Summer Opportunity Scholarships (SOS)

A Proposal to Narrow the Skills Gap

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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.

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.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>First Summer</th>
<th>Second Summer</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Treatment</td>
<td>-2.0%</td>
<td>-1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>-2.5%</td>
<td>-3.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Legend:  
- **Treatment**:紫色条形柱 
- **Control**:蓝色条形柱
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.