

Summer Opportunity Scholarships (SOS)

A Proposal to Narrow the Skills Gap

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Hamilton Project Launch

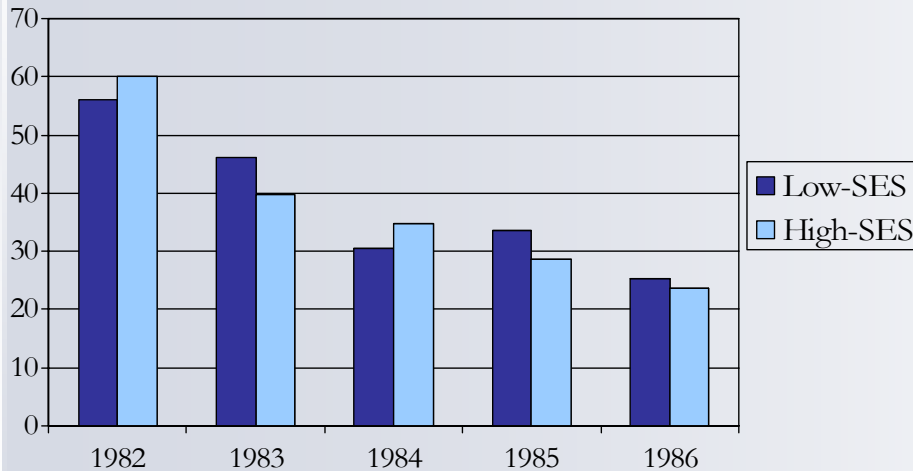
Brookings Institution

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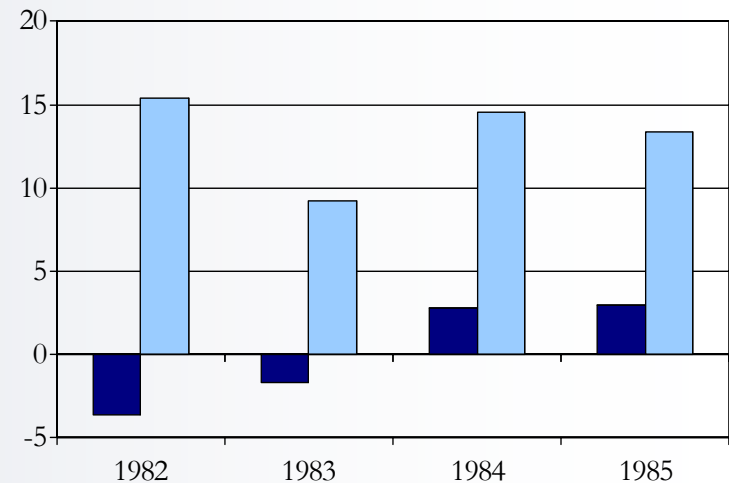
The Problem: Summer Learning Loss

- During the summer, students skills atrophy by as much as 3 months of learning.
- The loss is greater for low-SES students.

School Year Reading Gains, Baltimore



Summer Reading Gains, Baltimore

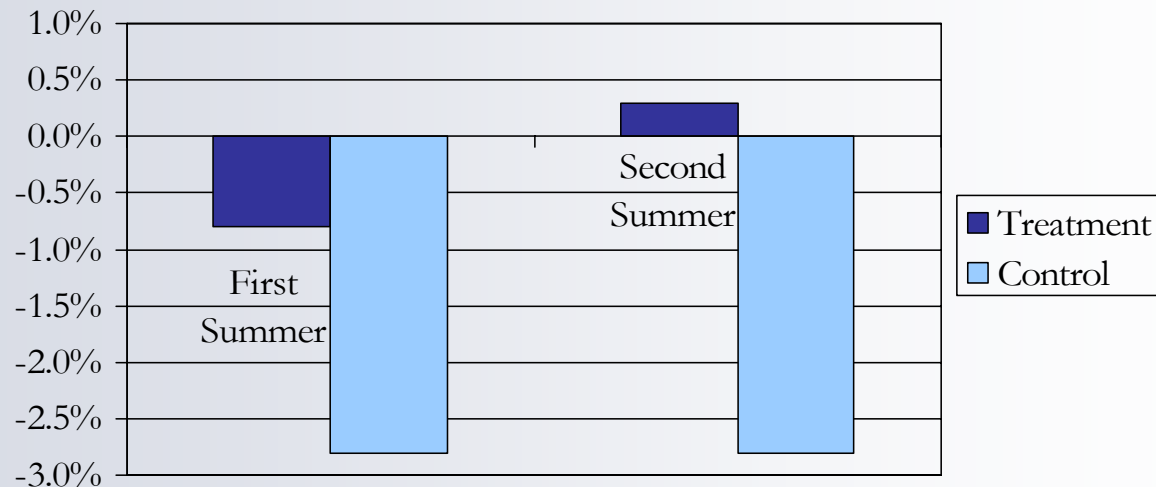


Source: Alexander, Entwisle, and Olson (2004).

The Evidence: Summer School

- Cooper, et al (2000): programs focusing on remedial instruction increase scores among low-SES students by roughly the same amount that they are expected to fall during the summer.
- Sipe, Grossman, and Milliner (1988): the Summer Training and Employment Program (STEP) staunches summer learning loss.

**Summer Reading Gain, as a Percentage of the
Baseline Score, STEP**



The Solution:

Summer Opportunity Scholarships

Eligible Students: Participate in a 6-week summer school/enrichment program

- Grade level: K-5
- Family income: Free-lunch eligible

Eligible Providers: Districts, private providers, and summer enrichment camps

- Small group instruction; align the summer and school year curricula
- Evaluated by a state official; possibility of disqualification

Cost Estimates:

- Per-pupil cost: \$1,600 in 2006; \$1,800 in 2010
- Cost to federal government: 50% match
 - \$1.8 billion annually when fully phased-in
 - Five-year total federal cost: \$6.7 billion

Implications:

- Parents & Students: 60% of low-income parents worry kids will fall behind.
2/3 of low-income kids want help keeping up with school work.
- Teachers: Shouldn't oppose SOS since their participation is voluntary.
- SOS may shift the voucher movement toward a more productive path.