



COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS PACESETTER PITTSBURGH

Category: Summer Learning

Pittsburgh Public Schools — the second-largest school district in Pennsylvania, serving 25,000 students — runs one of the most innovative public summer programs in the nation: the Summer Dreamers Academy.

The academy, a free summer learning camp launched in 2010, engages students in both learning and fun during the summer months. The first Dreamers Academy was limited to rising sixth- through eighth-graders. About 1,200 campers participated, surpassing the district's previous summer camp programs capacity by more than 400 percent. Bolstered by that success, the school system expanded the program to K-8 in 2011.

All campers receive breakfast, lunch and a snack each day. Campers who live more than 1.5 miles from their assigned site receive transportation to and from camp.

During the five-week program, campers spend time with friends, read great books and have the opportunity to engage in unique activities thanks to partnerships with Pittsburgh organizations. This year, campers will have a host of choices, including Allegheny Youth Development's judo classes, lessons from the Andy Warhol Museum about art in the neighborhood, the Urban League's video design course called "Build Your 'A' Game" and Penn State University's environmental course "Be Green, Make Green 2012."

In addition to these special activities, all Summer Dreamers Academy campers participate each day in a 90-minute literacy period and a 90-minute math module to support academic growth and combat summer learning loss. Daily all-camp meetings, book fairs and programs by the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh round out the camper experience. At the end of the summer, campers showcase the development of their individual interests and their strengthened literacy skills through a final project, demonstration or presentation.

STRATEGIES

- All K-8 students in the Pittsburgh Public Schools district can apply to participate in the free five-week Summer Dreamers Academy
- Academy campers participated in separate 90-minute literacy and math periods each day to combat summer learning loss
- Campers participated in unique programs, provided through partnerships with local businesses, such as making mosaics with the Pittsburgh Center for the Arts or swimming and playing water polo with the Neighborhood Learning Alliance