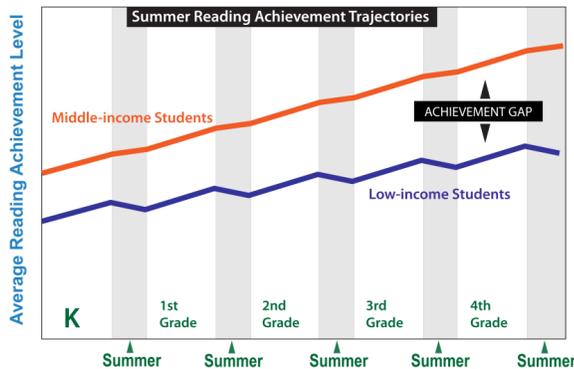


Seven Years of Summer

The Packard Foundation's Catalytic Investment in Summer Learning in California

The Challenge: Lack of access to high-quality summer learning and enrichment experiences is a key factor in the academic achievement and experience gaps for low-income students.



The Opportunity: From its existing investments to support expansion of after-school enrichment programs, the Packard Foundation already had developed assets and allies to pivot into a summer strategy. This capacity, combined with new knowledge about the critical role of summer learning, gave the Foundation a perfect opportunity to leverage its knowledge, connections, and existing investment to launch summer learning as a must-have in California's education landscape.

The Timeline: Seven years of ongoing investment, with ample time and support for grantees to prepare for the Packard Foundation's eventual departure. Although gains may be seen in a shorter time, true systems and policy changes take a lengthier commitment. The choice to make a time-limited investment forced the Foundation to co-create outcomes with grantees and push toward them. Otherwise, it would have been easy to get caught up providing ongoing support without real momentum for change. By being clear and upfront about the time limit of its commitment, the Foundation was able not only to manage grantee expectations, but also to infuse the work with a sense of positive urgency to make big strides. While not a guarantee, the momentum this created may help attract new funding to sustain the work.

Total Investment = \$31+ Million
by the Packard Foundation leveraging state funds of
over 7 years **\$3.85 billion**

The Strategy: Build a three-part scaffolding for a state-wide movement in support of quality summer experiences for California's kids. This meant engaging educators, policy-makers and community advocates around a common goal.

GOAL

Ensure that California's education leaders embrace high-quality after-school and summer enrichment as essential to the overall success of children who need it most.



1. QUALITY PRACTICE: 12 target communities with summer learning programs at multiple sites

Instead of rapid expansion, the Foundation chose to focus on quality, supporting a few demonstration sites to model "real-life" quality programs and show what was possible statewide. Partners created or kept their unique local identities rather than trying to adopt a one-size-fits-all approach.



2. SYSTEMS BUILDING: Technical assistance, training, coaching and other professional development for summer program staff and TA providers

The Packard Foundation worked to build summer expertise for sites across the state through an existing statewide network of support. It also supported the creation of a comprehensive assessment tool, but soon realized that while tools to measure quality or performance are great, they are not effective if they are too complicated or cumbersome to use. The Foundation simplified the tool for the sake of wider adoption.



3. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT & POLICY DEVELOPMENT: Strategic communications, champion building, and advocacy

Creating a Summer Matters public awareness campaign brought multiple benefits. It ensured consistent messaging, gave a sense of common purpose and inclusion to multiple stakeholders and put a public "face" on efforts that might otherwise be hidden from view. This, in turn, helped fuel advocacy gains that resulted in policies supportive of summer learning.

Key Factors and Lessons for Philanthropy

Tapping Power of Partners

It takes more than practice and programs to build a field. To make catalytic change, you have to identify and support the people and organizations who will become champions for that change. The Packard Foundation engaged a number of partners — from local grantees, to statewide advocacy organizations, to national experts — to develop and deploy its summer strategy.

Foundations must assume the lion's share of responsibility for balancing the power dynamics in collaborative efforts so that there is fertile ground for trust to grow.

Cooperative planning and ongoing communication can help ensure that all partners feel mutual ownership and benefit.

Partnerships must be fluid in terms of participants, leadership, focus, and roles, and must be open to adaptations over time.

Learning from failure is an option. Foundations can pave the way for candor and innovation by pledging that failed attempts won't become a black mark when it comes to future funding.

Making a Graceful Exit

The Foundation used six strategies to ensure a graceful exit at the end of its seven-year strategy:

1. Prepare from the beginning
2. Foster grantee connections and capacity
3. Be transparent about time frame and create common language around your exit
4. Share learnings with stakeholders
5. Support research to guide future work
6. End on a high note by celebrating accomplishments

Departing a space does not mean pulling the rug from under those who remain. Capacity building support to help grantees ramp up skills to ensure the sustainability of their work makes for a graceful exit and produces a win-win for foundation and grantees alike.

Partnership or collaborative structures may need to change when a funder departs. Funders can support that change in structure by helping grantees explore alternative models.

Sustainability comes when foundations work to create local connections and capacity for the uptake of great ideas – whether or not other large funders will be part of the picture.

Summer Learning Accomplishments at a Glance

Quality: Established a definition of “quality” that was adopted by the state as the standard of practice

- 63% of expanded learning program providers implementing the state's quality standards
- 100% of summer learning program providers supporting some type of quality indicators for summer learning programs

Technical assistance: Strengthened technical assistance support. *

- 4 Summer Matters regional hubs
- 8 TA organizations
- 868 programs throughout California supported with TA strategies
- TA services for 4,029 individuals representing 1,032 districts or agencies

Advocacy: Increased the number of champions for summer learning

- 73 superintendent champions
- 36 organizations building a Summer Learning network, 11 of these new to the Summer Matters campaign
- Elevated discussion of the importance of summer learning among state policymakers (see “Quality” above)

**Numbers represent 2016*