

Make Summer Count (MSC)

Summary

PEP's mission is to collaborate with the community, educators and elected officials to support and strengthen public education and student achievement in Greenville County Schools. MSC, a core initiative in this mission, provides students and families resources and opportunities to encourage reading through the summer. MSC engages students in summer reading in 2 key ways:

- Provide students with books during the summer to build their home libraries, and
- Host school-based Family Reading Nights at which families learn techniques and strategies to support their children's reading over the summer.

Demographics

- *Target Settings:* Urban, rural, suburban; in 29 public elementary schools across the county
- *Target Groups Served:* Children and families in higher-need elementary schools serving vulnerable student populations, defined as those with 50% or more of their students qualifying for Free and Reduced Price Meals
- *Districts Served:* Greenville

Research and Evaluation

What national or other research was considered during the development of this program/initiative? Describe the evidence that shows the program or initiative is relevant and effective.

Research indicates that during the summer months, elementary school students from low-income backgrounds experience greater reading loss compared to students from middle- and high-income backgrounds (Alexander, Entwisle, & Olson, 2001; Allington & McGill-Franzen, 2003; Cooper, Nye, Charlton, Lindsay & Greathouse, 1996; Kim, 2004). Allington and McGill-Franzen (2013) argue that this disparity in access to summer literacy resources results in "poor children typically lose reading proficiency during the summers and more advantaged children show modest reading growth during the same period" (p.ix). This phenomenon can lead to a two- to three-month gap in reading achievement between students from low- and middle-income families that accumulates to a substantial gap in reading achievement by the time students enter high school (Alexander, Entwisle, & Olson, 2007).

School districts have attempted to address summer reading loss by providing center-based summer school programs, but this approach is costly and difficult to sustain. In the absence of summer school programs, experts theorize that providing access to books over the summer may address summer reading loss in a more cost effective way (Allington, McGill-Franzen, Camilli, Graff, Zeig, Zmach, & Nowak, 2010). Moreover, strengthening the school and home relationship by encouraging parental support of summer reading is a key component to ensuring that children read during the summer, and that they read in ways that build understanding (Kim & White, 2011).

These principles are the foundation of MSC's goal of providing opportunities for all students to experience rich reading experiences of the summer.

Evaluation:

Scholastic Inc. conducted an evaluation of the 2016 MSC program to learn about the program's implementation procedures and outcomes. Measures used for data collection and key findings are below.

Measures:

Students. Surveys about literacy behaviors, attitudes and beliefs about reading, intrinsic motivation, and home literacy environment; book logs; student assessment data from the reading portion of the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP)

Families. Surveys about family background, literacy behaviors of parents, home literacy environment, and parent/child conversations about books; family focus groups; text messages to a select number of families during the summer.

Analysis:

Data on over 8,000 students and over 100 families was analyzed by a third-party vendor to answer our research questions around the impact of Make Summer Count on students and families. Analyses included exploration of pre-post student surveys for students in grades 3-5; analyses of MAP reading subtests (goal) and overall scores for students in grades 3 -5; and analyses of book logs for students in grades 1 – 5. Family data was captured from families who attended one of the 25 Family Literacy Nights hosted by GCS and PEP.

Key findings:

- MSC students read more books over the summer than the national average.
 - MSC students read an average of 14.7 books, compared to the national average of 12 books.
- The majority of students participating in MSC did not experience the summer reading loss that is typically associated with students in higher-needs schools.
 - More specifically, 78% of 3rd–5th grade students maintained or increased their reading level from spring to fall 2016.
- Students who read more books over the summer were less likely to experience summer reading loss.
 - Students who read 11 or more books were less likely to experience summer reading loss as defined by moving to a lower MAP performance tier at the end of the summer.
- There was a substantial increase in reading stamina, or the time spent reading without taking a break, from spring to fall 2016.
 - The percent of students who read for one hour or more without stopping increased from 13% to 26%.
- Students reported increased confidence in reading after participating in the MSC program.
 - 82% agreed that they were better readers after the summer.
- Families overwhelmingly found the MSC program to be valuable.
 - 99% agreed that the program contributed to their children reading more books over the summer.
 - 98% agreed that their children were better readers after the summer.
 - 100% found Family Reading Nights to be valuable for learning about how to support their children’s reading.

Resources

- *Annual Cost:* \$437,410
- *Funding Sources:* BlueCross BlueShield of South Carolina, Greenville Health System, ScanSource, Inc., United Way of Greenville County, John I. Smith Charities, Jolley Foundation, Hollingsworth Funds, Graham Foundation, TD Charitable Foundation, individual donors
- *Staffing Needs:* : PEP staff leads and manages the Make Summer Count program.
- *Infrastructure/Equipment Needs:* Infrastructure/Equipment needed to implement Make Summer Count includes a variety of materials and a team of human resources representing a multi-stakeholder group of community innovators.
- *Partner Organizations:* Greenville County Schools; Scholastic Inc.

Contact Information

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Links to other information, i.e., news articles, videos, etc.:

- <https://twitter.com/davidphearne/status/855105013600931840>
- <https://twitter.com/tbrinkma/status/855086514841190400>
- <https://twitter.com/PEPGreenville/status/855146831726211075> (photo)
- <http://mediaroom.scholastic.com/press-release/new-research-public-education-partners-scholastic-confirms-positive-impact-supporting-edu@Scholastic>
- blog post: <http://edublog.scholastic.com/post/reading-helps-kids-make-summer-count-greenville-sc#>

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