

# Starting School with Success: How Summer Learning Closes Gaps in the Early Years

September 3, 2024



# Moderator



**Natalia Sol**

National Partnerships

National Summer Learning Association (NSLA)

# Panelists



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# Panelists



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Director of Community Schools  
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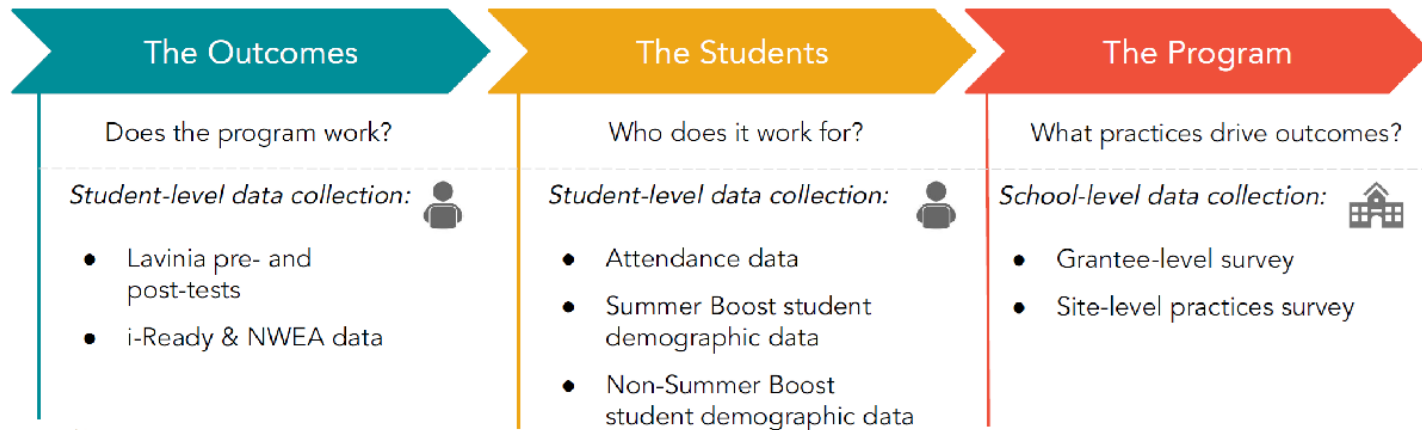


**Jackie Taslim**  
Co-President  
Lavinia Group

# Research Questions & Data Collected

With Bloomberg Philanthropies' investment, Summer Boost 2023 served **35,163 students** across **8 cities** with critical summer learning in Math & ELA. Bloomberg Philanthropies also set out to evaluate the program to better understand its impact on student learning.

*Below are the research questions we aimed to answer and the data we collected.*





## Summer Boost Works: Math

Consistent with other research, Summer Boost had a **statistically significant, positive impact on student growth in math**. These impacts were evident on Fall 2023 i-Ready and NWEA tests, which students took weeks, or in some cases months, after the summer program ended.

This estimate is based on the national average for Grade 4 and 8 learning losses on NAEP testing.

Exact learning loss recovery rates vary based on specific geographical COVID impact.

### Math

**~4-5 weeks**

*Additional Weeks of Learning\**

**~31% learning loss recovered\*\***

*High confidence in magnitude of impact*  
✓ *Consistent across 4/4 robustness checks*

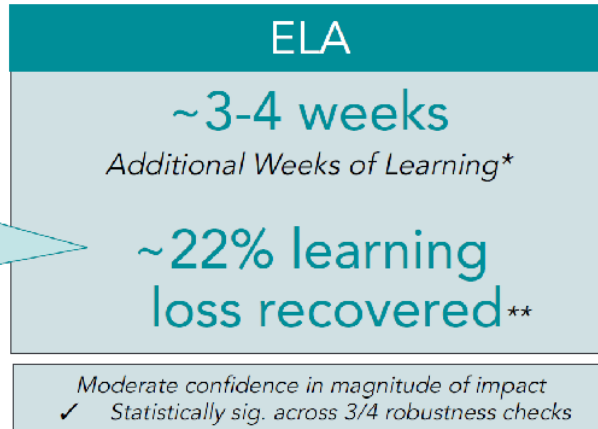


## Summer Boost Works: ELA

Summer Boost had a **positive impact on student growth in ELA**. Of four robustness checks, three found **statistically significant effects**, while one showed **positive** but not statistically significant effects. These findings – including the difference in impact for math vs. ELA growth – are consistent with other research.

This estimate is based on the national average for Grade 4 and 8 learning losses on NAEP testing.

Exact learning loss recovery rates vary based on specific geographical COVID impact.



### Hypothesis

*Why do students grow more in math than ELA in summer learning?*

Researchers hypothesize that while students may read outside of school, they rarely practice math outside of school; so students who receive extra math instruction during the summer may show more growth compared to their peers.



Note: \*Metric is based on the amount of [achievement growth](#) experienced by an average 3rd Grade student across a typical 9-month school year.

\*\*Metric uses national data from [NAEP indicating differences](#) in test scores between 2019 and 2022. Note that NYC is not included in this metric.

Overview: Summer Boost had impact across demographic groups, cities, achievement levels, and grades, with some particular bright spots



## The Students

### All Demographic Groups



Students across all demographic groups benefited from Summer Boost, with ELL students showing the strongest growth compared to peers.

*Summer Boost is effective across students from different backgrounds, and may be particularly helpful for ELL students.*

### Geographies



Students across participating cities benefited from Summer Boost.

*The program can be implemented effectively across multiple geographies and contexts.*

### Achievement Levels



Summer Boost primarily recruits students farther behind. All achievement levels grew, but the higher a student started Summer Boost, the more they grew.

*Summer Boost works for students at all levels, and it may be worth exploring strategies to accelerate students farthest behind.*

### Later Grade Levels



Students across all grade levels saw growth compared to their non-participant peers, with the greatest growth for students entering grades 4-8.

*The program has impact across grade levels, and consistent with other research produces even greater growth in the later grades.*

Implication



Overview: Programs operating in a **variety of contexts and approaches** all saw positive impacts on student growth

## The Program

### Balanced Approach



While all program structures boosted student growth, those that **balanced time on enrichment and instruction saw stronger results** than programs with either enrichment- or instruction- heavy schedules.

*Providing programs with program design best practices could increase Summer Boost impact.*

### 70% Attendance Rate



**Student attendance rates were linked to positive growth**, particularly over the 70% threshold.

*Continued focus on attendance is likely to have a positive impact on student outcomes.*

### Curriculum Flexibility



Students grew regardless of if their program utilized **Lavinia vs. a school selected curriculum**.

*Summer Boost can continue to offer flexibility on curriculum to ensure grantees can select a program that best suits students' needs.*

### Program Replication



Students **grew** whether they attended programs held by **first time or repeat grantees**.

*This data focuses on grantees; we expect impact on repeating students will be available for Summer Boost '2024.*

*Expanding program offerings to new grantees will not sacrifice program impact.*

Implication

## Math & ELA findings are in line with the current field of research

Summer Boost findings are in line with other studies on the impacts of summer programming on student growth, with more robust and consistent results in Math across studies.

Study	Duration	Treatment Size	Method	Findings / Effect*
Summer Boost Evaluation (summer 2023)	1 summer	~35,000	DiD with Event Study	Math: 0.07* SD, statistically significant increase ELA: 0.04* SD, statistically significant increase in 3 of 4 robustness checks
<a href="#">RAND</a> (2014)	2 summers	~5,000	RCT	Math: 0.08* SD, statistically significant increase ELA: 0.02 SD, positive growth but not statistically significant Two summers of high attendance led to more substantial, but not statistically significant, benefits.
<a href="#">Calder / AIR</a> (2022)	1 summer	130,000	Value-added model	Math: 0.03* SD, statistically significant increase ELA: no observed effect
<a href="#">Teach Baltimore</a> (2006)	3 summers	500	RCT	ELA: 0.30* SD, statistically significant impact for students attending 2 of 3 summers at an average to above-average attendance rate.

\*Indicates a statistically significant result



For reference, an improvement of 1 standard deviation (SD) is equal to an improvement of about 37 percentile points. Average Covid learning loss was ~0.2 SD.

# Research Supporting Other Findings of Summer Boost Impact



Our findings have been cross-referenced with potential explanations for the outcomes observed in previous studies.

Key Findings	Preliminary Hypotheses Under Consideration
Rising 4th through 8th graders showed the highest level of student growth	Meta-analyses suggest that students in upper grades gain more because they tend to lose the most ground when not offered summer programming. <sup>1</sup> <i>Implication: Formal summer school instruction through Summer Boost may have helped mitigate learning loss for older students.</i>
ELL students showed the strongest growth compared to their non-SB peers	Non-SB ELL students may not be exposed to instruction in English during the summer, leading to increased learning loss when they return to school in the fall. <sup>2</sup> <i>Implication: Summer Boost ELL students were exposed to a minimum of 90 math &amp; ELA instructional minutes over an average 20 days, maintaining a consistent stream of learning and English language ahead of returning to school.</i>
Balanced approach to academics and enrichment produced the most student growth	Research suggests integration of academic content and enrichment tends to accelerate student academic learning. <sup>3</sup> <i>Implication: Summer Boost's findings are in line with effective programming practices.</i>

<sup>1</sup> Borman, G.D., & D'Agostino, J.V. (1996), Chall, J.S. (1996); <sup>2</sup> Jaekel, N. & Fincher, E. (2022); <sup>3</sup> Beckett, M., Borman, G., Capizzano, J., Parsley, D., Ross, S., Schirm, A., & Taylor, J. (2009)

# Waterford Summer Learning Path



## Who We Are

We are a national early education not-for-profit providing equitable access to proven programs for children and the adults who support them.



## Strong Foundation

Engaging characters, songs, books, and activities built on the science of reading and aligned to standards. Weekly reports and end of summer summaries are provided.



## What We Do

We offer summer programs with flexible implementation models that can be delivered wherever children learn - at home or in the community.



## Strong Evidence

What Works Clearinghouse inclusion. 53 studies over 10 years representing diverse learners. Nine Tier 1 'strong evidence' studies.



## How It Works

Tailored, adaptive software builds reading, math, and science skills for PreK-2 children, built with inclusive representation of cultures.



## Strong Supports

Dedicated coaches share suggestions for building routines, learning ideas and overall support for a sturdy bridge to school success. Coaching available in English and Spanish.

# ESSA Evidence of Waterford Impact

53 Studies Over 10 Years Representing a Wide Variety of Learners

9

Tier 1 Studies  
Strong Evidence

9

Tier 2 Studies  
Moderate Evidence

14

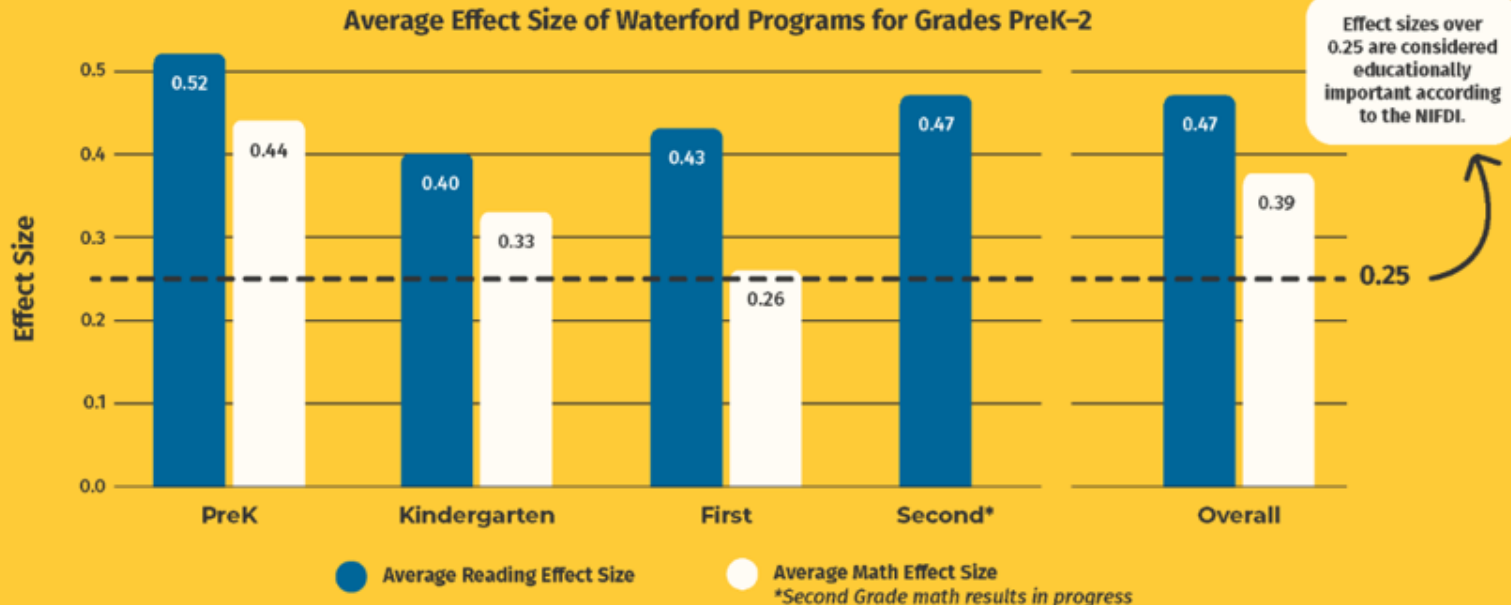
Tier 3 Studies  
Promising Evidence

21

Tier 4 Studies  
Demonstrates a Rationale

## 76,300 PreK–2 Learners Participated in Research Studies

Average Effect Size of Waterford Programs for Grades PreK–2



# Questions & Discussion

# Upcoming GLR Learning Tuesdays Webinars:

## KINDERGARTEN MATTERS

TBD

Tuesday, September 10, 3:00-4:30 pm ET/12-1:30 p.m. PT

## FUNDER TO FUNDER CONVERSATION

When Disaster Hits: Philanthropic Responses to Natural and Man-made Disasters

Tuesday, September 17, 12:30-2:00 pm ET/9:30-11:00 am PT

## LEARNING LOSS RECOVERY CHALLENGE

Locked Out of Literacy: Tackling the Illiteracy Crisis Together

Tuesday, September 17, 3:00-4:30 pm ET/12-1:30 p.m. PT

## PEER EXCHANGE

Ready, Set, Go (Part 2): Realizing the Potential of Out of School Time to Deliver High-Quality Programming for Early Learners and Parents

Tuesday, September 24, 12:30-2:00 pm ET/9:30-11:00 am PT

Join us!

[gradelevelreading.net](http://gradelevelreading.net) [@readingby3rd](https://twitter.com/readingby3rd) [#GLReading](https://twitter.com/GLReading) [#LearningTuesdays](https://twitter.com/LearningTuesdays) [#GLRKeepers](https://twitter.com/GLRKeepers)

