

# UNITED WAY COMMUNITY SCHOOL BEST PRACTICES FOR SUMMER LEARNING

## United Way of the Greater Lehigh Valley

Supports quality summer learning opportunities and best practices that align with the six conditions of the Community School model.

Provides technical assistance to support the implementation of approved best practices, grant writing and resource development, and research and evaluation.

### Why Is Summer Learning Important?

Children trapped in poverty without access to high-quality summer learning resources, such as lessons, summer camps, educational vacations, and other enrichment opportunities,<sup>1</sup> experience what mounting research has deemed the “summer slide.” This process is defined as a cumulative loss of academic skills over the summer months that disproportionately affects low income students, contributing to high drop-out rates and a persistent achievement gap between richer and poorer kids. Partners from across the Lehigh Valley have come together to form a Summer Learning Coalition aimed at systematically addressing this issue through standardized practices and directed resources to make summer learning opportunities available to more children.

- 2/3 of the 9th grade achievement gap is due to limited quality summer learning opportunities for low income kids prior to 9th grade.
- These disparities put low-income children 2 1/2–3 grade levels behind peers by 5th grade.

### Comprehensive Planning Guide: National Summer Learning Association: Summer Starts in September: Comprehensive Planning Guide for Summer Learning Programs

This guide includes research-based strategies, program examples and tools that summer program staff, leaders and trainers can use to develop an intentional, high-impact program.

The guide is brought to life by 80 summer learning quality indicators, developed and tested through years of partnership with summer learning programs, researchers and trainers. Together, these indicators make up the National Summer Learning Association’s Comprehensive Assessment of Summer Programs (CASP). **Price: \$95.00**

Please visit [summerlearning.site-ym.com/store/ViewProduct.aspx?id=1972728](http://summerlearning.site-ym.com/store/ViewProduct.aspx?id=1972728).

**Model: Horizons National** is a network of transformational, community-centered education programs that put low-income children on a path to success in school and life. Students

attend a six-week summer program on the campuses of independent schools, colleges or universities, and receive additional support throughout the year. In small classes, led by professional teachers, students dive into rich curricula with a focus on reading, STEM and art. Swimming and other confidence-boosting activities break down barriers to success and expose children to new opportunities. Children join Horizons the summer before kindergarten and return to the program each year through 12th grade, building lasting relationships with their teachers and peers, and developing lifelong skills like commitment and determination.

Please visit [www.horizonsnational.org/approach](http://www.horizonsnational.org/approach).

### Program: Lehigh Valley Summer Bridge

At Lehigh Valley Summer Bridge, through Moravian Academy, over 80 middle school students throughout the Lehigh Valley enroll in two summers of enrichment classes and two years of after-school tutoring. During the school year, area high school and college students volunteer one or more afternoons a week to tutor students.

- Summer Bridge students attend a rigorous six-week program taught entirely by high school and college students.
- Academic classes focus on pre-algebra, mathematics, expository writing, literature, and laboratory science.
- Summer events include community service projects, a talent show, weekly speaker’s series, an Olympics game day and an end of summer celebration.

Please visit [www.moravianacademy.org/page/Our-Story/Summerbridge](http://www.moravianacademy.org/page/Our-Story/Summerbridge).

### Model: Springboard Collaborative (Elementary School)

Springboard Collaborative is a five-week literacy program for Pre-K through 3rd grade students and their families. Based out of Philadelphia, Springboard Collaborative closes the reading achievement gap by coaching teachers, training family members, and incentivizing learning. This program includes:

- Home visits
- Half-day literacy instruction
- Family workshops showing parents how to pick a book on their child’s reading level and read with them.
- Coaching – site manager ensures classrooms are complete while teachers improve practice.
- Learning bonuses – Contingent on parent attendance and commensurate with student reading and growth (includes books and tablets during capstone celebration).

Please visit [springboardcollaborative.org/](http://springboardcollaborative.org/).

<sup>1</sup> National Summer Learning Association.

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