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Contact:

Emily Krone Phillips
Director of Communications
Spencer Foundation
ekronephillips@spencer.org
773-255-9748

Barbara McKenna
Director of Strategic Communications
Learning Policy Institute
bmckenna@learningpolicyinstitute.org
202.798.5595

New Report from Leading Education Scholars Provides Guidance to Schools and Districts for Supporting Learning and Development Postpandemic

While many education stakeholders have called for intensive remediation for students to address this year of disrupted schooling and potential learning loss, a new report argues that intensive remediation alone will not meet students' needs and—if conducted in a way that is segregating, stigmatizing, and separated from children's real-life concerns—could even deepen inequalities and exacerbate trauma.

“Our children have experienced multiple forms of trauma this past year from the pandemic and from racialized violence; they also have shown remarkable strength, resolve, and caring,” said report co-author Na’ilah Nasir, President of the Spencer Foundation and President of the American Educational Research Association (AERA). “They deserve learning experiences that are rooted in evidence about how people learn best; experiences that are intellectually honest and authentic; that provide opportunities for joy, exploration, play, and self-direction; and experiences that offer them a chance to study and understand the world.”

The report, *Summer Learning and Beyond: Opportunities for Equitable Learning Postpandemic*, is co-produced by the Learning Policy Institute and the Spencer Foundation. It has been developed to support schools and districts develop systems that are equitable, rigorous, and meaningful in the pandemic and post-pandemic world. The report points to the need for learning environments centered on strong teacher-student relationships that address students' social and emotional learning, providing students with opportunities to construct knowledge that builds upon their experiences and social contexts in ways that deepen their academic skills. It argues against the false dichotomy between cognitive learning and social-emotional learning that have been dominating debates around the return to school.

“While we consider how to help children grappling with trauma and anxiety, we must also take this moment to reimagine how we can better serve children, families, and communities, particularly those who have been marginalized by inequitable systems,” said report co-author Linda Darling-Hammond, President and CEO of the Learning Policy Institute and the Charles E. Ducommun Professor of Education

Emeritus at Stanford University. “This report synthesizes cutting-edge research on the science of learning to provide guidelines for how we can address whole child learning and avoid returning to the ‘old normal.’”

Those guidelines are presented through a set of six design principles, or stances, toward learners and learning that are essential for creating intellectually rigorous and equitable educational settings. Together, they provide a holistic framework for designing goals, practices, and activities for summer learning and beyond.

The Six Design Principles for Summer Learning and Beyond include:

1. Center Relationships
2. Create a Culture of Affirmation and Belonging
3. Build from Students’ Interests and Take a Whole Child Approach to Their Development
4. Engage Students’ and Families’ Knowledge in Disciplinary Learning
5. Provide Creative, Inquiry-Based Forms of Learning
6. Address Educator Needs and Learning

The report discusses the importance of each design principle, highlights key ideas and practices that are related to each principle, and lists resources and references that people can consult to learn more.

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The Learning Policy Institute conducts and communicates independent, high-quality research to improve education policy and practice. Working with policymakers, researchers, educators, community groups, and others, the Institute seeks to advance evidence-based policies that support empowering and equitable learning for each and every child. Nonprofit and nonpartisan, the Institute connects policymakers and stakeholders at the local, state, and federal levels with the evidence, ideas, and actions needed to strengthen the education system from preschool through college and career readiness.

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