AccelerateED Instruction Subcommittee
Thursday, May 13, 2020 (meeting 3)
3:00 – 5:00 p.m.

Instruction Subcommittee

Patrick Kelly, Chairman
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Subcommittee Deliverable: Proposed Summer Recommendations by May 22nd and Fall Recommendations by June 12th.

Minutes

DRAFT- Instructional Subcommittee Proposal for Summer 2020

This spring, students across the state of South Carolina have experienced an unprecedented disruption to learning and daily life. Over the past two months, educators, parents, guardians, and caregivers across the state have partnered together to develop and deploy an incredible array of resources to meet the academic, social, and emotional needs of our students. While school buildings may have closed across our state, the collective efforts across our state have allowed schooling to continue in the face of a generational pandemic.

However, while the efforts of our educators and parents have mitigated the negative impact of school closures for students, it is undeniable that things have been lost- from learning, to moments, to the daily relationships and interactions that give so many students in South Carolina a sense of safety. Students have experienced varying degrees of loss based on factors like unique learning needs, socioeconomic status, and access to broadband technology.

As a result, before our state moves into the 2020-2021 school year, it is imperative that we use the summer to both address the challenges created by this moment of crisis and prepare the steps necessary to move out of the crisis. In effect, our state must take the steps to ***LIFT*** our students in order to effectively address student learning needs. To meet that goal, our subcommittee recommendations for Summer 2020 fall into four areas:

- **L**earning
- **I**dentification
- **F**ormulation
- **T**ransition

Please note that these recommendations are not presented in a recommended sequential order for implementation and instead are simply structured in this format for ease of use. These recommendations are also not an exclusive set of possible summer activities. Districts are encouraged to consider other possible activities based on local need, circumstances, and available funding.

Learning

During the summer of 2020, our state must make wise investments to promote student learning in ways that are developmentally appropriate and targeted to meet the unique needs of different learners. Districts should consider one or more of the following as it relates to summer programming:

1. Districts should continue existing Reading Camps for 3rd graders and summer school programs for middle and high school students.
2. Summer programs should be offered in a format that best meets the needs of students and aligns with the capabilities of the district (virtual, blended, paper/pencil, reading challenges/at-home summer reading programs, face-to-face if permitted and possible). While the digital format could be effective for middle or high school, districts should make every effort to avoid the use of distance learning or resource packets for summer programs (Reading Camp and other). This may necessitate shifting the dates for summer programs until later in the summer in order to increase opportunities to conduct summer learning in face-to-face settings if permitted and appropriate based on current health guidance (DHEC and CDC) and staff availability.
3. Districts could use recovery funding to hire tutors for students involved in summer learning programs. Districts opting for this activity should develop appropriate qualifications, training, and guidance for tutors. Potential groups to consider for tutor recruitment could include pre-service teachers in collegiate programs and members of local organizations focused on adult literacy promotion. South Carolina IHEs with teacher preparation programs should consider offering to assist districts in recruiting pre-service teachers for employment as tutors, especially in areas not in close proximity to an IHE.
4. Districts could also consider using available recovery and summer reading funding to purchase books for students as part of an at-home summer reading program and challenge. If districts pursue this option, they should consider a menu of age-appropriate material, a blend of physical and digital text, and ensuring accessibility for all students.
5. Districts are strongly encouraged to explore all available options (ESY, one-to-one tutoring, etc.) to meet the needs of specific student subgroups, including- but not limited to- EL and special education.
6. Districts should prioritize focus on early learners and literacy. Consider using available recovery funding to expand Reading Camps to include students in grades K-2 using similar procedures to what districts used to identify 3rd grade students for reading camp and based on availability of staff and funding. Consideration for use of summer recovery funding could also be targeted for math instruction in grades K-3.
7. Districts could use funding to provide services to address the social and emotional needs of students**.** Consider using available recovery funding to provide support services for students to include, but not limited to, mental health counseling, tele-counseling, and one-to-one in-person counseling.
8. Provide recovery funding to staff opportunities for high school students in CATE programs to work in one-on-one or small group in-person settings to complete certification requirements that could not be met during the eLearning period.

9. For any summer activities, districts should use available recovery funding to supplement existing summer academic programs rather than supplanting funding already allocated for those purposes.

In support of district efforts to provide summer learning opportunities, the SCDE should consider the following:

10. The SCDE should develop and deploy ELA, Math, and Social-Emotional learning resources for home that are easily accessible for students and parents to supplement already established district resources. This could include, but is not limited to, the creation of instructional support videos, a single learning management system for summer resources or play-based learning kits for early learners, developmentally appropriate instructional choice boards, summer learning packets. These resources should be accompanied by guides to provide parents and caregivers insights on how to best utilize resources.

11. The SCDE should develop and deploy a public relations summer reading campaign to promote literacy for all students and families. This could include, but is not limited to, public service announcements, use of social media, and partnership with public libraries and local media to encourage student reading for enjoyment over the summer.

Identification

In an effort to diagnose student learning loss to the greatest extent possible prior to the 2020-2021 school year, districts should consider the following when identifying eligible students for summer learning programs:

1. Utilize existing teacher feedback and recommendations as a starting place for diagnosing student needs, particularly existing documentation indicating lack of student engagement during the period of school closure. Districts should also use existing data sources such as Literacy Assessment Portfolios, benchmark performance measures, or other means of formative assessment given to students prior to school closure.

2. Once districts have identified students likely to have experienced the most significant learning loss during the period of school closure, districts should find ways to use available recovery funding to assess student academic levels. If allowable under health guidance, this could be best achieved in July through in-person settings using existing diagnostic tools.

3. Given limited time and resources, districts should give highest priority for seeking to diagnose student needs for individuals in these subgroups:
   a) K-2
   b) Transition Grades- 5th to 6th and 8th to 9th
   c) English Learners
   d) Migrant or homeless students
   e) Students with Individual Education Plans or those recommended for evaluation for eligibility for services under IDEA

Formulation

Regardless of the health situation in August, the start of the 2020-2021 school year will be unlike the traditional return to school from summer. As a result, districts should use time during the summer to formulate the plans necessary to address the unique challenges and needs for the return to school this year.

1. Districts may consider the development of a local task force or similar group to build back-to-school plans that are best aligned to the resources and needs of the local district. This task force should include broad and meaningful engagement and participation from key educational stakeholders, to include teachers and parents.

2. Approximately 150,000 student households in South Carolina lack broadband access, and 160,000 students lack access to a computing device. As a result, SCDE and state leaders should place high priority on using recovery funding to close this digital divide for the start of the 2020-2021 school year. This includes increasing access to broadband, devices (for students and teachers), and ensuring that each district has an available Learning Management System (LMS).
3. The SCDE, in collaboration with districts, should prioritize developing professional learning opportunities in the areas of distance learning and instruction, social-emotional learning, and trauma-informed practices.
4. In the event of school closures due to COVID-19 during the 2020-2021 school year, it is recommended for each district to develop a distance learning plan to have in place by the start of the 2020-2021 school year. This plan should include, at minimum:
    a) Distance learning procedures, "schedules," and expectations for each grade-level (elementary, middle, and high) aligned to SCDE guidelines for recommended number of daily hours for distance learning
    b) A communications plan for sharing distance learning plans and procedures with students, parents, and the community at the start of the school year
    c) Methods to track student engagement and "attendance"

In support of providing districts with flexibility for their efforts to formulate plans for distance learning, the SCDE should consider the following:

1. Review and consider waiving defined minimum program language in state statute as a mechanism to ensure reasonable instructional time during distance learning that is developmentally appropriate for all grade levels.
2. Review and consider waiving attendance intervention requirements as traditional methods of capturing attendance would not be used during distance learning.
3. Review and consider waiving seat time requirements for high school credit courses to allow for flexibility of districts who are able to provide students with demonstration of mastery opportunities and document such.

Transition

Finally, our state must take steps to ensure that once students return to school, they are able to transition back to a school-based learning environment and experience academic success during the 2020-2021 school year. As a result, the following recommendations should be considered by SCDE and state policy makers to help districts, schools, and educators facilitate that transition for students. The SCDE should consider the following:

1. **Development of Learning Progressions-** SCDE should develop a framework of learning progressions to inform the work of educators during the 2020-2021 school year. These progressions should identify the core, essential skills, practices, and processes that a student should master to achieve proficiency related to state standards.
2. **Development of Essential Readiness Standards-** SCDE should consider prioritizing the standards and indicators at each grade level, and for each subject and content area. This will allow teachers to target instruction based on the most important standards and indicators and adjust the curriculum and instructional focus accordingly.
3. **Waiver from Testing for Accountability-** Time is one of the most valuable resources we can provide for students in the coming year to promote learning. As a result, our state should seek a waiver from all accountability-related testing requirements for the 2020-2021 school year for the purpose of making more time available for learning to help remedy and recover lost time and learning during spring 2020.
4. **Learning Recovery Plan-** In an effort to mitigate the gaps in learning that students will have when they return to school, districts should have the option of using funds to

recover learning in one or more of the following ways and outline such in their learning recovery plan:

a) Add up to six additional days to the school year;
b) Extend the existing school day up to two hours;
c) Offer Saturday School for students who demonstrate the most significant gaps in learning
d) Implement a before or after school learning program to serve students who demonstrate significant the most significant gaps in learning

Expansion of VirtualSC Offerings- SCDE should work to develop increased online learning opportunities and resources for elementary and middle school students in the event that parents opt to keep students home beyond the date of a return of “normal” school operations. In this event, the burden should not fall on a classroom teacher to simultaneously create traditional and eLearning instruction for students in the same class.