



Success

Timely tips to improve student achievement

July 2019

Gahanna-Jefferson City teacher inspires students to help the environment

Gahanna-Jefferson City's Gahanna Middle School South's Enviro Start Up Team is making a positive difference in the world and encouraging others to do the same. Science teacher **Cailin Sendelbach-Shelton** started an environmental club to encourage students to become action-oriented environmentalists through reflection, personal choice and community outreach. For more, go to <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU561>.

How lack of technology at home affects learning gaps

According to an analysis of census data by The Associated Press, approximately 17% of students lack access to home computers and 18% do not have broadband internet at home. Data show students with access to the internet at home are more likely to have higher scores in math, science and reading. For more, go to <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU562>.

Key Bank and Akron City partner to teach financial skills

Key Bank and **Akron City** have opened a mock bank at the district's East Community Learning Center to teach students financial skills. Students not only learn money management but also help run the bank. For more, visit <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU563>.

'Shark Tank'-style panel tests students' problem solving skills

Troy Middle School in Troy, N.Y., hosted local fourth- and fifth-graders who presented their business or nonprofit ideas before a panel of judges in an event inspired by the reality TV show 'Shark Tank.' Students developed their projects after thinking of everyday problems they wanted to solve. For more, visit <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU564>.

Students learn statistics at the ballpark

Thousands of students recently learned real-world uses for math and statistics while attending a Milwaukee Brewers baseball game. Students used workbooks to keep track of statistics on pitching and hitting as well as how much they spent on snacks and other treats. For more, visit <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU565>.

American Sign Language course popular at Lorain City high school

Lorain City's Lorain High School's students have the chance to learn a language other than Spanish or French. American Sign Language is offered and typically has a wait list for the 70 spots available each year. For more, visit <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU566>.

Student achievement in-depth

Each month, **Success** brings you a research brief or in-depth article to discuss with board members and administrators.

Make summer school more like summer camp

According to research collected by the nonprofit think tank, the RAND Corp., students can lose up to three months of learning each summer. By ninth grade, much of the achievement gap in reading is attributed to the compounding impacts of summer learning loss. This phenomenon, often called “summer slide,” particularly impacts low-income students who may not have access to enrichment opportunities and extracurriculars that wealthier peers enjoy.

Summer school programs that focus on academics for underperforming students is one solution favored by many school districts to address summer slide. However, these programs typically draw little interest from parents and students, yielding low enrollment and attendance.

EAB, an education research and consulting group, conducted more than 200 interviews with districts and dug into what those with successful summer programs learned. The study was led by consultant **Maria Wahlstrom**. “We found that the majority of districts do have summer programs, but only 10% of students in the district are actually participating in them,” she said.

Contributing to low enrollment figures is the difficulty in drumming up interest from parents and students. Wahlstrom suggested that disinterest is partially due to branding. “People underestimate the stigma summer programs have,” she said. Rebranding summer school to summer camp could help attract more students. Some districts Wahlstrom studied saw boosts in engagement by adopting classic summer camp vibes, starting with the nomenclature. Thus, students became “campers,” lessons became “activities,” staff members became “counselors” and classrooms morphed into “cabins.”

A district interviewed by Wahlstrom partnered with a local YMCA to extend the half-day summer program into a full day with literacy activities in the mornings and games in the afternoon. That change may have been more pragmatic than cosmetic, she said. “Having a half-day summer program makes it difficult for a lot of parents to send their kids because they have to find child care afterward,” Wahlstrom noted. But at the same time, “Teachers don’t want to teach the whole day.”

Outreach may be just as crucial. Instead of sending a memo home, the report suggests creating a promotional video, complete with parent and camper interviews, to build excitement for the following year’s summer programs. “Think about your competitors” and their PR efforts, Wahlstrom advises, referring to the nonacademic summer camps students might otherwise attend and she also suggested that outreach and promotion efforts should begin in the fall.

To read the article, which contains a link to the report, visit <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/SU567>.

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