



SNAPSHOT

An informational brief covering issues affecting the lives of children and youth living in Prince George's County, Maryland

Learning

All Year Round

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Just as quickly as one school year has wended down, the start of a new one is upon us. By the time this newsletter is published, school will be back in session. Parents will be eager to learn about the new programs at their child's school. Teachers will be preparing to decorate their classrooms with new materials and, more than likely, it will still be *hot!* Although summer will not technically be over for a few more weeks, learning is never-ending.

Did you know that during summer vacation, students can lose up to 3 months of grade equivalence? Yes, 3 months. Research shows that students who remain disengaged during summer break find it harder to retain information learned during the previous school year. Students tend to score higher on learning aptitude tests in the beginning of the summer than they do at the end, even when the same test is administered.

In the United States over 40 million children miss out on expanded learning and enrichment opportunities during the summer. Children, who remain uninvolved in summer enrichment activities of any kind, are at risk of losing not only academic advantages but social and interactive advantages as well.

And now that summer is over, teachers will spend anywhere from 4-6 weeks re-teaching information that was lost over the summer. Students from low income families run a higher risk of succumbing to these statistics.

As a new school year starts, let's take this opportunity to focus on closing the summer learning gap by providing additional academic support to children especially during the first 6 weeks of school. Many strides were made in Prince George's County Public

Schools on the 2011 Maryland School Assessment (MSA) and we want to continue this positive trend. Reading scores show that 84 percent of fifth graders and 83 percent of fourth graders are reading at a proficient or advanced level. Seventy-one (71) percent of eighth graders scored proficient, up from 67 percent last year.

In math, 84 percent of fourth graders scored proficient or advanced. Seventh graders jumped 6 percentage points, making the most gains from 2010 to 2011. While sixth graders showed a 3 percentage point decline in reading, moving from 81 percent in 2010 to 78 percent in 2011, they maintained 73 percent proficient or advanced in math.

Students attending Prince George's County Public Schools are and can continue to achieve especially when they have the appropriate supports. In addition to schools, there are many programs led by community-based organizations, parks and recreation centers and other providers that offer enrichment and all year opportunities throughout the county to keep students learning in a variety of ways. A glimpse of 3 of these fabulous programs are described on page two.

In Good Company in Prince George's County

Helping your child to become and remain a better scholar is not only rewarding but easy. The Human Services Coalition of Prince George's County maintains a directory of its local member organizations (www.hscofpgc.org/html/directory.html#middle) many of which offer academic as well as a variety of youth development programs. Below are three extraordinary organizations that provide diverse programming to Prince George's County students.

- **Conscious Thoughts, Inc.**, is a non-profit grassroots organization that seeks to provide thought provoking and practical experiences for African American males that will empower them to analyze and understand the complexity of their existence. The organization operates under the premise that by understanding oneself, and affirming one's culture, heritage, and humanity, the resultant manifestation is sustainable health and development.

The primary objective of Conscious Thoughts is to assist males from various backgrounds in thinking consciously thus prompting responsible personal and social action. Conscious Thoughts encourages and fosters such growth through its programs and services.

Conscious Thoughts' premiere program, The Young Man Camp Summer Enrichment Program is for teenage males who are matriculating to high school. The primary goal of this program is to help individuals to better understand themselves thereby becoming aware, responsible, and productive citizens. The Young Man Camp places a high premium on the notion that awareness begins with "knowledge of self". Learn more at www.consciousthoughts.org.

- **ECO City Farms** is an educational, not-for-profit enterprise designed to serve as a prototype for sustainable local farming. They grow food, farms and farmers. Their vision is a just, vigorous and sustainable food system in the Chesapeake food shed with ample fertile soil, quality environments and sustainable incomes for farmers, and access to nutritious high quality food for all.

This summer ECO City Farms partnered with End Time Harvest Ministry's Port Towns Youth Council at Bladensburg High School to launch its Youth Wellness Ambassador program. Margaret Morgan-Hubbard, ECO executive director reported, "Young people spent the summer learning how to grow food at the farm and experienced first hand how fresh food is prepared from scratch."

The summer experience for the program participants included learning about compost and vermiculture, seed planting and transplanting, crop maintenance and harvest, selling produce at a farmers market, and visits to retailers and restaurants that process healthy food for sale to customers and diners.

Says Morgan-Hubbard, "Our goal in having a farm inside the Beltway and doing outreach with the youth of our community is to show the many aspects of a local food system and to show the possibilities for jobs and business opportunities along the way, from seed to feed." Learn more at www.ecocityfarms.org.

- **Innoworks', University of Maryland (UMD)-College Park**, mission is to develop innovative extracurricular educational programs for students from disadvantaged backgrounds with the purpose of inspiring lifelong enthusiasm and confidence in learning, improving problem-solving and teamwork skills, and promoting science and engineering as exciting career paths.

InnoWorks curricula are designed to maximize the development of problem-solving and analytical skills using methods developed with cutting-edge cognitive neuroscience and educational psychology research. Each one-week to two-week InnoWorks program consists of three different types of activities: interactive presentations, mixed-team learning and team-building activities, and fast-paced competitive missions. Students work in teams of four with college student mentors.

For five straight years, UMD volunteers have spent thousands of hours working to bring science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) enrichment at no cost to over a hundred in-need middle school students in Prince George's County communities. Innoworks work to prevent the critical "brain-drain" that happens over summer break by turning that period into a constructive and rewarding experience for campers. It is their hope that maintaining continuum from school to camp to school will both improve campers' performance in school and promote their interest in pursuing potential careers in the STEM fields. Learn more at <http://www.innoworks.org/newinno/umcp.php?chapter=3&length=1000>

Even if you missed the summer programs, there are many afterschool and weekend programs during the year to help your child thrive and, the best part of all, you are now a year ahead for next summer. For additional information, visit **IN REACH's** Resource Page on-line at www.inreachinc.org.

21st Century Learning

What is 21st century learning? While there are a variety of perspectives, most seem to agree that it is flexible, creative, challenging, and complex and addresses a rapidly changing world filled with fantastic new problems as well as exciting new possibilities and includes electronic and digital literacy.

According to the Prince George's County Public Schools Secondary School Reform document, *Profile of a 21st Century Graduate*, to their fullest potential, a Prince George's County Public School graduate will demonstrate specific 21st century skills in the following areas:

- An Effective Communicator and Collaborator
- A Successful Problem Solver
- A Responsible Person
- An Engaged Global and Domestic Citizen

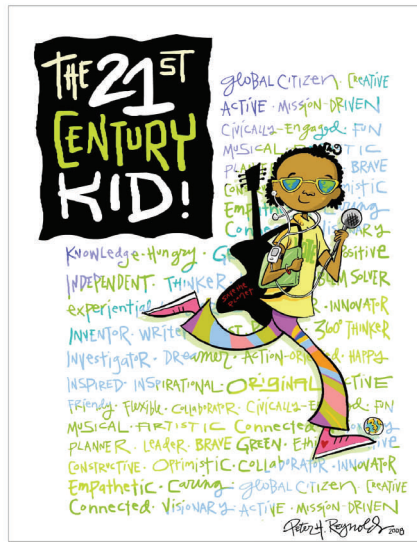
These categories cover many areas including writing effectively and clearly in a variety of personal, social, educational and career related activities; collecting, organizing, interpreting, and analyzing information in order to form personal opinions, support ideas and opinions with relevant information, and make decisions; demonstrating basic fundamentals of good health; and engaging in environmental stewardship.

There are many tools that can help students advance during the summer and throughout the year and contribute to them becoming proficient 21st century graduates. Online materials take advantage of today's technology by providing a convenient and web-based interactive learning resource, helping children excel in their studies. Many sites offer web-based summer programs that take school year curriculum and continue on through the summer so that kids can retain what they have learned, catch up on what they have not, and get ahead for next year. Online learning allows students to work at their own pace in an environment that is most comfortable and familiar to them.

Companies like Apple have fully integrated education and technology, creating a dynamic way for parents and children to learn together. Apple products offer easy-to-learn tools that encourage students to communicate their best thinking in compelling new ways. Included on every Mac, iLife helps students create great multimedia projects together. iWork allows

students to make documents, spreadsheets, and presentations for both everyday assignments and advanced projects.

iPhone, iPod touch, and iPad applications (apps) are transforming the way teachers teach and students learn. Although not the only mobile devices, apps enable learning both inside and outside the classroom. From math games and vocabulary flash cards to anatomy visualizers, there's an app for every subject and every level of instruction; from preschool to higher education. These apps help personalize instruction, address a variety of learning styles, and create highly interactive classrooms that not only makes for a more engaging learning environment, but also results in performance improvements. And since most students are familiar with the devices these apps are made for, they can start using them right away.



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During the 2011-2012 school year, four Prince George's County Public Schools will pilot the Transforming Education through Digital Learning (TEDL) program. "Digital learning changes the look of the traditional classroom setting," said Dr. William R. Hite, Jr., Superintendent of Schools. "Through this initiative, our teachers and students will experience a new way of teaching and learning by using the latest technology. Students will become more engaged and better prepared for college and the global workforce."

The four Title I middle schools that will participate in the TEDL initiative are Buck Lodge, Charles Carroll, Nicholas Orem and William Wirt. During the first quarter, students will receive iPads as a learning tool that will allow access to instructional digital content and will engage them in their education. Students will be able to create, distribute, access, and collaborate using the highest level of technology.

As 21st century learning will heavily integrate with online and digital tools, now is a great time to begin learning about all of the technology and resources available to help children increase their academic achievement especially students who may be struggling to excel. Technology can serve as an important learning bridge.

Learning—Academic & Fun

Education comes in many shapes and forms. Whether your child is homeschooled, attends a charter, private or traditional public school, the following online web-based programs and activities will allow students of all ages to explore required and new interests in the privacy of their own homes.

If a computer is not available at home, the local library provides a safe and constructive environment. The Prince George's County Memorial Library System, <http://prge.lib.md.us>, offers free audio books and e-books as well as online tutoring.

- **khanacademy.org**—Learn almost anything for free. With a library of over 2,400 videos covering everything from arithmetic to physics, finance, and history and 125 practice exercises, Khan Academy is on a mission to help teach whatever you want, whenever you want, at your own pace.
- **Kidsknowit.com**—The total free children's learning network.
- **Qtopia.com**—Free online access to thousands of ready-to-use activities, motivating games, 24/7 online homework access with automatic grading and more
- **worldbookonline.com**—A suite of online research tools that includes encyclopedia articles, primary source collections, educator tools, student activities, pictures, audio and video complimented by current periodicals and related Web sites.
- **Tutor.com**—Get an online tutor to help right now.
- **Tutorbungalow.com**—a free tutor search engine. Parents/students deal directly with the tutor and, by cutting out the middle man, save a lot of money.
- **Freeworldu.org**—Provides Free flashcard-style learning in all subject areas for pre K-12 students.



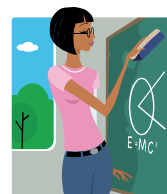
English Language Arts/Reading

- Pbskids.org/read
- Readingrockets.org
- Readwritethink.org
- Uen.org/3-6interactives/lang_arts.shtml
- Teachervision.fen.com/reading-and-language-arts/games/5831.html
- Admongo.gov
- Clicknkids.com
- Pocketliteracy.com
- Meritsoftware.com
- Vocabulary.com

Science



- Smithsonianchannel.com
- Kidsciencechallenge.com
- Nasa.gov/audience/forkids/kidsclub/flash/index.html
- Exploratorium.edu/afterschool
- Shoutlearning.org



Mathematics

- Coolmath4kids.com
- Kidsnumbers.com
- Thekidzpage.com
- Fuelthebrain.com
- Mathforum.org/students
- Mathletics.com

All Year Round



U.S. History

- Kids.gov
- Loc.gov
- History.com
- Historyexplorer.americanhistory.si.edu/index.asp



Special Needs

- Kurzweiledu.com
- Scholastic.com/system44
- Monarchteachtech.com
- Texthelp.com
- Livescribe.com

Accessibility Apps

- icomm Free
- iCommunicate
- iConverse
- Stories2learn
- Sentence Builder

Special Education Collection

scr.bi/cdz1SF

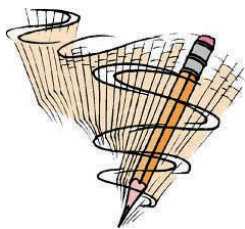
Autism and Asperger's Syndrome

bit.ly/9i1ZQ4



Creative Arts

- Artsedge.kennedy-center.org
- Neajazzintheschools.org



College Preparation

- Hbcuconnect.com
- Mdgo4it.mhec.maryland.gov/index.html
- Collegeboundfoundation.org
- Knowhow2go.org
- Collegenet.com/elect/app/app
- Educationplanner.org
- Braintrack.com
- Xap.com
- Colledgeclicktv.com



(Foreign) Languages

- Learnalanguage.com
- Asldeafined.com
- Fluentfuture.com
- Palabea.com
- Rosettastone.com

Council Chair Ingrid M. Turner, District 4 Spring Into Summer Initiative



AVID students on New York field trip

IN REACH was pleased to have the opportunity to work with Council Chair Ingrid M. Turner, representing Councilmanic District 4, to implement the *Spring Into Summer Youth Development Project*. The purpose of the initiative was to engage District 4 youth through partnerships with schools in meaningful and positive experiences through which they can continue to grow and thrive as well-informed, healthy, and productive young adults.

The project taught youth how to organize, implement and evaluate forums to discuss issues that affect them; engaged youth in a range of developmental activities related to health, education, self-esteem and efficacy, college and career readiness, and financial literacy; and allowed students to participate in a variety of field trips to help expand their vision of their future. These sessions helped students develop critical thinking skills, effective communication strategies, team/project work experience and armed them with valuable information on becoming college and career ready.

This initiative positively affected all of the youth in IN REACH's programs and directly impacted students at Benjamin Tasker Middle School participating in the Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) program led by Ms. Natiqua Riley. AVID is a program for middle and upper middle academic students who have the potential for Honors and Advanced Placement work in high school but need academic and emotional support paired with the rigor. AVID combines rigor with support that includes the student's own individual determination and the support of teachers, other AVID students and their families, the AVID teacher, and university volunteers and tutors.

A staunch advocate for education and supporter of all students especially those in her district, Ms. Riley remarked that Council Chair Turner's "inspirational talks and recommendations really resonated with many students. This year she so

graciously accepted the invitation to come and celebrate with students at our AVID showcase. I know personally, I was elated and touched to see Council Chair Turner there and to hear her endearing words about the wonderful students in Prince George's County Public Schools. Her thoughtfulness also reflects the concern and compassion that our community feels for our students."

Students went on several educational field trips to such places as Columbia University in New York, the U.S. Capital and the Library of Congress, the U.S. Naval Academy, the Baltimore Aquarium, ECO City Farm in Edmonston, and the University of Virginia.

IN REACH strives to fulfill its mission of preparing students for college, work and life primarily by creating partnerships with public schools in Prince George's County, Maryland. The Council District 4 Initiative allowed IN REACH to expand its Quantum Project and Youth Ambassadors Programs which focus on college and career readiness; science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) career exploration, and service learning.



*Chair Ingrid M. Turner, Esq.
Councilmanic District 4*



High School Youth Ambassadors



Quantum Project Summer Program Stars at U.S. Naval Academy



National Summer Learning COALITION

IN REACH has joined forces with the National Summer Learning Coalition (NSLC) along with many other diverse organizations to advocate for every child in the United States being safe, healthy, and engaged in learning during the summer. Taken directly from NSLC materials, below is information on the work that they are undertaking to advance summer learning and close the achievement gap.

Summer learning must become an essential component of education reform and youth development, not an afterthought that is vulnerable during difficult economic times. At this time in particular, the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act provides a unique opportunity for the United States Congress and the Administration to lead in this direction, while leaving ultimate decision-making about program design to local communities.

For young people who lack access to high-quality summer learning experiences, extensive research confirms that during the summer these students typically lose up to three months of what they learned in math during the school year, and low-income youth, who more frequently lack such access, also chronically fall behind their peers in reading. This presents a major challenge, not only to students and their families, but to the nation as well.

Research from Johns Hopkins University attributes two-thirds of the ninth grade achievement gap in reading to unequal summer learning opportunities during the elementary school years. Students who fall far behind are at great risk for dropping out of school. The national dropout rate of about 30 percent has huge implications for workforce development, economic growth, and international competitiveness.

All of our efforts and investments to improve the quality of teaching, curricula, school management, and other aspects of public education are seriously compromised by summer learning loss. *The Coalition believes that providing high-quality summer learning opportunities to significantly more students, in conjunction with other education reform measures, will have a major impact on student success.*

While we support a variety of approaches to summer learning, the Coalition believes that high-quality summer programs entail:

- **Adequate duration and scope.** To be successful, summer learning programs should address the comprehensive

needs of students, including academics, enrichment, and other programming for healthy development. This often includes addressing students' nutrition and exercise needs. Successful programs typically provide students with a minimum of 150 hours of full-time programming per summer over more than one summer for sustained, multi-year academic benefits.

- **Strong partnerships.** Successful summer learning programs typically include robust partnerships among schools, community organizations, and other public agencies in order to align and leverage resources, improve program quality, and develop shared outcomes for success.

- **Innovative programming that engages both students and teachers.** Quality summer learning programs provide a blended approach of academic learning and enrichment activities that include transition programs (e.g., for rising kindergarteners and ninth graders), proficiency-based learning opportunities, college and career awareness, experiential learning (e.g., workplace internships or service-learning), STEM education, arts, physical education, and innovative professional development opportunities for teachers and administrators.

We believe that, to meet the needs of all students and to make the United States a global education leader again, our public education system requires new investments. We also recognize that economic and fiscal pressures may make it difficult for the federal government to allocate new resources to public education, including summer learning.

At this time, the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act provides a special opportunity for Congress and the Administration to encourage local communities to use a variety of new means to allocate existing resources to summer learning. The Coalition looks forward to working with Congress, the Administration, and all summer learning stakeholders to ensure a diverse array of high-quality summer learning opportunities are accessible to students throughout the nation.

For more information, please contact Bob Seidel, Policy Director at the National Summer Learning Association, at bseidel@summerlearning.org. Read our interview with Mr. Seidel at <http://inreachinc.blogspot.com>.

Keeping Kids Safe and Healthy

In addition to academic losses, research shows that students may not have access to balanced nutritional meals during the summer. Nutrition is a key component in the success of any child, as a balanced diet can improve work ethic, attendance and behavior. Since 1980 the number of young people who are overweight has more than tripled, with 31 percent of school-aged children overweight or obese. Obesity can lead to poor academic achievement, serious health problems and even depression.

For the last 25 years, the prevalence of obesity has been steadily increasing in Maryland. Prince George's County children and adolescents have high levels of obesity, which is associated with increased death from many causes in adulthood, and places this group at increased risk for diabetes, high cholesterol and hypertension.

Now that summer is ending, enrolling your child in after school and weekend programs can provide a healthy structure for children that would otherwise be indeterminate during lazy after school afternoons and Saturdays. These programs are not only healthy for children but ensure their time is spent constructively in a safe environment.

Title I schools offer supplemental education services and a nutritional meal afterschool and many after school programs offer snacks to help students focus during activities. In addition to providing nutritious food, these meals draw children into programs that promote their health and development, and offer engaging and fun experiences while their parents are working.

If you or someone you know is in need of food or other assistance contact the Department of Social Services at 301.909.2000. Charles Carroll Middle School in New Carrollton hosts a food bank the fourth Saturday of every month from 10:00am-12:00pm.



For more information about diabetes visit the American Diabetes Association online, www.diabetes.org. Children's National Medical Center in Washington, DC has a host of programs that address childhood diabetes and obesity, www.childrensnational.org.

Also, please remember to discuss your child's specific health related needs with the school nurse at his/her school. School nurses are trained professionals who implement strategies to promote student and staff health and safety.

Read our interview with Bob Seidel about summer learning and the work of the National Summer Learning Coalition via IN REACH's blog, ViewPoints, <http://inreachinc.blogspot.com>. Visit IN REACH's website, www.inreachinc.org/links.html, for a list of additional resources.

SOURCES

National Summer Learning Association, www.summerlearning.org
Prince George's County Public School, www.pgcps.org
Apple, www.apple.com/education
Forum for Youth Investment, www.forumfyi.org/readyby21
United States Department of Agriculture, www.fns.usda.gov/fns
MSNBC.com



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