



Tabletop Session Summary

May 27, 2021

Working Together: Recruiting, Training and Supporting Staff Members for Impactful Summer Learning

Presenters: Melanie Claxton, [Pittsburgh Public Schools](#); Anneliese Martinez and Dr. Kait Brennan, [Pittsburgh Learning Collaborative](#)

This tabletop discussion explored innovative recruitment and onboarding strategies to meet summer staffing needs.

Session Highlights

- » For the Pittsburgh Public Schools, plans for summer are based on boosting student success through relationship building, exploration, academic supports, and recreation. The program design is only as great as its implementation. To implement summer programming with fidelity, high-quality staff are needed.
- » Taking a staggered approach to hiring summer staff can be helpful, starting with camp leadership. Once the leadership team is in place, teachers (including academic and activity teachers) are the next role group to hire.
- » Providing options for teachers to work either part-time (e.g., academic teachers in the morning and activity teachers in the afternoon) or full-time can aid recruitment. Leveraging peer-to-peer connections and relationships with community-based providers can be useful for identifying staff as well. Finally, outreach to pre-service teachers, art instructors, paraprofessionals, parents, and young adults through out-of-school-time job fairs can also be effective for recruitment.
- » Operations support staff (including security staff, food service workers, and custodians) are the final role group to hire.
- » Once the staff are in place, professional development by role group and collectively is important for a successful summer program. Orientation and training activities include team building exercises and mission setting, review of program policies and procedures, and an examination of the academic curriculum.
- » It is also important to devote some training time to mindfulness and wellness strategies that staff can use to take care of themselves and to support students.
- » During the pandemic, community organizations have been coming together to rally around students and families.
- » The Pittsburgh Learning Collaborative was developed to bring together regional organizations to provide a coordinated response to community needs.



Shared Resources

- » [Allegheny County After 3PM 2020 Data](#)
- » [Community Schools Playbook: A Practical Guide to Advancing Community Schools Strategies](#)
- » [Cumulative and Differential Effects of Early Child Care and Middle Childhood Out-of-School Time on Adolescent Functioning](#)
- » [Expanding Opportunities, Improving Lives: Maryland's Out of School Time Programs](#)
- » [Investing in Our Youth, Strengthening Our Economy: The Economic Impact of Boys & Girls Clubs in the State of California](#)
- » [OKAN Issue Brief: Making the Case for Afterschool](#)
- » [Summer Dreamers Academy](#)
- » [Summer Learning Toolkit](#)
- » [Vermont Afterschool: Investing in Expanded Learning Opportunities \(ELOs\) in Vermont yields a \\$2.18 return on every dollar spent](#)
- » [Why Afterschool Makes "Cents" for Georgia](#)

Questions and Answers on Working Together: Recruiting, Training and Supporting Staff Members for Impactful Summer Learning

What was the timeline for the development of the out-of-school-time network infrastructure in Pittsburgh?

Pittsburgh and the greater Allegheny County region have been building a network infrastructure for more than 15 years. While Pittsburgh has a dense nonprofit and university ecosystem that reinforces programming capacity, a network infrastructure can be developed quickly. Starting small and hyper local and leveraging existing relationships is the first step. Then, craft a more global lens. Take stock of community-based assets including city parks, libraries, and museums, and tap into what already exists.

Did the summer job fair raise any community-wide conversations about the compensation structure in different agencies and organizations?

Yes, these issues do carryover into summer staffing. They are important and are part of a larger conversation about livable wages.

Have you heard any feedback about teachers' unions and summer schedules?

Pittsburgh has a memorandum of understanding with the union specifically for summer. It has expectations for different role groups and offers more flexibility, as it is independent from what is in place for the school year. It is important to have these conversations as early as possible as it takes time to think through the agreement.

How do you ensure that summer staff have the necessary skills training to serve students with disabilities or other special populations?

For district-run summer programming in Pittsburgh, they are intentional about having the proper supports in place for students (e.g., ESOL teachers, special education staff, and staff support for students experiencing homelessness).



For work with out-of-school-time providers, the district has been intentional about trying to leverage its internal resources like training to build up the capacity of providers to ensure that student needs are being met. It is an ongoing effort.

How have professional learning communities informed your planning for this summer? What kind of input did they provide and how did that impact your planning for using new funds this summer?

In terms of planning, professional learning communities have provided a space to share needs and to better understand what supports providers have to meet different needs. In terms of funding, a community-based committee was just approved to help design the way the new funds will be utilized.

Are you addressing transportation for students (including special populations) this summer?

District-run summer programming will provide transportation for all students within district guidelines.

