



# THE *new* VISION FOR SUMMER SCHOOL NETWORK

In 2009, the National Summer Learning Association launched the New Vision for Summer School (NVSS) initiative, a bold new effort to completely transform and re-position the role of summer school in education reform. NVSS, which consists of nine principles, seeks to provide comprehensive and engaging programming for students and teachers which transcend the remedial and punitive model of the past.

**Since the initial launch, urban districts around the nation have invested over \$200 million in summer learning programs that embrace the principles of the New Vision.** Both President Obama and Secretary Duncan have talked extensively about the importance of summer learning, and the issue has recently been featured in the *New York Times* and *TIME Magazine*.

To build on this momentum and expand the initiative, the Association recently created the New Vision for Summer School Network to provide districts with an unprecedented opportunity to exchange ideas with peers across the nation, share best practices, and have access to the latest tools, resources, and policy developments in summer learning.

The Network currently consists of the following 21 school districts, which serve over 2 million students across the nation: **New York City, Chicago, Philadelphia, Boston, Minneapolis, Oakland, Baltimore, Washington, DC, Rochester, Pittsburgh, Duval County (FL), Fairfax County (VA), Cincinnati, Springfield (MA), Wausau (WI), Racine (WI), Newark, Birmingham, Fresno, Sacramento, and Providence.** The Network meets regularly to address a comprehensive range of issues dealing with the development and implementation of a new vision for summer school, including evaluation and assessment, staffing, curriculum, technology, partnership building, and sustainability.

## Principles of the New Vision for Summer School

- (1) Increase the duration, intensity, and scope of the traditional summer school model to a comprehensive research-based, 6-week, full-day model that makes summer an essential component of district school reform strategy.
- (2) Expand participation to all students in school-wide Title I programs, not just those who are struggling academically, and consider expanded year programs that include all students in participating schools.
- (3) Change the focus from narrow remediation and test preparation to a blended approach of both academic learning AND enrichment activities that provides hands-on, engaging programming that fosters critical 21st Century skills, including collaboration, innovation, creativity, communication, and data analysis.
- (4) Strengthen and expand partnerships with community-based organizations and public agencies that provide summer activities to align and leverage existing resources, identify and meet gaps in service, improve program quality, and develop shared outcomes for summer success.
- (5) Include strategies to improve student attendance and engagement by providing healthy food, field trips, recreation, electives, attendance policies, and comprehensive supports.
- (6) Provide innovative professional development for educators and ensure summer programs offer teachers a chance to test new models of teaching and gain valuable leadership experience.
- (7) Include innovative approaches to learning for older students, including proficiency-based learning, flexible credit recovery and acceleration, internships, college visits, and other college and career readiness opportunities that provide targeted interventions and workforce development skills to prepare students for future success.
- (8) Target key transition periods such as the summers before kindergarten, middle school, high school, and college to ensure students are prepared for success in new environments.
- (9) Lastly, summers need to move from the periphery to the center of school reform strategies through sustainable and stable funding from Title I and other sources, long-term planning, robust assessment and evaluation, and improved infrastructure and data collection.