



Summer Dreamers Academy Overview

Summer Dreamers launched in the summer of 2010 as a “premier summer camp for free”, intentionally designed to **blend engaging academics and unique enrichment activities, delivered in a positive setting that creates a culture for learning and promotes 21st century skills**. The 27-day nationally and internationally recognized program for K-8 students is led by District staff and community partners and aims to:

- **Stop the effects of summer learning loss**
- **Prepare students academically and socially**
- **Encourage a passion for learning**
- **Motivate youth to persist in the face of challenges**

Additional Program Details

Cost/Funding Sources

- On average, students costs range between \$1,500 to \$2,000 per student and includes the following:
 - Staffing
 - Enrichment (afternoon activities)
 - Food (2 meals and 1 snack)
 - Transportation
 - Curriculum/Site-based Supplies
 - Attendance Incentives
 - Communication & Marketing
 - Family Engagement Events/Activities
- We are now completely funded through general funds (public dollars) and Title I funds. Prior to summer 2019, we received a significant investment from the foundation community (Wallace Foundation, Walmart Foundation, Grable Foundation, Heinz Endowments, The Pittsburgh Foundation & McAuley Ministries)
 - Our current funding breakdown is as follows: 79% General Fund & 21% Title I

Recruitment/Hiring Process

- Staff
 - The staff recruitment process occurs in three stages with a priority and focus on hiring internally. All positions are posted through the districts hiring platform. Given the longevity of the program, there is little additional effort that is needed to attract high-quality staff to the program. In the past, however, we have had district leadership, including our Superintendent and Assistant Superintendents engaged in reaching out to schools directly to support recruitment efforts. To ensure quality, all staff are hired on a provisional basis and are only able to work if they score Proficient or Distinguished on their annual review.
 - 3-Step Hiring Process
 - The first step in the hiring process is to post for our Camp Directors, which occurs in late November/early December. They then support the hiring and recruitment process for our remaining Camp Leadership Team members (late December/early January). This group in turn is invited to support the recruitment process of the remaining roles that are not hired based on seniority, such as teachers and camp coordinators (February).
- Students
 - Our recruitment process for students has evolved over time. We currently divide all available slots into guaranteed and open enrollment. 60% are guaranteed slots where schools are given a specific number of students that they can recommend based on their current building enrollment. As long as the students complete our online application by the May 1 deadline, they are then guaranteed a spot for summer. This allows us to work most closely with those that know our students and can reinforce the importance of attending program over the summer months. The other 40% is open enrollment. In the event of over enrollment in the open slots, we run a lottery with preference given to students who scored basic or below basic on standardized test and/or are identified as economically disadvantaged. Additionally, we have a sibling preference system, in which all siblings are accepted together. Outreach to schools begins in January.

Curriculum

- We utilize a literacy curriculum that was designed in-house. Each year it is updated to ensure alignment with district and state standards, and best practices in pedagogy. For math, we have utilized number worlds. However, we are currently looking into alternative options that are better aligned with the school year curriculum.