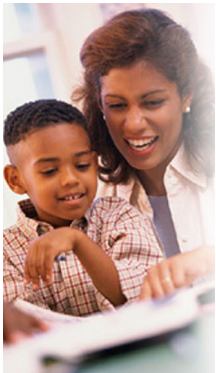


Archived Information



No Child Left Behind Summer Reading Achievers

U.S. Department of Education and the Atlanta Public Schools No Child Left Behind Summer Reading Achievers FACT SHEET



What is the purpose of the program?

The No Child Left Behind Summer Reading Achievers program is designed to encourage school children in grades K-8 to read actively during the summer months and thus to help to mitigate the summer fall-off in reading skills. The program is a pilot conducted by the U.S. Department of Education (ED) and the Atlanta Public Schools (APS). If successful, the program will expand next year to schools nationwide.

Why is the U.S. Department of Education partnering with Atlanta Public Schools?

While reading has always been a key ingredient for student success, the National Assessment of Educational Progress reports serious deficiencies in many children's ability to read, especially children in high-poverty schools. Consistent with the No Child Left Behind Act's emphasis on closing the achievement gap for disadvantaged students, APS was chosen as the pilot site for the No Child Left Behind Summer Reading Achievers program because, while still trailing the State average score for reading competencies in the elementary and middle grades, APS schools have posted gains over the past several years. These improvements include a significant increase in the percentage of 4th graders meeting or exceeding the standard in reading as measured by the Criterion Referenced Competency Test. Other factors in the selection of the Atlanta Public Schools include its superintendent's strong leadership and the presence of active faith-based and community partners able to support the program.

How do we plan to implement the program?

- In mid-March, letters co-signed by the Superintendent and the Secretary will be sent to principals of all public and charter elementary and middle schools in APS to explain the program.
- Principals will estimate how many students might participate during the summer months and order the appropriate number of NCLB Summer Reader Achievers certificates from ED. A "participating school" will be a school with 70 percent of its students participating in the program. Participating students are expected to read 10 age-appropriate books during the summer months.
- To qualify for their certificates, students will be required to describe briefly the 10 books they have read by filling out a perforated (pull-off) section of an 8-panel outreach brochure. Principals will have the opportunity to send their school's best entries to the U.S. Department of Education, which could post them on the NCLB website.

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No Child Left Behind Summer Reading Achievers

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- Products (8-panel brochures and posters) will be developed and sent to K-8 schools, libraries, and partner organizations in the district. Principals will be asked to distribute them to families to encourage participation in the program.
- Certificates will be mailed to schools in time for Back-to-School assemblies. Certificates will be high quality, embossed, and signed by the Secretary and Superintendent, designating students as "NCLB Summer Reading Achievers." Partner organizations will provide other incentives and forms of recognition.
- Events featuring Secretary Paige and Superintendent Hall, corporate sponsors, parents, and students will be held in March and September to kick-off the program and subsequently to celebrate its accomplishments.

Who are our contributing partners?

Corporate and non-profit partners with both a strong presence in the metro Atlanta region and a focus on reading and literacy skill development will be invited to participate.

Participating partners to date include:

- First Book
- Target Stores
- Scholastic, Inc.
- The Boys and Girls Clubs of Metro Atlanta
- The Atlanta Metro Chamber of Commerce
- Atlanta-Fulton County Library System
- City of Atlanta Bureau of Parks and Recreation
- The Boy Scouts of America
- Communities in Schools of Atlanta
- The Atlanta Council of PTAs
- Parenting Coalition International

How will we assess the effectiveness of the program?

This year's pilot will test ideas for a nationwide program that would be aimed at mitigating the summer learning drop-off in low-income communities in Summer 2004. To help us determine the pilot's effectiveness and applicability, the following accountability measures have been incorporated:

- Students are required to submit reading logs detailing the number of books read and what they have learned by the end of August 2003.
- Principals will certify that 70 percent of their students completed the program.
- Data from APS reading assessments will help to determine if the campaign helped mitigate the loss of K-8 reading skills that occurs over the summer and improve scores district-wide.

For more information, call 1-800 USA LEARN or send an email to nochildleftbehind@ed.gov.





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