

Office of the Superintendent of Schools
MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Rockville, Maryland

September 30, 2020

MEMORANDUM

To: Members of the Board of Education

From: Jack R. Smith, Superintendent of Schools

Subject: Extended Learning Opportunities-Summer Adventures in Learning Update
(08-25-20-01-A)

During the *Opening Schools in Recovery of Education* discussion, Dr. Docca requested updated information:

Question A

Dr. Docca requested updated information regarding the Extended Learning Opportunities-Summer Adventures in Learning (ELO SAIL) program offered this past summer, especially the literacy courses.

Response

This summer, the ELO SAIL program provided 7,853 students in Title I schools with access to an engaging virtual learning experience. Staff in the Title I Unit collaborated with staff members on the Elementary Integrated Curriculum Team to provide the same literacy and mathematics curriculum used for the local Summer Boost program.

The instructional program for ELO SAIL included a bridge or a pathway to help prevent summer learning loss, as well as strengthen foundational skills emphasized throughout the Continuity of Learning experience. The 3.5-hour student day consisted of core content instruction in literacy and mathematics, as well as supplemental instruction in the creative arts, physical activity, science, coding, and engineering. In partnership with KID Museum, students in Grades 2–5 participated in live maker-based virtual programming, which engaged students in science, technology, engineering, and math concepts embedded with literacy concepts.

ELO SAIL incorporated the new Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) reading curriculum (Benchmark Advance) and the new math curriculum (Eureka Math) during summer 2020. In addition, teachers led live virtual lessons with students. Title I schools with special language immersion programs or a high number of English Learners also provided live content instruction or access to curriculum resources in both English and Spanish.

A key area of focus for ELO SAIL this year was to provide students with rich and meaningful learning experiences in literacy and mathematics. Specific literacy standards were emphasized to help students develop foundational skills and reading strategies to access grade-level texts. In addition, standards in speaking and listening were emphasized to help all students, including English Learners, learn how to engage in critical and creative conversations around complex texts. Teachers used a literacy scope and sequence document focused on these key standards aligned with Benchmark Advance.

Another key area elevated in literacy instruction was the incorporation of culturally responsive teaching strategies. With a high percentage of students from racially, culturally, linguistically, and economically diverse backgrounds in Title I schools, various strategies were integrated into the ELO SAIL program to help students engage in rigorous learning experiences with a high degree of attention, curiosity, interest, optimism, and passion. One strategy, the “Ignite, Chunk, Chew, and Review” lesson delivery structure, was adopted from the book, *Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain*.

During ELO SAIL 2020 professional development, presenters worked alongside teachers to explain and model how to use this strategy in a literacy lesson with a Benchmark Advance text about ice hotels. Teachers learned how to “Ignite” a lesson in a virtual setting by engaging students in the deductive reasoning process while using a guess box with ice cubes inside. They “Chunked” a lesson with a shared reading, using live explicit teacher modeling. Teachers outlined different opportunities for students to “Chew” or process their learning, such as small group literacy instruction, a virtual field trip to an ice hotel, a hands-on project for students to build and present their own ice hotel, and a reader’s theater lesson focused on building fluency. Finally, myriad strategies were used to help students “Review” their learning and help teachers check for understanding.

The integration of the new MCPS curricula, the emphasis on key literacy standards, and the integration of culturally responsive teaching methods helped students strengthen their foundational skills in literacy and all other content areas. ELO SAIL further was enhanced with the incorporation of a virtual ELO Parent Workshop. The workshop was offered to all families at Title I schools with students attending ELO SAIL. The workshop highlighted strategies and online tools and programs, such as Audible, Tumblebooks, Didax virtual manipulatives, and DreamBox learning to support students with literacy and mathematics at home. In addition, staff shared a virtual parent/guardian toolkit with literacy and mathematics learning resources with families, in English and Spanish, to further support parents/guardians and families in engaging and reinforcing their child’s learning at home.

If you have any questions regarding ELO SAIL, please contact Mrs. Cheryl L. Dyson, area associate superintendent of school support and improvement, Office of Teaching, Learning, and Schools, via e-mail.

JRS:MBM:JSW:CLD:mec

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Executive Staff

Ms. Webb