

# Leveraging

# Summer



**Enrichment as a Pathway to  
Opportunity in Los Angeles**



Throughout Summer of Joy, we witnessed how providing opportunities outside the normal classroom supported our students in connecting, building friendships, developing social-emotional skills, and identifying new interests and motivations for learning.” – LAUSD partner

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# Executive Summary

For many students, summer is a time to explore interests, engage in enriching experiences, and prepare for the coming school year. However, too many students — especially those from low-income communities — lack access to these opportunities.<sup>1</sup> Months of isolated remote learning during the pandemic expanded this opportunity gap, with countless students missing out on opportunities to play, enjoy arts and music, and experience learning beyond traditional classroom instruction.<sup>2</sup> Disparities in access to enrichment opportunities may be particularly pronounced in California, a state with one of the nation's widest wealth divides.<sup>3</sup>

Free, high-quality summer enrichment programs can help bridge persistent opportunity gaps, fostering a more equitable foundation to support all students to succeed and thrive.

Research shows that high-quality out-of-school programs offer a range of benefits:

- Academic Benefits:** Out-of-school programs can lead to improved academic outcomes, especially for high attenders of summer programs.<sup>4</sup> Studies also link participation in extracurricular activities, like art and sports, to possible improved academic performance.<sup>5</sup>
- Attendance and Retention:** Out-of-school programs can enhance school attendance and reduce dropout rates, with studies linking high attendance to significantly lower truancy and absences, as well as decreased likelihood of dropping out.<sup>6</sup>
- Social, Emotional, and Behavioral Development:** Out-of-school programs help foster social skills, supportive relationships, self-esteem, and confidence while reducing risky behaviors and disciplinary incidents.<sup>7</sup>

Los Angeles Unified recognizes the importance of summer as a time for not just formal learning but enrichment as well.<sup>8</sup> The district is thinking deeply about how to maximize all out-of-school time opportunities to support students academically and beyond, and it is leaning into collaboration across community partners, public agencies, and philanthropy to deliver on this goal.

One collaborative effort helping to close opportunity gaps and expand enrichment is the Summer of Joy, launched in 2021 through the coordinated efforts of GPSN in partnership with Los Angeles Unified, philanthropy, and local nonprofit organizations. Now California's largest summer collaboration, the Summer of Joy has grown from a pandemic response to a sustained collaboration that provides free, in-person summer enrichment to tens of thousands of students across Los Angeles each year, ensuring that every low-income community offers transformative and joyful out-of-school experiences over the summer. Over four summers, the Summer of Joy has served 188,258 students, provided

14,066 enhanced program hours, offered 1,966 field trips, invested \$15,900,000, and funded 125 nonprofits.

Collaboration has been the key to the Summer of Joy's success. Los Angeles Unified has consistently prioritized this essential work and opened the doors of hundreds of its highest-need campuses. Dozens of nonprofits have stepped up in partnership to provide tailored enrichment opportunities to students across Los Angeles, and philanthropy has helped spur collaboration. GPSN has played a central coordinating role in facilitating this collaboration.

The Summer of Joy shows that innovative collaboration and out-of-school enrichment can help narrow opportunity gaps and create a lasting impact for students. After four summers in a row, the partnership continues to refine and enhance its programming to broaden and diversify student experiences that help close persistent opportunity gaps between students from lower- and higher-income households. One impactful innovation has been investing in professional development opportunities to enhance Summer of Joy staff capacity and improve the student experience. Professional

development delivers lasting benefits that extend beyond a single summer, building capacity and providing lessons that can be applied year after year, and it also has the potential to strengthen the district's educator pipeline.

Summer enrichment has benefited students in Los Angeles, and demand is high to continue to deepen and expand opportunities. In fact, in 2023, most Los Angeles family survey respondents said that they wanted schools to provide more enrichment programs outside of school hours; beyond Los Angeles, support for public funding of summer enrichment is high among parents across ZIP codes and partisan ideology.<sup>9</sup>

Ongoing public investment is essential to sustaining and scaling summer enrichment opportunities in Los Angeles and California as a whole. This is especially true amid funding uncertainty due to factors like shifting legislative priorities, declining enrollment, and expiring pandemic-related relief funds.

California students deserve to thrive, and summer enrichment is an essential strategy that must continue to be prioritized within Los Angeles and statewide.

While this report references Los Angeles Unified throughout, none of this would be possible without the partnership of the district's Beyond the Bell department. Under the leadership of Debe Loxton, their collaboration has been instrumental in making Summer of Joy a reality—bringing joyful, enriching opportunities to thousands of students. We are deeply grateful for their unwavering commitment and partnership.



# Los Angeles Unified Is Using Summer for Equity and Impact

Los Angeles Unified is thinking innovatively about what its students need to succeed — including how out-of-school time can bolster learning during the traditional school day. As part of its strategic plan, the district is focused on closing opportunity gaps, supporting students most in need, and instilling a love of learning in all of its students by offering enriching, well-rounded educational experiences.<sup>10</sup>

Part of this plan is to think expansively about the use of time in a day and a year, and summer is one crucial but often underutilized time to advance these goals through supplemental opportunities for both learning and enrichment. Los Angeles Unified recognizes the value of summer.

Superintendent Alberto M. Carvalho shared, “From an academic perspective, [summer] is important, but it’s also about enrichment ... [which] builds holistic education.”<sup>11</sup>

The Summer of Joy represents one high-impact summer enrichment strategy that is helping Los Angeles Unified support students furthest from opportunity. Emerging from an unprecedented collaboration between GPSN, Los Angeles Unified, philanthropy, and dozens of community-based organizations in 2021, the Summer of Joy has become California’s largest summer collaboration, offering free in-person summer enrichment to thousands of students across Los Angeles. Now entering its fifth year, the initiative is evolving from its early, pandemic-driven beginnings to a well-established partnership, continuing to evolve to better support students and bolstering the work of Los Angeles Unified.

This report explores the importance of summertime enrichment, highlighting how the unprecedented public/private Summer of Joy collaboration in Los Angeles has helped address students’ needs. It also discusses the ongoing need for impactful enrichment opportunities, which can only be sustained through continued collaboration and public investment. Combined, these efforts ensure that all students have access to valuable enrichment experiences — during summer and beyond — that can help them lead thriving adult lives.



# Summer Offers a Unique Opportunity for Students to Make Gains

Summer is a special time for many students — a season with the potential for play, creativity, socializing, and learning that extends beyond classroom walls. However, students experience summer opportunities unevenly, and they are often out of reach for students from lower-income households or communities who may lack the resources and opportunities that students from wealthier households can access during the break.

It is well known that during the summer, many students experience a “summer slide” where they lose some academic gains made during the school year.<sup>12</sup> But in addition to academic losses, access to enrichment

opportunities — like camps, sports, travel, art, and skill-building programs — varies widely during the summer months, particularly between students from higher-income communities and students from lower-income communities.<sup>13</sup> Indeed, an America After 3PM study found that families in the highest income bracket spend “more than five times as much on out-of-school activities as families in the lowest income bracket” — \$3,600 versus \$700 annually.<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, the study reveals that many students would have participated in an out-of-school program if one were available, with unmet demand reaching even higher levels among Black and Latino students at 58% and 55%, respectively.<sup>15</sup>

The pandemic further exacerbated this opportunity gap. Some families were able to offset the impact of isolated remote learning with supplemental opportunities, while others, especially students living in low-income households or communities, were far less likely to have access to this kind of enrichment.<sup>16</sup>

**Ensuring that all students have access to out-of-school enrichment is necessary to close opportunity gaps, and summer is one critical time to do this.** After the pandemic, summer became a particularly opportune time to offer programs to support student academic and social recovery. In fact, in 2023, nearly 80% of public schools





offered summer programming to support students as they continued to transition back to in-person learning.<sup>17</sup>

Research shows that out-of-school programs benefit students not only through academics but also by offering enriching activities that foster creativity, inspire a love of learning, and support healthy social development:

- **Out-of-school programs can help improve academic student outcomes.**

For instance, research shows that high attenders of summer programs that combine learning and enrichment, like the Wallace Foundation's National Summer Learning Project, perform better on subsequent math and English language arts state assessments, as well as improved social and emotional competencies.<sup>18</sup> Additionally, participation in extracurricular activities,

like music, visual arts, and sports — which are aspects of many out-of-school programs — may positively correlate with academic performance.<sup>19</sup> Finally, studies also show that play, often an important part of out-of-school programming, helps stimulate students' cognitive development.<sup>20</sup>

- **Out-of-school programs are also linked to better school attendance and decreased dropout rates.**

For instance, evaluations of 21st Century Community Learning Centers, which offer after-school, before-school, and summer learning and enrichment programs, show positive impacts on student attendance, with studies in New Jersey and Texas finding significantly reduced truancy and lower absence rates for students with high program attendance compared to non-participants.<sup>21</sup> In addition to improving daily attendance, research shows that students participating in out-of-school programs are also significantly less likely to drop out of school.<sup>22</sup>

- **Out-of-school programs improve social and emotional development and support the development of healthy behaviors.**

Research shows that out-of-school programs help improve social skills, fostering supportive relationships between students and adults, as well as between peers.<sup>23</sup> Participation in these programs is also linked to improved levels of self-esteem, confidence, and self-advocacy.<sup>24</sup> Finally, some studies indicate that these programs help reduce risky behaviors in middle and high schoolers, as well as lower disciplinary incidents.<sup>25</sup>





# Collaboration Has Expanded Summer Enrichment in Los Angeles

In 2021, when Los Angeles Unified students returned to in-person learning after over a year of remote instruction, students needed support urgently. Though academic recovery was critical during this time, instructional intervention alone could not sufficiently meet the needs of Los Angeles students transitioning back to their classrooms. During the pandemic, many students — especially students growing up in poverty — missed important supplemental opportunities, like music, art classes, or other enriching activities. Additionally, students needed to reconnect with each other after months of isolation, stress, and instability due to COVID-era remote learning.

The summer of 2021 emerged as a crucial moment to address students' unprecedented academic, social, and emotional needs arising from the pandemic. All this provided a chance to reimagine summer as a tool for closing learning and opportunity gaps.

**This moment also called for a bold, collaborative effort, transforming how GPSN, Los Angeles Unified, philanthropy, and community partners could work together to support students.**

The Summer of Joy demonstrates how collective action can catalyze transformation in the service of students. The initiative was established to provide free in-person summer enrichment to students in low-income neighborhoods across Los Angeles for the first time, helping to close the persistent opportunity gap in the city that had come into even sharper focus during the pandemic. The Summer of Joy enhanced important summer programming that Los Angeles Unified was leading, helping it to expand enrichment programming that allowed students to be creative, build relationships, explore, and deepen their love of learning.

Collaboration was pivotal to the creation of the Summer of Joy. In its inaugural summer,



Working collaboratively is essential to expand our collective impact. GPSN and its partnership with LAUSD helps this partnership to expand because they have authentic collaboration as their focus.”

– LAUSD Partner

Los Angeles Unified opened hundreds of its Title I elementary and middle school campuses for in-person summer enrichment and invested in programming. Dozens of nonprofit organizations operated summer enrichment programs on behalf of the district, provided specialized enrichment enhancements through Summer of Joy at district summer enrichment sites, or helped get the word out to communities about free district summer programming. Philanthropic individuals and organizations provided vast resources to support this unprecedented collaboration and enhance enrichment programming. GPSN led rapid, centralized coordination efforts and managed grantmaking to fund Summer of Joy nonprofit partners. In the first year, nearly 35,000 students participated across 737 sites, and over 70 partners were involved in bringing the effort to life.<sup>26</sup>

Now, four summers later, the Summer of Joy has become California's largest summer collaborative effort in terms of students served.<sup>27</sup> Los Angeles Unified, the City of Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks, and dozens of nonprofit organizations have continued to provide free in-person summer enrichment through Summer of Joy. Several nonprofit partners continue to provide enhanced STEM, arts, and sports enrichment programming, including field trips to help enrich students' summer experiences. Philanthropy has helped fund this continued collaboration. Such collaboration has also enabled quick and creative approaches to improving summer programming, as shown by efforts like job fairs to recruit summer enrichment staff and targeted advertising campaigns to build awareness.



### Four Years of the Summer of Joy: By the Numbers

**188,258** Students served

**14,066** Enhanced program hours provided

**1,966** Field trips

**~\$16M** Invested

**125** Nonprofits funded

Professional development opportunities for summer staff are the most recently added component to the Summer of Joy to improve the student experience and expand staff capacity. For the past two years, GPSN has invested in an annual professional development summit and on-site coaching for Summer of Joy staff, as well as a leadership institute to further develop Summer of Joy leaders. While these opportunities immediately benefit Summer of Joy staff and students, this professional development is more than a one-time summer investment; it is an investment in staff capacity that will yield ongoing returns each summer. Additionally, prioritizing learning and positive work experiences for Summer of Joy staff has the potential to go beyond its impact on the Summer of Joy and strengthen the district's teacher pipeline. When staff members have rewarding experiences supporting students over the summer, they are more likely to view teaching as a fulfilling, viable career path within Los Angeles.

### Summer of Joy Professional Development

**6,701** Hours of professional development

**700** Summer of Joy Summit participants in 2024

**27** Leadership Institute participants in 2024

**99%** of Summer of Joy Summit participants report learning something that they would be able to apply to their school site over the summer

**100%** of Leadership Institute participants would recommend it to a colleague

**99%+** of Summer of Joy Summit and Leadership Institute participants are satisfied or highly satisfied<sup>28</sup>





# Investing in Enrichment Is Beginning to Show Impact

Driving student success requires focusing on social-emotional gains as much as academic ones. Expanded learning and initiatives like Summer of Joy are vital for achieving this.

The Summer of Joy's targeted investment in high-need school sites over the past four years shows the impact of collaboration in action. Targeted investment sites are all Los Angeles Unified priority elementary schools, which are some of the district's lowest-performing schools and receive additional focused support from the district as well as the Summer of Joy. At these targeted investment sites, Los Angeles Unified provides academic-focused in-person summer school in the morning; then, students receive enrichment programming in the afternoon from the Summer of Joy.

Sites with targeted investment receive specialized enrichment programming, field trips, and staff coaching.

Many of these Summer of Joy school sites show noteworthy school-level outcomes in achievement, attendance, and sense of belonging.<sup>29</sup> **Though we cannot directly attribute these school-level outcomes to Summer of Joy alone, the initiative — and the collaborative effort that sustains it — is likely one factor impacting the overall success of students at these school sites.**

- **Compton Elementary:** Across the country, student achievement scores significantly dipped during the pandemic as student learning was disrupted by the era of remote learning. From 2022 to 2023, Los Angeles Unified students had the largest increase on the Smarter Balanced Assessment (SBA) test compared with other California districts, with Los Angeles Unified's 100 priority schools showing even greater improvement rates.<sup>30</sup> All Summer of Joy sites are priority schools, and many show significant academic gains. Take, for instance, Compton Elementary, which has seen consistent recent gains in the proportion of students who met or exceeded math and ELA standards on Smarter Balanced Assessments, surpassing pre-pandemic achievement levels and recovering from dips in achievement in 2021-22.<sup>31</sup> In fact, Compton Elementary has more than





doubled its proportion of students meeting or exceeding math standards since 2018-19,<sup>32</sup> indicating that this school site is successfully and consistently meeting its students' academic needs.

- Columbus Avenue Elementary:** Nationwide, the percentage of students who were chronically absent during the 2021-22 school year almost doubled compared to pre-pandemic rates, rising from 16% to 30%.<sup>33</sup> In Los Angeles, some school sites saw their rates more than triple upon the return to in-person learning. While many schools have made significant gains in curbing chronic absenteeism rates since returning to in-person learning, Columbus Avenue Elementary stands out for its progress. Though chronic absenteeism rates nearly doubled for Columbus Avenue Elementary in 2021-22, they fell dramatically the following year.<sup>34</sup> In fact, chronic absenteeism rates were within a percentage point of 2020-21 levels in the most recent year of data collection, a trend not seen at many other Los Angeles Unified elementary schools we examined.<sup>35</sup>

- Main Street Elementary:** While many schools across Los Angeles Unified have experienced an overall decrease in students reporting that they feel like they are a part of their school in recent years, Main Street Elementary has seen the opposite trend. Since 2020-21, the percentage of students who report feeling like a part of Main Street Elementary has consistently increased, moving from 69.8% in 2020-21 to 76.6% in 2023-24, even though nearby peer schools have seen net losses in students feeling connected to their school over time.<sup>36</sup> Additionally, Main Street Elementary has maintained a near-zero single-student suspension rate from 2020 to 2024.<sup>37</sup> These steady gains in students feeling a sense of connectedness to their school, paired with low disciplinary incidents, indicate that Main Street Elementary has developed a strong culture of safety and belonging.



## Impact of the Summer of Joy, as Told by Students\*

**93%** Report having fun in the program

**87%** Feel that the program helps them learn

**91%** Feel like they belong<sup>38</sup>

*\*Student survey data from the summers of 2021 to 2024 were averaged, with each year weighted equally, regardless of variations in student participation across years.*

# California Students Will Benefit From Continued Investment

The pandemic spurred rapid innovation, responsiveness, and collaboration in Los Angeles to meet student needs and close opportunity gaps. The Summer of Joy demonstrates what is possible through public and private partnerships to achieve significant outcomes for students.

The Summer of Joy is one impactful way that Los Angeles students can access valuable out-of-school enrichment, and continued investment can help deepen and expand these opportunities for students and continue to narrow opportunity gaps. In fact, 2023 polling of Los Angeles families indicates that families increasingly want to see the district prioritize nonacademic supports, with over half of families (52%) wanting schools to provide more enrichment programs outside of school hours, such as arts, sports, and coding,<sup>39</sup> and support for public funding of summer learning and enrichment is high among parents, across ZIP codes, and across partisan ideology.<sup>40</sup> Parents' focus on enrichment reflects parent experience with the Summer of Joy. Over the years, families have consistently reported strong satisfaction with the Summer of Joy and called out its specific benefits, especially for their child's social-emotional development. One parent reflected: "They're actually doing a lot of educational activities, fun activities, physical activities, everything that has incorporated with the social, emotional, and physical development of the children."<sup>41</sup>

However, continued public investment is necessary to maintain and expand

enrichment opportunities. Though out-of-school enrichment initiatives, like the Summer of Joy, are catalyzed by philanthropic dollars, these efforts have also drawn upon unprecedented public funding like government pandemic response funds and ELO-P, California funding established in the 2021-22 school year dedicated to establishing or supporting programs that support TK-6 students before school, after school, or during out-of-school time, like summer.<sup>42</sup>

To thrive, systems need diverse levers of support, necessitating both public and private investment. Intermediaries can effectively bridge this gap, maximizing collaboration among entities. But public funding now faces an uncertain future. While ELO-P funds are secured through 2025, they depend on future legislative renewals and continued prioritization by the state.<sup>43 44</sup> At the same time, Los Angeles Unified, like other districts nationwide, is limited by funding and capacity constraints, including federal pandemic relief funding ending, declining student enrollment, a significant state deficit, and reduced public education investments, further straining the ability to sustain and expand enrichment opportunities.<sup>45</sup>

States are well positioned to create the conditions necessary to deepen and expand summer enrichment programming. California has the power to fund summer programs, prioritize access for students from low-income communities, and support district implementation by providing evidence-

based resources and guidance.<sup>46</sup> Moreover, as pandemic-related funds expire, continued state prioritization of summer enrichments is more important than ever.

To thrive as adults, today's students need early exposure to diverse enrichment opportunities that spark their interests, support healthy development, build skills, and, ultimately, empower them to participate in and compete in the workforce. Today, California has one of the widest wealth gaps in the country, and most Californians think that this gap is widening — and that the government needs to do more to narrow it.<sup>47</sup> Though solving inequality in California is complex, one important state priority should be closing the opportunity gap for students through high-impact strategies like summer enrichment. In fact, opportunity gaps, like those seen during the summer months, have been shown to have a long-term impact on educational attainment and earnings, particularly for low-income children.<sup>48</sup>

All students should have access to high-quality, enriching summer learning experiences, and public investment is key to making that vision a reality.

What increased philanthropic support through Summer of Joy combined with public funding enabled us to do with our STEM program was invaluable. We significantly expanded our curriculum for grades TK-5 and the number of students we've been able to serve across LAUSD."

– LAUSD Program Enhancement Partner





# Sustaining and Prioritizing Enrichment for Every Student

The Summer of Joy initiative represents a pivotal step in closing opportunity gaps within Los Angeles Unified by providing equitable access to enriching summer experiences. The strength of the Summer of Joy lies in its collaborative framework, built on partnerships between GPSN, Los Angeles Unified, the City of Los Angeles, philanthropy, and community-based nonprofit organizations. This initiative demonstrates the power of working together to support students across Los Angeles.

But to sustain and expand enrichment opportunities like the Summer of Joy to Los Angeles students, especially those most at the margins, California must continue to prioritize and invest in enrichment as a valuable strategy for learners — and for the future of the state.

The vision is clear: By continuing collaborations like the Summer of Joy, we can ensure that every student in Los Angeles has the opportunity to thrive and succeed.





# Endnotes

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<sup>2</sup> See, for example: Elissa M. Abrams, Matthew Greenhawt, Marcus Shaker, Andrew D. Pinto, Ian Sinha, and Alexander Singer, “The COVID-19 Pandemic: Adverse Effects on the Social Determinants of Health in Children and Families,” *Annals of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology* 128, no. 1 (2022): 19–25, <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1081120621011686>; Dania V. Francis and Christian E. Weller, “Economic Inequality, the Digital Divide, and Remote Learning During COVID-19,” *The Review of Black Political Economy* 49, no. 1 (2022): 41–60, <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC8914302/>; “Addressing the Impact of COVID-19,” Georgia Statewide Afterschool Network, 2021, <https://www.afterschoolga.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Addressing-the-Impact-of-COVID-19-Final.pdf>.

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<sup>5</sup> Ellen Winner and Lois Hetland, eds., “Beyond the Soundbite: Arts Education and Academic Outcomes,” conference proceedings, Los Angeles, August 24–26, 2000, <https://www.getty.edu/foundation/pdfs/soundbite.pdf>; Daniel I. Rees and Joseph J. Sabia, “Sports Participation and Academic Performance: Evidence

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<sup>6</sup> “What Does the Research Say About Afterschool?,” Afterschool Alliance, November 2017, [https://afterschoolalliance.org/documents/What\\_Does\\_the\\_Research\\_Say\\_About\\_Afterschool.pdf](https://afterschoolalliance.org/documents/What_Does_the_Research_Say_About_Afterschool.pdf); Denise Huang, Kyung Sung Kim, Anne Marshall, and Patricia Pérez, “Keeping Kids in School: An LA’s BEST Example: A Study Examining the Long-Term Impact of LA’s BEST on Students’ Dropout Rates,” LA’s BEST, December 2005, [https://www.lasbest.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/CRESST-2005-Keeping\\_Kids\\_in\\_School.pdf](https://www.lasbest.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/CRESST-2005-Keeping_Kids_in_School.pdf).

<sup>7</sup> Joseph A. Durlak, Roger P. Weissberg, and Molly Pachan, “A Meta-Analysis of After-School Programs That Seek to Promote Personal and Social Skills in Children and Adolescents,” *American Journal of Community Psychology* 45, no. 3–4 (2010): 294–309, <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/20300825/>; “What Does the Research Say About Afterschool?,” Afterschool Alliance; “Ch. 4: How do Summer Programs Influence Outcomes for Children and Youth?” in Martín-José Sepúlveda and Rebekah Hutton, eds., *Shaping Summertime Experiences: Opportunities to Promote Healthy Development and Well-Being for Children and Youth* (Washington, DC: National Academies Press, 2019), <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK552656/>; Heather L. Schwartz, Laura S. Hamilton, Susannah Faxon-Mills, Celia J. Gomez, Alice Huguet, Lisa H. Jaycox, Jennifer T. Leschitz, Andrea Prado Tuma, Katie Tosh, Anamarie A. Whitaker, and Stephani L. Wrabel, “Early Lessons From Schools and Out-of-School Time Programs Implementing Social and Emotional Learning,” RAND Corporation, 2020, <https://casel.s3.us-east-2.amazonaws.com/RAND-Corp-SEL.pdf>.

<sup>8</sup> “Ready for the World: Los Angeles Unified School District 2022–26 Strategic Plan,” Los Angeles Unified School District, <https://www.lausd.org/cms/lib/CA01000043/Centricity/Domain/1371/Strategic-Plan22-26.pdf>; KCAL News, “LAUSD Superintendent Alberto Carvalho Discusses Summer Programs,” YouTube video, July 8, 2024, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FpldtgrLN2Q>.

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<sup>14</sup> Afterschool Alliance, *America After 3PM: Demand Grows, Opportunity Shrinks – 2020*.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> See, for example: Abrams, Greenhawt, Shaker, Pinto, Sinha, and Singer, “The COVID-19 Pandemic: Adverse Effects on the Social Determinants of Health in Children and Families”; Francis and Weller, “Economic Inequality, the Digital Divide, and Remote Learning During COVID-19”; “Addressing the Impact of COVID-19,” Georgia Statewide Afterschool Network.

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<sup>19</sup> Winner and Hetland, eds., “Beyond the Soundbite: Arts Education and Academic Outcomes”; Rees and Sabia, “Sports Participation and Academic Performance: Evidence from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health.”

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<sup>22</sup> Huang, Kim, Marshall, and Pérez, “Keeping Kids in School: An LA’s BEST Example: A Study Examining the Long-Term Impact of LA’s BEST on Students’ Dropout Rates.”

<sup>23</sup> Joseph A. Durlak, Roger P. Weissberg, and Molly Pachan, “A Meta-Analysis of After-School Programs That Seek to Promote Personal and Social Skills in Children and Adolescents,” *American Journal of Community Psychology* 45, no. 3–3 (2010): 294–309, doi: 10.1007/s10464-010-9300-6, PMID: 20300825; Emilie Phillips Smith and Catherine P. Bradshaw, “Promoting Nurturing Environments in Afterschool Settings,” *Clinical Child and Family Psychology Review* 20, no. 2 (2017): 117–126, <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC5552374/>; Schwartz, Hamilton, Faxon-Mills, Gomez, Huguet, Jaycox, Leschitz, Prado Tuma, Tosh, Whitaker, and Wrabel, “Early Lessons From Schools and Out-of-School Time Programs Implementing Social and Emotional Learning.”

<sup>24</sup> “Ch. 4: How do Summer Programs Influence Outcomes for Children and Youth?” in Sepúlveda and Hutton, eds., *Shaping Summertime Experiences: Opportunities to Promote Healthy Development and Well-Being for Children and Youth*.

<sup>25</sup> Martín-José Sepúlveda and Rebekah Hutton, eds., *Shaping Summertime Experiences: Opportunities to Promote Healthy Development and Well-Being for Children and Youth* (Washington, DC: National Academies Press, 2019), <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK552656/>; “What Does the Research Say About Afterschool?,” Afterschool Alliance.

<sup>26</sup> GPSN, “Summer of Joy 2022: A Report on Los Angeles’ Summer Learning Programs,” January 2023, [https://gpsnla.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Summer-of-Joy-2022-report\\_FINAL.pdf](https://gpsnla.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Summer-of-Joy-2022-report_FINAL.pdf).

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> GPSN, “Summer of Joy Professional Development Data,” 2023–2024, internal data.

<sup>29</sup> In our analysis, we focused on math and ELA achievement, chronic absenteeism, suspension rates, and feeling like a part of one’s school because these indicators reflect broader research that has been conducted on the benefits of summer and/or enrichment programs.

<sup>30</sup> “Los Angeles Unified SBA Scores Show Growth in Every Grade, Every Demographic, and Outpacing the State (10-11-24),” Los Angeles Unified School District, accessed December 2, 2024, <https://www.lausd.org/site/default.aspx?PageType=3&DomainID=4&ModuleInstanceId=4466&ViewID=6446EE88-D30C-497E-9316-3F8874B3E108&RenderLoc=0&FlexDataID=181685&PageID=1>.

<sup>31</sup> Enrollment data, Los Angeles Unified School District, <https://my.lausd.net/opendata/dashboard?language=en>.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2024 KIDS COUNT Data Book: State Trends in Child Well-Being (Baltimore: Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2024), <https://assets.aecf.org/m/databook/aecf-2024kidscountdatabook-embargoed.pdf>.

<sup>34</sup> Enrollment data, Los Angeles Unified School District.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> GPSN, “Summer of Joy Survey Data,” 2021–2024, internal data.

<sup>39</sup> GPSN, Family Insights: An Annual Poll of Los Angeles Families.

<sup>40</sup> America After 3PM, “Time for a Game-Changing Summer, With Opportunity and Growth for All of America’s Youth.”

<sup>41</sup> GPSN, “Summer of Joy Survey Data,” 2021–2024, internal data.

<sup>42</sup> “Day 1: ELO-P Nuts & Bolts, Vol. III - Spring 2024 ELO-P Academy,” California AfterSchool Network, April 3, 2024, [https://www.afterschoolnetwork.org/sites/main/files/file-attachments/day\\_1\\_\\_elo-p\\_nuts\\_\\_bolts\\_vol.\\_iii\\_-\\_spring\\_2024\\_elo-p\\_academy.pdf?1712180293](https://www.afterschoolnetwork.org/sites/main/files/file-attachments/day_1__elo-p_nuts__bolts_vol._iii_-_spring_2024_elo-p_academy.pdf?1712180293); Ca. EDC 2-4-26 Ch. 2, [https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/codes\\_displaySection.xhtml?sectionNum=46120&lawCode=EDC](https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?sectionNum=46120&lawCode=EDC).

<sup>43</sup> ELO-P was authorized in SY 2021–22 and originally set to remain in effect through SY 2022–23, though after-school enrichment continues to be a priority in California’s most recent budget and maintained the same level of funding, \$4 billion, for another year. It will rely on continued renewal each year by the California legislature in alignment with the governor’s priorities.

<sup>44</sup> “CAN Policy Newsletter—California’s Budget Agreement & Expanded Learning,” California AfterSchool Network, July 10, 2024, <https://www.afterschoolnetwork.org/policy-newsletter/can-policy-newsletter-californias-budget-agreement-expanded-learning>; Ca. EDC 2-4-26 Ch. 2.

<sup>45</sup> “Los Angeles Unified Approves Budget That Addresses Current Realities and Ensures Future Sustainability,” Los Angeles Unified School District, June 25, 2024, <https://www.lausd.org/site/default.aspx?PageType=3&DomainID=4&ModuleInstanceId=4466&ViewID=6446EE88-D30C-497E-9316-3F8874B3E108&RenderLoc=0&FlexDataID=175727&PageID=1>.

<sup>46</sup> Allison Crean Davis, “How States Can Make Summer Learning Programs Meaningful and Open to All Students,” *The 74*, September 11, 2023, <https://www.the74million.org/article/how-states-can-make-summer-learning-programs-meaningful-and-open-to-all-students/>; Linda Darling-Hammond, Karen Pittman, and Jennifer Peck, “Better, Broader Learning: California Education Policymakers Prioritize Bolder Expanded Learning Opportunities” (blog), Learning Policy Institute, July 16, 2021, <https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/blog/better-broader-learning-california-education-policymakers-prioritize-bolder-expanded-learning>.

<sup>47</sup> Thorman and Payares-Montoya, “Income Inequality in California.”

<sup>48</sup> Eric Dearing, Andres S. Bustamante, Henrik D. Zachrisson, and Deborah Lowe Vandell, “Accumulation of Opportunities Predicts the Educational Attainment and Adulthood Earnings of Children Born Into Low- Versus Higher-Income Households,” *Educational Researcher* 53, no. 9 (2024): 496–507, <https://www.aera.net/Newsroom/Accumulation-of-Opportunities-Predicts-the-Educational-Attainment-and-Adulthood-Earnings-of-Children-Born-into-Low-Versus-Higher-Income-Households>.



## **About GPSN**

GPSN is a nonprofit intermediary organization exclusively focused on improving Los Angeles public education. GPSN envisions a public school system in Los Angeles that prepares all students to succeed in school and to live thriving adult lives.

Guided by this vision, our mission is to bring together the Los Angeles community to catalyze the transformation of the public education system so that students of color and students living in poverty gain the knowledge, skills, and experiences to lead thriving adult lives.