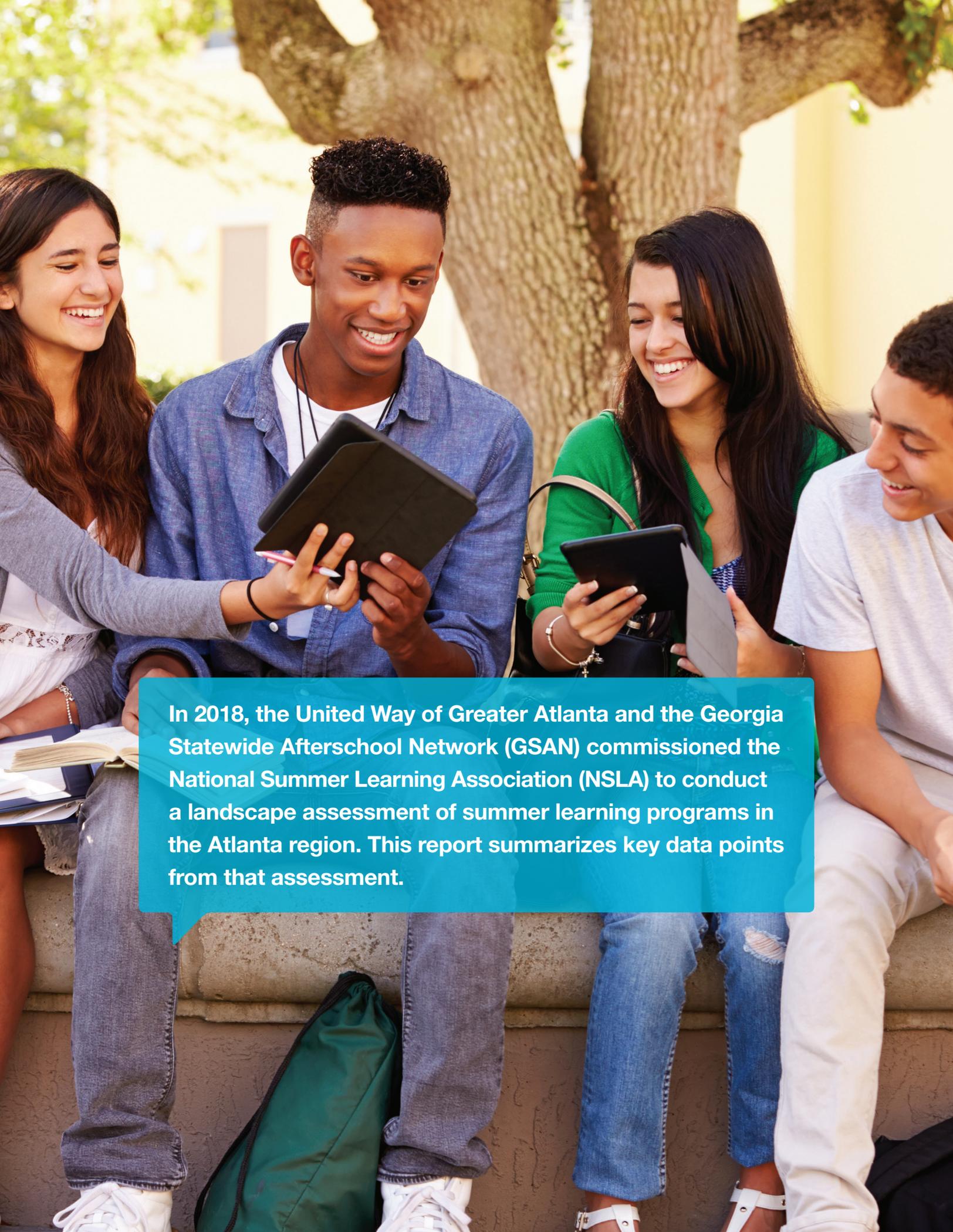


summer matters: a community landscape report

greater atlanta

Across Greater Atlanta, children and youth are being served by private and public entities that offer academic, STEM, literacy, health and wellness, social-emotional, sports, and arts programming.



In 2018, the United Way of Greater Atlanta and the Georgia Statewide Afterschool Network (GSAN) commissioned the National Summer Learning Association (NSLA) to conduct a landscape assessment of summer learning programs in the Atlanta region. This report summarizes key data points from that assessment.

intro

SUMMER LEARNING IN GREATER ATLANTA

Across Greater Atlanta, children and youth are being served by private and public entities that offer academic, STEM, literacy, health and wellness, social-emotional, sports, and arts programming. Persistent gaps in educational outcomes still exist between low-income students and their more affluent peers.

Of the 1.3 million children living in the Greater Atlanta region, nearly half a million children live in communities with low or very low child well-being. Nearly a quarter of them are living in poverty. Less than half of 3rd graders are exceeding 3rd grade reading standards and less than half of 8th graders are exceeding 8th grade math standards, while only 80% of high school students are graduating.

There are many root causes for achievement gaps including lack of quality early childhood education, low literacy rates, suspension or expulsion from school, developmental delays and disability, low parental literacy, exposure to childhood trauma, and poor school attendance—often due to illness or lack of transportation. Often overlooked is summer learning loss as a major factor contributing to the achievement gap.

Summer presents myriad opportunities for most middle- and high-income children and youth like family vacations, museum trips, summer camps, and access to books and learning materials. The largest-ever summer learning study conducted by the RAND Corporation found that it was clear that low-income students experienced more setbacks

over the summer compared to their wealthier peers. Most students lose two months of mathematical skills, and low-income students typically lose another two to three months in reading every summer.

Without access to summer learning programs, children and youth can also lose other vital supports including access to healthy meals, academic enrichment, social and emotional support, arts, sports, and connections to healthcare. Many communities invest in high quality summer learning programs and camps to ensure all children, regardless of identity or income, have the opportunity to stay engaged, learning, and thriving during the summer months.

This report highlights the findings of a community assessment of the Greater Atlanta region's summer learning landscape during 2018. The assessment offers a snapshot of existing summer programs, including data on youth served and types of programming offered. Additionally, a self-assessment of Greater Atlanta's summer learning system was completed by key partners. Together these assessments create an opportunity to learn more about the range of summer opportunities available, gaps in services or data, and steps that can be taken to increase region-wide impact.

COMMUNITY DEMOGRAPHICS OF GREATER ATLANTA REGION¹

Total Regional Population	4.6 million
Total Regional Child Population	1.3 million
Percent of Students Exceeding 3rd Grade Reading Standards	44.1%
Percent of Students Exceeding 8th Grade Math Standards	46.7%
High School Graduation Rate	80.3%
Percent of Children in Poverty	24.2%
Percent of Families Not Financially Stable	31.3%
Percent of Enrolled in Post-Secondary Education	75.6%
Unemployment Rate	10.2%

¹ United Way of Greater Atlanta, Stakeholder Report 2018

KEY FINDINGS

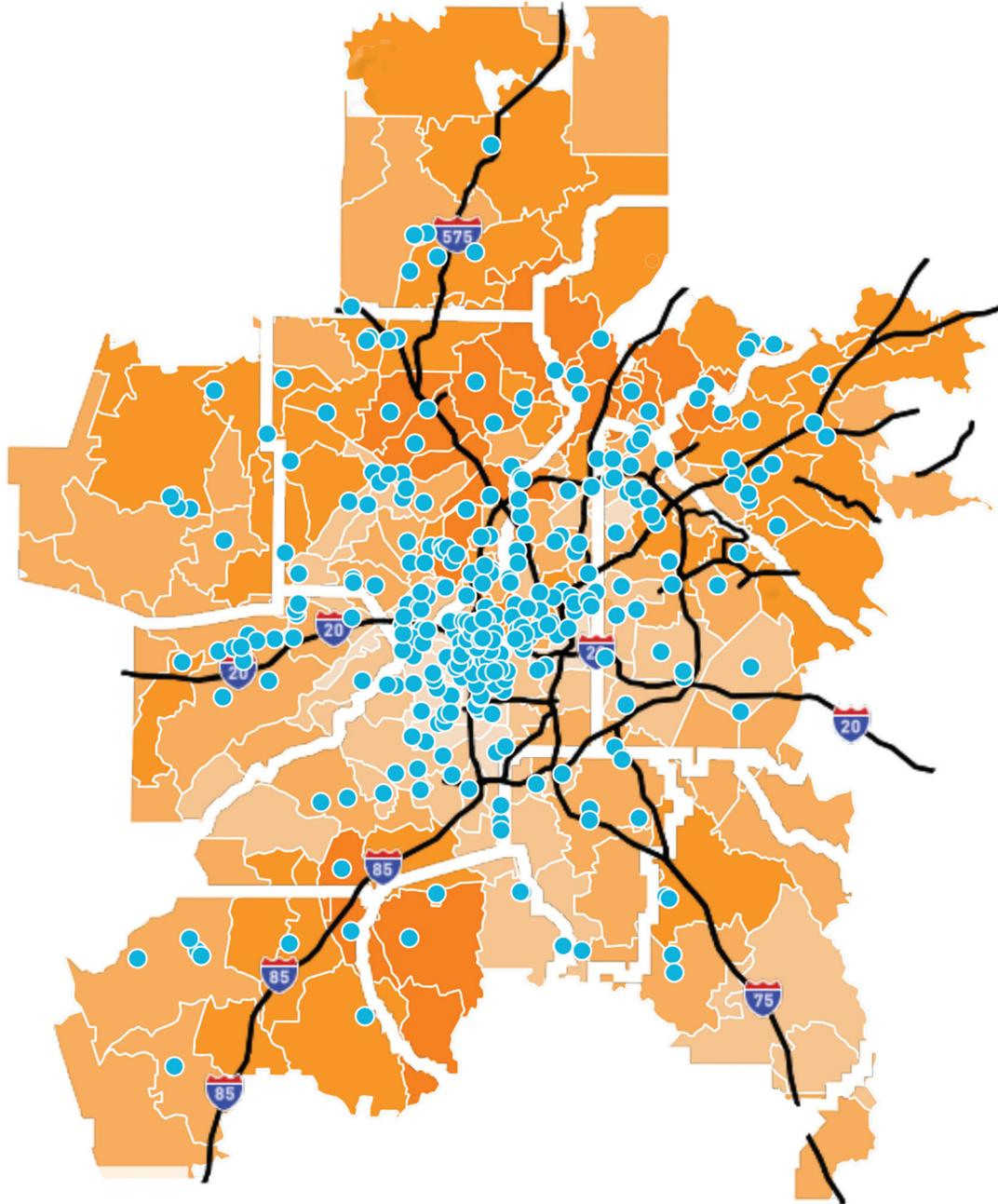
The most common content areas provided by summer programs were Academic Enrichment (71%), STEM (60%), and Literacy/Reading Skill (51%).

Only a quarter of the programs served high school youth. Older youth need access to opportunities for internships and apprenticeships, college and career readiness, and financial literacy.

The most common barrier to enrollment was youth finding transportation to and from the program.

summer learning in greater atlanta

discover



CHILD WELL-BEING

VERY LOW

AVERAGE

VERY HIGH



PROGRAM SITE





GREATER ATLANTA SUMMER PROGRAM THEMES & FOCUS AREAS

The most common content areas provided by Atlanta summer programs were Academic Enrichment (71%), STEM (60%), and Literacy/Reading Skills (51%).

Very few programs offered Summer Jobs/Career Exploration or Financial Literacy.

These activities tend to be offered to older youth, and fewer programs served those age groups.

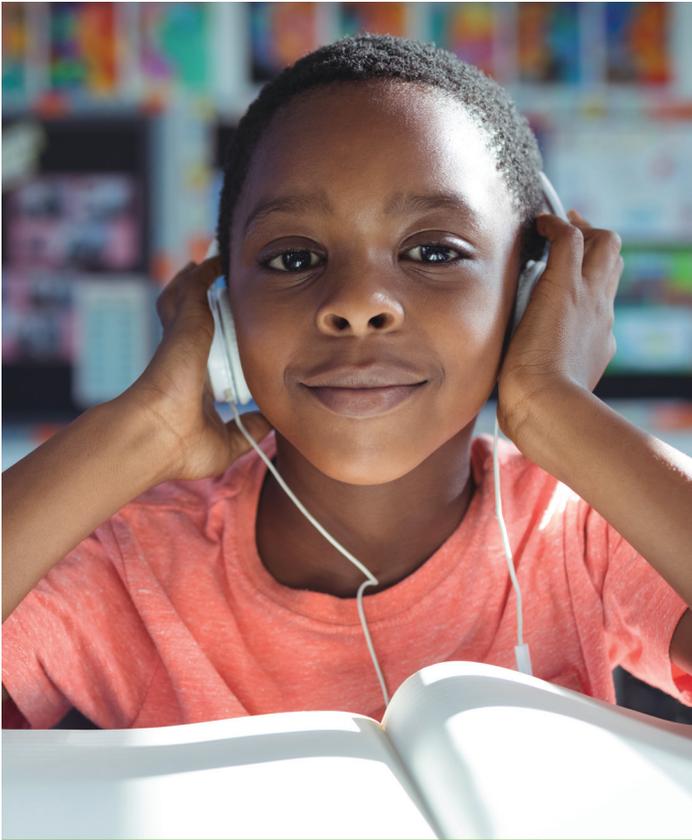
PROGRAM CONTENT AREAS	PERCENT OF PROGRAMS
Academic Enrichment	71%
STEM	60%
Literacy/Reading Skills	51%
Health & Wellness	47%
Social-Emotional Learning	44%
Sports/Recreation	41%
Crafts	38%
Visual & Performing Arts	33%
Cultural Enrichment	25%
Civic Engagement/Community Service	23%
Family & Parents Activities	22%
College Readiness	21%
Mentoring	20%
Services for Students with Special Needs	17%
Academic Remediation/Credit Recovery	17%
Job/Career Readiness	15%
Summer Jobs/Career Exploration	8%
Financial Literacy	7%

Most Atlanta summer programs served elementary-aged youth.

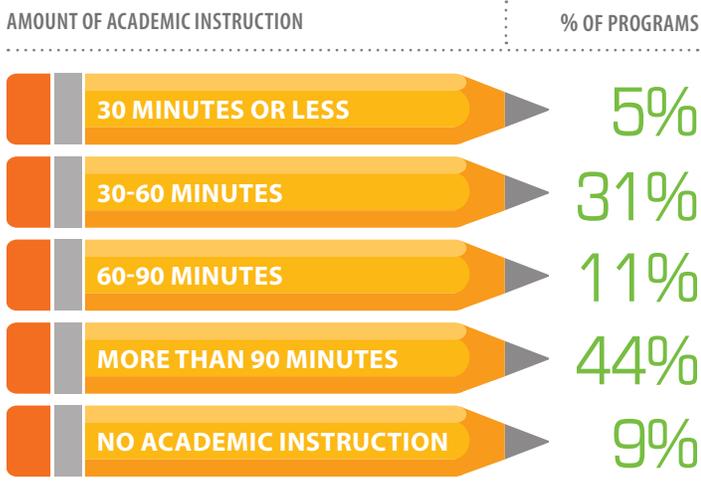
Third and fourth graders had access to 129 programs, while youth at both ends of the age spectrum had far fewer programs serving these critical transition periods.

GRADES	NUMBER OF PROGRAMS SERVED
Preschool, K	46
Grades 1-2	119
Grades 3-4	129
Grades 5-6	119
Grades 7-8	80
Grades 9-10	66
Grades 11-12	57
Transition to College	15

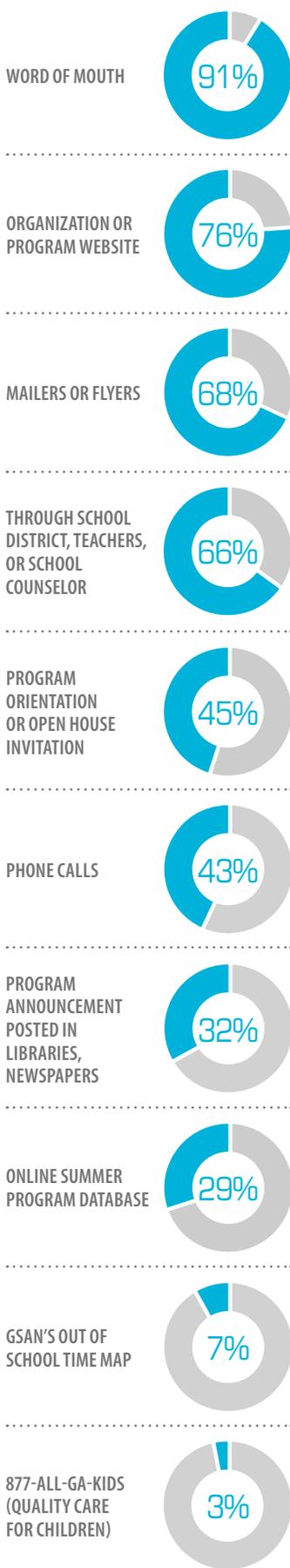
academic instruction



Most programs offered a significant amount of academic instruction time each day. Incorporating 2-3 hours per day is often enough to produce measureable gains in reading or math.



HOW FAMILIES FIND THE PROGRAM



BARRIERS TO ENROLLMENT



meals served

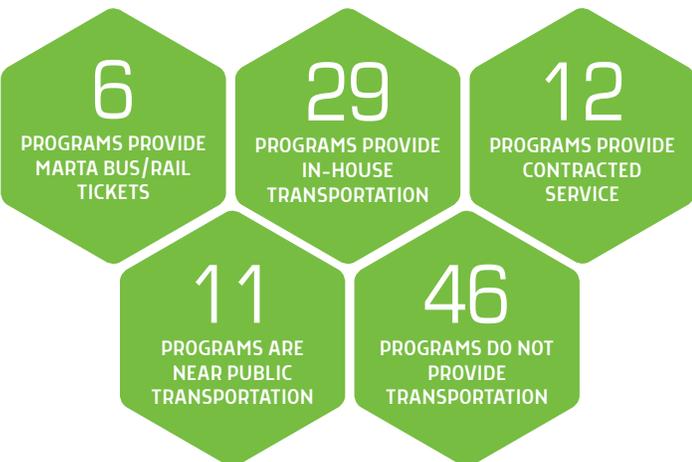
BREAKFAST	NO. PROGRAMS	83
LUNCH		116
SUPPER/DINNER		6
SNACK		94
DON'T PROVIDE MEALS		40



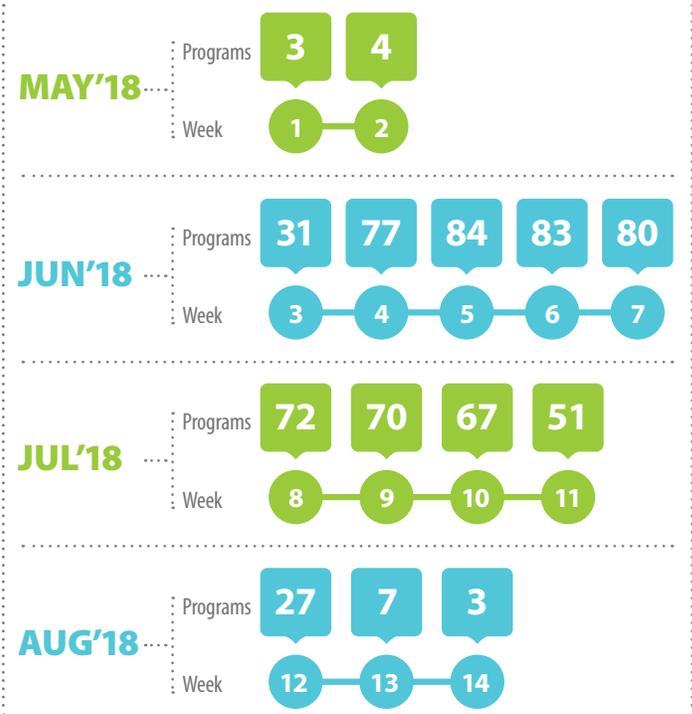
Three-fourths of programs reported serving at least one meal. Of those that did, 94% served lunch and 66% served breakfast and lunch. A quarter of programs did not serve a meal or snack. Summer programs are often the only consistent source of meals for youth who receive free breakfast and lunch at school during the rest of the year.



TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS



number of programs operating per calendar week



- 16% OPERATED PROGRAMS 4 WEEKS OR LESS
- 49% OPERATED PROGRAMS 5-8 WEEKS
- 34% OF PROGRAMS OPERATED 9 OR MORE WEEKS

The majority of Atlanta summer programs operate during June and July, with fewer programs being open right after or before the school year. While there is good coverage in the number of programs that are offered throughout the summer, there also seems to be good coverage throughout the day, as most organizations reported either offering a full day of programming or partnering with other organizations to do so.



THE COMMUNITY INDICATORS OF EFFECTIVE SUMMER LEARNING SYSTEMS

Developed in 2013, NSLA's Community Indicators of Effective Summer Learning Systems (CIESLS) rating scale is based on the theory that effective summer learning systems can provide more summer learning opportunities for youth, improve program quality, and improve outcomes for youth through coordinated and collaborative action at the community level.

Based on research on system-building, best practices in existing afterschool and summer systems, and a survey of community intermediaries and program providers, NSLA developed a set of 39 indicators that define the size, scope, and features of summer learning systems. These indicators are used to measure community progress in achieving system-building milestones in each of the rating scale's six domains:

- 1) Shared Vision and City-wide Coordination
- 2) Engaged Leadership
- 3) Data Management System
- 4) Continuous Quality Improvement
- 5) Sustainable Resources
- 6) Marketing and Communications

Key stakeholders in the Greater Atlanta area were asked to self-assess the current state of the region's summer learning system based on the CIESLS. Their assessment is discussed below.

1) SHARED VISION AND CITY-WIDE COORDINATION

A shared vision for summer learning, which informs a community-wide summer learning action plan, should coordinate the efforts of a diverse group of stakeholders and support community-wide collaboration. Some organizations have plans for their own summer learning programs and the Summer Opportunities Workgroup, consisting of a few key players, meets several times a year, but there is no community-wide summer learning action plan with shared goals or activities. There is not enough representation from the community due to many reasons including a lack awareness of the initiative, a lack of coordinated efforts, and a need for more resources.

Recommendation: NSLA recommends that the region develop a community-wide summer learning vision to engage the broader community, including local education agencies, businesses, private donors, and civic and community leaders. The first step to starting the conversation can be convening stakeholders to discuss the results of the community landscape report.

2) ENGAGED LEADERSHIP

Successful summer learning system-building requires community stakeholders and champions to advocate for summer programming, coordinate progress towards summer priorities, and share accountability for the development and implementation of the summer learning action plan. There are a few strong leaders in summer learning, but there is no systematic engagement of leadership. There is a need to identify summer learning champions and leaders from various stakeholder groups and from all localities to build a strong systems-level approach.

Recommendation: NSLA recommends that current summer leadership expand their engagement from the program to system-level and engage additional key stakeholders across a variety of sectors.

3) DATA MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Model summer learning systems implement processes for data collection, sharing, and analysis across stakeholders. While some Greater Atlanta stakeholder groups have standardized processes for data collection and evaluation in place at the program-level, there is no regional consensus on common data points nor a process for collecting data at the community-level. A data sharing agreement with the school district is being explored at the program-level but remains a complex goal to achieve.

Recommendation: NSLA recommends that the region examine the benefits and challenges of current data collection processes and identify common data points that can be standardized and systematically collected across multiple providers.

4) CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

Exemplary summer learning systems adopt a process for quality improvement at both the systemic and programmatic levels. While systems of quality improvement, including the Georgia Afterschool & Youth Development Quality Standards and Self-Assessment and Quality Ratings, exist in Georgia, there is no consistent adoption or use of program quality measures or an assessment tool across the region. Respondents identified a need for more professional development opportunities, including training on how to conduct assessments and use the resulting data for program improvement.

Recommendation: NSLA recommends developing a shared program quality framework. This should include adopting common standards and tools to assess the quality of summer programs across the region and increase professional development opportunities.

5) SUSTAINABLE RESOURCES

Community system-building around summer learning should consider the funding targets and strategies for both program development and growth, and system capacity-building. There is private, public, and local funding available for programmatic work, but it is not meeting the needs of all communities and is limited for capacity building and systematic work. Current funders do not communicate systematically, leading to gaps in funding for certain types of programs and geographic locations. There is a need to expand funding for areas lacking summer learning opportunities.

Recommendation: NSLA recommends that the region identify gaps in funding and sources being underutilized by mapping current summer funding including the following sources: private foundations, businesses, and local, state, and federal funding. NSLA also recommends building a transparent community-wide funding process for summer programs that may include an intermediary.

6) MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

Exemplary summer learning systems identify community-wide strategies to understand the demand for summer, build awareness of need and available resources, and support student recruitment and enrollment. Efforts to create centralized resources with current program information exist, but there is a need for more intentional, year-round community and family engagement strategies. There is also a need for shared messaging and advocacy to support awareness building and promotion of a community-wide action plan.

Recommendation: NSLA recommends developing shared messaging around the importance of high-quality summer learning opportunities. This message should include input from a variety of stakeholder groups.



where do we go from here?

High quality summer learning programs support the positive development of the whole child and can be a key strategy to improving child well-being. Greater Atlanta has an opportunity to be a leader in this space, but greater investment and infrastructure are needed to truly move the needle.

To ensure that all of Greater Atlanta's young people, particularly those most in need, have access to high quality summer learning opportunities, it is imperative to:

EXPAND FUNDING

Currently, not all young people have access to high quality summer learning opportunities. Increased and more coordinated funding from public and private sources is necessary to fill gaps in access and ensure quality of programming.

ENGAGE LEADERSHIP

Create a Summer Learning Council to develop a shared city-wide summer learning agenda. Critical voices include city and state officials, school districts, businesses, funders, program providers, childcare, and non-profits.

The Greater Atlanta region needs to fulfill these two criteria to be properly equipped to tackle the following next steps to increase access and strengthen the quality of Greater Atlanta's summer learning landscape.



TARGETED FUNDING

Dedicate funds to target gaps in summer learning to ensure affordability of programs, geographic diversity, and diversity of program type and ages served.

CREATE INTERMEDIARY

Invest in an intermediary to lead the shared city-wide summer learning agenda including providing shared professional development, resources, and communications.

QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

Adopt a common continuous quality improvement framework, including quality standards, an assessment tool, training, and technical assistance.

SOLVE TRANSPORTATION ISSUES

Create more partnerships among summer providers with school districts and public transportation to improve access and student retention.

DATA SHARING

Create data sharing measures to track program reach, identify service gaps, and develop shared metrics for youth outcomes.

EXPAND LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Increase the variety and availability of programs offered to youth during the summer by:

- Offering programming right after and before the school year in May and August to ensure continuity of learning;
- Providing meaningful learning opportunities for older youth including internships and apprenticeships, college and career readiness preparation, and financial literacy classes;
- Ensuring the coordination of aligned wrap-around supports, such as summer meals and connections to health and mental services.

participating organizations

Action Ministries	Fabricate Studios	Lithonia's Child Summer Camp Program
After-School All-Stars	FAMILY SUPPORT CIRCLE, INC	Little Ones Learning Center
Agape Youth and Family Center	Fayette County Parks and Recreation	Live Healthy Gwinnett
Agnes Scott Athletics Summer Sports Camp	Fugees Family, Inc.	Marietta Police Athletic League, Inc.
Alliance Theatre	Fun Creative Writin	Michael C. Carlos Museum
Atlanta Public Schools - Afterschool and Summer Programs	Future Foundation	New American Pathways
Atlanta Public Schools - Office of Early Learning	Future Seekers, Inc.	Next Generation Focus, Inc.
Bee's & Quotes Creative Children's Art Studio	Georgia Division of Family and Children Services, Afterschool Care Program	Odyssey Family Counseling Center
Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro Atlanta	Georgia Public Library Service	One 2 One Educational Support Inc.
Breakthrough Atlanta	Georgia TeenWork Internship Program	Piedmont Park Conservancy
Bricks4Kidz	Girl Scouts of Greater Atlanta	Raising Expectations Inc.
Camp Broadway, LLC	Girls Inc. of Greater Atlanta	Reach for Excellence
Camp Highland	Girls On The Run Atlanta	REACH Georgia
Camp Kudzu	GOALS Academy	River Green Academy
Carrie Steele-Pitts Home, Inc.	GoSTEM: Fun Summer of Service Program	Spruill Center for the Arts
Center for Pan Asian Community Services, Inc.	Gwinnett Alliance for Gifted Education	Street Smart Youth Project
Center for the Visually Impaired	Gwinnett County Parks and Recreation	TGA of Gwinnett County
Center Helping Obesity In Children End Successfully (C.H.O.I.C.E.S.)	Haverty Hollow	The Children's Museum Atlanta
Cherokee Recreation and Parks Agency	Henry County Parks and Recreation After School Program	The Lovett School
Children's Special Services, LLC	High Meadows School, Inc.	The Potter's House CDC
City of Atlanta Department of Parks, Recreation and The Mayor's Office of Cultural Affairs	High Touch High Tech Science Camp	The School Kids Club
Clay White, LLC	Horizons Atlanta	The Study Hall, Inc.
Clayton County Parks & Recreation	In the City Camp	UGA Extension Fulton County
Communities In Schools of Atlanta	International Rescue Committee in Atlanta Inc.	United Way PACE i3 Investing In Innovations
Community Guilds Inc.	Jared's Heart of Success Inc.	VOX Teen Communications
Corners Outreach	John & JeJuan Stewart Jr. Foundation	Whitefoord, Inc.
DeKalb County Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Affairs	Keeping Pace at Pace Academy	Wingain Inc.
Douglas County School System	Kiddos	YELLS (Youth Empowerment through Learning, Leading, and Serving, Inc.)
Easter Seals North Georgia	Kids Drone Zone	YMCA of Metro Atlanta
Easter Seals North Georgia, Inc.	KiDsGyM USA, Inc.	Young Engineers North Atlanta
Emmaus House	KinderCare Learning Center	Young Wall Street Traders, Inc.
	LaAmistad, Inc.	
	Latin American Association	
	Legomatics	

Limitation of the Data

Incomplete and Estimated Data

Complete data may not have been received from all targeted organizations and agencies for varying reasons. When considered as a whole, it is likely that incomplete and estimated data may have led to an underestimate of the total summer learning program landscape.

Double Counting

Because youth can participate in more than one program during the summer, they may be counted multiple times in the data used for this report. Where possible, we attempted to remove duplicate counts of children and youth.

Snapshot in Time

Data collection for this resource scan focused on summer 2018 and represents a snapshot in time. The extent to which providers are able to offer programs and the size of those programs may vary from year to year, sometimes substantially, based on available funding.



About United Way of Greater Atlanta

United Way of Greater Atlanta is the largest United Way in the nation and is focused on improving the lives of more than 250,000 children by 2027. Through the organization's Child Well-Being Impact Fund, it invests more than 140 programs in 13 counties to help children succeed in school, improve the financial stability of families, provide affordable and accessible healthcare and end homelessness.

**United Way of
Greater Atlanta**



www.unitedwayatlanta.org

About Georgia Statewide Afterschool Network

The Georgia Statewide Afterschool Network (GSAN) is a public-private collaborative that envisions a day when all communities in Georgia have the resources to provide exceptional afterschool and summer programming. GSAN's mission is to advance, connect, and support high quality afterschool and summer learning programs to promote the success of children and youth throughout Georgia.



GEORGIA STATEWIDE AFTERSCHOOL NETWORK

www.afterschoolga.org

About the National Summer Learning Association

The National Summer Learning Association (NSLA) is the only national nonprofit exclusively focused on closing the achievement gap by increasing access to high-quality summer learning opportunities. NSLA recognizes and disseminates what works, offers expertise and support for programs and communities, and advocates for summer learning as a solution for equity and excellence in education. NSLA's work is driven by the belief that all children and youth deserve high-quality summer learning experiences that will help them succeed in college, career, and life.



**national summer
learning association**

www.summerlearning.org