

Delaware Summer Acceleration Guidance

MARCH 2022

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Introduction

The [vision](#) of the Delaware Department of Education (DDOE) is that every student in Delaware will leave school ready for college, career, and life. In the spring of 2021, the DDOE launched its Strategy to Accelerate Learning to give students more opportunities to access grade-level content and make up for unfinished learning so that they are prepared for the next grade level and the 2021-2022 school year. To that end, Delaware developed an acceleration strategy grounded in four core actions that school systems need to prioritize to address unfinished teaching and learning.¹

The Delaware Summer 2022 Acceleration Guidance was developed in partnership with SchoolKit to support LEA's acceleration planning for summer 2022. This guidance considers data gathered through interviews with practitioners across the state; builds on research and best practices from organizations such as National Summer Learning Association (NSLA) and the Wallace Foundation; and aligns with DDOE's acceleration core actions:

1. Adopt and use high quality instructional materials (HQIM)
2. Provide educators with the professional learning needed to provide Tier 1 instruction to all students
3. Leverage data to diagnose unfinished learning and provide necessary support to all students
4. Create support structures to accelerate student learning

Summer planning is one aspect of accelerating to grade-level instruction and should be **viewed as part of a larger multi-year plan** for acceleration within an LEA or system. While the summer provides a valuable time to make progress towards the four core actions outlined above, the work must continue during the school year and beyond.

¹ Adapted from Delaware's [Summer Acceleration Impact](#) report.

How to Use this Document

This guidance is designed to be used by LEA or system leaders for two purposes:

- **To plan for student summer learning opportunities, and**
- To maximize administrative time during summer to **plan a longer-term learning acceleration strategy for the 2022-2023 school year and beyond.**

We encourage you to consider how you engage with this guidance based on where you are in your planning.

- If your summer acceleration planning is just beginning when you receive this guide, the summer acceleration planning team might find it useful to read through this document as pre-reading before the planning team's first meeting.
- If planning efforts are already underway when you receive this guide, the summer acceleration planning team may benefit from completing a step-back to ensure that a strong project plan is in place that will allow for the team to engage in the "Plan-Train-Assess-Reflect" process recommended by NSLA. Worksheets to help with planning and reflection are available under "[Additional Resources.](#)"

Delaware's Strategy to Accelerate Learning²

Addressing [unfinished instruction](#) for students has long been a complicated problem facing educators across the country. While the COVID-19 pandemic brought this challenge front and center both in the field and in our public discourse, "unfinished instruction is not a new phenomenon initiated and bound by the COVID-19 pandemic. Students from underserved populations...have been the victims of unfinished instruction since the inception of schooling for Black and Brown children in this country."³ Learning Acceleration, or Accelerating to Grade Level, aims to address unfinished instruction by providing just-in-time support to students to help them access grade-level standards and content.

Learning Acceleration **is...**

- An approach to teaching and planning that supports students to **access grade-level content** in core instruction, every day.

² [Delaware Strategy to Accelerate Learning](#)

³ [Why Unfinished Instruction Is More Accurate and Equitable Than Learning Loss](#)

- Grounded in **content area-specific, research-based** instructional practice to increase student mastery of grade-level standards.
- Focused on preparing students with what they need to access **grade-level curriculum during daily lessons with peers**. When done well, **students build confidence** in their own ability, rather than being shown time after time what they do not know or did not learn.

Learning Acceleration **is NOT...**

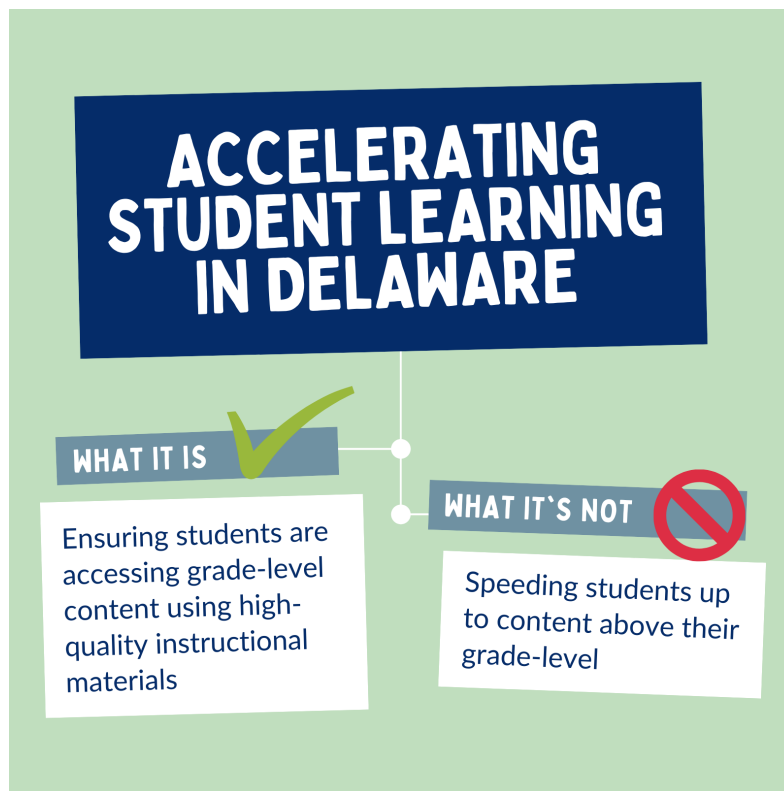
- A new name for intervention or remediation strategies.
- A separate or additional program.

Learning Acceleration often requires a shift in leader and teacher mindset to address unfinished learning *within grade-level content*. Delaware’s strategy to accelerate students toward grade level rests in four core actions (above) and is supported by the six key components below that ground the recommendations in this guide.

- 1. System Considerations:** System considerations integrate data, technology, and infrastructure to reexamine traditional school systems and structures. Systems considerations integrate whole child needs with academic needs.
- 2. High Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM) & Content:** High quality instructional materials create coherence, offer consistency across the learning environments, and support student voice and social-emotional health. The predictable structure of coherent, consistent instructional materials and content is foundational for teachers and students alike.
- 3. Diagnosing Unfinished Teaching & Learning:** Unfinished teaching and learning may impact students’ progress towards mastery of grade-level content. Determining the content that may not have been taught is critical to moving to grade-level content as quickly as possible. Leveraging data from multiple sources provides insight into what students know, what they don’t know, and addresses misconceptions about what students think they know.
- 4. Planning for Acceleration:** When planning for the summer, next school year, and the following school year, “meeting students where they are” will not be enough. A mindset of “acceleration, not remediation” is needed so that students are met with grade-level expectations while also addressing students’ social and emotional needs.
- 5. Ensuring Equitable Instruction:** Leaders and teachers must continue to assess the extent to which the academic and social-emotional needs of historically marginalized student groups

are addressed and ensure all students have equitable access and success in their learning opportunities.

- 6. Professional Learning for Teachers & School Leaders:** The traditional structures in which educators learn must be adapted to support teaching and learning. Curriculum-based, content-specific professional learning that accelerates all students' learning must support educators as they build knowledge and skills while ensuring their own sense of self-efficacy and social-emotional health and learning.



Section 1: Recruiting and Engaging Staff Early

Getting the word out about summer programming - including both LEA professional learning/planning opportunities and delivering summer learning to students - needs to happen as early as possible before staff make summer plans. In interviews with Delaware leaders, we heard that many LEAs are anticipating that this year, more so than any other, recruiting staff will be a challenge. Relying on general announcements to recruit staff can result in missed opportunities to build excitement for summer acceleration efforts, but following the recommendations below will help to ensure that you have the right people supporting acceleration for the highest impact.

1. **Start early, be organized, and think strategically about incentives.** Planning early and carefully for the logistics of summer acceleration, including staff training needs, will ensure that the experience is a positive one for teachers, leaders, and other staff. A disorganized or stressful summer experience can hurt future recruiting efforts, and Delaware LEA leaders spoke of the need to offer a consistent, structured experience for teachers. LEAs are considering a range of incentives for staff to participate, including:
 - a. Increasing compensation for summer work to incentivize participation
 - b. Using summer as an opportunity to offer greater leadership responsibilities to teachers and staff so that they have access to experiences and growth opportunities that are less available during the year. For example, you might offer opportunities for teachers who have completed additional professional learning in the science of reading to assume a coaching role for the summer. Paraprofessionals could be trained on curriculum-specific strategies to better support student access to grade-level content, which would benefit students both in the summer and throughout the school year.
2. **Build collaborative relationships.** Without the day-to-day demands of the school year, summer can provide a unique space to build relationships, elevate staff voice, and develop emerging leaders. LEA leaders should identify opportunities to include building leaders, teachers, and staff in the planning process. Plan for input from community-based organizations (CBOs) and parents at key stages in the planning process as well. Building collaborative relationships not only improves the quality of programming, it also helps staff and student recruitment efforts by increasing engagement and generating grassroots support.

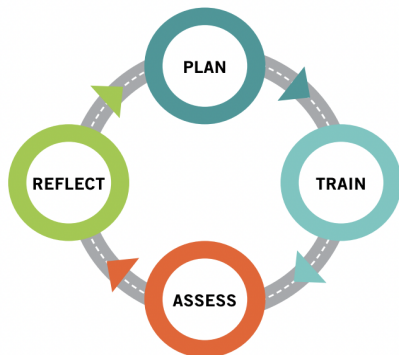
3. **Find messages that resonate.** One advantage to forming an inclusive planning team is that your efforts will benefit from diverse viewpoints, including which messages will resonate most with the staff that you would like to recruit to participate in summer acceleration, whether that means teaching summer learning or taking part in high-impact activities that will set the stage for acceleration in the 2022-2023 school year. While in some contexts, clearly stating the anticipated compensation will be a strong motivator, other staff members might respond most to messages that promote opportunities for developing leadership skills, engaging with students in a small group setting, or gaining experience with high quality curriculum materials.
4. **Prioritize personal outreach.** Identify the staff members you most want to play a part in either planning summer acceleration or leading it and be intentional about extending a personal invitation to these individuals. At the LEA level, this might mean reaching out to specific school leadership team members. At the school level, school leaders should recruit teachers and staff who are particularly influential in their buildings or who show promise as emerging leaders.

Section 2: Summer Learning for Students

Planning Guidance for Summer Acceleration

Making the most of the summer requires that teams engage in an intentional planning process. Adopting a continuous improvement approach will ensure that your team makes strategic, inclusive decisions that have the biggest impact for students. The National Summer Learning Association advocates for a “Plan-Train-Assess-Reflect” model. A well-designed summer acceleration experience should start with a comprehensive, intentional planning phase followed by training to build skills and capacity. A sample project plan for Summer Acceleration can be found in the Appendix of this guide. The project plan should include a plan for collecting impact data throughout the summer and for completing a step back at the end of the summer or in early fall.

National Summer Learning Association (NSLA) Quality Improvement Cycle⁴



- **PLAN:** Set quality improvement goals and develop and implement a plan for achieving them
- **TRAIN:** Develop staff understanding and ownership of program quality goals and strategies
- **ASSESS:** Look for evidence of quality improvement during the program
- **REFLECT:** Review summer program data and debrief with key stakeholders

In the sections that follow, we reference the NSLA Quality Improvement Cycle to ground LEA actions as you prepare for summer learning work with students.

⁴ National Summer Learning Association, “[Summer Starts in September](#)”

PLAN - Set Summer Acceleration Goals

The most important step to begin your planning for summer learning acceleration is to bring clarity to your goals. Delaware systems leaders mentioned that the idea of accelerating students to grade-level content was a priority for summer 2021. However, in practice, various challenges meant that schools implemented summer acceleration with varying levels of success. Summer 2022 offers an opportunity to learn from the successes and challenges of 2021 and refine your LEA's summer acceleration approach to have the highest impact. As you create goals for summer 2022, consider the following questions:

- Which students in your LEA are most in need of additional learning opportunities to be set up for success in accessing grade-level instruction? In which subject areas? Grades? Consider existing student achievement data and qualitative input from school leaders and teachers.
- How will summer acceleration experiences, specifically, help prioritized students access grade-level work at the beginning of the school year? Consider known gaps in instruction from pandemic-related disruptions and content demands for beginning-of-school-year modules from your HQIM by grade.
- Finally, consider available resources and constraints as you develop goals that reflect your LEA's context and resource allocation towards summer learning. For example, a shortage of staff may mean that your team sets a goal for in-person learning for grades K-4 and a goal for remote learning for students in grades 5-8.

PLAN - Develop Your Summer Acceleration Model

Once your goals have been determined, the next step in planning for summer acceleration opportunities is to develop a learning model that best positions teachers and students for success. Delaware school system leaders made it clear that staffing is likely to be one of the biggest challenges for any summer acceleration work this year. LEAs have found many innovative ways to reach students with varying levels of staffing needed. Below, we explore two possible approaches for offering summer learning acceleration to students.

A benefit of offering more than one model - or a hybrid approach - is the potential to reach more students, or do so in a more sustainable way, than may have been realistic in past

summers. LEAs who adopted a multi-model approach last summer reported higher percentages of students served, and many Delaware LEA leaders are thinking of how to offer a continuum of options, recognizing that flexible program designs can better meet families' needs.

Finally, if you are planning to launch high-dosage tutoring in your LEA, summer is a great opportunity to start piloting/laying the foundation. For those seeking to leverage summer learning as a bridge to school-year tutoring, see the High-Dosage Tutoring section of this guide on page 21.

Option A: In-Person or Synchronous Remote Instruction with Highly Qualified Teaching Staff

Offering synchronous instruction, either in person or remotely, with highly qualified teachers has the greatest potential for impact on student learning. In addition, most LEAs have experience with more traditional summer school operations that can be leveraged to support a summer program grounded in learning acceleration principles. This model is also the easiest to align with HQIM already in place in your LEA. Another benefit of this model is that if HQIM is new to your LEA, teachers can gain exposure to and practice with the curriculum during the summer, paving the way for the fall. Delaware LEAs that used HQIM last summer reported that teachers responded positively to using a common curriculum because it gave them a solid foundation for summer planning.

Guiding Questions:

- *How much time is available for summer learning in your LEA? If you're only able to offer a 2-week learning opportunity (due to resource or staffing constraints), this option alone may not be the most resource-efficient unless paired with additional virtual learning opportunities for students.*
- *How will days/weeks be structured to allow sufficient time for culture building, enrichment, and academic content? In addition to accelerating to grade level, summer programs should "prioritize developing the conditions for healing and development, including opportunities*

to play, to explore new skills and experiences, and to connect with peers and caring adults.”⁵

- *How will student learning experiences be designed?* Check with your HQIM publisher to see if they have existing guidelines for how to design the summer learning experience as a bridge to grade-level learning for students returning to school in the fall.
- *How and when will teachers be trained to deliver instruction consistent with learning acceleration principles?* Consult DDOE’s [Professional Learning Partners Guide](#) to explore available training options.
- What kind of ongoing support will teachers receive as they learn and apply new strategies in support of student’s accessing grade-level content? Summer is a unique time for emerging leaders to get practice with coaching and supporting teachers.
- How will you measure student learning over the course of the summer experience? Develop a plan for a quick pre-, mid-, and post-assessment or a process for collecting and analyzing student work throughout the summer.

Option B: Asynchronous Virtual Learning

Asynchronous virtual learning is an effective way to reach a large number of students, even with limited staff. Some LEAs managed virtual learning almost entirely with central office staff, while others were able to recruit school-based staff to monitor student engagement and regularly check in with students. Teachers who need a break from classroom teaching this summer might be interested in engaging with students in a new way, through small-group or one-on-one virtual check-ins. A benefit for families is that this model offers maximum flexibility; even if a family is on vacation, or if a student can only be online for a couple of hours a day, they can still engage in learning.

⁵ Partnership for Children and Youth & National Summer Learning Association, “[2021 California Summer Learning Guide](#)”

Guiding Questions:

- *How has asynchronous learning worked in the past in your LEA, and based on prior experience, how will you design asynchronous summer learning experiences?* Gather input from your planning team and other stakeholders about the successes and challenges of asynchronous learning in your LEA. Consult the resources on [Digital DE](#) and in this guide to design an effective asynchronous program that meets your LEA's needs.
- *On what cadence and how will teachers check in with students in live time to monitor their progress or provide them with written feedback on their asynchronous work products?* Consider that some children will be completing asynchronous work outside of school hours and may not have access to the internet during the day. Think about how to be as flexible as possible while operating within the constraints of your LEA.
- *What expectations for progress/completion need to be shared with students and families, and how will they be held accountable for completing their work more independently?* How will you communicate with parents/caretakers about asynchronous learning expectations and programming? Families may have varying expectations about the level of support the school or LEA is providing to their child during asynchronous learning. Being clear about expectations and the structures of support available in the summer will ensure that families can plan for a learning routine that works best for them. Providing virtual orientations, described below in the section “Best Practices to Maximize Student Enrollment, Engagement and Attendance,” is a great way to start summer off on the right foot with families. These are especially important if students will be with teachers other than their teachers from the previous school year.

PLAN - Considerations for Using Digital Learning Resources Effectively

While digital learning resources are sometimes seen as a “low effort” option, the use of these resources requires thoughtful and intentional planning to ensure that students receive the maximum benefit. LEAs must identify which digital learning tools fit their context best, then identify and remove any potential barriers for successfully using those tools. Choose your programs and think through all the logistics, including:

- **Technology needs**, particularly if non-instructional staff will be supporting students. LEAs should leverage their learning and their refined technology processes from the last two

years and apply them to summer learning. Delaware leaders shared that working through the logistics of deploying technology for summer learning was a critical step in the success of their summer learning efforts. Students, staff, and partners will need access to functioning devices, and all staff will need to be trained on any relevant IT protocols.

- **Access to digital learning platforms.** Consider how parents, staff, and partners will get access to LEA accounts and the steps they should take if they have any access issues. Something as simple as lost login credentials can derail a day of learning.
- **The best use of each tool.** Many programs have features to customize learning for students. If using a program where you can pre-set which module or unit students will start with, one best practice that we learned from Delaware LEAs is to work with the LEA curriculum and instruction team to determine the best starting point for each grade. Sometimes determining a starting point is all that might be needed. In other cases, the curriculum and instruction team may need to define a specific set of modules or units for student engagement in order to create optimal alignment with school year grade-level learning.
- **The time demands of each tool.** No two programs are designed alike, and some programs, like Zearn, have very clear recommendations on how much time per day students should spend using them.

TRAIN - Provide Targeted Professional Learning Grounded in HQIM

Key to a successful summer experience for students is for teachers to be trained effectively on the learning model. As noted above, if the goal is to prepare students to engage with grade-level instruction in the fall, teachers should be trained on how to plan and deliver instruction using your adopted HQIM in alignment with learning acceleration strategies. Most teachers in the state have not yet been trained on strategies to accelerate student learning, so making time for content- and curriculum-specific training in summer should be a priority. Many HQIM publishers provide guidance for teachers to use in adapting materials to address learning acceleration (sometimes referred to as “unfinished learning”) and may offer a tailored scope and sequence intended for summer. Importantly, training should be planned so that teachers have time between training and the start of summer acceleration (at least one week) to prepare consistent with their new learning. Consult DDOE’s [Professional Learning Partners Guide](#) to determine available training options. Then, communicate about training dates to staff as early as possible and make sure that all partners are aware.

If utilizing digital learning resources, ensure that staff and partners receive training in everything from IT protocols to how to use each tool effectively, including embedded supports for students. Connect directly with the company/publisher.

ASSESS – Gather & Analyze Data Based on Summer Acceleration Model

If you are adopting a synchronous learning model for summer, develop a plan for quick pre-, mid-, and post-assessment or a process for collecting and analyzing student work throughout the summer. Consult with your HQIM publisher to see if there are curriculum-based assessments that could fulfill this purpose. Work with teachers to use the data collected to adjust instruction based on what you learn.

Digital learning resources often provide a wealth of information, but LEAs frequently miss the crucial steps of collecting, analyzing, and reporting on data. Have a clear plan for what information should be collected and analyzed, who should be completing the analysis, how frequently it should be done, and who should receive reports. Planning for assessing the impact of programs before summer learning begins will ensure that the goals are clearly communicated. Consider how data will be collected from tutors or other staff monitoring or supporting learning. In interviews with leaders from LEAs across Delaware, a challenge that arose over the summer was tutors not having access to student data in digital learning platforms and relying on “free” accounts that then limited LEAs’ ability to access data. LEAs should own and distribute online learning accounts and manage access to ensure confidentiality while allowing staff to use data as intended.

REFLECT - Identify Key Learnings to Inform Ongoing Acceleration Work

Although it can be tempting to wrap up summer learning and immediately turn attention to the year ahead, build in time to reflect on the strengths and challenges of the summer learning experience and consider data on impact. We recommend formally scheduling time 1-2 weeks after the completion of summer acceleration activities. This reflection can help LEAs make informed decisions about ongoing efforts for accelerating students to grade level – including the continuation of learning acceleration work in the fall. Be sure to get feedback from all key stakeholders, including parents, as part of this process. Consider using the Summer Program Reflection Tool at the end of this guide to ground your analysis and document your learnings.

Section 3: Maximize Student Enrollment and Engagement

PLAN - Student Recruitment⁶

A key aspect of project management for summer learning is a plan for student recruitment based on effective communication. This approach aligns with the Delaware MTSS model, which names planning family engagement as key.⁷ Your plan should address your target audience, measurable goals, tactics, and timeframe. Delaware LEAs that had high recruitment and participation rates reported having a communication plan in place. These plans included strategies like routine blasts on messaging apps and social media and reaching students directly through video campaigns dispatched to classrooms for students to watch during homeroom or advisory.

Below is a menu of tactics that the LEAs in the National Summer Learning Project found effective. For each tactic, the Wallace Foundation indicates whether it is an essential, recommended, or optional step. In addition, resources, including sample communication and talking points for outreach, are available from [The Wallace Foundation](#).

■ **Sending Materials Home - *Essential***

- Send home registration materials via mail or “backpack express” at least two times: at the beginning of the registration period and within two weeks of the registration deadline. Tips for creating registration materials include:
 - » Ensure that motivating messaging remains front and center and that the details that will help parents make decisions (e.g., days and hours of operation, transportation, etc.) are prominent as well.
 - » For the second round, add a clear statement of the deadline, something along the lines of, “Only 2 weeks remaining. Registration closes April 30.”

⁶ The guidance in this section draws directly from [The Wallace Foundation’s Summer Learning Recruitment Guide](#).

⁷ [Delaware Multi-Tiered System of Support Implementation Guide, January 2021](#)

- **Reminder Phone Calls (Robocalls) - *Essential***
 - If schools in your LEA have the capacity to generate their own robocalls, then the principals should be the ones recording them. Otherwise, robocalls should come from the superintendent. Robocalls can be used during at least two stages in your outreach effort: during the last two weeks of registration and about a week before day one of the program. Two calls for each stage will do.
- **Confirmation Letters or Postcards - *Essential***
 - All school LEAs running summer learning programs send materials home after registrations are completed—transportation details, request for waivers, etc. In addition, be sure to send home a confirmation letter or postcard letting parents know that their registration form has been received and their child has a reserved spot in the summer learning program. This is an important first step toward building relationships with parents and students.
- **Use Personalized Outreach - *Recommended***
 - Parents consider teachers and principals trusted messengers. Personal phone calls (as opposed to robocalls), individualized notes, and conversations at school events or during pick-up and drop-off times are labor-intensive but powerful. Here’s some guidance:
 - » Get principals on board. They will want to know how the summer learning program will help “their” students. And they will need to know that you and your team will make the outreach program as easy as possible.
 - » Provide the list of parents and children, including contact information, to each messenger.
 - » Develop and provide a suite of materials, such as talking points, drafts of emails or notes home, scripts for phone calls, and frequently asked questions. (Examples available from the Wallace Foundation)
 - » Be sure to track the students from each school who register and routinely report back to principals about the status of their outreach efforts.

- To get the most out of this time-consuming tactic, use it during the registration period, and if possible, between the registration deadline and the first day of the program.
- **One-on-One Teacher Interaction with Students - *Optional***
 - A few encouraging words from a teacher to a student can be powerful. During the registration period, teachers can let their students know they would really enjoy and get a lot out of the summer learning program. After students register, teachers can tell them how excited they are for them. For this tactic to work, central office staff need to make sure each teacher gets an up-to-date list of eligible students and, after registration, an accurate list of which of their students are signed up.
- **Emails or Texts to Parents - *Optional***
 - If you have email addresses and phone numbers for parents, use them. These can be valuable, low-effort reminders during the registration period and can be sent several times—for example, shortly after registration materials go home, midway through the registration period, and as the deadline draws near.

TRAIN - Clarify Roles and Train Staff

Keeping students and families engaged in summer learning requires a team effort, and providing clarity on the roles of teachers and other staff is essential. As noted in the previous section, teachers can play a pivotal role in supporting recruitment efforts and need guidance and resources from LEA and school leaders on how to approach that work. Additionally, we know that a warm and welcoming learning environment helps students feel safe, appreciated, and bonded with staff and peers. In a positive site climate, students and staff know what to expect and what is expected of them. Bringing these expectations to life requires training with a focus on the following areas:

1. **Be consistent with behavior.** Develop and apply appropriate student behavior policies that are aligned with the climate you want to create at your site.
2. **Begin to build relationships right away.** Include “getting-to-know-you” activities in both staff training and the program’s first week.
3. **Have fun!** Plan daily and weekly rituals that lift up student voices in songs, chants, and recognition. Showcase student work and program themes in décor.

4. **Celebrate successes.** Many programs incentivize student attendance with field trips, college tours, or low-cost, high-novelty rewards, such as books and gift cards. Small but tangible celebrations, such as digital badges and certificates of achievement or appreciation, honor the investment of students and families.

ASSESS - Student Engagement and Attendance Monitoring⁸

Once you've done the hard work of recruiting students to attend your summer program, you must proactively work to keep engagement and attendance high throughout the summer. Laying the groundwork begins before summer programming kicks off and continues throughout the summer by creating a climate that promotes positive relationships and a culture of joy. Engagement and attendance are inextricably linked. LEAs, schools, and their community partners need to proactively engage both families and students now about what they need and want summer to look like, in their language of choice. Outreach, communication, and updates should be coordinated across the schools and their partners at the program, site, and classroom level. Gathering and acting on attendance data and feedback from parents/caregivers in real time will maximize your summer acceleration goals. Consider the following strategies:

1. Survey families and students before the summer to understand their priorities.
2. Provide virtual family orientations at multiple times to meet needs of working families; use this time to share expectations for summer programming and to build relationships.
3. Informally check in with families at drop-off and pick-up. Request specific feedback on program communications and activities. Use that information to guide adjustments.
4. Administer survey after week two of programming to understand the student and family experience, analyze results, and share an action plan. (See survey example.)
5. Administer end-of-summer survey, share the final impact report with families, and use data to inform fall learning and next summer.

⁸ The guidance in this section is drawn directly from the Partnership for Children and Youth & National Summer Learning Association's [2021 California Summer Learning Guide](#) and The Wallace Foundation's [Summer Learning Toolkit](#). While this toolkit offers helpful planning tools and resources that cover many aspects of summer learning, the academic and enrichment tools are not recommended for use, as they are based in pre-pandemic research and are not aligned to Delaware's approach to accelerating learning.

REFLECT - Use Key Learnings for Future Recruitment and Engagement Efforts

Formally schedule time 1-2 weeks after the completion of summer acceleration activities to reflect on successes and challenges. Use the **Summer Program Reflection Tool** at the end of this guide to ground your analysis. As part of that process, reflect on survey data (including the end-of-program survey suggested in the section above) and other data from throughout the summer. Document your learnings so that future leaders can benefit from your experience in leading future summer acceleration work.

Section 4: Preparing for Learning Acceleration in the Year Ahead

Academic Planning Priorities

DDOE’s [Tier 1 Planning Guide](#) and [2021-22 Classroom Ready Plan](#) (released in 2021) name specific actions that Delaware schools should take to minimize unfinished learning and promote acceleration to grade-level instruction. In alignment with the recommended actions outlined in the Classroom Ready Plan, we encourage LEA leaders to use the summer as an opportunity for planning and reflection to bring learning acceleration practices to life in your LEA.

This section is oriented around SchoolKit’s System [Learning Acceleration Framework](#). From the framework, we’ve elected to prioritize summer planning actions that align with the Foundations for Acceleration because many LEAs are in the early stages of their learning acceleration journey. If you would like to assess your LEA’s starting point with learning acceleration to help you determine where to focus this summer, complete SchoolKit’s “[System Learning Acceleration Self-Assessment](#),” which asks you to rate and reflect your LEA’s progress in four key areas: Mindset and Beliefs; Vision and Strategy ; Instruction and Assessment; and Systems and Structures.

Focus Area	Foundations for Acceleration	Critical Actions for Summer
Mindsets & Beliefs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Educators understand the importance of providing “just-in-time” support so that all students can access and succeed with at-grade-level content in core instruction, every day. ● Educators take ownership of student learning and believe that all their students can be successful with at-grade-level content. ● Educators embrace a growth mindset about developing their own instructional practice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identify a steering committee and meet to conduct a self-assessment to better understand your system’s strengths and growth areas related to learning acceleration principles. ● Offer foundational training for teachers and leaders to build an understanding of the learning acceleration research-base and make connections to current practice. Incentivize participation, wherever possible. Consult DDOE’s Professional Learning Partners Guide to determine available training options.
Vision and Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Leaders, together with key stakeholders, create and realize a long-term, multi-year acceleration plan focused on 3-5 key priorities even while “putting out today’s fires.” This plan is characterized by a compelling LEA vision for acceleration, academic coherence, goals, and measures of success. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Convene a steering committee with the goal of codifying a vision for excellent instruction in your LEA. Include a rationale to “accelerate, not remediate” student learning with just-in-time scaffolds in the context of grade-level work. Plan strategies for investing stakeholders in the vision, anticipate questions and concerns, and plan to respond proactively, clearly, and empathetically. ● Convene a cross-department workgroup to create a draft a multi-year acceleration plan. Consider using TNTP’s Learning Acceleration for All: Planning for the Next Three to Five Years as a resource to ground your planning efforts.

Instruction and Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● High quality instructional materials (HQIM) are in place and being used consistently as an anchor for planning and instruction. Teachers/schools <u>do not</u> replace grade-level curriculum with below grade-level content for any students during core instruction.● HQIM provides a coherent foundation for teacher and instructional leadership training.● Teachers and leaders engage in regular job-embedded, curriculum-specific professional learning and share best practices among colleagues (ideally, 30+ hours per year).● Educators actively use standards-aligned, efficient, timely assessments (curriculum-based assessments first) to measure student progress and inform instruction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Conduct an inventory of LEA adopted instructional materials and assess their alignment with DE state standards.● Convene a team of content experts (central office specialists, school leaders, and teachers) to review frequently adopted materials against established HQIM criteria (e.g., EdReports), then report findings and recommendations for how those findings will drive school and LEA decisions for the coming year.● Create or adapt plans for curriculum selection in content areas requiring attention. Use Instruction Partners' Curriculum Support Guide as a resource. While an entire curriculum adoption process can span months, focusing on one to two key actions is achievable over the summer.● Create a professional learning plan/calendar that supports teachers and school leaders to deepen their understanding of best practices for accelerating to grade level (ideally, curriculum and content specific and includes 30+ hours of learning per year).● Refine/develop curriculum-specific pacing guides with learning acceleration in mind. As you build pacing guides, use data to determine where just-in-time instruction will need to occur to address any missed content from the previous year as a bridge to related grade-level content. Instruction Partners' Addressing Unfinished Learning Toolkit contains content-specific guidelines to help.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ While toolkits such as these are helpful, you should first work with your LEA's curriculum publisher and be proactive in identifying where outside expertise is needed.
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Systems and Structures	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● LEAs and schools create support structures to accelerate student learning within the context of HQIM and evidence-based practices.● Teachers receive regular content-specific coaching to help internalize HQIM, prepare to teach, and respond to student data.● Schools have a master schedule with daily planning time for teachers and sufficient instructional time to address grade-level standards with daily flexibility for teachers to support student access.● Policies mandate that all students maximally participate in at-grade-level instruction every day, including elimination of tracking and grouping based on students' perceived ability.● Systems leaders use innovative strategies to address short-term talent and capacity challenges (e.g., covering classes).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Develop guidance for school-level scheduling that ensures teachers have sufficient time to collaborate with peers on best practices for accelerating to grade level learning. Teachers should have, on average, a minimum of 1 hour per week to co-plan with peers around learning acceleration practices, grounded in your LEA's HQIM.● Audit school schedules to ensure instructional time for curriculum materials is consistent with publisher recommendations and includes daily flexibility for teachers to support student access to grade-level instruction.● Identify and provide support structures and programs to accelerate student learning this summer and next school year (e.g., summer learning acceleration, extended school day/year, high-dosage tutoring).
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High-Dosage Tutoring Planning

Rigorous research provides strong evidence that high-dosage tutoring can produce large learning gains for a wide range of students, including those who have fallen behind academically. A review of almost 200 rigorous studies found that high-dosage tutoring – defined as more than 3 days per week or at a rate of at least 50 hours over 36 weeks – is one of the few school-based interventions with demonstrated large positive effects on both mathematics and reading achievement.⁹ Offering an effective high-dosage tutoring program requires extensive planning, even if partnering with an education service provider.

The summer months provide a valuable opportunity for planning a tutoring program as part of the MTSS model for the upcoming school year. In the [Tier 1 Planning Guide](#), DDOE states that LEAs should examine and create support structures to accelerate student learning within the context of HQIM, including creating or refining high-dosage tutoring programs. EdWeek offers specific steps that leaders can take to connect tutoring to classroom instruction in the article, [“To Get Tutoring Right, Connect It to the Classroom.”](#) In addition, the [National Student Support Accelerator](#) from the Annenberg Institute outlines best practices for the [recruitment and selection process for tutors](#), which should be incorporated into summer planning.

Because there are so many components to a well-designed program, your team will need several weeks, if not months, to get the pieces in place. However, the research is clear that high-dosage tutoring is one of the most effective interventions when executed well, and it is a worthwhile investment.

As you develop your program, follow the [“Plan-Train-Assess-Reflect”](#) model described in Section 1 of this guide. The [National Student Support Accelerator](#) has in-depth resources for developing or evaluating the quality of tutoring programs and can be used as a reference.

- 1) **PLAN** Identify which students will benefit from high-dosage tutoring services, who will deliver services, and how you will recruit, select, and train tutors (see the National Student Support Accelerator’s [recruitment and selection tools](#)). Determine how high-dosage tutoring is designed to work in alignment with your LEA’s MTSS model. Ideally,

⁹ [Delaware Strategy to Accelerate Learning](#)

tutoring is connected directly to a student’s core curriculum and tutors are directly supporting student access to grade-level instruction. Consider implications for the tutoring model you select - see Designing a Blended Learning Tutoring Program section below for considerations around using software to support tutors.

- 2) **TRAIN** Identify the materials and training needs of staff and communicate early and frequently about any training dates.
 - a) If you have HQIM in place,¹⁰ then work with the publisher of the materials to identify how to best use these materials for high-dosage tutoring and consult DDOE’s [Professional Learning Partners Guide](#) to identify a training partner.
 - b) If you don’t yet have HQIM in place, use an open-access curriculum available on [Digital DE](#).
 - c) SchoolKit offers a [free Canvas course](#) designed for tutors who are supporting students to develop foundational reading skills. The course helps to build tutors’ knowledge and skills of evidence-based reading instruction and provides resources that tutors can use for planning and instruction. This course includes 8 training modules and takes 6-10 total hours to complete.
- 3) **ASSESS** Develop a data collection plan to assess the impact of tutoring throughout the summer and at the end of the summer, whether students are receiving services with teachers or through a provider. Plan to share relevant data with key stakeholders, including students, parents, and teachers.
- 4) **REFLECT** Be sure to build in a step back to reflect on the successes and challenges of the program. If you’ve worked with a service provider or CBO, invite them to be part of the reflection process as well. Parent and student voices can be included through surveys or focus groups. Because high-dosage tutoring is such a powerful tool for accelerating learning, the reflection process is especially valuable so you can apply any lessons learned to your program offerings for the upcoming school year and beyond.

Combining Digital Learning Resources & High-Dosage Tutoring¹¹

Blended learning is a delivery mode that combines live instruction with digital learning tools for independent practice. High quality blended learning supplements live tutoring (either virtually or in person) with adaptive software, which modifies the presentation of material in response to student performance to support student learning. For students, blended learning offers

¹⁰ [Overview of High Quality Instructional Materials](#)

¹¹ This section draws directly from the Annenberg Institute National Student Support Accelerator’s [Toolkit for Tutoring Programs](#)

opportunities to practice independently through tailored activities. For tutors, blended learning provides a wealth of knowledge and granular data about student learning to help explicitly target their live instruction. In addition, a blended learning program can reduce the frequency of tutor-student interaction while maintaining rigor, allowing the same number of tutors to serve more students without diminishing tutor effectiveness.

Considerations for Selecting Blended Learning Software

Once you have decided to use blended learning software, you need to select an existing product. Whichever you choose, this checklist will help you evaluate the blended learning software you may be considering. No software is perfect; good programs will have some of these features but not others. Choose the combination of features that best help your LEA meet its goals. The National Student Support Accelerator offers a [comprehensive checklist](#), which is summarized below:

- Does the software provide concise and actionable data to both the tutor and the student?
- Will the software be engaging for students to use?
- Is the design of the software grounded in research and best practices? Refer to Delaware Deliver's [Overview of High Quality Instructional Materials](#) and other HQIM resources found on [Digital DE](#) in your evaluation.
- Is the software's curriculum implementation scaffolded, adaptive, and dynamic?
- Is the software's interface intuitive for both students and tutors to navigate?
- Will infrastructure limitations (such as slow internet connections or old devices) prevent students from using the software at school or at home.

About the Authors & Acknowledgements

At SchoolKit, we believe that excellent teaching is the foundation of equitable schools. SchoolKit's mission is to partner with local educators to improve instruction and leadership through content and curriculum-specific training, planning, and coaching. Together, we build schools and systems that help all students succeed.

We would like to thank all of those who contributed to the development of this guidance. To learn from the experience of Delaware educators, we interviewed LEA leaders at Brandywine SD, Lake Forest SD, Seaford SD, Christina SD, and Capital SD, as well as leaders from the Delaware Department of Education.

Additional Resources

[Digital DE](#) serves as Delaware's online hub for best-in-class instructional, professional development, and family resources for this academic year and beyond. This site is accessible, searchable, and free. Digital DE streamlines access to a variety of digital and online resources to better support educators with instruction in all learning environments. When selecting resources, please work with your LEA to determine supports that are aligned with your locally established instructional vision.

The curated list of resources below is intended to support summer acceleration. Many more resources can be found at Digital DE, including resources specific to summer acceleration.

Learning Acceleration Resources

- [Addressing Unfinished Learning Toolkit by Instruction Partners](#): The complete toolkit contains practical tools, templates, and recommendations for addressing widespread unfinished learning challenges. Resources include: high-level strategies for addressing unfinished learning; content-specific guidelines and customizable worksheets to inform instructional planning at the year, unit, and lesson level; step-by-step, curriculum-specific examples of content prioritization in action.

- [Continuous Improvement Toolkit](#) by **Instruction Partners**: Resources for keeping students engaged in meaningful learning, whether they are learning in a classroom or at home. The complete toolkit contains more than 40 practical tools, templates, and recommendations for supporting: vision setting; student attendance; relationships and connections; professional learning & coaching; pacing; lesson preparation & internalization; distance learning practices.
- [National Student Support Accelerator](#) by **Annenberg Institute at Brown University**: The Accelerator provides comprehensive resources for those interested in implementing high-impact tutoring. The Accelerator introduces a framework for thinking about how tutoring programs should be structured to suit their communities and specific tools for building, expanding, improving, and funding such programs. Designed with the needs of tutoring organizations, schools and LEAs in mind, the Accelerator tools articulate best practices, drawing on an extensive body of existing research.
- [To Get Tutoring Right, Connect It to the Classroom](#) by **David M. Steiner & Ethan Mitnick via EdWeek**: This article advocates for using HQIM in high-dosage tutoring and includes steps that leaders can take to connect tutoring to classroom instruction.
- [Unfinished Learning Webinar Series](#) by **SchoolKit**: Three webinars that SchoolKit hosted to empower educators with the necessary tools to address unfinished learning.

Student Recruitment and Engagement in Summer Programs

- [2021 California Summer Learning Guide](#) by **Partnership for Children and Youth & National Summer Learning Association**: This guide is designed to support local education leaders in jump-starting their summer planning and to offer ideas and resources to help offset the overwhelming sense of urgency felt by us all.
- [Summer Learning Recruitment Guide](#) by **The Wallace Foundation**: This report reviews key lessons learned from recruitment and retention by summer programs included in the National Summer Learning Project. It proposes and reviews eight key strategies for successful summer program recruitment: engage directly with students, understand your audience, create engaging messaging, create a written plan, make your outreach consistent and assertive, use trusted messengers, build a relationship with parents and students, and make registration as easy as possible.

- [Summer Learning Toolkit](#) by The Wallace Foundation: More than 50, evidence-based tools and resources—drawn from the work of five urban school LEAs and their partners and aligned with research from RAND—the Summer Learning Toolkit helps educators deliver programs that make a real difference. *While this toolkit offers helpful planning tools and resources that cover many aspects of summer learning, the academic and enrichment tools are not recommended for use, as they are based in pre-pandemic research and are not aligned to Delaware’s approach to accelerating learning.*

Summer Learning Planning Calendar

This calendar is adapted from the [Wallace Foundation](#) and offers an overview of the recommended steps and timeline for planning and executing an effective summer learning acceleration program. This tool can be adapted to fit your LEA’s specific needs. An editable version of this document can be found on [Digital DE](#).

6-MONTH SUMMARY							
PLANNING		RECOMMENDED PLANNING TIMELINE					
CATEGORY	KEY ACTIVITIES	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG
Planning and Project Management Guidance for Summer Acceleration							
Planning and Management	Outline cross-departmental leadership structure for planning						
	Determine planning process and timeline						
	Facilitate regular planning meetings						
Continuous Improvement Process	Set measurable goals for summer learning acceleration						
	Develop new or refine existing evaluation plan						
	Use appropriate data to inform instruction and program development						
	Execute evaluation						

	Use quantitative and qualitative data as part of a structured reflection process							
Recruiting and Engaging Staff	Determine staffing needs, hiring timeline, and incentives							
	Recruit or select and hire site leads							
	Recruit or select and hire seasonal central office staff							
	Recruit or select and hire teachers							
	Recruit or select and hire other essential staff							
Summer Learning for Students								
Student Recruitment	Identify which groups of students will be served							
	Develop a marketing and recruitment plan							
	Prepare student identification and recruitment process and materials							
	Execute recruitment							
	Notify parents of enrollment status							

	Reach out and engage families and students for retention						
Curriculum	Identify High Quality Instructional Materials for summer learning and order supplies						
	Consult HQIM publisher to identify how materials can be leveraged in summer to support acceleration to grade level instruction						
	Organize and deliver curriculum materials						
Staff Training and Support	Plan training for teachers and other staff in alignment with summer acceleration goals and HQIM						
	Implement professional development and solicit feedback from participants to inform summer support activities						
Site Operations and Culture Policies and Procedures	Define program culture and operating policies and procedures						
	Prepare site management procedures						
Schedules and Rosters	Develop program schedule						
	Develop and share site schedules						
	Develop and share class schedules						
Transportation	Coordinate transportation						

Delaware Summer Acceleration Guidance

	Execute transportation						
Meals	Coordinate and execute food service at each program site						
Supplies	Determine supply needs						
	Order, organize, and deliver supplies to sites						
	Manage supplies during and after the program						

Summer Program Reflection Tool

The Summer Program Reflection tool was created by Bellwether Education Partners and published by the [Wallace Foundation](#) to provide LEAs and cities with a semi-structured guide to reflect on a recently completed summer program and begin planning for the upcoming summer with a focus on continuous program improvement. It contains prompts for reflection (what went well, what could be improved) in a variety of categories related to program planning and management, instruction, and student outcomes. It also encourages program leaders to incorporate key data sources to inform decisions and considerations for the next summer. An editable version of this document can be found on [Digital DE](#).

PROGRAM COMPONENT	WHAT WENT WELL?	WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED?	DATA SOURCES (How do we know?)	CONSIDERATIONS FOR NEXT SUMMER (Based on data)
Program Planning and Management				
Program dates and times				
Students served				
Student recruitment/enrollment				
Attendance rates/no shows				
Program management/Logistics (busing, meals, supplies, etc.)				

Site management (schedules, transitions, etc.)				
Management/selection of enrichment providers				
Instruction				
Instructional goals and curricular alignment (ELA & math)				
Staffing/hiring				
Professional development				
Instructional quality				
Enrichment quality				
Connection between school year and summer				
Systems and Partners				
Progress made toward fuller integration of summer				

programs into LEA strategies and operations				
Collaboration and partnerships with community-based partners				
MEASURABLE OUTCOMES	KEY FINDINGS FROM DATA COLLECTED	DATA SOURCES (How do we know?)	CONSIDERATIONS FOR NEXT SUMMER (Based on data)	
Student Behavior				
ELA				
Math				
Social-emotional learning				
Student/family satisfaction				
Teacher/staff satisfaction				
LEA-specific performance area (i.e., special education, facilities, etc.)				

To learn more about DDOE's summer acceleration guidance, contact the Academic Support Team at 735-4180

