings. A 2009 YRDSB research project for example, indicated that 26-30% of primary students' reading levels dropped during the summer (Dunn, Jamshidi, Majaski & Turner, 2010, p. 1). This data is supported by various other articles that were used in the literature review. Of the twenty-five articles that were examined, nine of them focussed on the effects of summer learning loss.

To combat the summer slide, programs need to be engaging, have an early intervention focus, target those students who need it the most, and focus on literacy and/or numeracy. As discovered during the interviews and focus groups and in order for students to attend summer programs, they need to be fun and engaging. During instructional time, students need to be given opportunities to use technology, work on authentic tasks, and participate in a wide variety of activities. They also need to be given opportunities to go on field trips, listen to guest speakers, and explore the communities in which they live. In the Peel District School Board for example, the Peel Summer Academy and the Camp I Can programs both provide field trip opportunities to students ("After-School and Summer Programs", n.d.). The Peel Summer Academy also infuses such activities as cooking into their programs. Field notes captured a YRDSB Grade eight Reach-Ahead program that provided students with the opportunity to work with wood, prepare food and construct simple circuits. Other YRDSB programs that were observed infused elements such as technology, social justice presentations, the Arts, and robotics, to engage the learner. The literature review also

highlighted the need for fun, engaging and enriching summer programs. In some Asian countries, summer programs have begun to focus their attention on creativity and innovative thinking (Smink, 2007, p. 36). In doing so, the focus is no longer on remediation, but engagement, exploration, and enrichment (Smink, p. 42). As Jeffrey Smink notes, “when the fun stops, the learning often stops” (2007, p. 40). When we consider our students of low SES, such programs are critical as many of their families are unable to provide such experiences. Furthermore, and as Heather Weiss notes, “out-of-school or complementary learning opportunities are major predictors of children’s development, learning, and educational achievement (Rischer, 2009, p. 32).

By focussing on early intervention, it is hoped that fewer students will require additional supports later in their educational careers. As has also been noted in many articles, by providing early support to students, we are taking advantage of a critical time for cognitive development and not allowing an achievement gap to begin or widen (Alexander et al., 2007a, p. 178). As outlined in the field notes and a 2008 YRDSB report, the Building Blocks for Kindergarten program supports pre-Junior Kindergarten students before they attend school in the Fall (Backlund et al, 2008). The program is a four week program that develops students’ literacy skills, supports school entry, and exposes students to a variety of social situations (Backlund et al.).

Interview and focus group respondents identified a number of groups of students who may need additional support during the summer months. These groups included students who are exceptional, English Language Learners (ELL), and those who are performing below the provincial standard. While many of the summer programs offered by Boards in the GTA include Grade seven and eight reinforcement and English as Second Language (ESL) programs, many fail to provide programs that specifically support exceptional students. And while the interview and focus group respondents did not identify students of low SES as a group who may need additional support, the literature review recognized the importance of supporting this group of students³². Some researchers suggest that programs need to target disadvantaged students specifically in order to have meaningful impact (Alexander et al., 2007a, p. 178). Doris Entwisle notes that “for summer school and other programs to close the learning gap (between students of low and high SES), they will have to be designed especially for poor children and provided specifically for them” (Entwisle et al., 2001, p. 4).

Based on the responses from interviews and focus groups, the literature review, other summer School Board programs in the GTA, past YRDSB research projects, and field notes, there is overwhelming support for literacy and/or numeracy based summer programs. The only two previous YRDSB summer learning research projects for example both focussed on summer literacy and the retention of students’ reading skills (Dunn et al, 2010; Jamshiidi, 2008). In the GTA, the Toronto District School Board, Peel District School Board and Durham District School Board offer Grade seven and eight literacy and numeracy programs, while the Simcoe County District School Board offers a Grade seven to nine numeracy program (“After-School and Summer Programs”, n.d.; “Summer School”, 2012; “Summer School Programs”, 2012; Toronto District School Board, 2012). Field notes also showed a heavy emphasis on literacy and

³² While respondents did not specifically identify students of low SES as a group who may need additional support, they did identify the need for no-cost/low-cost programs for students.

numeracy within a wide variety of YRDSB summer programs. With respect to literacy, this included programs that focussed on writing, reading, oral communication, and media literacy. When planning a summer program, Karl Alexander believes that a “strong curriculum comes first; one that is focussed on reading because reading is the foundation for all that follows” (Alexander et al., 2007b, p. 26).

While literacy and numeracy programming needs to be a priority for summer programs, students also expressed the need for support in other subjects such as Science, Social Studies, and French. Students also expressed an interest for arts integration which aligns with some of the GTA School Board programs that are being offered and some of the programs studied in the literature review. While The Toronto District School Board integrates visual arts into its Grade seven and eight Literacy and Numeracy program, a US-based Kindergarten summer literacy program also uses fine arts to complement its program (Borman, Dowling & Goetz, 2009; Toronto District School Board, 2012, p. 3).

In order to address issues of wellness, summer programs also need to provide students with opportunities to engage socially with one another and participate in recreational activities. During the interviews and focus groups, all stakeholder groups expressed a need for recreational opportunities. Based on the field notes, many of the summer programs that were offered in YRDSB included a recreational component. These programs ranged from ages three to 13 and included recreational activities such as archery, co-operative games, basketball, and mountain biking. More specifically, the YRDSB’s Summer Institute provides students with a combination of academic, art, and physical education (Aihoshi, Hibberd & Morandi, 2001, p. 3). Similarly, the Peel District School Board’s Summer Academy includes sports in its program (“After-School and Summer Programs”, n.d.). And while Doris Entwisle believes the first step to developing a sound summer program is in the curriculum being delivered, Karl Alexander notes that summer programs also need a “heavy dose of physical activity” (Alexander et al., 2007b, p. 3). Such recreational opportunities will help to develop healthy students and will most likely enhance engagement in the program and encourage attendance.

On a final note, and while the need for small class sizes was only raised by a few respondents during the interviews and focus groups, it was a re-occurring theme in the literature review. Some of the articles expressed the need for small class sizes so that teachers can meet the specific needs of their students (Borman et al., 2005). Harris Cooper noted that “small programs that provided small-group instruction produced the largest impact on student outcomes” (2001, p. 5).

6.2 Accessible Programs and Resources

Among the administrators, teachers, and parents who participated in the interviews and focus groups, the issue of accessible programs and resources was a significant concern. These three groups spoke of the importance of low-cost or no-cost programs, the need to access school resources in the summer, programs that are close to family dwellings, and the equitable distribution of board-level resources during the summer.

This thinking aligns with the faucet theory shared earlier and the need for the “resource faucet” to remain on in the summer, particularly for our students of low SES.

While the case for low-cost or no-cost programs was strongly presented during the interviews and focus groups, it was not clearly presented in any of the articles reviewed. Since many of the articles focus on students and families of low SES, perhaps providing low-cost or no-cost programs was an assumed expectation. Furthermore, and when examining the summer programs available in the GTA, only one of the School Boards explicitly mentioned low-cost or no-cost programs. And again, while this may not necessarily mean that low-cost or no-cost programs are unavailable, it does speak to the marketing of programs and the need to be explicit about the cost of summer programs. If a program fails to do this, those families whose participation is dependent upon cost may not be aware of or may overlook registering for suitable programs.

During the interviews, school staff shared the fact that most school resources are underutilized during the summer. Administrators in particular spoke of the potential cost associated with replacing lost or damaged resources. And while this is a real concern for many school administrators, one administrator during the interviews insightfully commented that, “it is the cost of doing business”. This needs to be a more widespread perspective. Parents also voiced a need for summer resources, inquiring about the accessibility of school books and technology in particular. Both school staff and parents specifically mentioned the need to share levelled readers over the summer months to support their primary aged students. Based on my observations of YRDSB summer programs, very few school resources were being sent home to complement summer learning programs. Some schools who had received funds to support summer learning did however open their school libraries for students and parents to access books.

It is important to note however that the distribution of resources cannot take the place of a well-designed and delivered summer learning program. As James Kim notes, “if children cannot decode words on their own, there is no reason to believe that a voluntary reading intervention, in which children receive no support or feedback from teachers, would improve reading achievement” (Kim, 2007, p. 506). This would also hold true if a child did not have a parent at home who could effectively support him/her with their reading and embed similar reading strategies as those taught in school.

When we look specifically at our families of low SES, the lack of resources has a detrimental effect on student achievement. As Geoffrey Borman writes, “poor children’s families tend to have fewer education resources within their homes and communities to provide opportunities to practice reading and to learn new literacy skills” (2005, p. 132). Other articles shared the correlation between reading in the summer and student achievement, and the critical role available books or visits to the library plays in this (Borman et al., 2005; Kim, 2007). “Increasing access to books would keep the “faucet” open for disadvantaged children and voluntary reading of books would potentially improve reading engagement and achievement” (Kim, 2007, p. 506).

During the interviews, parents expressed the need to have summer programs close to their homes or have transportation provided. Doris Entwisle also believes that the success of a summer program, particularly for those who do not have the means to travel far distances, is ensuring they are located near students’ homes (2001, p. 5). Based on the field notes, all of the programs observed were either located at the home school and near students’ homes, or transportation was provided. Many other summer programs in the GTA also provide transportation or provide free public transit tickets to students.

As shared by participants in the interviews and focus groups, most school communities also want to see summer programs in their schools. With limited funds available for summer programs however, not all schools can host summer programs. As a result, it is imperative to employ transparent, equitable and consistent practices when determining which schools will host a summer program. As suggested by the faucet theory, this decision should largely be based on the socio-economic status of the school community. As Jane Sundius believes there needs to be a variety of summer programming options for parents and students, as well as equal access to such programs, especially those that are deemed as enriching opportunities (Sundius, 2007, p. 114). Jeffrey Smink goes so far as saying that the achievement gap between students of low and high SES is largely due to unequal access to summer learning opportunities (2007, p. 43).

By taking a broad view of the possible barriers related to summer learning, there is also a need to increase funding for summer learning programs. “Inadequate and highly variable funding limits the spread of summer learning programs and contributes mightily to the continued existence of summer learning losses (Sundius, 2007, p. 110). Until additional funding can be allocated to summer learning, some communities that may need summer learning programs will not be able to have them.

6.3 Community Partnerships

Based on the interviews and focus groups, further community partnerships need to be developed and effectively communicated to stakeholders. In order to accomplish this, Board staff need to support schools in building relationships with local community groups. In doing so, community partnerships can help design programs that meet the specific needs of its school and community members. School staff also need to be more aware of the summer programs that are offered by community groups so that they can direct families to a variety of different programs, hopefully being able to target the specific needs of each student or family. In doing so, schools will help some families understand that schools are not the only provider of summer learning programs, and that other, equally supportive programs or resources are available in the community.

A 2007 YRDSB summer program was based on a collaborative partnership between YRDSB, the York Catholic District School Board (YCDSB) and the City of Vaughan (Dunn, et al, 2010). The *TEAM* (Together Everyone Achieves More) program included a half day literacy program delivered by YRDSB and YCDSB and a half day recreational program delivered by the City of Vaughan. Similarly, the *Building Blocks for Kindergarten* program that was observed forged a partnership with local Early Years partners to support the delivery of the program. As a result, many of the Building Blocks for Kindergarten sites had a YRDSB teacher and an Early Childhood Educator from a local Early Years centre (e.g., YMCA) supporting the program.

The literature review also revealed the need for community partnerships, especially with students of low SES. Doris Entwisle writes, “no single program or intervention is likely to prove sufficient” (Alexander et al., 2001, p. 183). Schools and local group community groups therefore must not be in competition for clients, but work together to offer a wide variety of programs.

On a final note, similar to school-year programs, summer programs that require or encourage parent involvement appear to offer more comprehensive and effective programming (Cooper,

2001, p. 5). While the interviews and focus groups did not present this idea, the importance of parent engagement is definitely noteworthy. Geoffrey Borman notes that this involvement should not be limited to program support but the planning and development of programs (2006). “We need to develop a greater understanding of how parents and schools from high-poverty communities can work together to improve participation in summer school” (Borman, 2006, p. 46).

6.4 Communication

As mentioned in the Findings section, communication is critically linked and embedded throughout the other four themes. Summer programming requires effective communication between the Board and school, as well as the school and its parents and students. With both lines of communication, a wide variety of communication methods need to be employed early and often to allow schools to plan for programs and give parents advance notice of summer learning opportunities.

The interviews and focus groups both raised concerns regarding school-home communication. While parents felt that they were unaware of YRDSB summer programs, administrators and teachers both acknowledged the challenges associated with school-home communication and getting information to parents in an effective manner. While few findings regarding communication surfaced with the other data sources, two articles used for the literature review raised the need for early planning. Early planning time gives schools the appropriate time to identify students who may benefit from summer learning and initiate communication with parents so that they can prepare for summer vacation (Bell & Carrillo, 2007, pp. 34-36). Heather Weiss believes that summer planning should begin six months in advance of the programs start date and include all stakeholders in the planning (Weiss, Bouffard, Deschenes, Malone & Little, 2009, p. 47).

6.5 Local Autonomy

As shared in the Finding section, the theme of local autonomy yielded the lowest response rate of the five themes. However, and based on the interview and focus group responses captured in some of the other themes, it is evident that schools and their communities believe local autonomy is critical when designing and delivering summer programs. By having local autonomy, schools can offer programs that will target the specific needs of their community, school and students. Many of the programs that were observed were school-based programs that targeted the needs of their specific schools. These schools were also able to select the targeted grade and area of focus.

The literature review also revealed the need for local autonomy. Harris Cooper strongly believes that effective summer programs need to “tailor class content and instruction to the specific need of the students” (2001, p. 5). Similar to the importance of including parents as partners (as discussed in the Community Partnerships section), it is equally important to engage students as partners when developing summer programs. “Learning works best when children feel they are partners in the enterprise” (Alexander et al., 2001, p. 184).

Once school needs have been identified and students have been engaged in the planning process, schools need to be given the flexibility to plan innovative and student centered programs (Sundius, 2007, p. 115; Rischer, 2009, p. 36). To accomplish this, “policy makers ought to resist the temptation to micromanage programs and give local schools and teachers leeway in how to structure and deliver programs” (Cooper, 2001, p. 7).

As presented throughout the Discussion, there are strong commonalities between the interviews and focus group findings and the data that was collected from other sources. As a result, previous research that was revealed through the literature review (including earlier YRDSB research projects) could be used to strengthen YRDSB summer programs. Therefore, the qualities and characteristics of other successful summer programs in North America should arguably be included in the recommendations. Some of these elements include programs that focus on literacy and provide enriching opportunities for students, the development of community partnerships, a coordinated approach at the system level, and the need for local autonomy when developing programs at the school level.

Conversely, those findings from the interviews and focus groups that did not align with the literature, but yet represent the voice of YRDSB stakeholders, should also arguably be reflected in the recommendations. These findings represent some of the unique characteristics of YRDSB, as well as qualities of successful summer programming that may not have previously emerged due to the research design of previous studies. Some of these attributes include the need to support exceptional students, the role of communication in summer learning, the need for low cost or no cost programs, and access to school resources.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The goal of this project is to enhance the current YRDSB Summer Learning Plan. The following recommendations will support YRDSB in accomplishing this goal. The recommendations have taken into account all findings and centre on the five themes shared earlier: student achievement and well-being, accessible programs and resources, community partnerships, communication, and local autonomy. The recommendations speak to broadly identified beliefs and proposals and do not attempt to convey the specific details of implementation.

Student Achievement and Well-being

1. Summer programs must focus on the following groups of students: exceptional learners, English Language Learners, low SES, early learners, and students performing below the provincial standard. In focusing on these groups, we are providing targeted support to those who need it most and will strive to prevent the achievement gap from widening.
2. Where possible, summer programs should maintain a low student-teacher ratio³³. This will allow teachers to provide small group or one-to-one instruction and target specific student needs.
3. Develop responsive programs that focus on literacy and numeracy as well as other subjects that are of interest to students. Such programs need to be developed and delivered in a manner that is both engaging and enjoyable for students.
4. To assist with student engagement and wellness, summer programs need to include a recreational component.
5. Summer programs need to provide enriching opportunities to students. This is particularly important for students of low SES who may not have the opportunity to participate in such activities during the summer.

Accessible Programs and Resources

6. Summer programs, particularly those in areas of low SES, need to be low-cost or no-cost and be within close proximity of students' homes.
7. Incorporate a systematic, system-level approach to school and student participation in summer programs that reflects the needs of specific communities and demonstrates equitable distribution of Board resources. Low SES and underachieving schools need to be the priority.
8. Maximize all available resources for summer learning. At the district level, this includes maximizing Board resources and establishing partnerships with local community groups. At the provincial level, this includes working with the Ministry of Education to explore additional funding for summer learning.
9. At the school level, students and parents need to have access to resources such as technology and leveled books.

Community Partnerships

³³ Some programs funded by the Ministry of Education however require a prescribed number of students (in order to be financially viable and run) which make it difficult to attain low student-teacher ratio.

10. Work with community partners to develop, deliver, and communicate summer programs.
11. Increase staff awareness of community-based summer learning options. Once this has been accomplished, help parents and students access community-based summer programs and supports.

Communication

12. Strong lines of communication need to exist between the Board and its schools as well as the school and its families. This communication needs to be early and often to give all stakeholders the necessary time to make appropriate plans.
13. The communication methods that are used by schools must reflect the preferred communication methods of each specific school community.

Local Autonomy

14. Schools need to be given the opportunity to develop summer programs that meet the specific needs of their students, schools, and communities.

Upon receiving this report, the Board should establish a summer learning working team to review and implement the listed recommendations. The working team should include all service teams and departments that play a role in summer learning. Some of the key service teams and departments are Continuing Education Services, Inclusive Schools and Communities, Curriculum and Instructional Services, Student Services, Finance and Administrative Services.

Due to the small sample size used for this research, new research in the area of summer learning should focus on specific groups (e.g., lower SES families). In doing so, more specific data may be collected from stakeholders that reflect the beliefs and understandings of YRDSB's varied communities.

CONCLUSION

YRDSB, as with all Ontario School Boards, uses its Board Improvement Work Plan to measure its success as a system. In YRDSB, this includes a series of goals that focus on student achievement and well-being. In recent years, school boards have begun to incorporate a more comprehensive approach to collecting and analyzing the necessary data to measure such goals. In addition to utilizing student achievement data, goals are also being assessed by using demographic, program, and perceptual data.

This research project, in using a qualitative research design and making use of interviews and focus groups, has attempted to follow this shift. By seeking the detailed feedback of a wide variety of YRDSB stakeholders, this research project has supplemented the more traditional approach of exploring summer programs through student achievement, to include much needed demographic, program, and perceptual data. With earlier summer learning studies primarily utilizing quantitative research designs, they were unable to capture some of the complexities related to summer learning. In collecting detailed feedback from a wide variety of respondents, this research project was able to move beyond student achievement as the sole data source, and capture the beliefs, opinions and behaviours of stakeholders. In collecting such data, the research project was able to identify summer learning recommendations that had not previously been recognized. As result, it is hoped that YRDSB will be better equipped to enhance its current Summer Learning Plan by utilizing the recommendations presented.

Based on the emerging themes and recommendations presented, it is clearly evident that a long-term, coordinated approach will be required to develop a comprehensive summer learning plan. This long-term, coordinated approach will take 2-3 years to implement and should include a full assessment of current programs. This approach should also be a collaborative effort amongst senior team members of YRDSB, a YRDSB summer learning working team, and community partners. Harris Cooper writes, “each day, policies and practices for summer schools are under construction and all too often, these decisions are made based on little knowledge gleaned from research” (2001, p. 16). While YRDSB is well on its way to developing a comprehensive summer learning plan, it must continue to garner system level support from senior leaders to ensure there is system-wide coordination. YRDSB must also develop an “integral web of strategic partnerships” with local, community based organizations (Bell et al., 2007, p. 52). Developing partnerships will help to ensure summer programs are responsive to community-based needs as well as help to ensure the long term sustainability of such programs.

With this in mind, this research project may also add to the current state of knowledge beyond YRDSB. In doing so, it may support the Ministry of Education or other School Boards who are looking to develop summer learning plans. With the Ministry of Education in particular, it may motivate policy makers and administrators to take a stronger stand with summer learning. This may include specific programming requirements and additional funding.

The goal of the research project was to enhance the YRDSB Summer Learning Plan so that it better met the needs of all students. As discovered during the data collection phase of the project,

summer programs must focus on those who need it most. Besides students of low SES, interview and focus group respondents also identified exceptional pupils, English Language Learners, and those who are achieving below the provincial standard as populations who may need summer learning support the most. As we look to support these groups, we must remind ourselves of the faucet theory and the need to keep the “resource faucet” open during the summer.

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APPENDIX 1: DIRECTOR'S ANNUAL PLAN

2012-13 Director's Annual Plan

Literacy and Numeracy

Student Achievement and Well-Being

- Establish a strong early learning foundation and continuously improve student achievement in targeted areas: critical thinking skills; primary reading; junior math; and Grade 9 applied math

Effective & Sustainable Educational Programs

- Provide engaging programs in alignment with the revised Literacy and Numeracy frameworks
- Renew leadership development and succession planning for all current and prospective school, department and system leaders

Stewardship of Board Resources

- Increase opportunities and access to differentiated professional development related to digital literacy
- Increase professional development and technological resources to support assessment and reporting

Equity

Student Achievement and Well-Being

- Continue to increase achievement for English language learners, students with learning disabilities, and reduce the gender achievement gap

Effective & Sustainable Educational Programs

- Review and update equity and inclusivity goals and targets in every school and workplace based on available data
- Develop and implement strategies to reduce the impact of social risk factors, including socioeconomic status on student achievement

Stewardship of Board Resources

- Provide training and resources to support equitable and inclusive practices for all students and staff, including First Nations and LGBTQ
- Review resource allocation to align with identified needs

Environment

Student Achievement and Well-Being

- Increase the number of schools and workplaces attaining gold level Eco Certification

Effective & Sustainable Educational Programs

- Implement measures to improve safety in school and workplace improvement plans, including a board-wide comprehensive anti-bullying strategy
- Maintain focus on environmental sustainability in the curriculum

Stewardship of Board Resources

- Reduce carbon footprint (e.g. electricity usage, waste reduction, increase in renewable energy initiatives, reduced water usage)
- Maintain positive climates for learning and working with all students and employee groups

Engagement

Student Achievement and Well-Being

- Develop a comprehensive strategy for improved parent engagement which supports student achievement and well-being

Effective & Sustainable Educational Programs

- Enhance student engagement and learning through the implementation of innovative programming including inquiry and integrated digital literacy strategies
- Continue to enhance Board and community relationships and partnerships

Stewardship of Board Resources

- Improve communication by enhancing the Board's online presence through corporate/school websites and social web
- Renew Board's school council forums and provide opportunities for student/parent voice in development of programs

Well-Being

Student Achievement and Well-Being

- Embed goals and targets for student and staff well-being in all school and departmental work plans

Effective & Sustainable Educational Programs

- Increase student and staff knowledge of resiliency and mental health issues
- Review and implement strategies to ensure compliance with Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)

Stewardship of Board Resources

- Partner with mental health agencies to support students, staff and families in need
- Appoint dedicated staff resources to coordinate wellness and mental health strategies for staff and students

APPENDIX 2: BOARD POLICY #325 – CONTINUING EDUCATION



Board Policy #325.0 Continuing Education

Document Integration Project Format

Policy Statement

The York Region District School Board believes in lifelong learning - learning that continues beyond the regular school day; beyond school age as defined by the Ministry of Education; and beyond the regular classroom. The York Region District School Board offers a number of programs for students and community members to support this belief.

Legislative Context

*Education Act
Bill 212*

Responsibilities

The Board of Trustees is responsible for:

- offering continuing education programs according to the *Education Act*; and
- establishing Ministry-funded programs in accordance with the Ministry of Education.

Day School Principals are responsible for:

- ensuring that necessary classroom space and equipment are available for the Continuing Education programs;
- promoting positive attitudes toward Continuing Education programs among staff and students in the school; and
- encouraging communication and interaction between day school and Continuing Education staff.

Principals (including Night School and Summer School Principals) are responsible for:

- implementing continuing education programs in accordance with the *Education Act* and the Ministry of Education;
- appointing staff who will be responsible for establishing, organizing, administering and supervising these programs;
- ensuring staff are aware of and adhere to Ministry curriculum guidelines in the delivery of programs;
- ensuring that the Board's Continuing Education programs funded by the Ministry of Education adhere to Ministry guidelines and criteria;
- ensuring effective communication among Continuing Education and day school staff, students, parents; and
- providing a safe, supportive, and respectful learning and working environment.

Site Administrators (for the International Languages and General Interest Programs) are responsible for:

- the program at the instructional location;
- ensuring that the curriculum is delivered in accordance with the Ministry of Education and Board directives;
- ensuring timely and effective communication with parents/adult learners on all matters related to the learning process (e.g. report cards, school events and class cancellations); and
- ensuring that the principal is immediately notified in case of emergencies or other concerns.

Teachers are responsible for:

- delivering the curriculum in accordance with the Ministry of Education and Board directives;
- addressing the academic and behavioural needs of the students;
- communicating with parents, administration and support staff;
- providing regular and timely feedback regarding progress to parents/adult students; and
- working cooperatively with the day school teacher to promote a safe and supportive learning environment for continuing education students.

Parents are responsible for:

- supporting student compliance with program requirements; and
- communicating with teachers and administration to promote student success.

Students are responsible for:

- complying with the program requirements; and
- complying with applicable Board policies and procedures.

The Community is responsible for:

- providing support, input and feedback regarding the various programs; and
- communicating community needs.

Definitions

Continuing Education

Continuing Education programs at the York Region District School Board include Ministry-funded and cost-recovery programs. The goal is to promote lifelong learning by providing expanded opportunities for people to gain the skills and knowledge necessary for personal fulfillment and/or career advancement.

Continuing Education students range in age from Senior Kindergarten (International Languages) to post-secondary (e.g. adults requesting General Interest courses; Literacy Basic Skills (LBS)).

Department

Education and Community Services

Policy History

Replacing former Policy #325.0, International Languages
Revised 2009

APPENDIX 3: INTERVIEW AND FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

“Developing a Summer Learning Plan” - MPA Master’s Project

Interview and Focus Group Questions and Probes

Administrator Interview Questions:

- What types of summer learning opportunities do you feel would be beneficial for students?
 - Programs?
 - School resources?
- Are you aware of the summer learning opportunities available to your students? Please explain.
 - What is the best way to advertise such programs?
 - Are you aware of the summer learning programs that are offered by other community partners (e.g., municipal library)?
 - Are there any community partners that you have worked with in the past that would be able to support summer learning?
- Are there any groups of students for whom you feel there aren’t sufficient summer learning opportunities? Please explain.
- Do you feel there is sufficient communication to all stakeholders about summer learning opportunities? Please explain.
- Are there any other summer learning questions I might have asked you or anything else you would like to add?

Teacher Interview Questions:

- What types of summer learning opportunities do you feel would be beneficial for students?
 - Programs?
 - School resources?
- What are the most critical learning gaps your students have and would a summer learning program support students in narrowing this gap?
- Should summer learning focus on content or skills? Please explain.
- Are there students that you recommend for summer learning that do not participate? If so, why?
- Are there any other summer learning questions I might have asked you or anything else you would like to add?

Parent Focus Group Questions:

- Has your child ever participated in a summer learning program (e.g., summer school, camp)? If yes, tell me about it.
 - What did you like/dislike about the program(s)?
- What types of summer learning opportunities do you feel would be beneficial for your children?
 - Programs?
 - Resources?
- Are you aware of the summer learning programs that are available in YRDSB? Please explain.
 - What is the best way to advertise such programs?

- Are you aware of the summer learning programs that are offered by other community agencies (e.g., municipal library)?
- What are some of your key factors in determining whether or not you will send your child to a summer learning program?
 - Is cost or transportation a determining factor?
 - Would you prefer utilizing an at-home program that uses school resources?
- Are there any other summer learning questions I might have asked you or anything else you would like to add?

Gr. 8 Student Focus Group Questions:

- Have you ever participated in a summer learning program (e.g., summer school, camp)? If yes, tell me about it.
 - What did you like/dislike about your experience(s)?
 - Did you find it helpful to participate?
- What type of learning opportunities would you like over the summer?
 - Would you take advantage of such learning opportunities if they were made available to you? Why or why not?
- If you could organize the ideal summer learning experience for YRDSB students, what would it look like?
 - Do you think your peers would attend such a program or use such resources during the summer? Why or why not?
- Are there any other summer learning questions I should have asked you or anything else you would like to add?

APPENDIX 4: ADMINISTRATOR AND TEACHER PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM



Administrator and Teacher Participant Consent Form

Developing a Summer Learning Plan

You are invited to participate in a study entitled "Developing a Summer Learning Plan" that is being conducted by Drew McNaughton. Drew McNaughton is a graduate student in the department of Public Administration at the University of Victoria and you may contact him if you have further questions by phone/e-mail at 416-624-0692 or ddm@uvic.ca.

As a graduate student, I am required to conduct research as part of the requirements for a Master's degree in Public Administration. It is being conducted under the supervision of Richard Marcy, Assistant Professor at the University of Victoria. You may contact my supervisor at 250-721-8054 or rtmarcy@uvic.ca.

Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this research project is to develop a plan for summer learning. A summer learning plan may include (but is not limited to): student programs (e.g., summer school, camps), family programs (e.g., family literacy programs, accessible school libraries), and school based resources (e.g., June and September classroom programming, summer learning packages).

Importance of this Research

Research of this type is important because it will help to develop a better understanding of summer learning.

Participants Selection

You are being asked to participate in this study because you are a teacher or administrator in YRDSB. Through the recruitment process, your school has agreed to participate in the study.

What is involved?

If you agree to voluntarily participate in this research, your participation will include an interview. All interviews will take place at your school. Each interview should take approximately 30 minutes. Data from interviews will be taped (audiotape) and then typed into transcripts. Transcripts will then be used to generate themes as part of the analysis process.

Inconvenience

Participation in this study may cause some inconvenience to you as a result of the time required to participate in the interview. Interview schedules will be designed to minimize potential inconvenience to participants. Each interview is scheduled to take 30 minutes.

Risks

There are no anticipated risks to you by participating in this research.

Benefits

The potential benefit of your participation in this research includes enhancements to the YRDSB summer learning plan. This may benefit students who participate in YRDSB summer learning programs.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this research must be completely voluntary. If you do decide to participate, you may withdraw at any time without any consequences or any explanation. If you do withdraw from the study your interview data will not be used.

Researcher’s Relationship with Participants

The researcher may have a relationship to potential participants as he is a Principal with YRDSB. To help prevent this relationship from influencing your decision to participate, the researcher will not conduct research in a school that he has worked in.

Anonymity

Due to the nature of the data gathering phase of research (e.g., in a school setting), your anonymity cannot be protected. Your anonymity will however be protected with the dissemination of results.

Confidentiality

Due to the nature of the data gathering phase of research (e.g., in a school setting) and the recruitment of participants, your confidentiality will be protected with some limits. Your confidentiality and the confidentiality of the data will be protected in the following ways: using separate coding sheets to identify participants, all forms of data will only be viewed by the principal investigator, the data collected for this project will only be used for this project, participants will not be named in the final report, and data will be stored on a password protected computer.

Dissemination of Results

It is anticipated that the results of this study will be shared in the following ways: an executive summary will be sent to participants, the final report will be shared with the University of Victoria Examination Committee (Master’s project defence), and a copy of the final report will be given to YRDSB.

Disposal of Data

Data from this study will be disposed of by January 1, 2013. Electronic data will be deleted and paper copies will be shredded.

Contacts

Individuals that may be contacted regarding this study include the researcher, Drew McNaughton, and the supervisor, Richard Marcy. Contact information can be found at the beginning of the consent form. In addition, you may verify the ethical approval of this study, or raise any concerns you might have, by contacting the Human Research Ethics Office at the University of Victoria (250-472-4545 or ethics@uvic.ca).

Your signature below indicates that you understand the above conditions of participation in this study, that you have had the opportunity to have your questions answered by the researchers, and that you agree to participate in this research project. Please return this form to the Principal at your school.

Thank you.

<i>Name of Participant</i>	<i>Signature</i>	<i>Date</i>
<i>Contact Phone # or E-mail</i>		

A copy of this consent will be left with you, and a copy will be taken by the researcher.

APPENDIX 5: PARENT PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM



Parent *Participant Consent Form*

Developing a Summer Learning Plan

You are invited to participate in a study entitled "Developing a Summer Learning Plan" that is being conducted by Drew McNaughton. Drew McNaughton is a graduate student in the department of Public Administration at the University of Victoria and you may contact him if you have further questions by phone/e-mail at 416-624-0692 or ddm@uvic.ca.

As a graduate student, I am required to conduct research as part of the requirements for a Master's degree in Public Administration. It is being conducted under the supervision of Richard Marcy, Assistant Professor at the University of Victoria. You may contact my supervisor at 250-721-8054 or rtmarcy@uvic.ca.

Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this research project is to develop a plan for summer learning. A summer learning plan may include (but is not limited to): student programs (e.g., summer school, camps), family programs (e.g., family literacy programs, accessible school libraries), and school based resources (e.g., June and September classroom programming, summer learning packages).

Importance of this Research

Research of this type is important because it will help to develop a better understanding of summer learning.

Participants Selection

You are being asked to participate in this study because you are a parent of a YRDSB student. Through the recruitment process, your school has agreed to participate in the study.

What is involved?

If you agree to voluntarily participate in this research, your participation will include a focus group session. All focus groups will take place at your child's school. Each focus group should take approximately 30 minutes. Data from focus groups will be taped (audiotape) and then typed into transcripts. Transcripts will then be used to generate themes as part of the analysis process.

Inconvenience

Participation in this study may cause some inconvenience to you as a result of the time required to participate in the focus group. Focus group schedules will be designed to minimize potential inconvenience to participants. Each focus group is scheduled to take 30 minutes.

Risks

There are no anticipated risks to you by participating in this research.

Benefits

The potential benefit of your participation in this research includes enhancements to the YRDSB summer learning plan. This may benefit students who participate in YRDSB summer learning programs.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this research must be completely voluntary. If you do decide to participate, you may withdraw at any time without any consequences or any explanation. If you do withdraw from the study, data linked to focus groups will only be used in summarized form with no identifying information.

Researcher’s Relationship with Participants

The researcher may have a relationship to potential participants as he is a Principal with YRDSB. To help prevent this relationship from influencing your decision to participate, the researcher will not conduct research in a school that he has worked in.

Anonymity

Due to the nature of the data gathering phase of research (e.g., focus groups), your anonymity cannot be protected. Your anonymity will however be protected with the dissemination of results.

Confidentiality

Due to the nature of the data gathering phase of research (e.g., focus groups) and the recruitment of participants, your confidentiality will be protected with some limits. Your confidentiality and the confidentiality of the data will be protected in the following ways: using separate coding sheets to identify participants, all forms of data will only be viewed by the principal investigator, the data collected for this project will only be used for this project, participants will not be named in the final report, and data will be stored on a password protected computer.

Dissemination of Results

It is anticipated that the results of this study will be shared in the following ways: an executive summary will be sent to participants, the final report will be shared with the University of Victoria Examination Committee (Master’s project defence), and a copy of the final report will be given to YRDSB.

Disposal of Data

Data from this study will be disposed of by January 1, 2013. Electronic data will be deleted and paper copies will be shredded.

Contacts

Individuals that may be contacted regarding this study include the researcher, Drew McNaughton, and the supervisor, Richard Marcy. Contact information can be found at the beginning of the consent form. In addition, you may verify the ethical approval of this study, or raise any concerns you might have, by contacting the Human Research Ethics Office at the University of Victoria (250-472-4545 or ethics@uvic.ca).

Your signature below indicates that you understand the above conditions of participation in this study, that you have had the opportunity to have your questions answered by the researchers, and that you agree to participate in this research project. Please return this form, in the envelope provided, to the Principal at your school.

Thank you.

<i>Name of Participant</i>	<i>Signature</i>	<i>Date</i>
<i>Contact Phone # or E-mail</i>		

A copy of this consent will be left with you, and a copy will be taken by the researcher.

APPENDIX 6: STUDENT PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM



Parent (for Student) Consent Form

Your child is being invited to participate in a study entitled “Developing a Summer Learning Plan” that is being conducted by Drew McNaughton. Drew McNaughton is a graduate student in the department of Public Administration at the University of Victoria and you may contact him if you have further questions by phone/e-mail at 416-624-0692 or ddm@uvic.ca.

As a graduate student at the University of Victoria in the School of Public Administration, I am required to conduct research as part of the requirements for a Master’s degree in Public Administration. It is being conducted under the supervision of Richard Marcy, Assistant Professor at the University of Victoria. You may contact my supervisor at 250-721-8054 or rtmarcy@uvic.ca.

Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this research project is to develop a plan for summer learning. A summer learning plan may include (but is not limited to): student programs (e.g., summer school, camps), family programs (e.g., family literacy programs, accessible school libraries), and school based resources (e.g., June and September classroom programming, summer learning packages). Research of this type is important because it will help to develop a better understanding of summer learning.

What is involved?

Your child is being asked to participate in this study because they are a YRDSB student and a stakeholder in education. Through the recruitment process, your school has agreed to participate in the study. Other stakeholders participating include: administrators, teachers, and parents. If you agree to your child’s voluntarily participation in this research, this will include participating in a focus group with 3-4 other students. Focus groups will take place at your child’s school. Each focus group should take approximately 30 minutes. Data from focus groups will be taped (audiotape) and then typed into transcripts. Transcripts will then be used to generate themes as part of the analysis process.

Inconvenience

Participation in this study may cause some inconvenience to your child as a result of the time required to participate in the focus group. Focus group schedules will be designed to minimize potential inconvenience to participants. Each focus group is scheduled to take 30 minutes.

Risks

There are no anticipated risks to your child by participating in this research.

Benefits

The potential benefit of your child’s participation in this research includes enhancements to the YRDSB summer learning plan. This may benefit students who participate in YRDSB summer learning programs.

Voluntary Participation

Your child’s participation in this research must be completely voluntary. If you or s/he decide to participate, you or your child may withdraw at any time without any consequences or any explanation. If you or your child do withdraw from the study, his/her data (linked to the focus group) will only be used in summarized form with no identifying information.

Researcher’s Relationship with Participants

The researcher may have a relationship to potential participants as he is a Principal with YRDSB. To help prevent this relationship from influencing your decision to participate, the researcher will not conduct research in

a school that he has worked in. Your permission for your child to participate in the research must be voluntary and I want to assure you that there are no consequences that arise from giving or withholding your permission. I have also informed the Principal of my intended research and should you feel that there are pressures or unanticipated consequences as a result of participating or not, you are free to contact him/her at the school, my research supervisor, or the Human Research Ethics Office at the University of Victoria (250-472-4545) to have your concerns addressed.

Anonymity

Due to the nature of the data gathering phase of research (e.g., focus groups), your child's anonymity cannot be protected. Your child's anonymity will however be protected with the dissemination of results.

Confidentiality

Due to the nature of the data gathering phase of research (focus groups) and the recruitment of participants, your child's confidentiality will be protected with some limits. Your child's confidentiality and the confidentiality of the data will be protected in the following ways: using separate coding sheets to identify participants, all forms of data will only be viewed by the principal investigator, the data collected for this project will only be used for this project, participants will not be named in the report, and data will be stored on a password protected computer.

Dissemination of Results

It is anticipated that the results of this study will be shared in the following ways: an executive summary will be sent to participants, the final report will be shared with the University of Victoria Examination Committee (Master's project defence), and a copy of the final report will be given to YRDSB.

Disposal of Data

Data from this study will be disposed of by January 1, 2013. Electronic data will be deleted and paper copies will be shredded.

Contacts

Individuals that may be contacted regarding this study include the researcher, Drew McNaughton, and the supervisor, Richard Marcy. Contact information can be found at the beginning of the consent form. In addition, you may verify the ethical approval of this study, or raise any concerns you might have, by contacting the Human Research Ethics Office at the University of Victoria (250-472-4545 or ethics@uvic.ca).

Your signature below indicates that you understand the above conditions of participation in this study, that you have had the opportunity to have your questions answered by the researchers. Please return this form, in the envelope provided, to the Principal at your school.

Thank you.

_____	_____	_____
<i>Name of Participant</i>	<i>Signature</i>	<i>Date</i>

<i>Contact Phone # or E-mail</i>		

Student Consent

My parents/guardians and I have reviewed the information in this consent form together and I consent to participate in the research project.

_____	_____	_____
<i>Name of Participating Student</i>	<i>Student's Signature</i>	<i>Date</i>

A copy of this consent will be left with you, and a copy will be taken by the researcher.

APPENDIX 7: INTERVIEW AND FOCUS GROUP RESPONSES

Key Themes with Total Counts of Responses (% of Total)	Interview/Focus Group Responses	Count of Responses
Student Achievement & Well-being 255 (41%)	• the need for programs that focus on literacy	39
	• programs need to be engaging (the use of technology, authentic learning, higher order learning, critical inquiry)	28
	• programs that integrate Science, French, Social Studies or the Arts	22
	• the need for programs that focus numeracy	21
	• fun an enriching opportunities for students	20
	• prevention of summer slide	18
	• early intervention focus	17
	• programs that promote student interactions	17
	• support for exceptional students	15
	• provide recreational opportunities	15
	• support students below provincial standard	10
	• support for English language learners	9
	• grade 8 transition opportunities	8
	• support for junior students	7
	• small group instruction	3
	• programs that maintain student routine	2
	• second language programs	2
• programs that promote healthy living	1	
• examine June and September practices in schools	1	
Accessible Programs & Resources 103 (17%)	• the need for no-cost/low-cost programs	21
	• access to reading materials (leveled books = 7)	19
	• programs close to home or transportation provided	15
	• access to technology	12
	• access to library	10
	• school resources are not accessible/concerns regarding the distribution of resources	6
	• equitable distribution of summer programs and resources	5
	• at-home resources	4
	• drop in program	3
	• access to numeracy resources	2
	• staff available for summer support	1
	• provide licenses for on-line sites	1
	• schools with limited resources to share	1
	• access to social workers	1
	• access to Early Years Centre	1
• prefer a school program rather than school resources	1	

Community Partnerships 70 (11%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • utilized community programs - administrator <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - public library (8) - municipal recreation departments (8) - youth service organizations (7) - charitable/community organizations (5) - places of worship (2) 	30	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • parent awareness of community programs 	14	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • utilized community programs – parent/student <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - library (3) - municipal recreation departments (4) - places of worship (4) 	10	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • administrator awareness of community programs 	9	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the need to utilize community resource facilitators 	3	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • student awareness of community programs 	2	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • community partners providing bursaries 	1	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • supporting parents with accessing community programs 	1	
Communication 126 (21%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • best way to advertise programs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - newsletter (12) - school council (3) - student agenda - advertising in community newspapers (2) - in-school posters (3) - website (7) - e-mail (4) - word of mouth (3) - school sign board (2) - flier (5) - parent nights (1) - target students 1-on-1/invitation to attend (5) - school team approach (2) 	50	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • administrator awareness of YRDSB programs 	15	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sufficient/effective system communications to schools 	15	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • parents lack understanding/awareness of summer programs 	11	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the need for early/timely communications 	10	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • challenges with school–home communications 	9	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • parents want to know the benefits of summer learning 	4	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • principals/schools managing a lot of other communications 	3	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • principal as key communicator of information at school level 	3	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • greater attention paid to advertising/marketing 	2	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • streamline registration process 	1	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • marginal opportunities for administrators to learn about programs 	1	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • communicate summer programs with term 1 report cards 	1	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • challenges associated with communicating summer programs to second language/new Canadian communities 	1	
	Local Autonomy 23 (4%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • focus on student interest and area of need 	10
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • August programming 	7
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • address school and community needs 	4

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • summer programming has become engrained in community 	1
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • school desire to host site-based/school directed summer programs 	1
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 different responses regarding student achievement and well-being 	see above
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15 different responses regarding accessible programs and resources 	see above
Other 40 (6%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • parents feel that children need to take a break in the summer or their kids don't want to attend summer programs 	11
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • family travel/holidays as a factor for student participation 	10
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • year round schooling 	4
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • students want to "hang out" with friends rather than attend summer programs 	3
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • parents wanting to spend time with children rather than register for summer learning 	2
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • one month of summer learning is too much 	2
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • summer learning as a suggested intervention during in-school team meetings an for student growth plans 	2
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • data needed to support summer learning programs (evidence based) 	1
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • gender imbalance with summer programs 	1
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • parents utilizing school year strategies to support children during the summer 	1
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • parents as volunteers for summer programs 	1
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • necessary programming so parents can go to work 	1
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • summer program participation depends on weather 	1
Total 617		