



RE: HB 2007 – Summer Learning

Chair Neron, Vice Chair McIntire, Vice Chair Dobson, and members of the House Education Committee

My name is Sahaan McKelvey and I am the Director of Advocacy & Engagement for Self Enhancement, Inc. (SEI). SEI has been providing standard-bearing Summer Programming for 25 plus years. The Summer Program at SEI is foundational to SEI programming where we provide In-School, After-School, and Summer program services to ensure that our students are able to discover their purpose and realize their full potential. The Summer is the start of our program year, and every SEI student is expected to participate in Summer Program. SEI has graduated 98% of our program participants for decades, so we know that the approach that we take at SEI is proven to work.

I am currently Neutral on HB 2007, but I would love to be moved to a position of Support. I do want to acknowledge and appreciate the sponsors of this bill for being willing to listen and respond to feedback, as evidenced by the -1 amendments that have been added. I am looking forward to the release of -2 amendments with the hope that there will be opportunities created to uplift services for historically underserved communities of color.

Below are some of the things that were not evident in the initial bill that SEI would like to see included in the final version after all amendments have been included.

- **Expand beyond a narrow focus on reading literacy** and include space for proven approaches that blend academics with enrichment activities like hands-on learning, STEM, arts, career exploration, youth development, and culturally relevant programming to accelerate learning. We would like to see the focus on literacy expanded beyond just reading, because every component of literacy mentioned above enhances reading literacy as well.
- **Include summer AND after-school programming** to create a coherent ecosystem of support that meets student needs year-round. The 6,000 hrs gap for low income students and students of color is real. And in order to overcome the 6,000-hour difference in learning opportunities that many African American youth are facing, we need to offer them as many opportunities as we can to enhance their learning experience. At SEI one of our axioms is that, “when school is out, SEI is in!” This approach is what is needed to give our students the opportunities for success that they deserve.
- **Build on prior summer investments and extend eligible partnerships to CBOs** who have established roots in their communities and hold deep trust with underserved youth and families. We must go beyond just “Summer School,” which has existed for decades in much of the state. We must allow the entities that young people trust to be a part of their learning experience. CBOs are imperative to any statewide Summer Learning Program being successful and maximizing its impact.
- **Address barriers to participation** by allowing flexible uses for family outreach and engagement to ensure organizations can effectively reach the children most in need.



- **Focus on PROVEN intervention and service strategies** to ensure the success of ALL children. Please utilize language that emphasizes proven, or data driven, results. Calling for “Evidence Based” approaches creates a bias against communities of color and culturally specific agencies and students. The programs that are able to conduct research and evaluation projects to receive an “Evidence Based” stamp are generally mainstream (white) programs that do not work seamlessly with kids of color.

Please make sure that these life-changing elements of Summer Programming are included in HB 2007.

Thank you!

Sahaan McKelvey