



EDUCATION

***Making Summer Count:
How Summer Programs Can Boost
Children's Learning***

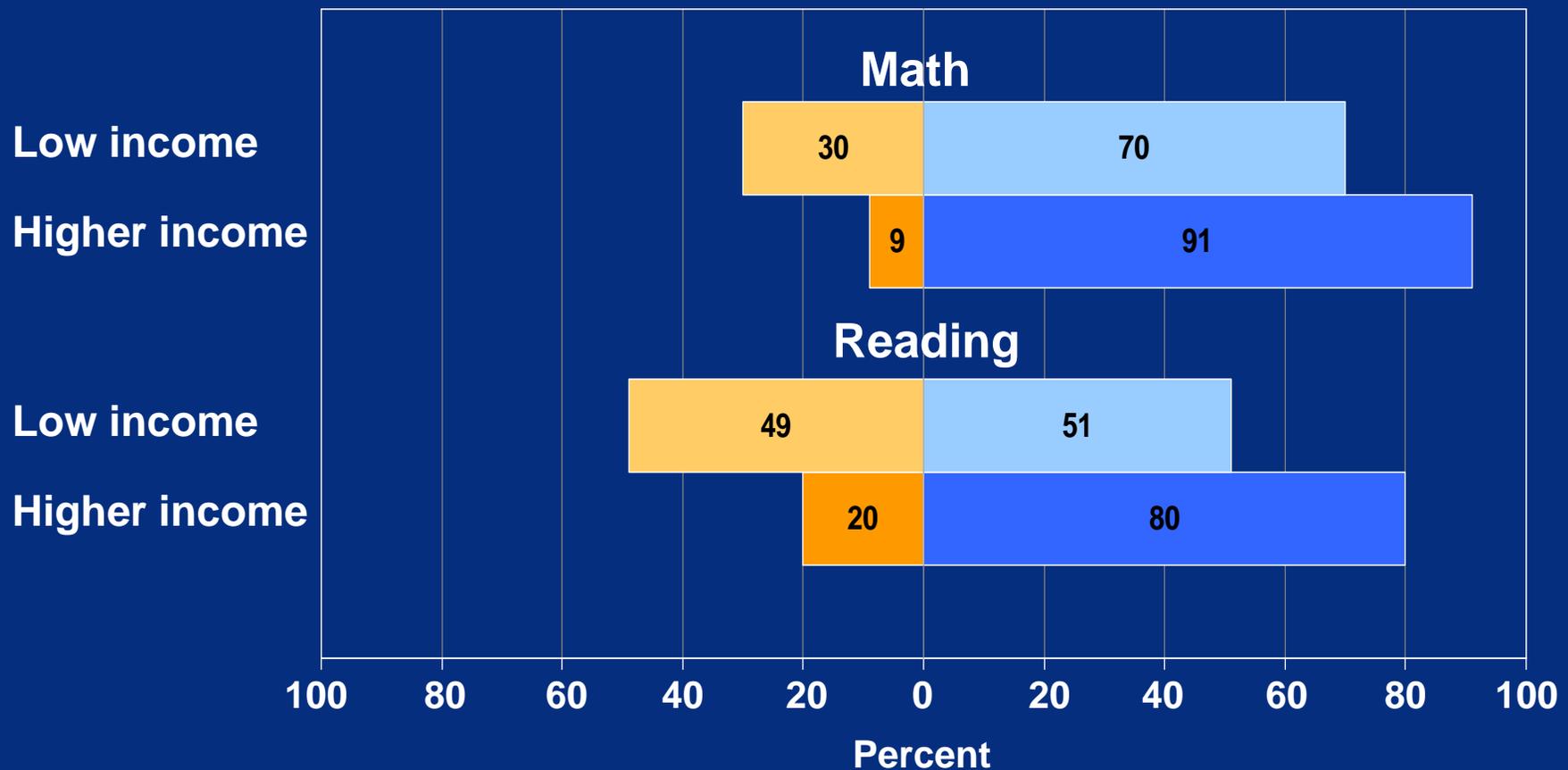
Catherine H. Augustine

Substantial Achievement Gaps Exist Between Low- and Higher-Income Students

4th Grade

Below basic

At or above basic



“Summer Slide” Contributes to the Achievement Gap

- **Students learn at roughly equal rates during school year but not during summer**
- **Each fall, on average, students perform one month behind where they performed in the spring**
- **All students lose some ground in math over the summer**
- **Low-income students lose ground in reading**
 - **In contrast, higher-income peers either maintain or gain**

Summer Learning Loss Is an Important Policy Concern

- **Loss is cumulative over time, contributing substantially to achievement gap by 9th grade**
- **Inequitable summer experiences relate to high-school dropout**
- **Closing the achievement gap between high- and low-income students requires attention to school and summer learning**

Summer Program Participation Can Improve Student Achievement

- Voluntary, mandatory, and home-based summer programs all found to have positive effects
- Positive effects can persist for 2 years after the student has engaged in a summer program
 - ✓ No studies estimate benefits beyond 2 years
- Not all summer learning programs studied produced achievement gains

Program Quality and Attendance Are Critical to Achieving Benefits

- **Certain program characteristics are linked to student achievement gains**
 - **Sufficient dosage**
 - **Small class sizes**
 - **Instruction aligned to student needs**
 - **Motivated, qualified, well-trained teachers**
- **Students must attend to reap benefits**

Summer Programs Engage Volunteers: Dallas

- **Dallas Independent School District engaged AmeriCorps members**
 - **5 members placed in three sites**
 - **Provided additional training before summer program began**
 - **Supported teaching artists**
 - **Served from 8-3 every day for 4 weeks**

Summer Programs Engage Volunteers: Rochester

- **Rochester City School District engaged Foster Grandparents**
 - **12 volunteers placed in elementary classrooms with willing teachers and needy students**
 - **Served in academic classrooms every morning for 5 weeks**
 - **Worked one-on-one and in small groups with struggling students**

Programs and Volunteers Both Benefited

- **School districts benefited**
 - Access to cleared, trained, low-cost adults
 - Volunteers served as positive role models for the children
- **Volunteers valued the opportunity to have an impact on students**
 - Early career volunteers also learned about organizational management

School Districts Still Learning How to Best Engage Volunteers In Their Summer Programs

- **Role clarification**
 - Teaching aids? Mentors? Disciplinarians?
- **Clear communication**
 - On expectations, roles, responsibilities
- **Training**
 - On teaching assistance
 - On classroom management

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How Summer Programs Can Boost Children's Learning

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