



MEDIA ADVISORY

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Summer learning as a strategy for education reform to be highlighted on Capitol Hill

National Summer Learning Association to hold Congressional briefing on summer learning from cradle to graduation, launch new advocacy coalition

Washington, D.C.— As students across the country begin summer vacation, the National Summer Learning Association will hold a Congressional briefing and panel discussion focused on the challenge of summer learning loss, its importance to education policy, and new research on the benefits of summer learning. Members of the newly-formed National Summer Learning Coalition, 45 organizations committed to embedding summer learning in federal education policy, will also be introduced at the event.

The briefing, to be held in the U.S. Capitol, is being sponsored by U.S. Senator Richard G. Lugar (R-IN), U.S. Senator Patty Murray (D-WA), and Congressman Donald Payne (D-NJ). Details are as follows:

Date: Tuesday, June 14

Time: 1:00 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Location: U.S. Capitol Visitor Center, Room SVC 203

The event will feature a distinguished panel that will discuss the role of summer learning in their efforts to improve education for children from the early years to high school. Panelists include:

- **Jessy Donaldson**, program associate, [The Annie E. Casey Foundation](#) (The Campaign for Grade-Level Reading)
- **Angela Collier**, senior manager, corporate affairs, [The Walmart Foundation](#)
- **Heather Rieman**, senior policy advisor, Office of Planning, Evaluation, and Policy Development, [U.S. Department of Education](#)
- **Bryan Joffe**, [American Association of School Administrators](#), project director for the Ready by 21 national partnership

The Association, the network hub for thousands of summer learning program providers and stakeholders across the country, will use the event to highlight the role of schools and community-based organizations in delivering quality summer learning programs that are essential to closing the achievement gap and supporting the healthy development of young people. The Coalition will emphasize the opportunity presented by the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Act to embed summer learning in federal education policy. The effort to keep kids learning during summer is based on research that shows that without effective summer learning opportunities:

- Most students fall more than two months behind in math over the summer.
- Low-income children fall behind two to three months in reading each summer, while their middle and upper-income peers make slight gains.
- By the end of fifth grade, lower-income children can be nearly three years behind their higher-income peers in reading.

“There is growing recognition among policymakers that schools and communities should combat summer learning loss,” said Matthew Boulay, the Association’s Interim CEO. “Given the research on summer and the achievement gap, summer learning programs must be an essential component of any strategy aimed at improving student achievement.”

“The education of our young people does not stop when they leave the classroom,” said Marguerite Kondracke, President and CEO of [America's Promise Alliance](#). “If we are going to reverse the dropout crisis plaguing this country and robbing our children of the opportunity to reach their full potential, then we must ensure that all of them have access to high quality and safe continuous learning activities year-round. This is especially critical during those summer vacation months when many students lose ground academically. By working together as part of the National Summer Learning Coalition we hope to help raise awareness of the importance of this work and change outcomes for youth.”

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The mission of the National Summer Learning Association is to connect and equip schools and community organizations to deliver quality summer learning programs to our nation’s youth to help close the achievement gap. The organization serves as a network hub for thousands of summer learning program providers and stakeholders across the country, providing tools, resources, and expertise to improve program quality, generate support, and increase youth access and participation. *For more information, visit <http://www.summerlearning.org>.*