Summer Learning Partnership Report
COMMUNITY SCHOOL FOR CREATIVE EDUCATION
OAKLAND, CA
2014
Partnership Design

This report describes the summer learning activities & outcomes of a partnership between BELL (Building Educated Leaders for Life) and the Community School for Creative Education in Oakland, CA.

BELL is a nonprofit organization that partners with schools and community organizations to expand learning time for students in grades K-8. Its mission is to transform the academic achievements, self-confidence and life trajectories of children living in under-resourced, urban communities.

Summer learning activities play an important role in a child’s academic success, as well as their social, physical, and emotional development. Without them, studies show that children tend to lose reading and math skills, gain weight, and face increased risks of negative social behavior. By the time a child completes the 8th grade, summer learning loss can account for up to 2/3 of the academic achievement gap between children from low-income families and their higher-income peers.

BELL's summer learning model has successfully served students and families in the San Francisco Bay area since 2011. In 2014, The Community School for Creative Education invited BELL to combine resources and deliver a summer learning experience to help students boost their academic skills, self-confidence, and social skills, while encouraging healthy lifestyles and engaging parents in their child’s education. The BELL Summer program was offered at no cost to families.

The summer learning partnership helped students – particularly students who were struggling academically - strengthen the foundational academic skills they need to advance to the next grade and begin the new school year ready to excel.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>133</th>
<th>Scholars Enrolled</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-6</td>
<td>Grades Served</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>137.5</td>
<td>Total Hours of Summer Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>91%</td>
<td>Average Daily Attendance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+1.9</td>
<td>Average Grade-Equivalent Reading Gain, in Months, Underperforming Scholars*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+1.5</td>
<td>Average Grade-Equivalent Math Gain, in Months, Underperforming Scholars*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>88%</td>
<td>Teachers reporting that scholars increased their self-confidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100%</td>
<td>Parents reporting that scholars enjoyed their summer learning experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>82%</td>
<td>Parents reporting they became more involved in their scholar’s education</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* "Underperforming" scholars score in the lowest quartile on STAR assessments at the start of the summer: Urgent Intervention (1-10th percentile) or Intervention (11-25th percentile)
PROGRAM GOALS

BELL and the Community School for Creative Education (CSCE) worked together to eliminate the summer opportunity gap, accelerate students’ reading achievement, and close the achievement gap. Goals of the partnership included:

- Increase scholars’ literacy and math skills.
- Strengthen scholars’ self-confidence & social skills.
- Increase parental engagement.

PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

BELL worked with CSCE to recruit, hire, and train a summer leadership team led by a Program Manager, who was responsible for setting and fulfilling program goals, supervising staff, and engaging parents. An experienced teacher served as an Instructional Coach, responsible for overseeing assessment and ensuring instruction remained consistent with curricula and program goals. A Program Assistant managed logistics, attendance, and parent interactions.

BELL was responsible for delivering the summer program model, managing quality, and measuring outcomes. The national nonprofit leveraged its capacity for program design & planning; scholar data management; staff recruitment, hiring & training; assessment & evaluation; payroll & finance; distribution of curriculum & supplies; fundraising; and information systems.

PROGRAM STAFFING & TRAINING

BELL collaborated with CSCE to identify and recruit high-performing teachers to lead academic instruction, enrichment instructors to lead afternoon activities, and teaching assistants to support classroom activities. Program leaders participated in BELL’s comprehensive leadership training, including online e-learning (BELL University), webinars, and classroom-based training. With assistance from BELL, they took the lead in training program staff, who also completed e-learning courses. Training focused on the summer learning program model, utilizing assessment data to drive instruction, effective teaching practices, collaborative teaching, and behavior management.

SCHOLARS SERVED

CSCE set criteria for scholar enrollment based on grades, test scores, and risk of retention in grade. BELL facilitated enrollment efforts by collecting enrollment forms, creating scholar files, clustering scholars, and maintaining communication with parents.

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Family involvement was a key component of the summer learning program. At each site, the program leadership team worked diligently to engage parents and guardians and share the program model, goals for scholars, and requirements for adult involvement. Program staff members provided regular updates to parents on their children’s progress and challenges through phone calls, progress reports, and mid-program parent-teacher conferences. Parents were invited to join scholars at school for “Bring your parent to school day.” Parents were invited to attend a Closing Ceremony celebration, at which scholars performed skits, songs, and presentations about their summer learning experience.
## Partnership Checklist

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Summer Program Management</td>
<td>☒</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Curricula &amp; Supplies</td>
<td>☒</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrichment Curricula &amp; Supplies</td>
<td>☒</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Enrollment &amp; Attendance</td>
<td>☒</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher &amp; Tutor Recruitment</td>
<td>☒</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff Training</td>
<td>☒</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality Assurance &amp; Technical Support</td>
<td>☒</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field Trips &amp; Community Service</td>
<td>☒</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent Engagement</td>
<td>☒</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment &amp; Evaluation</td>
<td>☒</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classrooms &amp; School Facilities</td>
<td>☒</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snack &amp; Meal Service</td>
<td>☒</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philanthropic Funding</td>
<td>☒</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Funding &amp; In-Kind Contributions</td>
<td>☒</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Program Design

**SUMMER LEARNING CORE ESSENTIALS & VALUES**

The BELL Summer program is designed to serve students who are performing below grade level and who lack access to high-quality learning opportunities outside of school. The model is guided by principals of effective summer learning, including (1) a culture of high expectations; (2) partnerships to magnify impact; (3) an exceptional learning environment, including a 1:10 staff to scholar ratio; (4) teaching excellence; and (5) relevant & engaging learning experiences that broaden scholars’ educational horizons while developing 21st Century skills. Scholars and staff were expected to model core program values: Quality, Empowerment, Respect, Courage, and Sacrifice.

**THEMES**

All summer long, scholars were encouraged to Be Extraordinary, the program’s motto. Activities focused on college- and career-readiness, healthy lifestyles, and community engagement were woven into academic and enrichment programming. During College Pride Week scholars learned about the college experience and how success in school is connected to success in life. On Field Day they participated in active team-building games.

**PROGRAM SCHEDULE**

The program operated 5.5 hours per day, 5 days per week, for 5 weeks. In sum, the program expanded learning time by a total of 137.5 hours. The program started June 16 and concluded on July 18. The daily schedule started at 8:30 am and ended at 2:00 pm.
FRIDAY FIELD TRIPS & FIELD DAYS

Each week culminated in a special event. During College Pride Week, scholars visited Santa Clara University and learned about the admissions process, financial aid, and campus life. They held Field Days, hosted guest speakers, and performed in an end-of-program Jingle Competition, a tradition of the BELL Summer program.

ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES

After lunch and recess, scholars rotated through a series of fun, hands-on enrichment activities. Activities were designed to foster critical 21st Century skills like teamwork and leadership, while boosting their self-confidence and exposing them to new subjects and opportunities.

| 8:30 | BREAKFAST & COMMUNITY TIME |
| 9:00 | LITERACY INSTRUCTION |
| 10:30 | MATH INSTRUCTION |
| 12:00 | LUNCH |
| 12:30 | ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES |
| 1:15 | FRIDAY FIELD TRIPS & FIELD DAYS |
| 2:00 | |

Zumba
Healthy Cooking

Yoga
Chess

Arts & Crafts
Sports

LITERACY INSTRUCTION

Certified teachers led 90 minutes of literacy instruction using the Reader’s Journey curriculum from Prentice Hall / Pearson, specifically designed for scholars in grades 6-8. Each unit has a specific genre focus, such as fiction and nonfiction, poetry and prose, the novel, drama, and the research process. The curriculum uses high interest, leveled anchor books to engage scholars at their reading level and support the systematic development of core language arts skills. Each unit is developed around a “Big Question,” and includes a focus on active reading strategies, a writing activity, the development of speaking and listening skills, and a culminating book project.

MATH INSTRUCTION

Certified teachers led 90 minutes of math instruction using the curriculum developed by Pearson. Math Navigator (Common Core Edition) uses targeted intervention modules to build conceptual understanding, problem solving resilience, and mathematical skills. It is designed as a supplemental program for scholars in grades K-8, supporting all eight of the Common Core’s Standards of Mathematical Practice and covering numbers and operations, algebra, geometry and measurement, data analysis, statistics, and probability.
Impact Measurement

The BELL Summer program sought to produce the following outcomes:

- Students who are underperforming at the start of the summer will gain at least one month of grade-equivalent skills instead of experiencing summer learning loss.
- At least 75% of scholars will demonstrate improved self-confidence and social skills.
- At least 75% of parents will report that they became more engaged in their child’s education.

To measure performance against these outcomes, program leaders produced qualitative and quantitative data.

✎ COMPUTER-ADAPTIVE ASSESSMENTS

Teachers used STAR Enterprise Assessments, by Renaissance Learning, on a pre- and post-program basis. The assessments are built for measuring progress against Common Core standards. Scholars in grades 1-2 completed the STAR Early Literacy Assessment, while scholars in grades 3-6 completed the STAR Reading Assessment, and all scholars completed STAR Math assessments.

The multiple-choice assessments were administered via computer, laptop, or tablet. They adapted to scholar answers; if a scholar selected the correct answer, the next question became more difficult, if the scholar answered incorrectly, the next question became easier. The adaptive quality of these assessments enabled staff to hone in on the specific learning needs of each scholar. It also allowed staff to group scholars according to common needs and deliver data-driven instruction.

✎ ATTENDANCE DATA

BELL managed scholar enrollment and tracked attendance data in an online Scholar Management System powered by Salesforce.com. Scholars were expected to attend at least 80% of the time. In addition, scholars were only allowed three absences, given the strong positive correlation between learning time and academic and social outcomes. Program leaders integrated enrollment and attendance data with staffing and quality indicators to optimize the learning environment.

✎ TEACHER SURVEYS

Partners used a teacher and teaching assistant survey instrument to assess program implementation and efficacy from the perspective of instructional staff. Teachers and teaching assistants completed the anonymous survey at the end of the program, which included questions regarding scholars’ progress, training, curricula, program staff and service, and parent engagement.

✎ PARENT SURVEYS

Partners employed a parent survey instrument to assess parent observations of scholar improvement, program quality, and parent satisfaction. Parents completed the anonymous survey on-site during the final week of the program.
Grade-equivalent gains are an important indicator of student success because they provide an absolute measure of how much a student has progressed up the proficiency ladder at a time when most children are not engaged in structured learning activities. A full grade level contains ten months of grade-equivalent skills development (i.e., based on an average school year of learning from September – June). To put it another way, a gain of 1 grade-equivalent month is equal to what an average student learns in 10% of a school year.

At the start of the BELL Summer program, formative assessments provided teachers with baseline indicators of scholar performance along with individualized learning plans. Approximately 60% of scholars started the program underperforming in reading, and 62% were underperforming in math.*

Assessment data from the end of the BELL Summer program show that scholars gained grade-equivalent reading and math skills. On average, scholars in grades 1-2 gained an average of 2 months of grade-equivalent skills. In grades 3-6, underperforming scholars gained 1.9 months of reading skills and 1.5 months of math skills. All scholars – including scholars who started the summer at or near grade level – achieved modest gains in reading and approximately 1 month of grade-equivalent math skills.

Scholars’ grade-equivalent academic growth suggests that participating in summer learning activities could have a positive impact on reading and math achievement and mitigate summer learning loss. The data also hints that more time for learning may have the greatest impact on scholars who are struggling academically and who need it the most.

* Underperforming scholars score in the lowest quartile on STAR Reading and STAR Math assessments: Urgent Intervention (1-10th percentile) or Intervention (11-25th percentile)

** Sources


SELF-CONFIDENCE & SOCIAL SKILLS

Scholars’ academic success is rooted in their self-efficacy skills, determination, and their social skills, including their ability to communicate clearly and work well with others. Teachers and parents consistently reported that scholars’ participation in BELL Summer program helped them make important gains in these areas. Such a positive impact can be attributed to a culture of high expectations, high-quality staff, a small staff to scholar ratio, and an individualized learning environment.

PARENT & TEACHER ENGAGEMENT & SATISFACTION

Teachers and parents consistently reported that the BELL Summer program was of high quality and met or exceeded their expectations. Teachers reported that the program structure and resources helped scholars achieve the goals set forth for them. They also reported that working the program helped them develop their professional skills. Parents reported that the model boosted their involvement in their child’s education – an outcome that is proven to have significant long-term impact on student achievement in school and beyond.

PARENT & TEACHER SURVEY RESULTS

Parents report:

- Scholars are more confident in their abilities: 91%
- Scholars have a more positive attitude about school: 91%
- Scholars enjoyed the BELL Summer program: 100%
- The BELL Summer program helped me become more involved in my child’s education: 82%
- I am highly satisfied with my BELL Summer experience: 100%
- I recommend the BELL Summer program to other parents: 91%

Teachers report:

- Scholars have more confidence in themselves: 88%
- I recommend the BELL Summer program to parents: 98%
- Program staff are diverse and reflect scholar diversity: 93%
- Working with BELL helped me develop my professional skills: 100%
Public & Private Funding

**BELL**

BELL raised philanthropic funding to cover a portion of program expenses. Donors supporting the summer learning partnership included:

- American Honda Foundation
- Bank of the West
- Cisco Foundation
- Quest Foundation
- RGK Foundation
- Tipping Point Community
- Umpqua Bank
- Western Digital Foundation

BELL raised additional funds from national donors including the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation, the Hearst Foundation, and The Wallace Foundation.

**COMMUNITY SCHOOL FOR CREATIVE EDUCATION**

The school contributed school funding and in-kind resources, including classroom space, utilities, janitorial services, breakfast and lunch, and bus transportation to and from program sites each day.

**CONTACT US**

Mary Wissemann  
**Vice President, Program Operations**  
Mary.Wissemann@experienceBELL.org  
(617) 740-0485