



Enriching the Lives of Connecticut's Students

A summer of learning and fun every day, everywhere

Due to the ongoing impact of the pandemic, there has and continues to be substantial disruption to our children's learning, interpersonal interactions, and social emotional well-being. In order to address students' academic, social-emotional and mental health needs, an educational response is underway focused on promoting renewal, reducing opportunity gaps, accelerating learning and advancing equity by providing access to supports, resources, and enhanced enrichment opportunities available this summer and through the 2021-2022 school year and beyond.



What:

The ARPA provides an unprecedented opportunity to develop bold, high-impact plans to address the inequities in our PK-12 system, especially those further exacerbated by the pandemic. Providing and expanding free and affordable access to summer enrichment and recreational opportunities for all students with an emphasis on vulnerable communities and those who were most impacted by the pandemic is the first step toward helping our students thrive in the years to come.

How:

We will use funding allocated through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) to bring together various state agencies and stakeholders to:

Increase student access to engaging and fun summer opportunities

- Provide grants to serve as scholarships to families to subsidize the costs of their children's transformative summer experiences
- Expand slots for additional children to access camps, early childhood education programs, parks and recreation, libraries, cultural centers, and other nonprofit providers across the state
- Provide grants to high-quality, innovative enrichment programming — including STEM workshops and more

Ignite students' imagination and reconnect them to the community

- Provide Connecticut families statewide with the opportunity to learn, explore and have fun together at various Connecticut attractions
- Support hands on summer experiences for children that bring back the joy of discovery, play and imagination

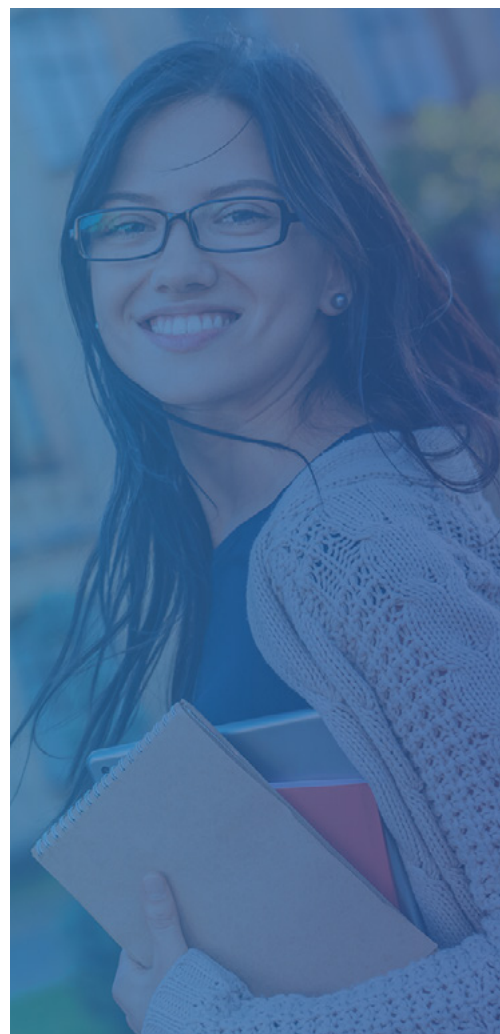
Support and prepare our youth for the fall and future

- Provide grants to programs that are focused on creating safe, fun and healing spaces for Connecticut's Youth (ages 13-17) to re-connect with their peers and simply be kids again
- Invest in services and programs that support youth employment, beginning with summer internships
- Recruit and train 500 college students statewide to work as mentors for children in summer programs

Why:

Disruption is a time to innovate, create, partner, and collaborate to redefine education moving forward by combining traditional educational tools with the nontraditional methods we found most successful during the pandemic, while being mindful and responsive to the needs of the children we serve. Now more than ever, it is critical to see this as an opportunity to renew these high-impact practices through summer and beyond, and leverage the assets that exist throughout Connecticut.

This spring, the Connecticut State Department of Education issued a survey to state education partners that revealed more than 90 percent of respondents agreed this funding should prioritize engaging, hands-on learning experiences and transformative enrichment opportunities. It also revealed the shared belief that we must help children re-engage, provide services to address children's social-emotional and mental health needs and help them get caught up so that they can thrive during the 2021-22 school year and beyond. These enhanced learning and enrichment opportunities are key to the state's education recovery and to helping our young people heal from the past, prepare for the future, and flourish along the way.



Governor Ned Lamont
April 21, 2021