

Summer Learning Loss – The Problem

- School is the primary source of academic learning for low-income students. Higher-income students continue to build their knowledge and skills in the summer through experiences such as camp, classes or travel, but low-income students have limited access to similar learning opportunities. Not surprisingly, achievement gaps between low-income and higher-income students grow during the summer.
- Research shows that two-thirds of the ninth grade reading achievement gap between low- and higher-income students can be attributed to unequal access to summer learning opportunities. [National Center for Summer Learning - Alexander, K., Entwisle, D., and Olson, L. (2007). Lasting consequences of the summer learning gap. *American Sociological Review*, 72, 167-180]
- While most students lose math skills over the summer months, low-income students also lose two to three months in reading skills during the summer, putting them farther and farther behind their higher-income peers. [Cooper, H., Nye, B., Charlton, K., Lindsay, J., & Greathouse, S. (1996). The effects of summer vacation on achievement test scores: A narrative and meta-analytic review. *Review of Educational Research*]
- By the end of 5th grade, low-income students are up to 2 ½ years behind in reading compared to their higher-income peers, largely because low-income students' reading skills are stagnating or declining over the summer months. [National Center for Summer Learning - Alexander, K. L., Entwisle, D. R., & Olsen, L. S. (2004). Schools, achievement, and inequality.. In G. D. Borman, & M. Boulay (Eds.), *Summer learning: Research, policies, and programs* (pp.25-52), Lawrence Erlbaum Associates. Seppanen, P., deVries, D., and Seligson, M. (1993) *National study of before- and afterschool programs.*]
- Academically strong students are not immune to summer learning loss. High-achieving students' reading skills are more likely to decline over the summer as compared to low-achieving students' reading skills. [McCall, et al., *Achievement Gaps: An Examination of Differences in Student Achievement and Growth*, Northwest Evaluation Association, November 2006.]
- African-American and Hispanic high-achieving students experience a greater decline in reading skills over the summer than their White high-achieving peers. [McCall, et al., *Achievement Gaps: An Examination of Differences in Student Achievement and Growth*, NWEA, November 2006.]

Breakthrough – The Solution

- Breakthrough provides students who are most at risk for summer learning loss with an intensive, academically rigorous six week summer program. As a result, Breakthrough students do not lose ground over the summer. In fact, data show that Breakthrough students make significant gains over the summer in reading, writing and math fluency.



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