Meaningful Linkages between Summer Programs, Schools, and Community Partners: Conditions and Strategies for Success

NATIONAL CENTER *for* SUMMER LEARNING

Acknowledgments

We would like to express our sincere thanks to the following programs for providing their insights into school/community linkages:

- BELL (Building Educated Leaders for Life), Boston, MA

- Breakthrough Collaborative, San Francisco, CA

- Central Falls School District, Central Falls, RI

- Corbin Independent Schools, Corbin, KY

- H2O, Hope High School, Providence, RI

- Higher Achievement, Washington, DC

- Newport Public Schools, Newport, RI

- Project Morry/Morry's Camp, White Plains, NY

- Summerbridge Pittsburgh, A Breakthrough Program, Pittsburgh, PA

- Summer Scholars, Denver, CO

- SuperKids Camp, a program of the Parks and People Foundation, Baltimore, MD

The lessons learned through the interviews with these programs informed the content for this report. We would also like to thank the Rhode Island After School Plus Alliance and the Rhode Island Summer Learning Working Group for their support of this publication. We are grateful that their support allowed us to explore meaningful summer linkages in more detail.

About the National Center for Summer Learning

The National Center for Summer Learning's vision is for every young person to experience enriching, memorable summers. To realize that vision, our mission is to ensure that children and youth in high-poverty communities have access to quality summer learning programs.

Based at the Johns Hopkins University School of Education, the Center engages in research, develops policy, and delivers professional development designed to achieve the following results:

- Increase the number of providers offering high-quality summer learning programs to young people living in poverty;

- Increase the number of organizations and policymakers that identify summer learning as a public policy priority; and

- Increase funding for high-quality summer learning programs for young people who currently lack choices and opportunities

Through its nation-wide network of providers and partners, the Center is focusing national attention on how high-quality summer learning programs help close the achievement gap, lead to higher graduation rates, and promote healthy development.
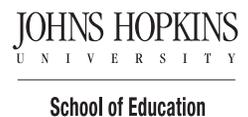
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School of Education

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INTRODUCTION

With funding from The Nellie Mae Education Foundation, The Rhode Island Afterschool Plus Alliance (RIASPA) convened a Summer Learning Working Group in early 2008. The objective of the Working Group was to identify the key elements of summer learning that should be addressed at the public policy level to eliminate summer learning loss and, thus, contribute to more effective school year approaches to educating underserved learners. For summer 2008, the Summer Learning Working Group (SLWG) recommended three summer programs to receive funding from the Foundation. The funding was used to implement a strategy intended to strengthen and deepen linkages between the programs, the public school system and community partners, and to make progress toward the aforementioned goals. These pilot projects are being evaluated and are meant to serve as "test beds" to determine how a more comprehensive statewide strategy might be implemented over time.

At the request of RIASPA, and to inform the pilot projects and the overall strategy, The National Center for Summer Learning (the Center) was asked to produce a report that responds to the following questions:

- What does a high-quality summer learning program with strong and meaningful school and community linkages look like? What models currently exist?

- In high-quality, school-linked summer programs, what youth outcomes are achieved? How are programs measuring youth outcomes?

- What are the criteria for successful and meaningful linkages between summer programs, schools, and community organizations? What makes the linkages meaningful and strong?

- In high-quality, school-linked summer programs, how do the content offerings vary as compared to nonschool-linked programs?

METHODOLOGY

To answer the questions posed above, the Center relied on two primary sources: 1) a review of the literature and 2) interviews with previous Excellence in Summer Learning Award winners and a select group of Rhode Island summer program providers.

The literature review included articles, program evaluations, and research studies that discussed relationships between summer program providers, school districts, and community partners. However, because the literature on summer programs and partnerships, specifically, is scant, the search was expanded to include literature on relationships between the variety of organizations supporting out-of-school time programming.

The interviews reinforced and supplemented the literature review by providing 1) rich, detailed information from current providers on the nature and structure of their linkages; 2) the conditions necessary for successful relationships; 3) the strategies and tactics used to strengthen and deepen relationships; 4) the content offerings available through the programs; 5) the youth outcomes the programs strive to achieve; and 6) information on the challenges the programs face in successfully maintaining their linkages. Interviewees were chosen because of either their recognition as a high-quality summer learning program,[*] or because they were recommended by the Summer Learning Working Group as a noteworthy local provider. The questions asked during the interviews are included as Appendix A. Key findings from the literature review are included as Appendix B.

Below is the list of program providers included in the interview group:

BELL (Building Educated Leaders for Life) *Boston, MA*
Breakthrough Collaborative *San Francisco, CA*
Central Falls School District *Central Falls, RI*
Corbin Independent Schools *Corbin, KY*
H2O, Hope High School *Providence, RI*
Higher Achievement *Washington, DC*
Newport Public Schools *Newport, RI*
Project Morry/Morry's Camp *White Plains, NY*
Summerbridge Pittsburgh, A Breakthrough Program *Pittsburgh, PA*
Summer Scholars *Denver, CO*
SuperKids Camp, a program of the Parks and People Foundation *Baltimore, MD*

The remainder of this report summarizes the findings from the literature review and the interviews in the following sections:

▸ What Are Meaningful Summer Linkages?
▸ What Are the Benefits of Meaningful Linkages?
▸ Conditions and Strategies for Deepening Summer Linkages
▸ Overcoming Common Barriers to Collaboration

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[*] The National Center for Summer Learning sponsors an annual award contest to recognize high-quality summer learning programs for their excellence in service delivery and contributions to the field. Since 2003, fifteen programs have been recognized as Excellence in Summer Learning Award winners. In 2009, the Center received applications from 80 programs located across the country. The award process includes an application that elicits information on the program's approach to learning and infrastructural supports, as well as a follow up phone interview for programs that pass the initial application screening.

WHAT ARE MEANINGFUL SUMMER LINKAGES?

In a 2006 issue of *The Evaluation Exchange*, Priscilla Little writes, "...there is increasing understanding that meaningful links between out-of-school time programs and schools are essential to supporting children's learning in both settings." The Harvard Family Research Project's **complementary learning** concept suggests that linkages can benefit youth and families.

> **Complementary** *learning refers to the idea that school and life success requires an array of learning supports. To be most effective, these supports should complement one another, moving out of their silos and working together to create an integrated, accessible set of community-wide resources that support learning and development. (The Evaluation Exchange, Volume XI, Number 1, Spring 2005)*

But what are **meaningful links**? Little attention has been paid to describing what meaningful links look like and how they are developed or sustained. To date, most descriptions of linkages have focused on afterschool programs or out-of-school time programs generally, with less of a focus on summer and the unique relationships that form often in the absence of school. This report hopes to contribute to the summer program literature, specifically, with an eye toward drawing attention to the research on summer learning loss. Alexander, Entwisle, and Olsen (2007) found that summer learning losses explain two-thirds of the achievement gap between poorer and more affluent children. If meaningful summer linkages can enhance outcomes for youth and families, perhaps linkages are a critical part of any reform intended to address the summer achievement gap.

Summer programming, in particular, may also be critical in helping out-of-school time programs engage and retain youth. An evaluation of New York City out-of-school time programs found that year-to-year retention rates were highest in elementary grade, center-based programs rather than school-based programs, and in *programs with summer components* (Pearson, Russell, and Reisner, 2008).

In the context of this report, *linkages* can be defined as specific relationships between organizations involved in implementing summer programs for youth. *Meaningful linkages* extend beyond networking or more superficial relationships to *collaborating in order to improve outcomes for youth and families*. Meaningful linkages are those that deepen into a collaboration or partnership where organizations share risks, responsibilities and rewards. This paper seeks to explore the meaningful linkages that form between summer programs, schools, and community organizations, and to describe what these linkages look like in practice.

Dotterweich (2006, p. 188) offers a very practical definition of collaboration that may be helpful in understanding the linkages described in this report:

> **Collaboration** *can be defined as a process to reach goals that cannot be achieved by one single agent. It includes the following components: 1) jointly developing and agreeing on a set of common goals and directions, 2) sharing responsibility for obtaining those goals, and 3) working together to achieve those goals, using the expertise and resources of each collaborator.*

Dotterweich goes on to describe that youth organizations collaborate to varying degrees and along a continuum. How deeply the organizations collaborate is often decided by how well the partners are able to overcome the common barriers of time, turf, and trust. The continuum begins with *networking*—the most shallow type of collaboration—and ends with *integrating*—a complete merger of the collaborators (www.actforyouth.net). Although most summer programs will not aspire to the integrating stage, the description of the *collaborating* stage offers a strong example of how meaningful summer program collaborators might interact:

> *Exchanging information, altering activities, sharing resources, and enhancing each other's capacity for mutual benefit and to achieve a common goal...organizations and individuals are willing to learn from each other to become better at what they do. Collaborating means that organizations share risks, responsibilities, and rewards. It requires a substantial time commitment, very high level of trust, and sharing turf. (Dotterweich, 2006, p. 189)*

Program providers in our sample expressed a strong sentiment that collaborating organizations should be able to agree upon a common goal that they are jointly trying to achieve. For example, organization partners might agree that a common goal of both of their programs is to improve the reading comprehension abilities of the young people they serve. The individual approaches to achieving this goal may vary—one partner may focus on supporting young persons' social and emotional development by helping to build their identity as capable learners, while the other may focus specifically on teaching comprehension strategies—as long as the linkage itself strengthens each partner's ability to meet the overall goal.

Considering the substantial time commitment needed for meaningful linkages, it's important to understand whether or not linkages will benefit the organizations involved and, ultimately, the young people and families they serve. The next section addresses the question of benefits directly. ▐▌

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF MEANINGFUL LINKAGES?

While there is still debate about whether or not linkages between out-of-school time programs and schools do enhance outcomes for youth and families (Halpern, 2005), two primary interview questions elicited responses from summer providers that suggest there are benefits to meaningful linkages, both for programs and those they serve. The questions asked:

1. *What are the primary youth outcomes you try to achieve with your [summer] program? Are any of these outcomes more or less attainable because of the specific linkages you described? Why?*

2. *What, if any, unique content offerings are available [through your summer program] as a result of these linkages? What are you able to offer, or offer better because of your relationships?*

Providers cited a tremendous range of desired outcomes for youth participating in summer programs, from improved self-esteem to increased math scores to fewer disciplinary referrals. The interviews also revealed a wide variety of content offerings and differing perspectives and attitudes about how content offerings are affected or supported by linkages. With that said, several themes emerged that highlight the primary benefits of meaningful linkages as relayed by the programs in our sample.

- Better access to information about youth and families,

- Greater alignment in content and curriculum,

- More and varied enrichment offerings,

- Unique, yet complementary, staff skill sets and expertise,

- Greater variation in instructional delivery methods, and

- Increased likelihood of positive relationships with youth and families.

Table 1 (next page) highlights these themes as a rationale for meaningful linkages and provides additional information about the outcomes providers sought to influence.

Table 1. Desired Summer Program Outcomes and Rationale for Meaningful Linkages

Type of Outcome	Desired Outcome	Rationale for Meaningful Linkages
Academic	– Improved Grades – Improved Test Scores – Greater Choice in High School Options (Placement in Competitive High Schools) – Selection of College Track Courses in High School – High School Completion – College Acceptance – College Completion	Outcomes may be more easily achieved because collectively the partners have • Better access to information about youth and families • Greater alignment in content and curriculum • More and varied enrichment offerings • Unique yet complementary staff skill sets and expertise • Greater variation in instructional delivery methods • Increased likelihood of positive relationships with youth and families
Behavioral	– Fewer Disciplinary Referrals – Higher Program and School Attendance – Increased Parent Engagement	
Social/Emotional	– Greater Connection to School Community – Improved Self-esteem – Improved Self-confidence	

Better Access to Information about Youth and Families

Frequently, the activities and services offered by partnering organizations differ, as do staffing configurations. Partners also tend to differ in the ways that they assess youth abilities. For example, a community-based partner may have critical information about a young person's interests, family situation, and successes with learning in nontraditional ways and environments. A school-based partner may have critical information about academic needs and abilities across a variety of subject areas. If the community-based partner and school described in the above example decide to share the information available for each child, each partner can tailor its specific services to better meet that child's needs. This becomes especially critical in the context of summer programming, when providers have four to six weeks to make a difference.

As one summer staff member put it:

If we have information from the school prior to receiving the young person into our summer program, we have a leg up on how we can better connect with that child and how we might need to vary our activities to meet his or her needs. If we don't have any prior information about the child, we have precious little time to get to know him or her and may not be able to vary our activities in ways that allow him or her to experience success.

Project Morry's relationship with schools, for example, helps the program achieve its primary outcome for the kids it serves—high school graduation. Project Morry views its relationship with the public schools as a way to stay informed of a child's academic progress, and information provided by the schools helps staff devise an individualized plan of intervention and support for each student.

Greater Alignment in Content and Curriculum, and More and Varied Enrichment Offerings

Greater alignment of curriculum and variation in enrichment offerings are also seen as benefits to having strong linkages. Often, community-based organizations (CBOs), collaborating with the public schools, work to complement, but not repeat, what is offered during the school day and year. The excerpts below paraphrase a few of our related discussions during the interviews.

> Higher Achievement curriculum is fully aligned with district standards, but adjusts when necessary and provides significant academic enrichment. The program also focuses on key developmental outcomes, such as leadership development and problem-solving skills.

> Summer Scholars has weekly principal and site coordinator meetings to ensure an awareness of what academic themes are in the school curriculum; however, the Summer Scholars programs is specifically designed to give kids experiences that they do not get in school.

Community organizations sometimes describe their curriculum and programming as supplementing and accelerating the content that their students receive in the schools. Several of the CBOs in our sample mentioned that they work with the school district to select the academic standards that are most important for students to focus on over the summer; then the community-based organization tailors its summer curriculum to help support those academic standards and work toward specific social, recreational, and developmental milestones.

The public schools in our sample were often quite candid about their own limitations in providing enrichment activities to their students for their personal, social, and emotional development. They are, by and large, excited about the varied content offerings available through the partnering community-based organizations. Physical fitness offerings, environmental awareness programs, sailing and science activities are just a few of the opportunities that the community organizations provide to their school partners. The Newport School System, for example, enhances its programming with community partners that provide Tae Kwon Do, Norman Bird Sanctuary and Environmental

programs, sailing instruction, wellness, and cheerleading. As one program ends, another begins. They also partner with the public library Bookmobile to provide books for their program, which focuses on literacy and skills maintenance.

Often, each partner plays to its strengths in delivering program content, with school partners taking the lead on delivering academic content and a community partner taking the lead on enrichment activities. A summer school program that adds an afternoon enrichment component should think critically about how to better connect and integrate the academic and enrichment portions of the day in order to deliver a seamless program. Integrated, seamless approaches are typically better received by youth and families, and can more easily be marketed as positive, fun, developmental experiences.

Unique, Yet Complementary, Staff Skill Sets, and Greater Variation in Instructional Delivery

Programs directors in our sample provided evidence that the partnership models they use allow for complementary staff skill sets and greater variation in how activities are designed for and delivered to youth. Youth ultimately benefit by receiving more individualized attention, a greater variety in topics they can explore, and exposure to staff with varying skills, abilities, and priorities. Staff ranged from highly qualified teachers to community professionals to social workers to college- and high-school-age mentors. Each type of staff person plays a unique role in relating to the students.

> In the BELL [Building Educated Leaders for Life] summer program, very experienced teachers and literacy coaches work as managers and trainers of summer staff that can include college students or other community professionals. College students act as mentors to the youth and are asked to be responsible role models for the young people with whom they are working.

> At the Redhound Enrichment program in Corbin, Kentucky, community professionals—who are sometimes the parents of youth participants—partner with the program to impart knowledge related to their particular skill or profession. For example, Trinity Martial Arts Academies offer martial arts

Increased Likelihood of Positive Relationships with Youth and Families

Because of the many and varied education mandates facing public schools, teachers are often unable to develop close relationships with the families of each of their students. Conversely, partnering community organizations sometimes prioritize developing deep relationships with a young person's family as a part of the unique service they bring to the partnership. In fact, some summer programs require family commitment to the program over multiple years as a prerequisite for youth participation. Program interviews revealed that schools do rely on the individual relationships that community organizations foster with youth and their families as a way to provide additional support to each young person.

Project Morry serves as a reliable advocate for youth and families, and is often consulted when the school needs to develop an intervention plan to meet a young person's behavioral or academic challenges.

The H2O program at Hope High School in Providence, Rhode Island, acts as a clearinghouse for many community partners serving incoming ninth graders at the school. H2O partners with a number of organizations, including Brown University and the Culinary Arts department, to provide a variety of quality enrichment activities for their students. H2O focuses on helping ninth graders starting high school feel connected to the school community. By linking with H2O, Hope High School receives more information about its incoming ninth grade population, and is able to expand its focus on meeting critical academic and youth development outcomes for their students. Young people begin ninth grade with an expanded network of caring adults and a greater set of enrichment opportunities. Because H2O is housed at the school, it can provide continued social and emotional support to ninth graders throughout the school year and summer, while maintaining relationships with families.

The examples provided above illustrate some of the benefits of developing meaningful linkages in summer programs. The next section describes the conditions needed to deepen summer linkages, and strategies used by providers in our sample to strengthen collaboration between the program, school, and community partners. ▐▐

experiences to the campers. Redhound is also negotiating a relationship with a local caterer who hopes to offer kids experience with cooking. The program also hires high school students to do a drama program for kids. High school students are more affordable than teachers or community professionals, and they also bring a great energy and enthusiasm to their work with younger students.

Central Falls School District's community partner, S.C.O.P.E., works with the district to target youth who are at risk of academic failure. S.C.O.P.E. can arrange tutoring services and focus attention on kids who most need intervention. The Higher Achievement Program (HAP) also prioritizes more individualized attention to youth to support their academic success. Rather than repeating the large-group experience the young person has in school, HAP can personalize its services to meet the very specific academic needs of a young person.

Although complementary skill sets and variation in instruction were both viewed positively by the programs in our sample, many are quick to point out the need for joint professional development and continuous communication and coordination to ensure that the youth participants enjoy a seamless experience with the program.

CONDITIONS AND STRATEGIES FOR DEEPENING SUMMER LINKAGES

As programs described their linkages, it became apparent that partnerships thrive under certain "conditions." Sometimes these conditions are in place prior to the formation of the partnership; other times the collaborators need to strive very hard in order to get to a place where these conditions exist. Regardless of the starting place, all programs stressed that the degree to which these conditions exist will vary over the life of the partnership. A change in program or school district leadership, for example, can have a dramatic impact on whether or not the first condition mentioned below, supportive leadership, is present. For this reason, the second part of this section offers a framework for the variety of strategies programs use to strengthen and deepen linkages, thereby increasing the likelihood of conditions favorable for successful relationships. The strategies are thought to influence the degree to which the conditions exist.

Conditions vs. Strategies

Conditions for meaningful linkages refer to existing situations that often work to strengthen relationships between partners. Conditions may be present at the onset of a partnership, or may evolve or change over time.

Strategies for deepening linkages are activities partners engage in so that they can create better conditions for success. The more strategies partners use to strengthen their relationships, the greater the likelihood that they will have favorable conditions for success.

Below, we describe each of the conditions then provide contextual examples of what the condition looks like in practice, or strategies programs use to create the condition.

1. Supportive Leadership

Supportive leadership can be defined as the active backing and participation of key decision-makers in program planning, implementation, assessment, and improvement. School leadership, in particular, is often critical, as many summer programs that operate in partnership with schools are located on school grounds. In many cases, the principal is the critical link; however, superintendents and other administrative leaders also need to be supportive and involved, depending on the context of the program and the nature of the relationship. Without the buy-in of the school's top official, it can be very difficult to engender support for the linkage. Summer Scholars, a year-round community literacy program, partners with the Denver Public Schools to run their programs. They cite principal support at each school as essential and say that if principal support does not exist, Summer Scholars is sometimes inclined to end the partnership.

The Break-Aways Partnerships for Year-Round Learning program was conceived by a former chancellor of public schools in New York City, Rudy Crew. He was committed to reducing the summer learning loss that students experience during summer vacations. The chancellor organized an effort to send at-risk kids to summer camp experiences, funded by donations raised by the board of education.

Participating camps were selected through a competitive process and given three-year contracts to work with individual schools throughout the city. That this initiative was spearheaded by the Chancellor gave the initiative a leg up, and fostered more buy-in from stakeholders because they knew they would have leadership supporting them.

Supportive community leaders are also critical to successful partnerships. The Reading Reaps Rewards (R3) program in Newport, Rhode Island is directed by an Education Success Committee comprising top leaders from community organizations: Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Community Center, Sullivan School Family Center, Newport Community School, Boys and Girls Club, and the Newport Public Schools. The Education Success Committee is collaborative in nature and allows for a participative decision-making process, fostering joint buy-in for programmatic choices.

2. Complementary Missions and Shared Values

The most effective summer programs demonstrate a clear understanding of mission and values, and communicate those values broadly to all stakeholders. When building effective linkages with partners, it is critical that all partners share a commitment to a broader set of values and toward achieving the missions of the partnering organizations. If organizational missions and values are at odds with one another, programs can feel disjointed, often resulting in culture clash.

Public schools' fundamental mission is to educate the children in their communities. Community partners play an important role in supporting this mission while bringing additional resources and ideas that can enhance it. Higher Achievement takes the position that they are offering a unique service to the public schools that emphasizes an individualized approach to educating youth in their program; they are able to provide an extra net of support for public school students, offering services that complement the school's overall mission.

Project Morry is a year-round youth development organization anchored by a residential summer camp. Its mission is to give inner-city children enriching learning opportunities through a curriculum implemented during school year gatherings and an intensive summer camp program. The

children, for whom these experiences would not otherwise be available, benefit from a network of support and gain increased social skills, enhanced self-esteem, positive core values, and a greater sense of personal responsibility. Staff from Project Morry suggested that organizations and their board members need to think carefully about whether each new linkage is within the scope of their mission. If the linkage is being pursued for any reason other than the mission's calls for, it may not be worth the investment, or the organizations may be at risk for "mission drift." One example might be a community organization pursuing a partnership with a public school simply as a way to recruit youth into their program; then realizing that the school and the program have different values and cultures that are not supportive or complementary to one another.

3. Formal and Informal Communication Structures

Communication is critical to any effective partnership; therefore, the program-school-community linkage must include formal and informal communication structures. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is an example of an official document between two organizations that outlines their commitment to the linkage. Regularly scheduled meetings, joint professional development opportunities, and consistent email contact are more informal means of communication, but they support and promote the linkage and keep the key players informed of any issues or concerns.

Partnering staffs need to have a common knowledge and understanding of each program's design, curriculum, instructional delivery methods, and measures of success. Each staff also needs a common language with which to describe and discuss its work. Without joint staff development opportunities, each group may be operating under different assumptions and programs can seem disjointed. Goals and objectives can be misaligned, and the quality of instructional delivery can vary greatly.

The Central Falls School District works with a community organization called S.C.O.P.E. to deliver quality summer learning opportunities to its students. The organizations meet on a monthly basis, and S.C.O.P.E. also sits on every school improvement team as a representative. The Education Success Committee in the Newport School District, consisting of school representatives, community members,

and organizational staff, meets on a monthly basis in order to successfully implement and evaluate its programming.

Creating a shared staffing model is another way to facilitate the transfer of information from one organization to another. Summer programs often involve staffs from many disciplines and organizations in the delivery of content; if each staff is given opportunities to be reflective and take lessons learned back to their respective organizations, partners have a better chance to learn from one another and grow.

4. Multidimensional Relationships

Although leadership is often responsible for laying the foundation for strong linkages, relationships must exist on all levels and among all staffs. Programs must make a concerted effort to engage teachers, staff, administrators, families, youth, and other stakeholders in their work. These relationships must also be developed year-round and not just during the summer months.

SuperKids Camp, a summer program of the Parks and People Foundation, enjoys relationships on many levels with the Baltimore City Public School System. They recruit and hire staff from the public schools; they use several school buildings as sites for their programming which results in relationships with key administrative staff; and they use public school teachers as academic specialists and counselors in their programs. Another unique linkage is that SuperKids Camp serves as a potential teacher feeder program for the Baltimore Public Schools through their internship program. BCPSS recruits potential teachers from the Super-Kids interns through presentations and shared information.

5. Shared Systems and Data

Administrative systems can be defined as the structures in place to organize, support, track, and assess the work being done. The linkages between the program, school, and community can undoubtedly be strengthened by administrative systems, particularly when space or data are shared. Organized facility walk-throughs, for example, and documentation of shared spaces help both sides keep track of the condition of rooms. Management information systems for data collection and sharing also help secure the linkage

and hold the program, schools, and community partners accountable to one another with respect to youth outcomes.

Project Morry strives to share information about student progress with the students' school year teachers and social workers. Program staff stressed the benefit of having information about the young people they serve prior to their coming to camp. At one site, school year teachers complete profiles of the youth as learners, and Project Morry staff report back to the teachers about the work done and progress made during the summer camp experience. Programs in our sample also stressed the need for mutual commitment to accountability for results. Savvy programs have overcome administrative obstacles to sharing data, and offer illustrative examples of the benefits of real-time feedback. When relationships move beyond shared data and into shared accountability, mutual understanding of goals and objectives is reinforced, and partners are less inclined to assign blame and more inclined to devise collaborative solutions.

6. Favorable Policy and Funding Climate

Favorable policy and funding climate can best be described as having the necessary resources and support to ensure sustained operations of programming. Summer programs are affected by changes in policy and funding at the federal, state, and local level. At present, though, local policies and funding are probably most responsible for whether or not summer programs are sustainable, with very few federal and state programs addressing the summer months specifically. When local leadership is in favor of summer programming and understands the value of summer learning experiences, their support can be critical to influencing the policy and funding decisions of board members and other local education decision-makers.

At the federal level under No Child Left Behind, two distinct initiatives have provided critical funding opportunities for community organizations and schools to work in partnership. The first, the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program, is designed to support a wide array of youth development and academic enrichment activities for low-income youth from underperforming schools. The second, Supplemental Educational Services program (SES),

can also be used to support tutoring for struggling students. SES services must be provided to eligible students in Title I schools that have not made "adequate yearly progress." SES is intended to help increase students' academic achievement; services must be provided during out-of-school time, including after school or during the summer. Both initiatives provide examples of policies that have been developed to support youth during out-of-school hours.

The SuperKids Camp, a program of the Parks and People Foundation in Baltimore, Maryland, is a designated recipient of 21st Century funding as well as an approved SES provider. SuperKids serves more than 1,000 Baltimore City students each summer, and the district provides supplemental funding from its own discretionary fund to support the camp.

In an ideal linkage, all six of the above conditions are present. Partners have regular discussions about the relative "health" of the linkage, and triage as necessary to increase chances of success. For linkages to thrive, all sides have to embrace the spirit of collaboration and commit to jointly overcoming obstacles. Not only does this include commitment to a systematic process for engaging in joint meetings, conducting cross trainings, and sharing resources; but it also means being flexible partners with one another. Youth development organizations, whether public schools or community-based organizations, are dynamic and subject to unexpected changes. During the summer months, in particular, public schools often struggle with facilities issues while community-based organizations experience staffing turnover and funding challenges. By mutually understanding and accepting the complexities of their own environments, and developing ways for the continual exchange of knowledge and information, collaborators enter into their partnerships better prepared to address unexpected challenges.

Leadership and staff from schools and community-based organizations should not underestimate or undervalue the amount of effort and energy that goes into strengthening the linkages. As more of the conditions take root and thrive, it is easier to add to or build upon what is already in place.

Strategies for Deepening Linkages: Using the Characteristics of Effective Summer Learning Programs as a Framework

As previously mentioned, the extent to which any particular condition is present may vary over the life of the collaboration. Because of this, program providers need to have an understanding of strategies they can use to strengthen and deepen linkages, thereby contributing to their likelihood of successful collaboration. Since 1992, the Johns Hopkins National Center for Summer Learning has researched, evaluated, and promoted summer learning programs that advance learning and support healthy youth development. Based on available evidence about best practices in summer programming and interviews with experts, the Center identified nine interconnected characteristics of effective summer learning programs, which are described in detail in the Center's publication, Making the Most of Summer (see Chapters 1 and 2). As we reflected on the comments we received during our interviews, we realized that the strategies program providers recommended to us fit neatly into the Center's characteristics of effective summer learning programs.

The first three characteristics reflect on the program's approach to learning—how they focus on developing a child intellectually, socially, physically, and emotionally. The remaining six represent program infrastructure. These characteristics reflect an organization's broader strategy to achieve and sustain quality programming, and the supportive structures they have in place, such as leadership, availability and frequency of staff development, and evaluation capacity.

In this section, we deliberately use the nine characteristics of effective summer learning programs as a framework through which to view program-school-community linkages. The framework offers examples of program-school-community linkages alongside each characteristic.

Table 2. Characteristics of Effective Programs and Strategies for Deeper Linkages

APPROACHES TO LEARNING	
Characteristic of Effective Summer Learning Programs	**Program-School-Community Linkage**
Focus on accelerating learning...	that complements school content with an eye toward state curriculum standards and age-appropriate developmental outcomes

Strategies	**Programs in Practice**
• Shared selection, development, and/or review of curriculum; • Shared buy-in to instructional delivery that looks and feels different from the school day	**Higher Achievement** curriculum is fully aligned with district standards, but adjusts when necessary and provides significant academic enrichment. The program also focuses on key developmental outcomes, such as leadership development and problem-solving skills. **Summer Scholars** has weekly principal and site coordinator meetings to ensure an awareness of what academic themes are in the school curriculum; however, the Summer Scholars programs is specifically designed to give kids experiences that they do not get in school.

Firm commitment to youth outcomes...	by focusing on the developmental needs of the child, and involving family, school, and community partners in the delivery of program activities

Strategies	**Programs in Practice**
• Playing to the strengths of each partner in the delivery of services • Shared understanding of child and youth development theory and its relationship to learning • Eliciting multiple partners to deliver a range of activities	**Corbin Public Schools** in Kentucky offers a summer enrichment program that brings together teachers, families, and community experts. School year teachers provide insight into program design and individual student's needs; families support student learning and participate in parent education programs; and community partners bring unique expertise. In 2007, Corbin partnered with Baptist Family Fitness, which assisted in program design and took responsibility for providing health and fitness activities. **H2O program at Hope High School** serves as a clearinghouse for other community-based organizations to deliver a range of experiences to their student participants. H2O partners with the Culinary Arts department at Brown University to provide cooking experiences. The Boston Museum of Science and the Environmental Awareness Institute lead small workshops that connect to themes during the summer. Organic eating is also taught and encouraged, so that students understand how it helps their bodies and the environment.

APPROACHES TO LEARNING
...continued

Characteristic of Effective Summer Learning Programs

Program-School-Community Linkage

Proactive approach to summer learning...

through shared conversations and understanding about the research on summer learning loss and the importance of sustained participation in summer learning experiences

Strategies

- Intentional planning to minimize summer learning loss

- Consistent meetings among program providers, schools, and research professionals about research on summer learning

Programs in Practice

BELL (Building Educated Leaders for Life) works closely with school districts to plan summer programming that reverses summer learning loss. BELL regularly evaluates their program's impact on youth academic and social outcomes, including the influence BELL summer has on the young person's school year performance. BELL strives to share information with its school district partners to offer a more coordinated strategy for improving learning outcomes.

Central Falls School District partners with S.C.O.P.E., which provides the summer school program for students. S.C.O.P.E. sits on every school improvement team as a representative, sharing data and collaborating to determine what the summer program is going to look like each year.

PROGRAM INFRASTRUCTURE

Characteristic of Effective Summer Learning Programs	Program-School-Community Linkage
Strong, empowering leadership...	from the school and community stakeholders, including those who have experience in academic learning and child/youth development

Strategies

- Mutual hiring of staff that have youth development experience and public school experience
- Using community, family, and district leadership to be champions and stakeholders in the success of the program

Programs in Practice

The Trail Blazers Summer Program employs a certified teacher as the education coordinator of the program. This person is charged with overseeing education efforts and implementing academic programming. Trained college students act as counselors and mentors, and lead program activities.

The District of Columbia Chancellor of Schools has decided to overhaul the district's out-of-school time structure, invited BELL to the table of discussion, and provided a letter of support for the program.

Advance, collaborative planning...	that includes coordinated program design, data sharing, recruitment, and public relations efforts

Strategies

- Joint identification and referral of youth to programs
- A series of planning meetings involving all partners in reviewing data and program design
- Joint branding and public relations efforts to create greater visibility

Programs in Practice

Summer Scholars uses a referral system of student recruitment in which teachers nominate students to the program and then Summer Scholars follows up by sending application materials to the student and family, notifying them of their nomination.

PROGRAM INFRASTRUCTURE
...continued

Characteristic of Effective Summer Learning Programs	**Program-School-Community Linkage**
Extensive opportunities for staff development...	through joint professional development opportunities, cofacilitation or team teaching, and mentoring

Strategies

- Joint trainings to foster mutual understanding and respect
- Joint staffing models, including team teaching, cofacilitation, or mentoring opportunities

Programs in Practice

Breakthrough Miami employs Miami-Dade District teachers to serve as mentor teachers to Breakthrough's young staff. In return, the district compensates the public school teachers, who also receive the professional and personal rewards of supporting and encouraging more young people to enter the teaching profession.

Project Morry built into the public school's social worker/guidance counselor job description that a key responsibility is monitoring and forwarding applications to Project Morry, as well as serving as a liaison between Project Morry and parents. This explicit expectation outlined in the job description adds to the sustainability and commitment of the partnership.

Strategic partnerships...	with clearly delineated roles, mutually reinforcing benefits, and advantageous use of resources

Strategies

- Clear delineation of roles and responsibilities through the development of an MOU
- Consistent monitoring of the benefit of the partnership to all organizations
- Advantageous use of resources, such as facilities and leadership

Programs in Practice

Corbin Public Schools leveraged many partnerships to enhance program offerings. The Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife and the state parks system provided science and nature education activities; Baptist Regional Medical Center provided pedometers and assistance during a minimarathon in which students walked 5K over the course of a week; the Kentucky National Guard conducted fitness checks; Channel 18 News taught students how to film and edit their own music videos; and the Corbin Recreation Department provided swimming on a weekly basis at no charge.

PROGRAM INFRASTRUCTURE
...continued

Characteristic of Effective Summer Learning Programs

Program-School-Community Linkage

Rigorous approach to evaluation and commitment to program improvement...	through shared tracking and dissemination of student progress

Strategies

- Implementation of a management information system that can track and store student progress

- System of sharing important documents (i.e., report cards, evaluations, test scores between programs and schools)

- Collection of program and school feedback through surveys of major stakeholders (i.e., parents, teachers, administrators

Programs in Practice

The Breakthrough Collaborative utilizes a web-based student database to track both student academic data during the school year and progress reports during the summer program. This management information system, called Social Solutions, allows local program directors to run reports on student progress, including school choice and extracurricular activities. The system also allows local directors to provide reports to the schools about the students' work over the summer.

The Core B enrichment program sites at the Newport Public Schools are trained on and utilize evaluation instruments that are developed by the district. By standardizing the evaluation practices, the district and the sites can best monitor and assess student outcomes and program quality.

Clear focus on sustainability and cost-effectiveness...	by leveraging relationships to secure resources (financial and in-kind) and influence policy

Strategies

- Collaboration to identify and secure funding, including joint grant proposals and appropriation of funds

- Firm commitment of in-kind resources leveraged through partnerships

- Collaborative marketing and promotion of programs

- Cross-membership on school and community policy committees

Programs in Practice

Summer Scholars partners with the Denver Public School to ensure its sustainability. DPS provides space, transportation, and funding for teacher training at a value of approximately $100K per year. This in-kind support allows Summer Scholars to devote its budget to program delivery and staffing.

21st Century funding has allowed many CBOs and schools to partner to deliver quality, sustainable programming, including SuperKids Camp and Newport Public Schools Core B programs. The Central Falls School District was instrumental in encouraging its partner community center to become a certified Supplemental Education Services provider so that it could receive funding to support its activities.

As more research is done to define and understand how linkages support enhanced and effective programming, we hope that others will expand upon this list and provide additional examples of best practices. ▌▌

OVERCOMING COMMON BARRIERS TO COLLABORATION

Just as the previous section describes the conditions present in a successful linkage and strategies to help deepen linkages, this section examines several of the common barriers to collaboration as cited by our sample. The intent of this section is for program providers to have a sense of the types of issues and challenges they may face in their attempts to collaborate.

In our interviews we asked, "What are the challenges associated with linked summer programs?" Unanimously, program providers agreed that—regardless of whether the linkage is created intentionally or develops organically— there will be challenges over the course of the relationship, and the strength of the linkages will vary over time. There is also a fundamental belief that challenges can be addressed through careful implementation of the strategies cited above.

The most commonly cited challenges are sharing space, creating time for joint planning, and maintaining adequate levels of communication, particularly as it relates to data sharing. Below we describe several challenges cited during our interviews, and offer an explanation about why those challenges might arise.

1. Shared Space and Territorialism

Community organizations that rely on public schools for physical space must deal with the changing priorities of facilities management and may not know what space is available until late in their planning. Summer, in particular, is typically a time of year when schools make needed facilities updates and clean in time for the following school year. Summer programs can be shifted or interrupted to accommodate maintenance and/or construction. Shared spaces also bring a sense of territorialism. Teachers may be concerned about how their classroom spaces are used during the summer months, and summer staff may feel that they don't have adequate space for leading activities and storing supplies.

2. Data Sharing

Confidentiality policies and separate or unaligned tracking systems significantly complicate the ability to share student-level data between and among partners. Data sharing tends to be one of the most time-consuming hurdles to jump, yet program directors stressed how important data sharing is to their overall ability to improve their services. Several partners have been able to coordinate the collection of data into one management information system, allowing multiple partners to input and access varying levels of individual and program information.

3. Short Planning Time

School system financial decisions affecting summer programming are typically not made until very late in the calendar year (typically May). Because of this, partners are often unable to anticipate the level of services they must provide. Short planning time poses significant challenges for staff and youth recruitment, staff training, budgeting, program planning, and ordering materials and supplies. End of school year events also frequently conflict with pre-summer training activities.

4. Mandatory Summer School

Mandatory summer school can also present a challenge for voluntary, full-day summer programs. In short, ensuring a young person meets his or her mandated obligations (summer school), while also ensuring he or she has adequate supervision and engaging activities over the course of the day and summer becomes the central tension. The scenarios below offer a few explanations for how this tension might play out.

> *If a young person is required to attend mandatory summer school, but his parent needs him to attend a full-day program to span the time while the parent is at work, the program may struggle to transport the youth from one program to the other. It can also add unanticipated costs.*

> *Often, the culture of the mandatory summer school and the culture of the voluntary program are very different. It is difficult to help a young person transition successfully from one setting to another, especially when there are different staff and different expectations.*

> *Programs typically make hiring and other budgetary decisions based on the projected number of youth they will serve. However, mandatory summer school placements typically aren't known until just before the start of summer. Suppose that a program director finds out in June that one-quarter of the program's kids are required to attend mandatory summer school. The program has two equally undesirable choices: turning away the kids mandated for the other program and scrambling to enroll others, or figuring out a way to alter its schedule to transition the youth population from one program to another. Alternatively, some full-day, voluntary summer programs have developed arrangements with the school district to be an acceptable summer school alternative, with youth receiving summer school credit for attending the school day program.*

5. Insurance and Liability

When a summer program is a partnership between two or more organizations, partners often question whose responsibility it is to ensure adequate insurance and to accept liability should anything happen. For instance, if the summer program is run by a community-based organization but it takes place on school grounds, who is responsible if a young person is injured while attending the program? These issues need to be discussed and clarified before the start of the summer program.

6. Lack of Autonomy to Enter into Formal Relationships

Even though they may want to reach out to community partners, individual schools may not have authority to enter into formal partnerships (involving the exchange of financial resources) without district approval. In some cases, gaining this approval can be cumbersome and discouraging.

7. Changes in Leadership and Shifting Policies or Funding Streams

Changes in leadership, shifting policies, and shifting funding streams all pose significant threats to the sustainability of programs and partnerships. A frequently cited example is the work that goes into establishing relationships with new leaders who know nothing about the history of the program and have not yet bought into the added value the program offers to the organization. Another example offered focused on replacing financial resources that are time-limited or tied to a particular leader.

8. Competing Priorities

Schools frequently voiced concern about being pulled in many different directions and managing competing forces on their time and resources. This struggle can pose a tremendous challenge to community organizations trying to maintain a partnership with schools. In some cases, the community partners voiced concern about being "last on the list of priorities." This concern was often mitigated as partners deepened their linkages and became more invested in each other's success.

9. Negotiating Non-Monetary Relationships

It may be more challenging to establish meaningful partnerships that don't involve the exchange of financial resources. The rationale is that buy-in from leadership takes longer to cultivate when the leader sees the service as "free"; and partners typically do not invest as much time in tracking the success of the partnership when monetary resources are not exchanged.

10. Staffing Bias and Imbalanced Relationships

Staffing bias can occur when the partnership values one type of staff over another, or one type of service over another. For example, union contracts or district mandates may give preference to certified teachers or teachers with greater seniority for hiring for the summer program. When this occurs, staff from the community organization may not feel equally valued as contributing partners.

FINAL THOUGHTS

The conditions and strategies described in this paper provide rich information on the unique linkages that support summer program success. Summer programs are well-positioned to act as laboratories for larger school reform efforts because some of the more nontraditional school partners may occupy the summer education space in ways that are not typical during the school year (for example, youth learning in a summer residential camp setting). Providers and policymakers reading this report should think about whether the lessons documented here are applicable to a larger set of education reforms in which collaboration might be a core strategy.

In Developing Effective Multiple Partnerships, Register and Thompson (2007) make the case that strong linkages are required to reform elementary schools, redesign high schools, and ensure college access and success. The authors reference the concept of smart education systems envisioned by Warren Simmons (2007). Simmons argues that efforts to strengthen districts alone are insufficient; community organizations and school districts must join together to provide supports for children and families.

As important as it is to provide quality programming and solid individualized support to children during the summer months, efforts to have an impact on the larger educational system and provide long-term opportunities for young people are equally as important. A great example that emerged from our interviews was offered by SummerBridge Pittsburgh. Although SummerBridge takes place on the campus of the Sewickley Academy, a highly regarded independent school in the Pittsburgh area, part of SummerBridge's mission is to positively affect the Pittsburgh public school system by helping to build a community of learners who are deeply invested in their education and in their identities as learners. In one case, a group of SummerBridge scholars created a "SummerBridge Club" at their home school to remain connected to each other and what they learned during the summer program. A critical mass of students attending the same home school could help spark a culture shift in which other students will become more invested in their identities as learners through interaction with their peers.

We hope this report provides guidance on the conditions for successful summer linkages and strategies to deepen those linkages. We also hope that it sparks conversation about how summer might lead the way in developing partnerships that could have an impact on a larger reform agenda. ▐▌

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Interview begins with an introduction to the interviewer, a brief description of the report to follow, and a definition of what we mean by "linkages."

Q Who is the fiscal agent for your summer program?

Q (If the fiscal agent is a school) What relationships does your program have with community-based organizations (CBOs) or community partners?

Q (If the fiscal agent is a community-based organization) What relationships does your program have with the public school system?

Q List and describe the nature of all of the linkages (relationships) your program has with [the public school system/community-based organizations].

Q Did you intentionally work to establish the linkages you described? How did these linkages develop?

Q What do you think are the necessary criteria for establishing, maintaining, and sustaining a strong connection between [the program, the public school system, and the community partners]?

Q What, if any, unique content offerings are available as a result of these linkages? What are you able to offer, or offer better because of your relationships?

Q What are the primary youth outcomes you try to achieve with your program? Are any of these outcomes more or less attainable because of specific linkages you described? Why?

Q How do you measure your outcomes?

Q What are the challenges associated with linked summer programs? What strategies have you used to overcome those challenges?

Q Are there any other insights you'd like to offer with respect to linkages and summer programs?

In the literature, we found several alternative frameworks of note that can be thought of as complementary to the one we offer. The first we call Linking Mechanisms and it is described in the Spring 2005 issue of The Harvard Family Research Project's The Evaluation Exchange. Weiss, Coffman, Post, Bouffard, and Little (2005) offer the following schematic to explain practical mechanisms for connecting learning contexts:

Table 3. Linking Mechanisms

Linking Mechanism	Example Applications
Professional Development and Staffing	• Training kindergarten and early childhood staff together on early literacy development • Staffing after-school programs with teachers or through other community resources (e.g., businesses, universities)
Public and Institutional Policy	• Fostering cross-agency collaboration between education and human service agencies that filters from the state to local level • Aligning schools and community-based programs through standards
Family Involvement	• Involving parents in early childhood or after-school programs • Engaging families in decision-making at community and institutional levels
Technology and Other Community Supports	• Developing a website that helps parents or after-school programs track what is being taught in the classroom • Using technology to improve communication that helps coordinate funding streams and meet accountability requirements
Research and Evaluation	• Sharing data about children's progress and achievement with parents • Researching the factors that predict participation in after-school programs • Demonstrating the value of interconnected services and initiatives to funders
Public and Private Funding	• Funding initiatives or programs focused on collaboration between learning contexts (e.g., arts programs and schools, high schools and universities, etc.)

Weiss, Coffman, Post, Bouffard, & Little, 2005

These linking mechanisms are offered in support of the Harvard Family Research Project's complementary learning concept.

Complementary learning refers to the idea that school and life success requires an array of learning supports. To be most effective, these supports should complement one another, moving out of their silos and working together to create an integrated, accessible set of community-wide resources that support learning and development (Weiss, 2005, p.1).

Summer learning squarely fits within this definition, and this concept is reinforced and reflected in the interview comments provided by the programs in our sample.

A second framework, which we call Necessary Assets, is cited by Wimer, Post, and Little (2004), building upon community development research conducted by Ferguson and Dickens (1999). The framework offers four "necessary assets" to developing and achieving common goals:

- **Physical Resources:** concrete assets, such as buildings, tools, or materials
- **Financial Resources:** money and funding streams
- **Social Resources:** norms, shared understandings, and trust
- **Intellectual Resources:** skills, knowledge, competence

In the case of summer or out-of-school time (OST) programs, the common goal is "the increased learning and positive development of youth (Wimer, Post, and Little, 2004)." Little also presents another framework, which we call Alignment Mechanisms, drawing from the Fall 2006 Issue of The Evaluation Exchange, Building and Evaluating Out-of-School Time Connections. The following key mechanisms are cited as helping to link and align OST programs and schools to better support learning and development.

- **Shared Space** Locating OST programs in schools can be a first step toward alignment and be helpful in terms of solving transportation issues. School-based OST programs also help school personnel change their perceptions of students' abilities, by seeing them participate and thrive in activities outside of the classroom that showcase their other skills and talents.

- **Supportive Leadership** Supportive school leaders are a key component to successful linkages, particularly in ensuring greater sustainability of an OST programs efforts. Leadership can leverage key resources and relationships that develop an environment of acceptance for the program in the school community.

- **Shared Staff** An overlap between school and OST staff strengthens both sides of the linkage by improving relationships with students and providing content expertise to enhance the skill set of the OST program staff.

- **Curriculum Alignment** Although OST programs struggle to ensure that their programs are not "more school," a linkage with the schools can be strengthened when OST program activities complement schools to support student success, not replicate them.

- **Shared Vision** Both schools and OST programs must articulate the "exchange of value" enabled by their linkages. By assessing how each stakeholder benefits and what their key motivations are for establishing the linkage, schools and OST programs can begin to establish a shared vision statement to strengthen their connections.

In the First 5 California Children and Families Commission's report on collaboration for school readiness, Gardner, Kloppenburg, and Gonzalez (2002) outline a number of important guidelines when collaborating with schools and community service providers. In the report, they comment that the differences between schools and community-based organizations become evident when collaborating and often frame the nature of the collaboration. School systems tend to be complex, hierarchical organizations that have a tremendous amount of responsibility with limited time and resources. The structure of schools is less flexible than community-based organizations (CBOs) that function free of the vast constituencies and accountability requirements that school face; therefore, the report notes that collaborating with schools requires understanding how the school system operates and developing strategies of working within it.

Successful collaborations exist when:

- A linkage mechanism between the school and CBO provides for accessible and frequent communication,

- There is widespread district and school support for partnerships, and

- Partnership activities can be linked to school improvement goals (Epstein, 1995; Sanders, 2001).

In *The Changing Role of Camps*, Jim O'Donnell highlights the innovations that traditional camps and schools are embarking upon to strengthen their connections and improve youth development outcomes for the children they serve.

Camps across America have embraced the critical role they play in helping young people learn and grow. They are developing innovative programs that help reduce summer learning loss, bolster academic enrichment and student socialization, provide opportunities for leadership development, and ensure that our young people achieve their full potential.

O'Donnell cites a number of examples of camps that have built strong partnerships with districts. They include:

- **In New York**, more than 10,000 young people spend a month of their summer vacation in a special camping program to help them retain what they learned during the school year.

- **In Arkansas**, a local camp works with school districts to provide an alternative classroom experience for elementary school students who haven't succeeded in a traditional setting.

- **In St. Louis**, more than 6,000 students from 53 schools study environmental education at camp between September and May.

- **In Maine**, the local United Way administers a grant that guarantees every elementary school child in three separate towns an opportunity to attend summer camp because of its value to the overall learning process (http://www.acacamps.org/media_center/camp_trends/article13.php).

By offering programs that complement the academic standards of school districts, camps are demonstrating how experiential education can be a strong addition to a school's curriculum. The American Camp Association's publication, *Creating Camp-School Partnerships, A Guidebook to Success*, recommends that camp leaders consider the following questions before entering into a partnership with a school:

Why are you doing this? Whether the interest to partner is based on increasing attendance and cash flow to playing a larger role in education and youth development efforts, having a clear answer to this question will determine the level of commitment that the camp and school are poised to make.

Is the proposed partnership consistent with your mission? Pursuing a "great idea" can be a distraction or a drain on resources if it is inconsistent with the camp's mission. Therefore, a strong school-camp linkage must allow the camp to stay true to its mission.

How will this impact your other programs? Assessing program capacity and the logistical demands that the partnership will require is an important step before entering into a school partnership. Will it require more staff or program changes or would it interfere with planning?

How well do you know your potential partners? Take time to conduct due diligence about potential partners and "dig deep for hidden agendas." The more each partner knows about the other, the stronger the partnership will be.

How well do you know yourself? Understanding the camp's strengths and weaknesses helps determine what a camp has to offer public school partners and what type of time and resources are available to commit to the partnership.

Are you committed to this for the long term? It is important to see the partnership as a long-term investment that will more likely pay off dividends down the road (http://www.acacamps.org/cspg.doc).

The *Guidebook* goes on to offer five common reasons that partnerships between schools and camps fail:

Camp people don't think of themselves as educators. Therefore, they don't ask the right questions, focus on the right issues, or speak the right language. Most important, they fail to demonstrate how their camping program relates to the school's improvement goals.

Camps get frustrated with the policies, procedures, process, and red tape of large, bureaucratic schools districts.

Unforeseen budget cuts can undermine a partnership, especially if you have put all of your eggs in one basket.

The partners don't approach it as a true partnership. One side thinks it owns the program rather than sharing responsibility and credit.

Camps fail to build and nurture relationships with key educational leaders.

Whereas, this list focuses primarily on the role of camps and how camps might contribute to a failed relationship, it's easy to imagine inverting the reasons to focus on how schools might just as easily contribute to unsuccessful collaborations.

In this report, we offered conditions and strategies for deepening linkages. Much of our thinking was informed by the frameworks and information listed in this appendix. ▪▪