

To: Senator Florence Shapiro (Co-chair) florence.shapiro@senate.state.tx.us/Representative Rob Eissler (Co-chair) Rob.Eissler@house.state.tx.us

Please forward my e-mail written testimony to Members of the Select Committee on Public School Accountability.
~Thanks.

To: Senator Patrick

P.O. Box 12068, Capitol Station; Austin, Texas 78711 [(512) 463-8810 (Fax)] **Change 1 (Supersedes Fax)*

Subject: Summer Learning Loss (Reference: Secretary Spellings – February 29, 2008 Hearing)

In response to your inquiry of Secretary Spellings about "Summer Learning Loss" phenomenon (February 29, 2008), please review verbiage from Senator Obama's Bill, Summer Term Education Programs for Upward Performance (STEP UP) Act of 2007. **Though I believe the law should be amended to include "Writing" (3 R's) in addition to Reading and Math [SEC. 6 Summer Learning Grants. (d) Agreement ... (1) (B) (iii) (I)] *and grade 4 Eligible Students [SEC. 4 (3) (C)] since Texas requires grade 4 Writing Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills, in Fiscal Years 2008 – 2012, it serves as an ideal model for Texas (<http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/z?c110:s.116>);** Per Texas Education Agency visit May 5, 2008, Carmen Alfonzo (Special Assistant, Office of Planning, Grants & Evaluations) informed me, no Texas STEP UP grants exist. The bill cites BELL Foundation's nationally recognized summer program, confirmed by at least 40 studies, http://www.bellnational.org/UI_Study_Summer_Program82306.htm.



In January 2007, Senator Obama reintroduced **Summer Term Education Programs for Upward Performance** to address the achievement gap among schoolchildren in early grades. STEP UP establishes a grant program to support summer learning opportunities offered by local schools or community organizations. The bill was included in a comprehensive proposal to improve U.S. competitiveness that passed the Senate in July 2007 and was signed into law in August, <http://obama.senate.gov/issues/education/>.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS, <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/z?c110:s.116>:

Congress finds the following:

- (1) All students experience learning losses when they do not engage in educational activities during the summer.
- (2) Students on average lose more than 1 month's worth of academic skills, and 2 months or more in mathematics facts and skills, during the summer.
- (3) The impact of summer learning loss is greatest for children living in poverty, for children with learning disabilities, and for children who do not speak English at home.
- (4) While middle-class children's test scores plateau or even rise during the summer months, scores plummet for children living in poverty. Disparities grow, so that reading scores of disadvantaged students can fall more than 2 months behind the scores of their middle-class peers each summer during the elementary school years.
- (5) Summer learning losses by children living in poverty accumulate over the elementary school years, so that their achievement scores fall further and further behind the scores of their more advantaged peers as the children progress through school.

Subject: Summer Learning Loss (Reference: Secretary Spellings – February 29, 2008 Hearing)

(6) Analysis by Professor Karl Alexander and his colleagues demonstrates that summer learning differences during the elementary school years substantially account for achievement-related differences later in students' lives, including rates of secondary school completion.

(7) This summer slide is costly for American education. Analysis by Professor Harris Cooper and his colleagues demonstrates that over 2 months of instruction is lost each school year due to re-teaching material from the previous year.

(8) Analysis of summer learning programs using independent randomized controlled trials has demonstrated their impact and effectiveness. Students participating in the BELL summer programs in Boston, New York, and Washington, DC, improved their reading skills by approximately 1 month, took part in more academic activities, read more books, and were encouraged to read more by their parents. A randomized, 3-year longitudinal study of the Teach Baltimore Summer Academy, designed by the Center for Summer Learning, demonstrates that students attending a multi-year summer intervention return to school having gained close to 1/2 year in reading comprehension and vocabulary.

(9) Summer learning programs are proven to remedy, reinforce, and accelerate learning, and can serve to close the achievement gap in education.

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I look forward to providing oral testimony at a later date in line with remarks reflected in my testimony on Senator West's Dropout Prevention Bill (SB 2035), May 1, 2007. If I may be of service to you in improving Public School Accountability at the state level or through testimony before Congress to ensure inclusion of elementary and/or K-12 *Writing* mandates under No Child Left Behind Reauthorization, please contact me via Zcjsph@sbcglobal.net.



Very respectfully,

Zenobia C. Joseph

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Press Release

8/23/06

Groundbreaking Study Confirms BELL Summer program Increases Children's Reading Skills

Urban Institute study of BELL Summer validates need to invest in summer learning.

BOSTON/NEW YORK: Researchers from the Urban Institute and Mathematica Policy Research completed a rigorous evaluation of the BELL Summer Program and its impact on children's academic achievements and parental involvement. In comparing the academic achievements of children enrolled in BELL Summer program sites in Boston and New York City against a control group not enrolled in the program, researchers concluded:

- The study "provides scientifically rigorous evidence regarding the ability of the BELL Summer program to improve the reading skills of low-performing elementary school children."
- The study "found evidence of positive impacts on the degree to which parents encouraged their children to read" and the degree to which they read with their children.
- "The results are of particular importance given the long-standing public policy focus on raising achievement levels of low-income students."

"The Urban Institute's evaluation of BELL Summer demonstrates the power of structured learning opportunities offered to children in the summer," said BELL CEO Earl Martin Phalen. "Summer is an incredible opportunity to help children who are underperforming in school achieve grade-level proficiency, develop as young leaders, and enter school ready to excel in the fall."

The BELL Summer Program provides children with a safe, fun and supportive learning environment while engaging them in rigorous academic instruction in literacy and math and a diverse array of social enrichment activities, such as art, music, and drama. Certified teachers implement skills-based curricula and technology-based assessment tools from Houghton Mifflin. Co. Children enrolled in BELL Summer, demonstrate significant gains in academic skills, while children not engaged in structured summer programs tend to lose two to three months' academic skills. This "summer learning loss" is a primary cause of chronic academic under-performance in school, and increases the risk of children becoming involved in crime, gang violence, and other negative outcomes.

According to Duncan Chaplin and Jeffrey Capizzano, the report's authors, "Programs that work are hard to find. Our results suggest that the BELL program has positive and substantively important impacts."

"This report strengthens BELL's conviction that the BELL Summer program must be made available to thousands of additional children who are having difficulty fulfilling their tremendous potential" explains Phalen.

BELL is educating 1,350 children at six BELL Summer program sites in Boston, New York City, and Baltimore. The program is supported by several corporations and foundations, including Bank of America, the Charles Hayden Foundation, Comcast, Fidelity Investments, Jane's Trust, Liberty Mutual, the Open Society Institute, the Picower Foundation, Reebok, the Robin Hood Foundation, the Starr Foundation, and the Yawkey Foundation.

For more information, please contact Lester Strong at (617) 740-0431, or lstrong@bellnational.org.

About BELL: BELL is a national non-profit organization with a mission to dramatically increase the academic achievements, self-esteem and life opportunities of children living in low-income urban communities. Headquartered in Dorchester, BELL provides educational after school and summer programs to 8,000 children annually. BELL


began as a community service project by a group of Harvard Law School students, led by CEO and Co-Founder Earl Martin Phalen.

BELL programs are nationally recognized for their positive impact on children's academic and social achievements. Most recently, Fast Company magazine and the Monitor Group recognized BELL as "one of the top 25 organizations changing the world." The Center for Summer Learning at Johns Hopkins University named BELL Summer the nation's best educational summer program for children with its 2006 Excellence in Summer Learning Award. Policy makers such as Senators Barack Obama (D-IL), Barbara Mikulski (D-MD) and Hillary Clinton (D-NY) have also recently recognized BELL programs as models of excellence. Learn more at www.bellnational.org.

About the Evaluator: The independent evaluation of the BELL Summer program was conducted by Duncan Chaplin, Senior Researcher, Mathematica Policy Research, and Jeffrey Capizzano, Director of Public Policy and Research of Teaching Strategies, Inc. The Urban Institute is an independent, non-partisan economic and social policy research organization. It analyzes policies, evaluates programs, and informs community development to improve social, civic, and economic well-being. The Urban Institute works in all 50 states and abroad in over 28 countries, and shares research findings with policymakers, program administrators, business, academics, and the public online and through reports and scholarly books.

The evaluation was funded by the Smith Richardson Foundation and the William T. Grant Foundation.

To view the full evaluation report, titled *Impacts of a Summer Learning Program: A Random Assignment Study of Building Educated Leaders for Life (BELL)*, please visit <http://www.urban.org/publications/411350.html>.

 **About Summer Learning:** Many researchers believe that a lack of high-quality educational opportunities available to children during the summer is one of the most significant contributors to persistent trends of academic under-achievement, dropping out of school, and engaging in a range of negative behaviors among children from low-income families. Data demonstrates that while all children learn at the same rate during the school year, children from low-income families lose the equivalent of two months' literacy skills and two months' math skills during the summer. At the same time, children from more affluent families actually gain skills from the opportunities that are available and encouraged for them. In sum, summer learning loss adds three and a half months to the academic achievement gap each year. Compounded annually, these summer losses are a major reason why the academic gap between low- and high-income children grows throughout the elementary school years, increasing from 65% in first grade to 96% in third grade. In the long-term, chronic academic under-performance during children's elementary school years is correlated to increased gang involvement, crime, drug abuse, and teenage pregnancy. The phenomenon known as "Summer Learning Loss" has been confirmed by at least 40 studies.

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STEP UP Act of 2007 (Introduced in Senate)

S 116 IS

110th CONGRESS

1st Session

S. 116

To authorize resources to provide students with opportunities for summer learning through summer learning grants.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

January 4, 2007

Mr. OBAMA (for himself and Ms. MIKULSKI) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

A BILL

To authorize resources to provide students with opportunities for summer learning through summer learning grants.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the 'Summer Term Education Programs for Upward Performance Act of 2007' or the 'STEP UP Act of 2007'.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

- (1) All students experience learning losses when they do not engage in educational activities during the summer.
- (2) Students on average lose more than 1 month's worth of academic skills, and 2 months or more in mathematics facts and skills, during the summer.
- (3) The impact of summer learning loss is greatest for children living in poverty, for children with learning disabilities, and for children who do not speak English at home.
- (4) While middle-class children's test scores plateau or even rise during the summer months, scores plummet for children living in poverty. Disparities grow, so that reading scores of disadvantaged students can fall more than 2 months behind the scores of their middle-class peers each summer during the elementary school years.
- (5) Summer learning losses by children living in poverty accumulate over the elementary school years, so that their achievement scores fall further and further behind the scores of their more advantaged peers as the children progress through school.
- (6) Analysis by Professor Karl Alexander and his colleagues demonstrates that summer learning differences during the elementary school years substantially account for achievement-related differences later in students' lives, including rates of secondary school completion.
- (7) This summer slide is costly for American education. Analysis by Professor Harris Cooper and his colleagues demonstrates that over 2 months of instruction is lost each school year due to re-teaching material from the previous year.
- (8) Analysis of summer learning programs using independent randomized controlled trials has demonstrated their impact and effectiveness. Students participating in the BELL summer programs in Boston, New York, and Washington, DC, improved their reading skills by approximately 1 month, took part in more academic activities, read more books, and were encouraged to read more by their parents. A randomized, 3-year longitudinal study of the Teach Baltimore Summer Academy, designed by the Center for Summer Learning, demonstrates that students attending a multi-year summer intervention return to school having gained close to 1/2 year in reading comprehension and vocabulary.
- (9) Summer learning programs are proven to remedy, reinforce, and accelerate learning, and can serve to close the achievement gap in education.

SEC. 3. PURPOSE.

The purpose of this Act is to create opportunities for summer learning by providing

summer learning grants to eligible students, in order to--

- (1) provide the students with access to summer learning;
- (2) facilitate the enrollment of students in elementary schools or youth development organizations during the summer;
- (3) promote collaboration between teachers and youth development professionals in order to bridge gaps between schools and youth programs; and
- (4) encourage teachers to try new techniques, acquire new skills, and mentor new colleagues.

SEC. 4. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

- (1) EDUCATIONAL SERVICE AGENCY- The term 'educational service agency' has the meaning given the term in section 9101 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7801).
- (2) ELIGIBLE ENTITY- The term 'eligible entity' means an entity that--
 - (A) desires to participate in a summer learning grant program under this Act by providing summer learning opportunities described in section 6(d)(1)(B) to eligible students; and
 - (B) is--
 - (i) a local educational agency;
 - (ii) a for-profit educational provider, nonprofit organization, or summer enrichment camp, that has been approved by the State educational agency to provide the summer learning opportunity described in section 6(d)(1)(B), including an entity that is in good standing that has been previously approved by a State educational agency to provide supplemental educational services; or
 - (iii) a consortium consisting of a local educational agency and 1 or more of the following entities:
 - (I) Another local educational agency.
 - (II) A community-based youth development organization with a demonstrated record of effectiveness in helping students learn.
 - (III) An institution of higher education.

(IV) An educational service agency.

(V) A for-profit educational provider described in clause (ii).

(VI) A nonprofit organization described in clause (ii).

(VII) A summer enrichment camp described in clause (ii).

(3) **ELIGIBLE STUDENT**- The term `eligible student' means a student who--

(A) is eligible for a free lunch under the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act (42 U.S.C. 1751 et seq.);

(B) is served by a local educational agency identified by the State educational agency in the application described in section 5(b); or

(C)(i) in the case of a summer learning grant program authorized under this Act for fiscal year 2008, 2009, or 2010, is eligible to enroll in any of the grades kindergarten through grade 3 for the school year following participation in the program; or

(ii) in the case of a summer learning grant program authorized under this Act for fiscal year 2011 or 2012, is eligible to enroll in any of the grades kindergarten through grade 5 for the school year following participation in the program.

(4) **INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION**- The term `institution of higher education' has the meaning given the term in section 101(a) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001(a)).

(5) **LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCY**- The term `local educational agency' has the meaning given the term in section 9101 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7801).

(6) **SECRETARY**- The term `Secretary' means the Secretary of Education.

(7) **STATE**- The term `State' means each of the several States of the United States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, the United States Virgin Islands, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, and the Republic of Palau.

(8) **STATE EDUCATIONAL AGENCY**- The term `State educational agency' has the meaning given the term in section 9101 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7801).

SEC. 5. DEMONSTRATION GRANT PROGRAM.

(a) Program Authorized-

(1) IN GENERAL- From the funds appropriated under section 8 for a fiscal year, the Secretary shall carry out a demonstration grant program in which the Secretary awards grants, on a competitive basis, to State educational agencies to enable the State educational agencies to pay the Federal share of summer learning grants for eligible students.

(2) NUMBER OF GRANTS- For each fiscal year, the Secretary shall award not more than 5 grants under this section.

(b) Application- A State educational agency that desires to receive a grant under this section shall submit an application to the Secretary at such time, in such manner, and accompanied by such information as the Secretary may require. Such application shall identify the areas in the State where the summer learning grant program will be offered and the local educational agencies that serve such areas.

(c) Award Basis-

(1) SPECIAL CONSIDERATION- In awarding grants under this section, the Secretary shall give special consideration to a State educational agency that agrees, to the extent possible, to enter into agreements under section 6(d) with eligible entities that are consortia described in section 4(2)(B)(iii) and that include 2 or more of the entities described in subclauses (I) through (VII) of such section 4(2)(B)(iii) as partners.

(2) GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION- In awarding grants under this section, the Secretary shall take into consideration an equitable geographic distribution of the grants.

SEC. 6. SUMMER LEARNING GRANTS.

(a) Use of Grants for Summer Learning Grants-

(1) IN GENERAL- Each State educational agency that receives a grant under section 5 for a fiscal year shall use the grant funds to provide summer learning grants for the fiscal year to eligible students in the State who desire to attend a summer learning opportunity offered by an eligible entity that enters into an agreement with the State educational agency under subsection (d)(1).

(2) AMOUNT; FEDERAL AND NON-FEDERAL SHARES-

(A) AMOUNT- The amount of a summer learning grant provided under this Act shall be--

(i) for each of the fiscal years 2008 through 2011, \$1,600; and

(ii) for fiscal year 2012, \$1,800.

(B) FEDERAL SHARE- The Federal share of each summer learning grant shall be not more than 50 percent of the amount of the summer learning

grant determined under subparagraph (A).

(C) NON-FEDERAL SHARE- The non-Federal share of each summer learning grant shall be not less than 50 percent of the amount of the summer learning grant determined under subparagraph (A), and shall be provided from non-Federal sources, such as State or local sources.

(b) Designation of **Summer Scholars**- Eligible students who receive summer learning grants under this Act shall be known as 'summer scholars'.

(c) Selection of Summer Learning Opportunity-

(1) DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION- A State educational agency that receives a grant under section 5 shall disseminate information about summer learning opportunities and summer learning grants to the families of eligible students in the State.

(2) APPLICATION- The parents of an eligible student who are interested in having their child participate in a summer learning opportunity and receive a summer learning grant shall submit an application to the State educational agency that includes a ranked list of preferred summer learning opportunities.

(3) PROCESS- A State educational agency that receives an application under paragraph (2) shall--

(A) process such application;

(B) determine whether the eligible student shall receive a summer learning grant;

(C) coordinate the assignment of eligible students receiving summer learning grants with summer learning opportunities; and

(D) if demand for a summer learning opportunity **exceeds capacity**--

(i) in a case where information on the school readiness (based on school records and assessments of student achievement) of the eligible students is available, **give priority for the summer learning opportunity to eligible students with low levels of school readiness**; or

(ii) in a case where such information on school readiness is not available, rely on randomization to assign the eligible students.

(4) FLEXIBILITY- A State educational agency may assign a summer scholar to a summer learning opportunity program that is offered in an area served by a local educational agency that is not the local educational agency serving the area where such scholar resides.

(5) REQUIREMENT OF ACCEPTANCE- An eligible entity shall accept, enroll, and

provide the summer learning opportunity of such entity to, any summer scholar assigned to such summer learning opportunity by a State educational agency pursuant to this subsection.

(d) Agreement With Eligible Entity-

(1) IN GENERAL- A State educational agency shall enter into an agreement with the eligible entity offering a summer learning opportunity, under which--

(A) the State educational agency shall agree to make payments to the eligible entity, in accordance with paragraph (2), for a summer scholar; and

(B) the eligible entity shall agree to provide the summer scholar with a summer learning opportunity that--

(i) provides a total of not less than the equivalent of 30 full days of instruction (or not less than the equivalent of 25 full days of instruction, if the equivalent of an additional 5 days is devoted to field trips or other enrichment opportunities) to the summer scholar;

(ii) employs small-group, research-based educational programs, materials, curricula, and practices;

(iii) provides a curriculum that--

(I) emphasizes reading and mathematics;

(II) is primarily designed to increase the literacy and numeracy of the summer scholar; and

(III) is aligned with the standards and goals of the school year curriculum of the local educational agency serving the summer scholar;

(iv) applies assessments to measure the skills taught in the summer learning opportunity and disaggregates the results of the assessments for summer scholars by race and ethnicity, economic status, limited English proficiency status, and disability category, in order to determine the opportunity's impact on each subgroup of summer scholars;

(v) collects daily attendance data on each summer scholar; and

(vi) meets all applicable Federal, State, and local civil rights laws.

(2) AMOUNT OF PAYMENT-

(A) IN GENERAL- Except as provided in subparagraph (B), a State

educational agency shall make a payment to an eligible entity for a summer scholar in the amount determined under subsection (a)(2)(A).

(B) ADJUSTMENT- In the case in which a summer scholar does not attend the full summer learning opportunity, the State educational agency shall reduce the amount provided to the eligible entity pursuant to subparagraph (A) by a percentage that is equal to the percentage of the summer learning opportunity not attended by such scholar.

(e) Use of School Facilities- State educational agencies are encouraged to require local educational agencies in the State to allow eligible entities, in offering summer learning opportunities, to make use of school facilities in schools served by such local educational agencies at reasonable or no cost.

(f) Access of Records- An eligible entity offering a summer learning opportunity under this Act is eligible to receive, upon request, the school records and any previous supplemental educational services assessment records of a summer scholar served by such entity.

(g) Administrative Costs- A State educational agency or eligible entity receiving funding under this Act may use not more than 5 percent of such funding for administrative costs associated with carrying out this Act.

SEC. 7. EVALUATIONS; REPORT; WEBSITE.

(a) Evaluation and Assessment- For each year that an eligible entity enters into an agreement under section 6(d), the eligible entity shall prepare and submit to the Secretary a report on the activities and outcomes of each summer learning opportunity that enrolled a summer scholar, including--

(1) information on the design of the summer learning opportunity;

(2) the alignment of the summer learning opportunity with State standards; and

(3) data from assessments of student **mathematics and reading skills** for the summer scholars and on the attendance of the scholars, disaggregated by the subgroups described in section 6(d)(1)(B)(iv).

(b) Report- For each year funds are appropriated under section 8 for this Act, the Secretary shall prepare and submit a report to Congress on the summer learning grant programs, including the effectiveness of the summer learning opportunities in improving student achievement.

(c) Summer Learning Grants Website- The Secretary shall make accessible, on the Department of Education website, information for parents and school personnel on successful programs and curricula, and best practices, for summer learning opportunities.

SEC. 8. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this Act \$100,000,000 for fiscal year 2008 and such sums as may be necessary for each of the fiscal years 2009 through 2012.

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