

A young girl with dark hair in pigtails, wearing a light blue denim jacket over a green shirt, is sitting at a desk in a classroom. She is smiling and waving her right hand towards the camera. In her left hand, she holds a yellow pencil. A pink and white patterned backpack is hanging on the back of her green school chair. In the background, other students and classroom furniture are visible but out of focus.

SUMMER BOOST 2025 EVALUATION Final Report



June 2026

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ABOUT SUMMER BOOST

Summer Boost is a summer learning initiative supported by Bloomberg Philanthropies in partnership with co-funders. Initially launched in response to COVID learning loss, the program continues to support charter students in cities across the nation to accelerate learning and drive academic recovery in English Language Arts (ELA) and math.

Summer Boost requires schools to provide a minimum of **20 days of programming**, with an average of **3 total hours of high quality English Language Arts and math** instruction each day. Schools must maintain a maximum **student to teacher ratio of 25:1**, and administer **pre- and post-assessments** provided by Summer Boost. Otherwise, schools have flexibility in how they implement their programs, such as curriculum, enrichment activities, and length of program day. In 2025, Summer Boost served:



EVALUATION APPROACH

To assess the impact of Summer Boost, Bloomberg Philanthropies commissioned an evaluation to answer the following research questions:

- ✓ Did Summer Boost work?
- ✓ Who did Summer Boost work for?
- ✓ What practices were linked to outcomes?

This evaluation builds on the 2023 and 2024 analyses and examines the impact of the 2025 program using a quasi-experimental Value Added Model (VAM). The study also examined student characteristics, attendance data, pre- and post-program assessments, and program characteristics to identify differences in impact. The total dataset included ~162,000 students, including the comparison group.

KEY FINDINGS

1. DID SUMMER BOOST WORK?

IN SHORT, YES!

Across each of the past three summers, students who participated in Summer Boost made remarkably consistent, positive, and statistically significant gains in both math and ELA, strengthening confidence that the program helps students return to school stronger in the fall.

In 2025, participants gained about **3.5 additional weeks of math learning** and **2.5 additional weeks of ELA learning** compared with students who did not attend.

Implication: There is clear value in investing in summer learning to drive student growth.

2. WHO DID SUMMER BOOST WORK FOR?

SUMMER BOOST HAD IMPACT ACROSS STUDENT GROUPS

Across three years, Summer Boost shows positive impact across student groups, cities, grade levels, and achievement levels. The program is effectively benefiting students who often face the greatest barriers to academic progress, including students eligible for Free or Reduced-Price Lunch, those receiving special education services, and English language learners.

Implication: Summer Boost is effective in supporting students from different backgrounds.

3. WHAT PROGRAM PRACTICES WERE LINKED TO OUTCOMES?

HIGH ATTENDANCE: Student attendance rates were linked to positive growth in math and ELA.

CLASS SIZES: Summer Boost is effective across class sizes, with some evidence of stronger ELA gains in smaller classes.

VARIOUS PROGRAM APPROACHES: Various approaches to program structure and allocation of time between enrichment and academics led to growth.

EVIDENCE-BASED ELA PRACTICES: Consistent use of evidence-based ELA instructional practices contributed to ELA gains.

Implication: To maximize impact, summer programs should prioritize attendance and evidence-based instructional practices.

INTRODUCTION



INTRODUCTION

ABOUT SUMMER BOOST

Over the past decade, U.S. students have faced [declines in reading and math proficiency](#), exacerbated by significant setbacks during the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition to pandemic learning setbacks, research shows that [students often lose learning](#) over the summer, with larger losses typically occurring in math. The [2025 Education Scorecard](#) notes that these challenges reflect not only pandemic-related learning loss, but a longer-term “learning recession” that began before COVID. While math achievement has begun to recover, reading recovery has been slower, and many districts remain below 2019 achievement levels.

Recognizing the urgent need for learning recovery, Bloomberg Philanthropies, in partnership with co-funders, launched Summer Boost in 2022 to provide high-quality summer learning for rising 1st through 9th graders. Created in response to COVID-related learning loss, the program continues to support charter students in select cities nationwide to combat ongoing learning loss. In its first year, Summer Boost served 16,383 students in New York City. **By 2025, Summer Boost reached 39,050 students across 457 schools in seven U.S. cities.**



7 CITIES

- Baltimore
- Birmingham
- Memphis
- Nashville
- New York City
- San Antonio
- Washington, D.C.

INTRODUCTION

ABOUT SUMMER BOOST

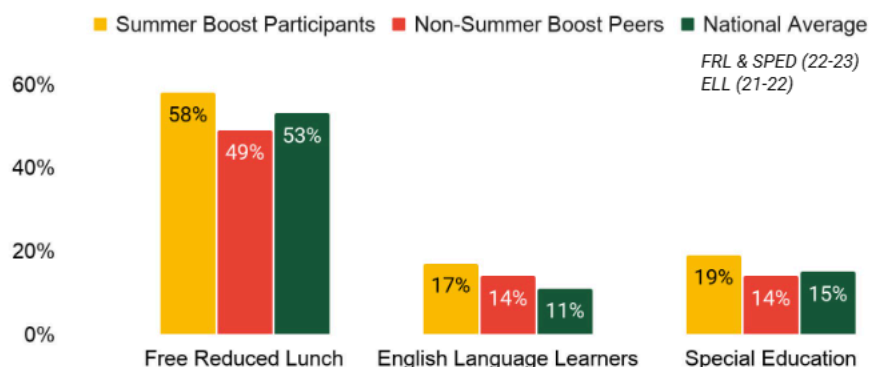
PROGRAM DESIGN

Summer Boost required schools to deliver at least **20 days of in-person programming**, with an average of **3 total hours of high quality English Language Arts (ELA) and math** instruction each day. Schools were required to maintain a **student to teacher ratio no higher than 25:1**, and administer standardized **pre- and post- assessments** provided by Summer Boost. Full grant disbursement was awarded to schools meeting a **70% average daily attendance** threshold.¹ **Beyond these core requirements, schools had flexibility** in program implementation, including:

- Option to use the Lavinia RISE curriculum—provided for free along with Summer Boost-provided training—or select their own (over half of students used Lavinia RISE).
- Targeted student recruitment, with a focus on enrolling those who could benefit most.
- Choice to provide enrichment activities alongside instruction.
- Variation in length of program day (half or full).

STUDENTS SERVED

Summer Boost 2025 primarily served students eligible for Free or Reduced-Price Lunch, a key indicator of low-income status. Summer Boost served these students at a higher rate than the schools they attended as well as national public schools.^{2, 3, 4, 5}



¹ Schools with less than 70% attendance still received the majority of funding.

² Percentages are based on total # of students served and may not align with the analytic sample later in the report.

³ U.S. Department of Education. *National free/reduced lunch and Special Education participation rates, 2022-2023*.

⁴ U.S. Department of Education. *National ELL participation rates, 2021-2022*.

⁵ FRL % does not include students in [CEP](#) qualifying schools that did not report data at the student level; if we assumed all students in CEP schools were eligible, we would estimate 76% FRL across Summer Boost.

*Non-Summer Boost Peers refers to students in Summer Boost schools who did not participate in the program.

INTRODUCTION

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

To assess the impact of high-quality summer programming, Bloomberg Philanthropies collaborated on a quasi-experimental study with [MGT](#), Dr. Geoffrey Borman at Arizona State University, and external advisors Dr. Thomas Kane and Dr. Andrew McEachin. The evaluation aimed to explore the following questions:

1. Did Summer Boost work?

2. Who did Summer Boost work for?

3. What program practices were linked to outcomes?

EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

Researchers used a Value Added Model (VAM) to gauge Summer Boost's impact on student growth. This method **compares predicted student growth without the program** (based on past test scores, student characteristics, etc.) **to how students actually grow**. If Summer Boost participants perform better than predicted, that additional growth can be attributed to the program. For additional information on methodology, see the [appendix](#).

To discern if Summer Boost had differential impacts on subgroups or under certain conditions, researchers analyzed student variables like Free or Reduced-Price Lunch status, along with qualitative program implementation data, to isolate impact by each variable.

The total dataset comprised approximately 162,000 students across 223 grantees, including approximately 39,000 Summer Boost students and 123,000 comparison group students.

MGT collaborated with schools and with assessment partners NWEA (MAP Growth) and Curriculum Associates (i-Ready) to collect the following data for the impact evaluation:

- i-Ready and MAP Growth assessment data from Fall '22 - Fall '25
- Student characteristic information
- Attendance data (*program participants only*)
- Qualitative data on program implementation obtained through grantee surveys

EVALUATION METHODOLOGY (cont.)

Summer Boost Assessment Overview

In addition to i-Ready and MAP Growth standardized test data used in the VAM study, **Summer Boost also administered pre- and post-assessments developed by the Lavinia Group** and vetted by third-party evaluators. The assessments focused on prioritized summer standards that map onto state academic standards. Administering the assessments to all Summer Boost students was a grant requirement in order to measure student growth over the course of the program. Further detail on Lavinia pre- and post-assessments results can be found in the [appendix](#).

Pre- and post-assessment data and the quasi-experimental evaluation provide a complementary picture of the growth of Summer Boost students and impact of the program.

Pre- and Post-Assessments <i>Lavinia Group</i>	Quasi-Experimental Evaluation <i>i-Ready and MAP Growth</i>
Show summer gains made by Summer Boost participants on specific Math and ELA standards , tied to prioritized Common Core and state standards. Note: no comparison group	Compares how we would predict students would grow without the program (based on past test scores, student characteristics, etc.), and how they actually grow . If students' actual scores are higher than we would predict, that extra growth is attributed to the program (i.e., the "value added").

KEY FINDINGS

KEY FINDINGS

1. DID SUMMER BOOST WORK?

IN SHORT, YES!

Across each of the past three summers, students who participated in Summer Boost made remarkably consistent, positive, and statistically significant gains in both math and ELA, strengthening confidence that the program helps students return to school stronger in the fall.

In 2025, participants gained about **3.5 additional weeks of math learning** and **2.5 additional weeks of ELA learning** compared with students who did not attend.

Implication: There is clear value in investing in summer learning to drive student growth.

2. WHO DID SUMMER BOOST WORK FOR?

SUMMER BOOST HAD IMPACT ACROSS STUDENT GROUPS

Across three years, Summer Boost shows positive impact across student groups, cities, grade levels, and achievement levels. The program is effectively benefiting students who often face the greatest barriers to academic progress, including students eligible for Free or Reduced-Price Lunch, those receiving special education services, and English language learners.

Implication: Summer Boost is effective in supporting students from different backgrounds.

3. WHAT PROGRAM PRACTICES WERE LINKED TO OUTCOMES?

HIGH ATTENDANCE: Student attendance rates were linked to positive growth in math and ELA.

CLASS SIZES: Summer Boost is effective across class sizes, with some evidence of stronger ELA gains in smaller classes.

VARIOUS PROGRAM APPROACHES: Various approaches to program structure and allocation of time between enrichment and academics led to growth.

EVIDENCE-BASED ELA PRACTICES: Consistent use of evidence-based ELA instructional practices contributed to ELA gains.

Implication: To maximize impact, summer programs should prioritize attendance and evidence-based instructional practices.

1 Research Question

DID SUMMER BOOST WORK?

2025 MATH & ELA IMPACT

Each summer for the past three years, students who participated in Summer Boost showed a **reliable academic boost in math and ELA the following fall**. In Summer Boost 2025, participants gained statistically significant improvements of about 3.5 additional weeks of math and 2.5 additional weeks of ELA compared with peers who did not participate.¹ These impacts were evident in Fall 2025 i-Ready and MAP Growth tests², which students took weeks, or in some cases months, after the summer program ended.

These results are strikingly consistent with the [2023 and 2024 findings](#), strengthening confidence that Summer Boost is making an impact for students.

Math	ELA: Reading
~3.5 weeks <i>Additional Weeks of Learning³</i> <i>Statistically Significant</i>	~2.5 weeks <i>Additional Weeks of Learning³</i> <i>Statistically Significant</i>

INTERPRETING RESULTS

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

- **Math is learned primarily at school and seldom practiced outside the classroom**, while reading and writing are more frequently reinforced through everyday experiences (e.g., reading at home). Given this, **students tend to lose more math skills over the summer than they do in ELA**, and summer programs may have a bigger impact in math.
- **Standardized assessments also tend to measure math learning more effectively than ELA**, as math skills are more concrete, while reading involves more complex cognitive processes that are harder to capture on a test question. Given this, it's also possible that the tests our evaluation relies on don't fully capture the reading growth students are experiencing.

¹The 2025 analytic sample consists of 39,018 students with observed math test scores and 36,239 students with observed ELA test scores in fall 2024, spring 2025, and fall 2025, and full student characteristics information.

²While Summer Boost is focused on ELA broadly, these assessments measure reading specifically; all ELA results herein refer to reading.

³Information on how the additional weeks of learning metric is calculated can be found in the [appendix](#).

2 3 Research Questions

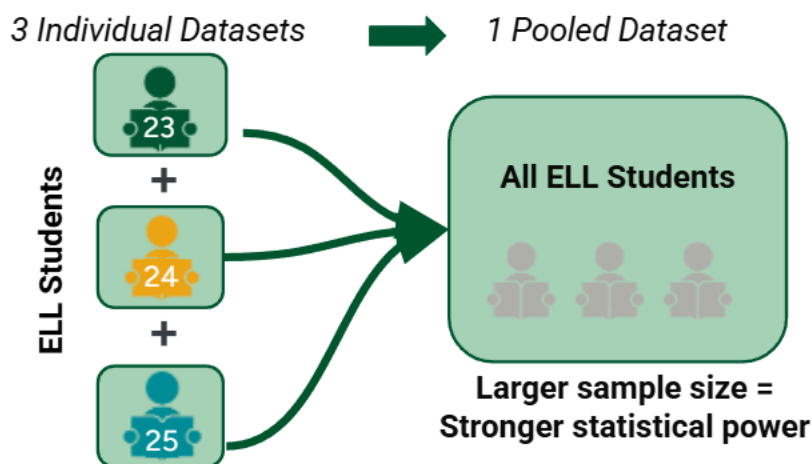
METHODOLOGY NOTE

POOLED RESULTS FOR STUDENT SUBGROUP & PROGRAM CHARACTERISTICS

The next sections present pooled results across 2023, 2024, and 2025. By combining three years of data and increasing sample sizes for smaller student groups, pooling helps highlight the strongest and most consistent impacts for Summer Boost. These findings combine annual results to show clearer patterns, but they do not represent three-year *longitudinal* results. Please see [here](#) for more information on the evaluation's pooling methodology and [here](#) for the 2025-only results for all student subgroups and program characteristics.

One exception: The [ELA practices results](#) are shown for 2025 only because these measures were added for the first time this year. These findings look at how grantees' self-reported use of evidence-based ELA practices related to ELA outcomes.

Example: Visualizing Pooled Results for ELL Students



How to read the symbols in this section: The symbols show how confident we can be that the results reflect a real pattern rather than random variation.

Statistically significant (*) = Strong evidence of a meaningful result ($p < 0.05$)

Marginally significant (†) = Moderate evidence, interpret with some caution ($p \geq 0.05$ and < 0.10)

Directionally significant (‡) = Early directional evidence, interpret cautiously ($p \geq 0.10$ and < 0.20)

Legend for Graphs in
This Section

Statistically Significant or
Marginally Significant

Not Statistically Significant

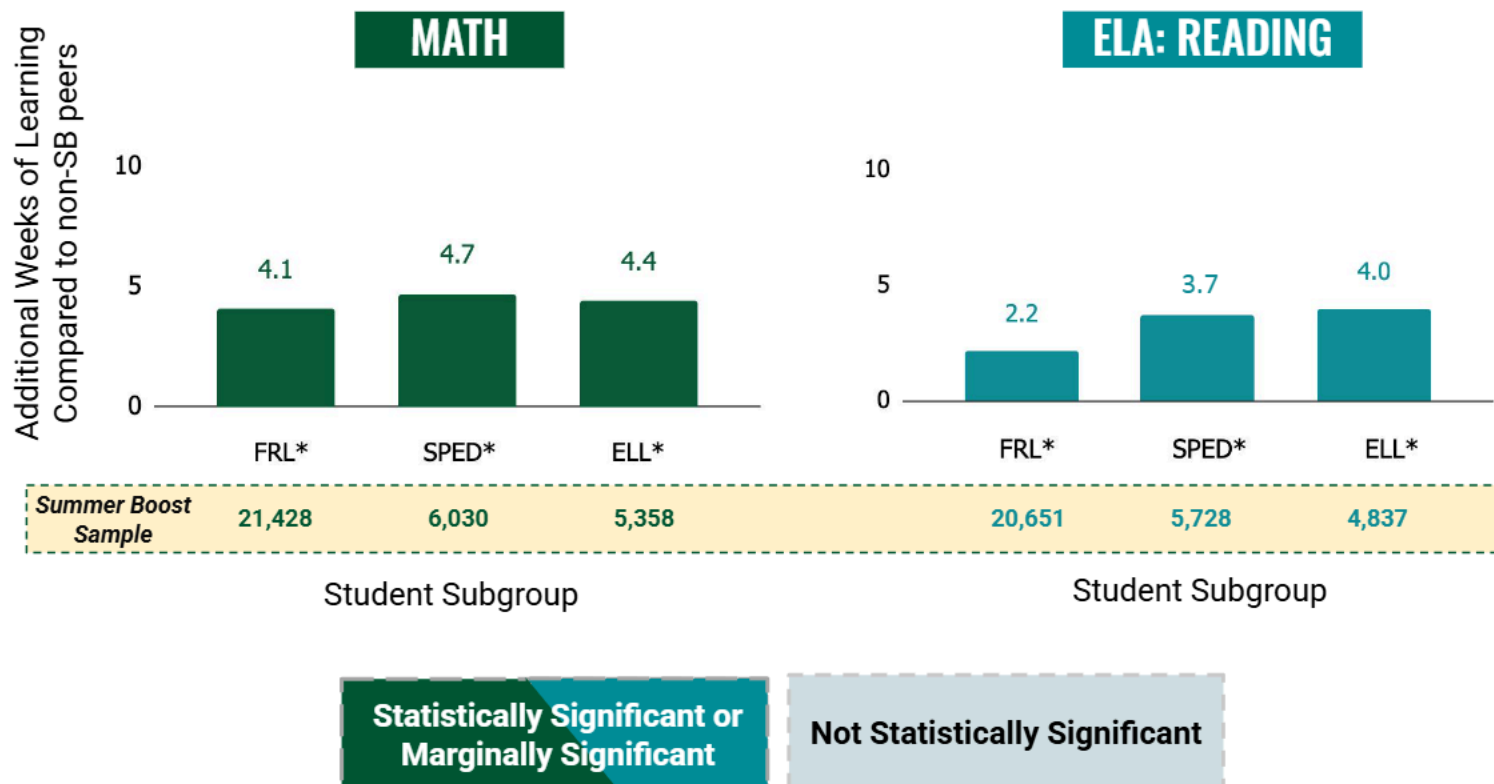
Note: The Summer Boost sample only includes students with complete data, which may differ between math and ELA.

2 Research Question

WHO DID SUMMER BOOST WORK FOR?

STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS

Results across years indicate that Summer Boost may be especially important for students who **need the most support to make academic progress**. Students eligible for Free or Reduced-Price Lunch (FRL), students receiving special education services (SPED), and English language learners (ELL) **all showed positive, statistically significant gains in math and ELA**. That is especially important because these student groups often enter and move through the school year facing larger academic gaps than their peers.¹



IMPLICATION

Not only is Summer Boost effective overall, it has a **significant impact for students who need the most support**.

¹ [National Center for Education Statistics, 2023](#)

2 Research Question

WHO DID SUMMER BOOST WORK FOR?

GEOGRAPHY

Over multiple years, Summer Boost appears to be effective across cities. Pooling data across three years, **results are positive in both math and ELA across all participating geographies**, with no meaningful differences in impact between cities.



7 CITIES

- Baltimore
- Birmingham
- Memphis
- Nashville
- New York City
- San Antonio
- Washington, D.C.

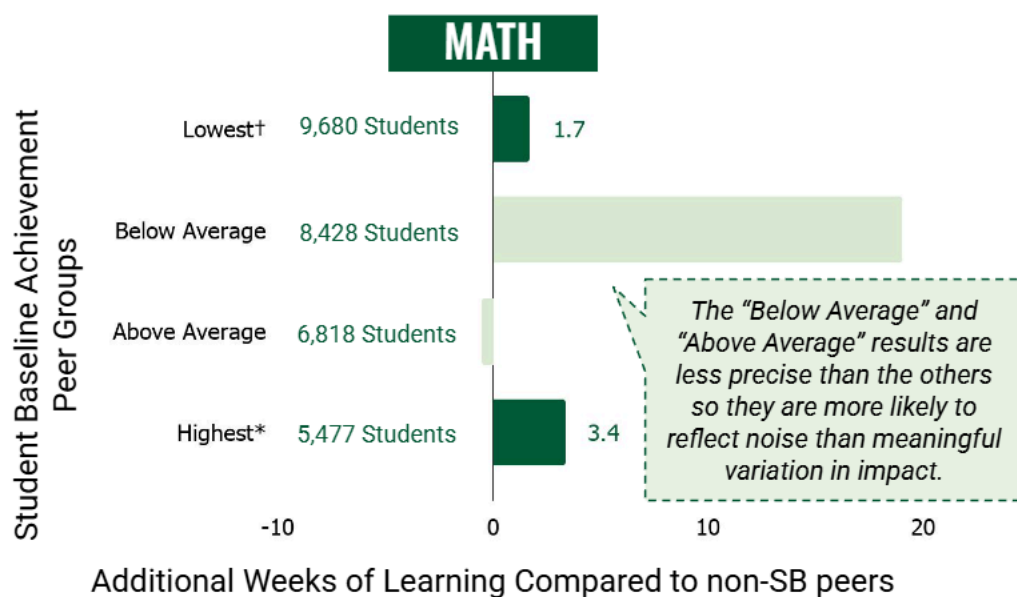
IMPLICATION

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

2 Research Question

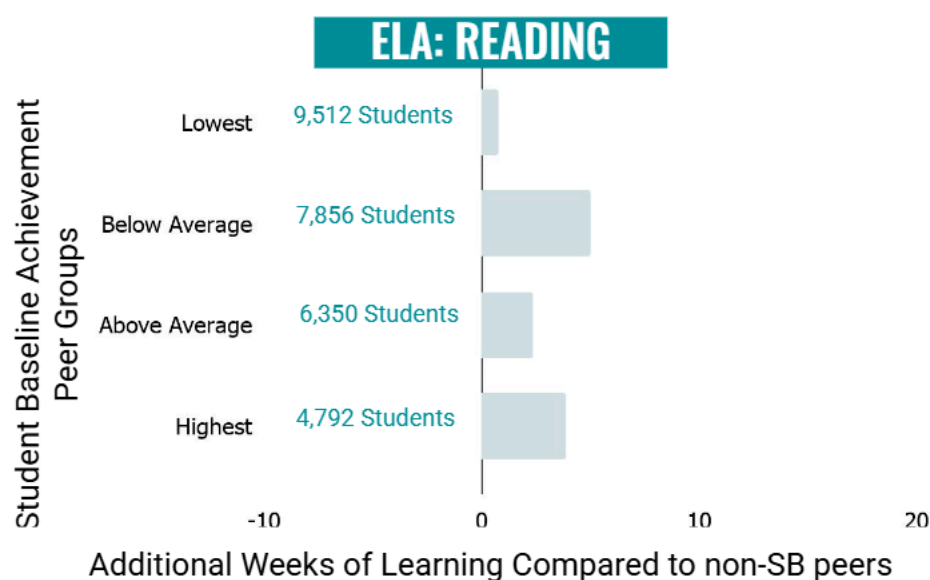
WHO DID SUMMER BOOST WORK FOR? ACHIEVEMENT LEVELS

Summer Boost appears to benefit students across starting achievement levels, including students in the lowest baseline quartile, who are a key target population. At the same time, because these students have larger gaps to close, summer learning programs should continue focusing on strategies to accelerate their learning.



How to Interpret Quartiles:

Quartiles are based on where students in Summer Boost schools were before the program, not nationally normed quartiles. Because these schools often serve students starting behind, students in higher quartiles may still be performing below grade level.



Statistically Significant or Marginally Significant

Not Statistically Significant

IMPLICATION

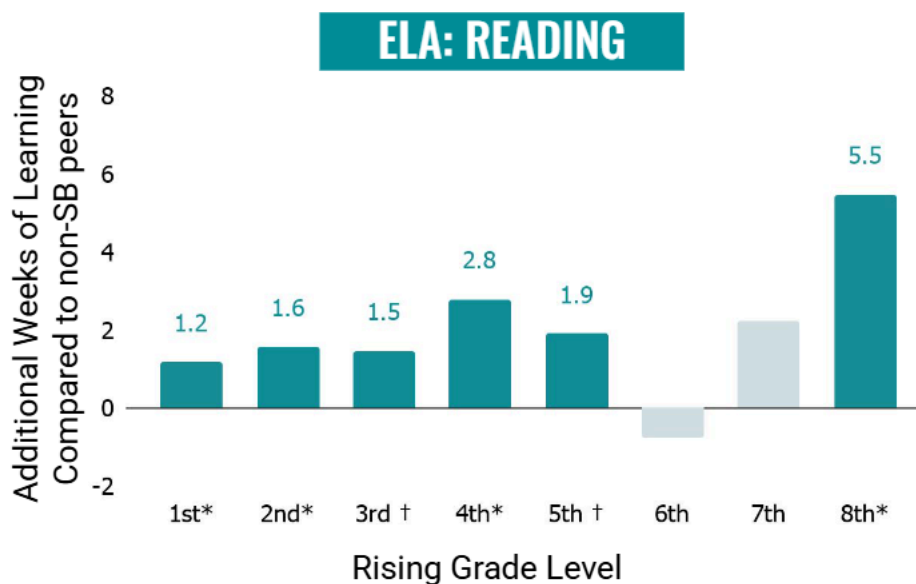
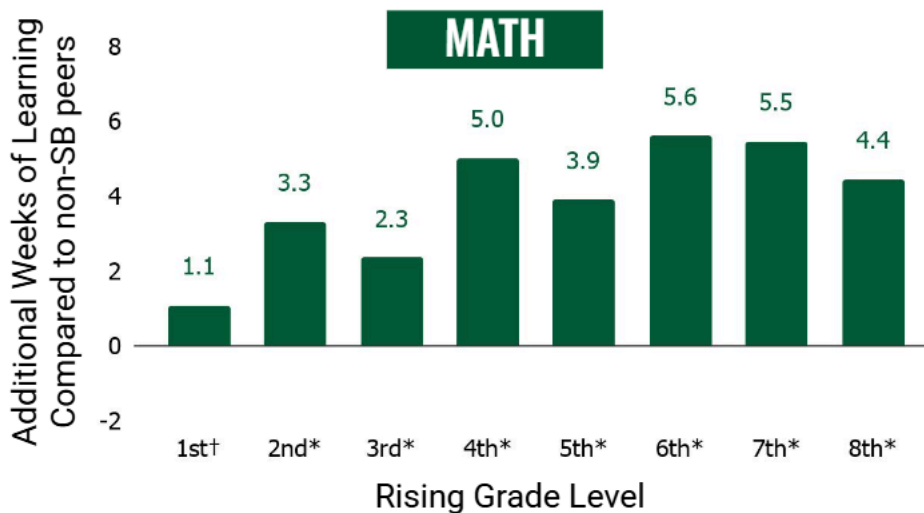
The program appears to **help the students who need it most**, and schools may still want to **explore strategies to accelerate students furthest behind**.

2 Research Question

WHO DID SUMMER BOOST WORK FOR?

GRADE LEVELS

Over three years, Summer Boost participants benefited across grade levels. Math results are positive and significant in every grade, with some evidence of larger impacts in the upper elementary and middle grades. ELA results are also generally positive, with no clear evidence that impacts differ meaningfully by grade level.



Because ELA results are smaller and more variable across grades, the non-significant results in grades 6 and 7 likely reflect “noise” in the data and should not be overstated.

Statistically Significant or Marginally Significant

Not Statistically Significant

IMPLICATION

The program can effectively serve students across elementary and middle school grade levels.

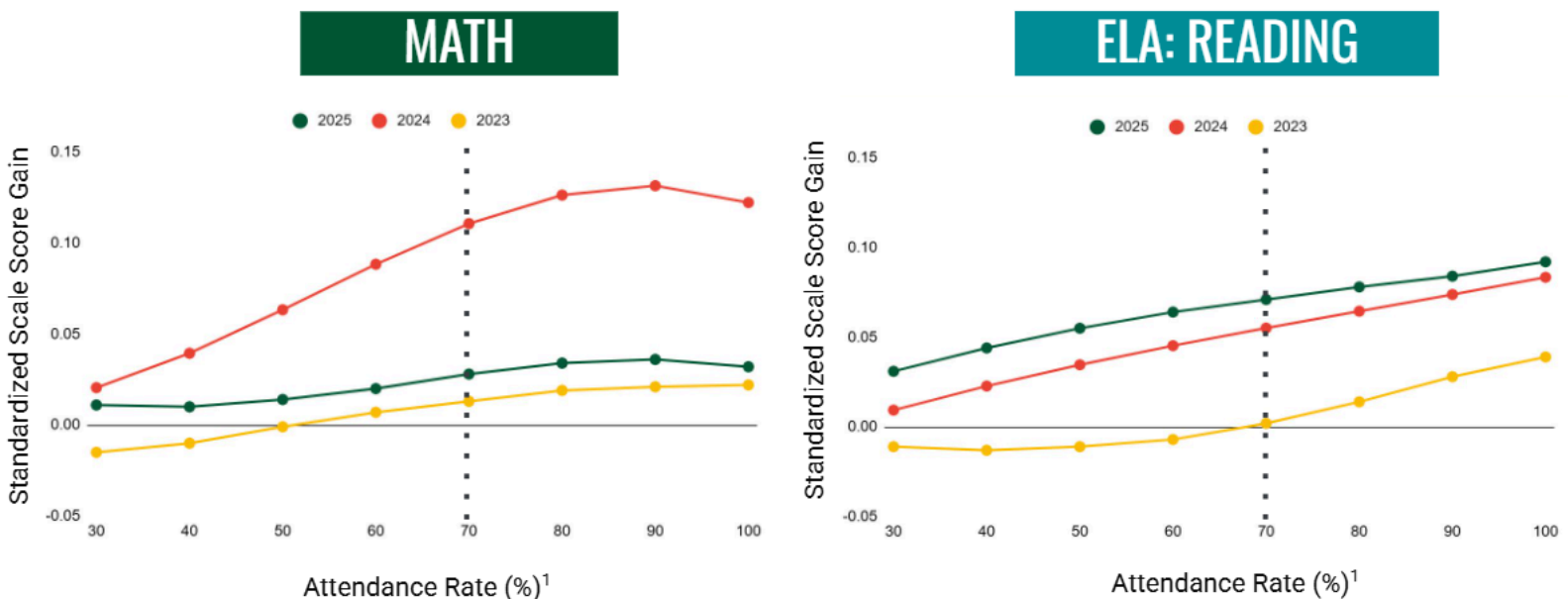
3 Research Question

WHAT PROGRAM PRACTICES WERE LINKED TO OUTCOMES? STUDENT ATTENDANCE

Across years, the takeaway is consistent: **higher Summer Boost attendance is associated with stronger test score growth in both math and ELA.** Some year-to-year variation is expected, but the overall pattern is clear, students who attend more tend to have better outcomes. The average Summer Boost attendance rate in 2025 was about 75%, higher than the 69% reported by research from [CALDER](#) on summer learning programs as a learning loss recovery strategy after COVID. Summer Boost's 70% attendance requirement may help drive these higher rates.

Summer Boost schools are effectively prioritizing attendance and should continue—or even expand—efforts to encourage consistent participation among students and families.

Note: These results are descriptive and correlational, not causal (since for attendance there is no comparison group). Students with higher attendance rates may differ from their peers in other unobserved ways which may also contribute to the differentiated gains between students.¹



IMPLICATION

Grantees should **continue to focus on attendance**. It may be worth encouraging grantees to set internal attendance targets above the 70% program requirement.

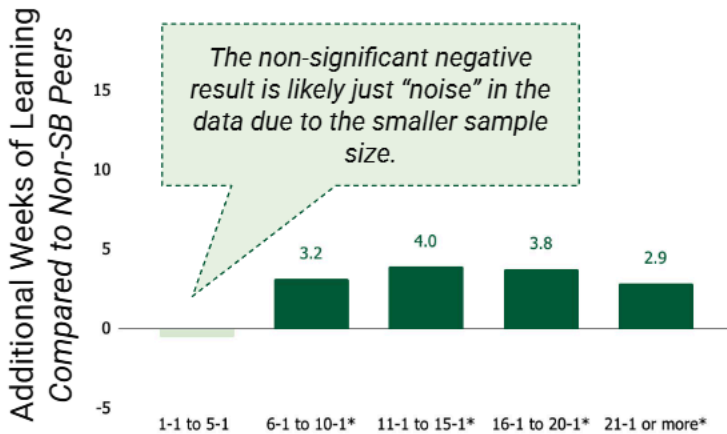
¹ Graph is plotted using each student's individual attendance rate to their MAP Growth/i-Ready score gain. Attendance rates shown here are based on the final analytic sample of students.

3 Research Question

WHAT PROGRAM PRACTICES WERE LINKED TO OUTCOMES? CLASS SIZES

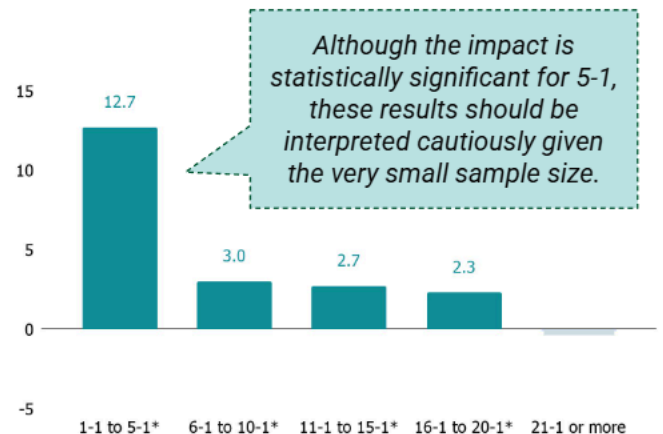
Summer Boost is effective across a range of class sizes. Across multiple years, Summer Boost shows positive, statistically significant results across most class sizes in math and ELA. At the same time, ELA results are weaker in very large classes (21+), which suggests that **keeping class sizes smaller may be especially important for supporting literacy growth.**

MATH



Summer Boost Sample	325	6,681	11,343	7,543	3,323
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ELA: READING



Summer Boost Sample	313	6,234	10,274	7,066	3,218
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Statistically Significant or Marginally Significant

Not Statistically Significant

IMPLICATION

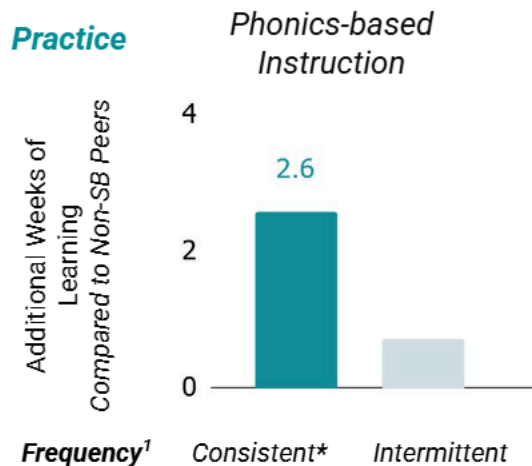
Implementing **lower student to teacher ratios in ELA** where feasible for grantees could increase impact.

3 Research Question

WHAT PROGRAM PRACTICES WERE LINKED TO OUTCOMES? ELA PRACTICES (2025 Only)

In 2025, students showed stronger reading outcomes when programs consistently (daily or weekly)¹ implemented literacy best practices, including high-quality instruction, differentiated supports, and regular use of data. Many grantees are already using these practices, and continuing to focus on them may help strengthen ELA outcomes.

HIGH-QUALITY INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES



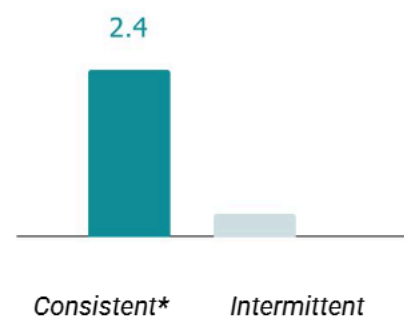
Summer Boost Sample

10,521

863

DIFFERENTIATED SUPPORTS

Visual aids for students with differentiated needs

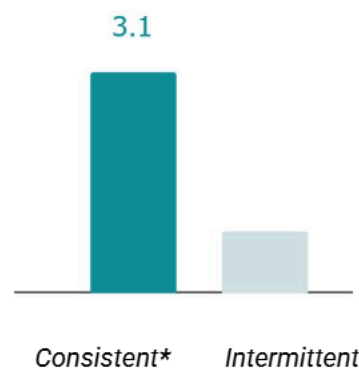


10,649

1,095

DATA FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Student data tracking systems



9,844

1,328

Other **instructional practices** which drive positive ELA outcomes include small group targeted instruction; 1:1 personalized tutoring; writing workshops; read-alouds; high-interest, level-appropriate texts; hands-on activities

Other **differentiated supports** which drive positive ELA outcomes include using SPED-certified or bilingual/ELL teachers; student monitoring of their own ELA growth

Other **data for continuous improvement practices** which drive positive ELA outcomes include: progress monitoring; coaching and feedback systems for teachers

IMPLICATION

Summer Boost programs should **consistently use evidence-based ELA practices to support growth.**

¹ Based on grantee self-reported data. Consistent indicates grantees reported using this practice daily, weekly, or multiple times a week. Intermittent indicates grantees reported using this practice occasionally (e.g., biweekly) or ad hoc (e.g., on an as needed basis).

3 Research Question

WHAT PROGRAM PRACTICES WERE LINKED TO OUTCOMES?

VARIOUS PROGRAM APPROACHES

The research team analyzed various program characteristics (listed below) to determine their impact on student outcomes. Most characteristics did not emerge as meaningful differentiators, consistent with prior years' findings. One area that has shown some variation in year to year results has been the balance between academic instruction and enrichment. However, pooled results suggest that as long as schools provide 3+ hours per day of ELA and math instruction, they can use the remaining program time flexibly and still see positive student outcomes.

Positive outcomes across different program models suggest that as long as **the minimum instructional requirements are met, Summer Boost can continue to offer flexibility in program design and expect strong student outcomes.** The minimum instructional requirements for Summer Boost are 20 days of programming, with an average of 3 total hours of high quality English Language Arts (ELA) and math instruction each day.

PROGRAM PROFILES

Teacher Recruitment Strategy: *Methods and rigor used to recruit teachers.*

Student Selection Criteria: *Rationale used to select students categorized into assessment, non-academic needs, and classroom referral-based selection methods.*

Classroom Environment Challenges: *Factors affecting program delivery categorized into safety, facilities, attendance and classroom environment challenges.*

PROGRAM CHARACTERISTICS

Days of Summer Boost: *Number of programming days conducted by a program.*

Length of Day: *Hours of programming provided each day of Summer Boost programming.*

Minutes of ELA & Math Instruction: *The number of minutes each of ELA and math instruction.*

Teacher Experience Level: *The average number of years of experience across Summer Boost classroom teachers at a given site.*

Teacher Supports Offered: *Frequency of supports offered to teachers (e.g., collaborative planning time, classroom observations, instructional coaching).*

Continued on next page.

3 Research Question

WHAT PROGRAM PRACTICES WERE LINKED TO OUTCOMES?

PROGRAM CHARACTERISTICS (continued)
Teacher Pay: <i>Average hourly compensation for teachers, calculated using reported pay (hourly or stipend) and standardized for cost of living across locations.</i>
Student Teacher Ratio: <i>Average number of students assigned to each teacher during program instruction.</i>
Program Curriculum: <i>Curriculum used during Summer Boost (Lavinia-RISE or school selected curriculum).</i>
Support for Highest Need Students: <i>Additional supports provided for high need students (e.g., breakout small group instruction; 1:1 personalized tutoring during enrichment time; specialized instruction to address needs identified on a student's IEP; social and emotional learning curriculum and activities; phonics-based reading programs targeting foundational literacy skills).</i>
Types of Enrichment Offered: <i>Whether schools intentionally integrated academics into their enrichment opportunities.</i>
Test Administered: <i>Whether schools administered MAP Growth or i-Ready.</i>
Grantee Program Repeaters: <i>Whether a site previously participated in Summer Boost.</i>

IMPLICATION

Programs can be effective within the flexibilities offered by Summer Boost.

IMPLICATIONS



Launched by
**Bloomberg
Philanthropies**

IMPLICATIONS

Key considerations for future summer learning programs and investments include:

1. **Summer learning is an effective and replicable solution for students with high academic needs.**
 - Even before the pandemic, **student learning dropped over the summer** in math and ELA¹, signaling the need for quality summer learning programs. And data from NAEP and the Education Recovery Scorecard reveal that **learning has not rebounded to pre-pandemic levels, particularly in high-poverty districts.**^{2,3}
 - Significant post-summer gains in math and ELA have been remarkably consistent for three years, **strengthening confidence that Summer Boost impacts student learning.**
 - The Summer Boost model also shows **consistent impact for tens of thousands of students** across hundreds of schools, demonstrating the **large-scale potential of summer learning.**
2. **Summer programs should focus on student attendance and evidence-based literacy practices, with flexibility on other program design decisions.**
 - Multiple years of Summer Boost and other research have shown that **high student attendance is a key driver of learning.** Programs may continue to require 70% attendance, but should consider encouraging schools to set higher internal targets to maximize student achievement.
 - While we only have one year of data so far on practices associated with ELA outcomes, these results indicate that **sites should design summer programs that consistently implement evidence-based literacy practices.**
 - Apart from these practices, grantees have generally shown impact across a variety of program characteristics. This indicates that there is not one single profile for a successful program and, **as long as minimum instructional requirements are met, summer learning programs can offer flexibility in choices like curriculum and program structure.**

¹ [Carbonari, et al., 2024](#)

² [National Center for Education Statistics, 2025](#)

³ [Center for Education Policy Research & The Educational Opportunity Project, n.d.](#)

APPENDIX



ABOUT THE AUTHORS

MGT

MGT is a national social impact firm serving state, local, education and government clients. As trusted advisors to our clients, through research and data, we identify a problem's root cause, co-create solutions, and implement lasting change. Our strategic approach helps clients build resilience, implement systematic change and strengthen their foundations, now and for the future. At MGT, we are committed to impacting communities for good. For more information, please visit www.mgt.us.

Erin McGoldrick, Chief Operating Officer

Erin McGoldrick is the Chief Operating Officer at MGT. With over 20 years of experience in data innovation, Erin has worked with a variety of clients including the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the College Board, and dozens of state and district school systems. She was the Chief of Data and Accountability for the District of Columbia Public Schools under Chancellor Michelle Rhee. She also held data-focused positions at the California Charter Schools Association, Los Angeles Unified School District, and Los Angeles Educational Partnership. Erin earned an undergraduate degree at the University of Notre Dame and a master's degree in Public Policy at U.C.L.A.

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Trained as a quantitative methodologist at the University of Chicago, Dr. Geoffrey Borman is President of [Measured Decisions, Inc.](#), Alice Wiley Snell Endowed Professor at Arizona State University, and Editor of *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*. He is the author of over 150 publications, including the edited volume, *Summer Learning: Research, Policies, and Programs*. His main substantive research interests include quantitative methodology and education policy.

Dr. Borman's methodological background includes directing multiple federally funded Institute of Education Sciences (IES) Ph.D. training programs in causal inference and interdisciplinary research and advancing the design and analysis of large-scale randomized trials to answer "real-world," field-based cause-effect questions. He has led more than 25 randomized field trials, which have included randomization of students, classrooms or teachers, schools, and districts. His national awards include the American Educational Research Association (AERA) Early Career Award, Palmer O. Johnson Award, and Review of Research Award. He has been selected on multiple occasions by *Education Week* as one of the top 200 scholars having the most significant influence on U.S. education practice and policy. His significant contributions to the field of education research were recognized by his selection as Fellow of the AERA.

Measured Decision Inc. (MDI)'s staff implement a range of state-of-the-art analytical methods to support a variety of research and development projects. Affiliated Scholars offer technical assistance and provide design and analysis support.

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PREVIOUS LEARNINGS

The “summer slide” has been widely documented across the literature.¹ Students tend to lose critical knowledge and skills over the summer when they are out of school. This is especially true for students from low-income communities. To address this issue, many schools and districts have decided to implement summer learning programs with the intention of improving student outcomes and preventing summer loss.

Previous studies on district-led summer learning programs have shown that these programs can be effective at increasing student achievement over the summer in math. In a randomized controlled trial, researchers at RAND (2016) found that on average, students who attended the summer program had statistically significantly higher math scores the following fall than students who did not attend (0.08 standard deviation; $p < .05$).² Students who attended the summer program showed no difference in ELA/reading scores as compared to those students who did not attend the program.³ In a more recent 2025 study, conducted using value-added modeling on COVID-19 learning loss, researchers found that students who attended a summer learning program had a statistically significant increase in math (0.02 standard deviation, $p < 0.01$), but no difference in ELA/reading, relative to non-participating comparison students.⁴ These findings are consistent with results from summer 2022, which also showed significant gains in math (0.03 standard deviations, $p < 0.01$) and no impact in ELA/reading.⁵

Some studies have also found an effect in reading. In 2006 researchers conducted a randomized controlled trial to examine the effects of a multi-year summer learning program to alleviate summer loss. The program, staffed by college students, was studied across 3 years.⁶ Researchers found that students who attended the summer program had statistically significant growth equivalent to 40 to 50% of one grade level in ELA/reading compared to students who did not attend.⁷

¹[Kuhfeld, M., & McEachin, A. \(2024\).](#)

²[Augustine, C. H. et al. \(2016\).](#)

³[Ibid](#)

⁴[Callen, L., et al. \(2025\).](#)

⁵[Callen, L., et al. \(2023\).](#)

⁶[Borman, G. D., & Dowling, N. M. \(2006\).](#)

⁷[Ibid](#)

DETAILED METHODOLOGY

OVERVIEW

The analyses were designed to answer three research questions:

1. Did Summer Boost Work?
2. Who did Summer Boost Work For?
3. What Program Practices Were Linked To Outcomes?

We use spring and fall achievement data from the fall of 2022 through the fall of 2025 to document the impacts of Bloomberg Philanthropies' investment in summer learning programs across multiple participating cities. NWEA and Curriculum Associates, who collectively administer the spring and fall math and reading assessments in the vast majority of participating charter schools, provided access to all necessary student-level achievement data needed for the study (with grantee authorization). These data enable a comparison of the summer math and ELA/reading outcomes for those students who participate in Summer Boost and those who do not participate.

In 2024, we transitioned from using Difference-in-Differences (DiD) as the primary methodology to employing a Value Added Model (VAM) approach to answer our research questions.

The VAM approach allows for the comparison of two groups (Summer Boost participants and non-participants in the same schools) with three time periods during which the students were tested—in this case, two periods prior to Summer Boost in fall 2024 and spring 2025, and one period after Summer Boost in fall 2025. This strategy permits comparisons of the relative achievement gains of participants and non-participants during summer 2025, when *some* students participated in Summer Boost and others did not. This analysis can provide an intuitive estimate of the Summer Boost impact by comparing how we would predict students would grow without the program (based on past test scores, student characteristics, etc.), and how they actually grow. If students' actual scores are higher than we would predict, that extra growth is attributed to the program (i.e., the "value added").

Numerous robustness checks were employed throughout the analysis to test whether results hold up under other conditions. Additionally, models were run using a Difference-in-Differences (DiD) approach to allow for comparison with the previous years. Furthermore, by exploring estimates from the VAM outcomes by various student groups, we can assess whether certain student groups benefited more or less from their Summer Boost participation. (*cont.*)

These analyses, performed for each of a number of student subgroups, provide answers to research question 2. Finally, we explore the relative performance of Summer Boost students across the schools who participated in the initiative. These analyses allow us to evaluate whether certain hypothesized program characteristics that varied across the schools, such as the city in which the program was offered, the teacher/student ratios, and teacher experience levels, may have been related to differences in Summer Boost students' achievement gains. Below, we provide more information regarding the analytic sample and the measures used.

This year's evaluation also incorporated pooling to strengthen selected analyses. Pooling combines data from multiple cohorts into one analytic dataset, increasing sample sizes, improving statistical power, and yielding more precise estimates of program effects. Because analyses of student subgroups and program characteristics often involve smaller samples within a single year, results for these analyses were pooled using data from the 2023, 2024, and 2025 cohorts.

SAMPLE

We compiled student data from MAP Growth or i-Ready test providers, along with records shared by each grantee on summer school attendance, grade levels, and student characteristics. MGT also collected information directly from participating schools about their summer programs (e.g., duration, daily hours, class size, instruction mode) and participating students (e.g., grade level, attendance, student characteristics, and program characteristics).

After accounting for all missing data, the analytic samples for Summer Boost 2025 include 39,018 students with math scores, 12,849 of whom attended Summer Boost in 2025, and 36,239 students with ELA/reading scores, 11,834 of whom attended Summer Boost in 2025. Of the 79,786 student-term records obtained from grantees, data attrition in the analytic sample affected 51% ($n = 40,768$) of the analytic math sample and 55% ($n = 43,547$) of the analytic ELA sample. The primary cause was missing MAP Growth or i-Ready pre- and post-program test scores, with 34,934 student records lacking one or more ELA or math scores. Other less significant contributing factors included missing test score dates and/or student characteristic information.

MEASURES

The main variables of interest in the analytic samples are changes in each student's MAP Growth or i-Ready test scores, determined by drawing on pre-program ELA/reading and math test scores taken in fall 2024 and spring 2025 (i.e., the school year before taking Summer Boost) compared to post-program scores in fall 2025 (i.e., the school year after Summer Boost).

We also include as control variables indicators of the date each pre-test was taken and student characteristics. Some additional school-related characteristics of students include binary measures of whether the student participated in a subsidized (i.e., free or reduced-price) school meal program, whether they are English language learners, and whether they participated in special education programming during the school year prior to participating in Summer Boost.

We also record each student's grade level. Grade level refers to the grade students entered after Summer Boost during the fall of 2025. For example, a student identified with a "1" entered Grade 1 in fall 2025 and is called a "rising 1st grader" while a student identified with a "2" entered Grade 2 in fall 2025 and is referred to as a "rising 2nd grader" and so on up to those who are "rising 9th graders." Some students are retained at grade level; in these instances, we match their MAP Growth or i-Ready score to the appropriate grade level.

Finally, we collected information regarding several characteristics of schools, including a grantee identifier, the curriculum used, the number of hours per day the program was offered, student participant selection criteria, instructional approaches, teacher experience, teacher support, student-to-teacher ratio, supports in place for high-needs students, whether there was enrichment-integrated learning, student and teacher recruitment challenges, transportation and operations challenges, enrichment activities, enrichment challenges, curriculum selection challenges, and teacher compensation.

RESULTS FOR 2023, 2024 AND 2025

In all three years of the evaluation, Summer Boost drove **positive, statistically significant growth in math and ELA test scores the following fall**. While estimates vary slightly from year-to-year, we do not see meaningful differences in overall student performance.

		2023 Results ^{1, 2}	2024 Results ^{1, 2}	2025 Results ^{1, 2}
		2023 Impact Difference-in-Differences (DiD)	2024 Impact VAM	2025 Impact VAM
				
Additional Weeks of Learning	Math	~4-5 weeks*	5 weeks*	3.5 weeks*
	ELA	~3-4 weeks*	2 weeks*	2.5 weeks*

¹ All results presented are compared to non-Summer Boost participants.
² Symbols mark p-values, or the strength of evidence the results are not due to chance, as follows:
* p < 0.05 (statistically significant),
† p ≥ 0.05 and < 0.10 (marginally significant),
‡ p ≥ 0.10 and < 0.20 (directionally significant).

Note: In 2023 the Summer Boost evaluation used Difference-in-Differences (DiD) as the primary methodology. In 2024 and 2025, the evaluation moved to VAM as our primary approach.

CAVEATS AND LIMITATIONS

While this evaluation provides valuable insights into the impact of Summer Boost, several factors should be considered when interpreting the findings:

- **Multiple factors shape student outcomes:** Summer Boost students differ in many ways, including city, grade level, academic starting point, and other observed and unobserved characteristics. While the Value-Added Model (VAM) controls for many measurable differences, it cannot control for unmeasured student characteristics or fully isolate the effect of any single factor.
- **Findings may not fully generalize:** Students participated in Summer Boost for a variety of reasons, including teacher recommendations, family needs, and other contextual factors not captured in the data. In addition, the evaluation reflects students in participating charter schools across specific cities, grades, and schools, so results may not apply broadly to all students or summer learning programs implemented in different contexts. These factors could influence student outcomes and should be considered when interpreting how broadly the findings apply.

Given these caveats and limitations, we recommend placing the greatest weight on results based on larger samples and on patterns that are consistent across student groups and over multiple years.

ADDITIONAL WEEKS OF LEARNING METHODOLOGY

To translate the observed effect sizes for the variety of analytical subgroups selected during the analysis, the weeks of additional learning were calculated using estimates from 7 nationally normed tests.¹ These values were then utilized to calculate the weeks of additional learning for the appropriate subgroup. **For analyses that were not directly related to the rising grade level, rising 4th graders were the uniform standard applied for all student groups.** This standard was selected due to its proximity to the median of the full analytic sample as well as the average annual gain in comparison to other grade levels.

General Equation Used

$$\text{Additional Weeks of Learning} = \left(\frac{\text{Observed Effect Size}}{\text{Annual Gain in Effect Size for Grade Level}} \right) \times 36 \text{ weeks}$$

Average Annual Gain in Effect Size From Seven Nationally Normed Tests¹

Rising Grade Level	Math	ELA
1st	1.14	1.52
2nd	1.03	0.97
3rd	0.89	0.60
4th	0.52	0.36
5th	0.56	0.40
6th	0.41	0.32
7th	0.30	0.23
8th	0.32	0.26

Equal to 9
months of
school

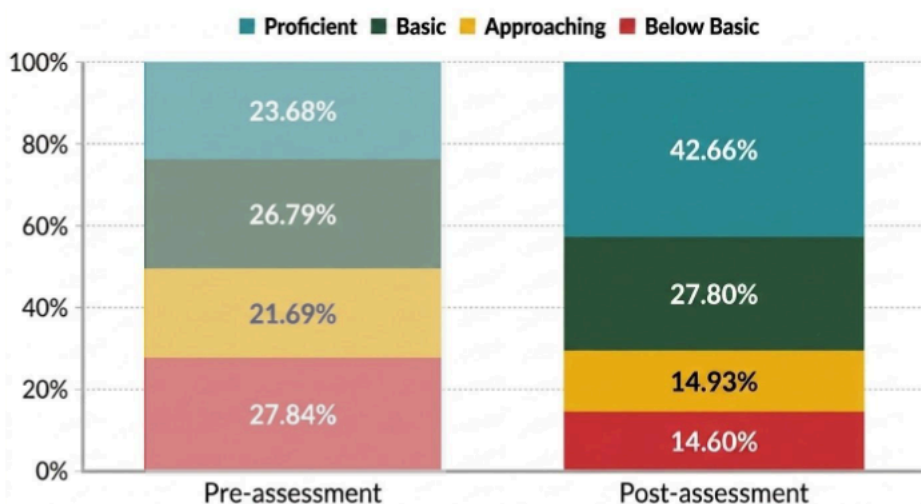
¹Hill, C. J., Bloom, H. S., Black, A. R., & Lipsey, M. W. (2008). Empirical Benchmarks for Interpreting Effect Sizes in Research. *Child Development Perspectives* 2(3):172 - 177. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/227544255_Empirical_Benchmarks_for_Interpreting_Effect_Sizes_in_Research

PRE/POST ASSESSMENT RESULTS

While this evaluation focused on a quasi-experimental research design using i-Ready and MAP Growth data, **Summer Boost students entering grades 1-9 also took Lavinia Group pre- and post-assessments** during the summer (see [here](#) for the role each assessment plays). Lavinia Group assessments focused on prioritized summer standards that map to state academic standards and measured student growth from the beginning to the end of the program. These assessments were vetted by third-party evaluators.

Similar to last year, the pre/post data below show a strong **descriptive increase in the number of participating students scoring “proficient,”** and a **decrease in students scoring “below basic” and “approaching”** following participation in Summer Boost 2025.

Average Growth in Math Assessment Proficiency Levels
Change in Proficiency by Percentage Points



Key Takeaways

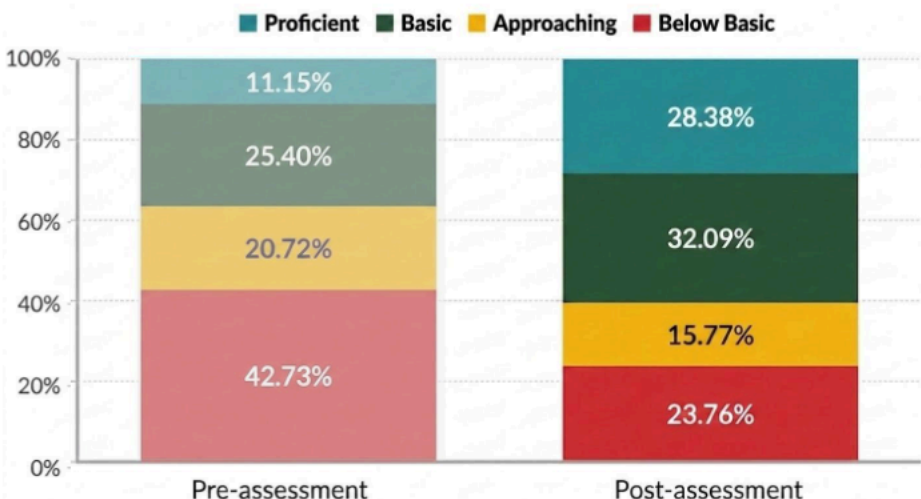


18.98 percentage point increase in students scoring “Proficient.”



20.00 percentage point decrease in students scoring “Below Basic” and “Approaching.”

Average Growth in ELA Assessment Proficiency Levels
Change in Proficiency by Percentage Points



Key Takeaways



17.23 percentage point increase in students scoring “Proficient.”



23.92 percentage point decrease in students scoring “Below Basic” and “Approaching.”

