

# **Summer Scholars**

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2001

**An Evaluation of the Community Literacy Project  
of Greater Park Hill and Northeast Denver**

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# Table of Contents

Executive Summary . . . . .	i
Introduction . . . . .	1
Program Structure and Components . . . . .	2
The Students . . . . .	5
The Teachers . . . . .	7
Attendance . . . . .	8
Reading Gains . . . . .	8
Family Visits . . . . .	10
Family Literacy . . . . .	12
Computer-Based Literacy . . . . .	13
Parent Satisfaction . . . . .	14
Staff Satisfaction . . . . .	15
Student Satisfaction . . . . .	18
Summer Recreation . . . . .	18
Over the Years . . . . .	20
Recommendations . . . . .	23

# **Executive Summary**

Summer Scholars 2001 served 1,238 children from 20 elementary schools ranging from Early Childhood Education through fifth grade. To accommodate changes in the DPS calendar, Summer Scholars operated for four rather than the usual six weeks and provided four rather than three hours of morning literacy classes in low student-teacher ratio settings. Most teachers used the Balanced Literacy method of instruction, although some schools used Success for All. In addition, 684 students at 16 school sites participated in a daily, four-hour afternoon recreation program — half of which were managed by Summer Scholars and half by Denver Parks and Recreation. The budget for Summer Scholars 2001 was \$1,444,138 — a slight decrease from costs in 2000 due to the four-week format. To conduct the program, Summer Scholars hired and/or managed 97 teachers, 53 paraprofessionals, 58 teen interns, 95 recreation coordinators and instructors, 18 VISTA associates, and 56 volunteers.

Second-grade students were assessed at the start and end of the program using the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA). Nearly all students tested at both time points (85.9%) improved by at least one DRA book level, with 45.1 percent moving up by four or more book levels. The proportion of second graders testing at or above grade level went from 36.8 to 53.6 percent. An assessment of attendance records shows that 33 percent had perfect attendance and another 44 percent missed only one to three days of this 19-day program.

Summer Scholars initiated two new programs in 2001: family literacy classes and computer-based literacy instruction. Offered at three schools in collaboration with Focus Points, a community-based organization that specializes in instruction for limited English speakers, family literacy involved daily, four-hour English as a Second Language (ESL) classes for parents of Summer Scholars students along with day care for younger siblings. Parents also joined their children in the classroom to work on literacy projects. Thirty parents enrolled in the literacy program with 26 attending at least 15 of the 19 classes that were offered. Parents and staff were very enthusiastic about family literacy classes, with several wanting continued instruction during the school year. Fortunately, Focus Points has secured funding

for ESL at the three pilot school sites and summer literacy class members were invited to participate in classes that began in the fall of 2001.

Four schools experimented with two literacy software programs: Read, Write & Type (RWT) and Lexia. A total of 173 first and second graders spent approximately five hours working on one of these two programs over the 19-day program, typically in daily, 25-minute sessions. Second graders who worked with the computer software were significantly more likely than their counterparts who did not work on the computer to improve by at least one book level on the DRA. Teachers favored RWT over Lexia, although it was impossible for students to explore much of the 40-week RWT program within the four-week Summer Scholars' session. One school site has chosen to use RWT as a regular part of its school-year curriculum for first-grade students.

It is recommended that Summer Scholars return to its six-week, three-hour format in order to better meet its instructional goals, recruit staff, iron out difficulties, and perform home visits and many other elements of this complex and multifaceted program. Although the mechanics of moving many small groups of students in and out of the computer lab proved to be difficult, the use of computer software did improve reading gains among second graders. Summer Scholars should continue to experiment with the use of computer software in the morning program at some schools and try to resolve the logistical issues that arise in a three-hour format. Simultaneously, it should explore the feasibility of gaining access to computer labs at some schools and incorporating the use of literacy software in the afternoon recreation program. The use of literacy software should be encouraged during the school year in both school and after-school settings. Family-based literacy should also be encouraged during the regular school year since summer interventions by themselves are too brief to lead to English mastery.

Although Summer Scholars improved the recruitment and enrollment process in 2001, it continues to be very challenging. Recruitment coordinators should be encouraged to target students with Individualized Learning Plans (ILPs) who have been identified as being "at-risk" of academic failure. Higher ratings of the initial orientation session and development classes for teachers indicate that Summer Scholars has improved the process of training its large and varied staff, although the process of informing participants about the scope of this big program and the duties of its various staff members remains a challenge,

particularly when it comes to new components and unconventional staff members, like VISTA volunteers and recreation providers. Weekly meetings of all staff members at each school site are helpful and an effort should be made to include literacy coaches, VISTAs, and others who have not routinely attended.

The many changes that Summer Scholars made with its teen interns appear to have paid off, with teachers and principals rating teens more favorably this year. These changes included reducing the number of teens from two to one per class and increasing their pay, overhauling the training program for teens to better align it with classroom activities, and creating a teen advisory group that met weekly and provided staff with input.

Summer Scholars should continue to collaborate with Denver Parks and Recreation and administer the afternoon recreation program at half of the sites. VISTAs should be included in pre-program meetings held by both recreation providers to ensure that they are used to maximum advantage in the recreation program. Using experienced Summer Scholars teachers as literacy coaches appears to work well, although coaches themselves favor focusing on new teachers and reducing the amount of school-to-school travel that they do. Principals and coaches should be encouraged to develop closer working relationships which Summer Scholars encourages by assigning coaches and principals to the same schools.

The schools were uncomfortably hot in 2001, making instruction particularly difficult during the last hour of the morning session and in the afternoons. If there are any rooms that are cooler than others in school buildings, these should be assigned to Summer Scholars. Finally, the organizational infrastructure of Summer Scholars should be continually upgraded and nurtured so that staff can continue to implement this large-scale and complex program.

# Introduction

This is an evaluation of Summer Scholars 2001, the program's eighth year of operation. A privately organized and funded effort to improve the reading and writing skills of elementary students performing below grade level in Northeast Denver, Summer Scholars includes the following core components:

Morning literacy classes in the summer at 20 DPS elementary schools;

The use of teachers, paraprofessionals, teen interns, and volunteers to achieve low student-staff ratios;

Afternoon recreation with cultural enrichment by area arts organizations and Red Cross swimming lessons;

Family events, visits, and other activities to encourage parent involvement; and

Training on state-of-the-art teaching techniques.

In 2001, to accommodate changes in the DPS calendar, Summer Scholars operated for four, rather than the usual six weeks, and provided four, rather than three, hours of morning literacy classes. It also initiated two new programs: family literacy classes and computer-based literacy instruction. Offered at three schools in collaboration with Focus Points, a community-based organization that specializes in instruction for limited-English speakers, family literacy involved daily, four-hour ESL classes for parents of Summer Scholars students along with day care for younger siblings. At four schools, first and second graders worked on either the Read, Write & Type (RWT) or Lexia software program, typically in daily, 25-minute sessions.

Summer Scholars actively pursues collaborations with many public and private organizations including, but not limited to: Denver Public Schools, which houses the program, provides lunch through the federal summer lunch program, provides limited transportation for children, and funds a teacher training program; the City and County of Denver, which funds swim lessons at Manual High School; Denver Department of Parks and Recreation, which provides afternoon recreation services; the Scientific and Cultural Facilities District and a variety of arts organizations, which provide arts experiences for students at selected school sites; and the AmeriCorps\*VISTA program, which selected Summer Scholars as a host site and placed Summer Associates at school sites.

In 2001, Summer Scholars continued to enjoy donations and cash contributions from many individuals and organizations, including the Tony Grampsas Youth Services Program, Read to Achieve, the City of Denver, the Helen K. and Arthur S. Johnson Foundation, the Denver Foundation, the Sturm Family Foundation, the Rose Community Foundation, Janus Funds, and the Colorado Reading Excellence Act.

## **Program Structure & Components**

Summer Scholars 2001 provided intensive literacy classes for 1,238 children from 20 elementary schools throughout Northeast Denver. As it has since its inception in 1994, Summer Scholars recruited students (Early Childhood Education through fifth grade) who were reading below grade level and provided them with special instruction during the summer. To accommodate changes in the DPS calendar, Summer Scholars classes ran for four hours per day for four weeks rather than the usual three-hour daily sessions over six weeks. The 2001 program began at most sites on June 20, 2001, and ended on July 18, 2001. Other schedules at selected sites were used to accommodate extended school-year schedules. The schools participating this year were Ashley, Barrett, Columbine, Ebert, Garden Place, Gilpin, Hallet, Harrington, Montclair, Moore, Palmer, Park Hill, Philips, Pioneer Charter, Smith, Stedman, Swansea, Whittier, Wyatt Edison Charter, and Wyman. Due to summer construction projects, the Summer Scholars programs at Ebert, Pioneer, and Wyman were offered at other school or church sites.

In 2001, DPS only required fourth and fifth graders with low test scores to attend summer school. As a result, only 74 Summer Scholars participants were mandated to attend a summer school program. Non-mandatory students were recruited by their classroom teachers and principals who felt these students were in need of special instruction to bring them up to grade level and/or prevent them from falling behind over the summer. Half of Summer Scholars' enrollees had Individualized Learning Plans (ILPs) either because they had not scored "Proficient" on the Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP) or were at-risk of not being proficient when they reached the third grade and were tested. As in past years, Summer Scholars hired a recruitment coordinator at each school to help identify students who were reading below grade level and enroll them in the program.

Summer Scholars hired 97 teachers in 2001. Teaching positions were advertised throughout the metropolitan area. Interested candidates submitted a formal application that

was reviewed and ranked by a panel of principals and literacy specialists. The results of this ranking process were forwarded to school principals, who made the ultimate hiring decisions. Principals also hired 53 paraprofessionals to work in the classrooms. Summer Scholars recruited, hired, and placed 58 middle and high school students to serve as teen interns in the classroom. Rounding out the staff of the morning literacy component were 56 volunteers and 18 Summer Associates, affiliated with the AmeriCorps\*VISTA Program, who worked at the schools to help to coordinate the program, organize family literacy events, and assist in the classrooms.

On a daily basis, the program was administered by nine summer principals that included active DPS principals, as well as experienced teachers training to become principals. Each principal was responsible for coordinating activities at two or three school sites, including evaluating teachers, handling personnel problems, dealing with student discipline, and helping to smooth the transfer of children from the morning to the afternoon staff.

Due to the unavailability of reading specialists associated with the Denver Public Schools Elementary Literacy Team, Summer Scholars hired experienced teachers from the Summer Scholars program to train teachers. As part of the training program, instructional coaches offered teachers a weekly seminar on the reading and writing process that was tailored to different levels of teacher experience. Coaches also visited each class to observe, conduct demonstration lessons, and provide other types of support. Coaches also distributed "literacy kits" for K-2 and 3-5 classes that had been prepared the year before. They include sample lesson plans, suggested activities, and recommended projects for small groups.

Summer Scholars required that each child receive an individual family visit conducted by either a teacher or paraprofessional and to host a family literacy event on a voluntary basis. Most schools choose to conduct a family literacy event. The goal of the literacy event was to encourage parents to participate in their children's schooling. The purpose of the family visit was to share information on the student's progress and to instruct parents on how to help their children succeed in reading.

Summer Scholars uses the Balanced Literacy method of instruction, which involves utilizing a variety of reading and writing techniques on a daily basis, including shared reading, guided reading, reading aloud, independent reading, modeled writing, and independent/guided writing. To support this method of instruction, instructional coaches developed a classroom schedule that they urged teachers to follow. It called for teachers



to divide students into small groups and rotate them through various instructional stations offering specific types of skill-building activities. Paraprofessionals, teen interns, and VISTA associates helped to “staff” various learning stations and supervise students in various types of reading, writing, phonics, and bookmaking activities. Two schools utilized the Success for All curriculum, a comprehensive reading program that is in place during the regular school year. First and second graders at Garden Place, Gilpin, Harrington, and Stedman worked on Read, Write & Type (RWT) or Lexia software programs in daily, 25-minute sessions.

In addition to the morning academic component, 684 students at 16 school sites participated in a daily, four-hour afternoon recreation program. As in 2000, Summer Scholars managed not only the morning literacy program, but the afternoon recreation program at half of the 16 schools. Denver Parks and Recreation operated the afternoon recreation program at the other half.

Summer Scholars hired DPS to provide sack lunches for children with afternoon recreation at school sites that did not participate in the federal summer lunch program. Summer Scholars also hired or received donations of services from several arts organizations, including the Colorado Children’s Chorale, the Museo de las Americas, the Story Gleaners, and the Audobon Society. Approximately 500 children enrolled in the afternoon recreation program received eight to ten swim lessons at Manuel High School. Several schools received hands-on science lessons, while others had music instruction.

Summer Scholars initiated family literacy programs at three schools: Columbine, Gilpin, and Harrington. Offered with consultation from Focus Points, a community-based organization that specializes in instruction for limited English speakers, family literacy involved daily, four-hour ESL classes for parents of Summer Scholars students along with day care for younger siblings. Parents also joined their children in the classroom to work on literacy projects.

The 2001 program evaluation focuses on attendance patterns, reading level prior to and following the program, and ratings given to the program by parents, teachers, paraprofessionals, interns, and VISTAs. The evaluation also includes an assessment of the two new program components: family literacy classes and computer-based literacy instruction.

# The Students

Most Summer Scholars 2001 students were in grades one through three. The average student was 8.5 years old. Students were most likely to be Latino or African-American, and about a quarter came from Spanish-language households. Students were almost equally divided between those living with both parents and those living with single mothers.

Based on information provided by parents, it appears that most of the students came from low-income households that were eligible for the federal free lunch program. About a quarter of the students had siblings who had previously participated in the program.

**Table 1: Description of 2001 Summer Scholars <sup>W</sup>(n=1,238)**

		Number	Percent
<b>Grade Level</b>	Early Childhood	32	2.6%
	Kindergarten	113	9.1%
	First	278	22.5%
	Second	294	23.7%
	Third	304	24.6%
	Fourth	170	13.7%
	Fifth	47	3.8%
<b>Age</b>	4-6 years	103	9.4%
	7-8 years	449	40.7%
	9-10 years	439	39.8%
	11 years or older	111	10.1%
	Average age		8.5 Years

**Table 1: Description of 2001 Summer Scholars <sup>W</sup>(n=1,238)**

		Number	Percent
<b>Gender</b>	Male	680	54.9%
	Female	558	45.1%
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>	Latino	519	46.0%
	African-American	490	43.4%
	Anglo	38	3.4%
	Native American	32	2.8%
	Other	50	4.4%
<b>Home Language</b>	English only	663	58.7%
	Spanish only	269	23.8%
	English and Spanish	185	16.4%
	Other	12	1.1%
<b>Living Arrangement</b>	Mother & father	454	42.1%
	Mother only	422	39.1%
	Father only	45	4.2%
	Parent and step-parent	85	7.9%
	Relative	72	6.7%
<b>Parent Report of Free Lunch Status</b>			
	Eligible	975	78.8%
	Ineligible	263	21.2%
<b>Education Status</b>	DPS mandatory	74	6.0%
	Special education	136	11.0%
	Title 1 <sup>WW</sup>	380	30.7%
	Individualized Learning Plan (ILP) <sup>WW</sup>	660	53.3%
<b>Prior Exposure</b>	Sibling in previously	285	23.0%

<sup>W</sup> In this and following tables, percentages will not always add to 100% due to rounding.

<sup>WW</sup> These children are identified as being at risk of not meeting the standards.

# The Teachers

There were 97 teachers participating in the 2001 Summer Scholars program. More than half of the teachers were new to Summer Scholars in 2001. Most were from the Denver Public Schools system.

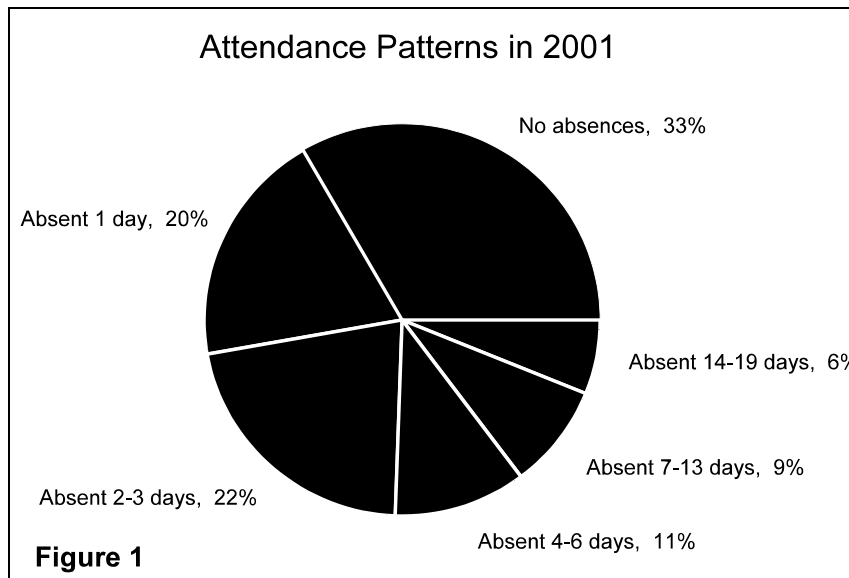
About a fifth (n=22) of the teachers were not regular classroom teachers, although ten of these teachers were reading, writing, or literacy specialists. The other 12 included special education teachers, psychologist, a physical education teacher, a speech-language pathologist, and a bilingual teacher. Thirteen teachers taught a grade level for Summer Scholars that they do not teach during the regular school year, and two were brand-new teachers who had no previous teaching experience. Summer principals rated teachers extremely favorably, with 82 receiving a rating of “excellent,” 13 receiving a rating of “good,” and three being rated “satisfactory” or “unsatisfactory.”

**Table 2: Profile of the Teachers in Summer Scholars 2000**

Non-DPS teachers	5.6%
Teachers teaching outside the grade they currently teach during the school year	14%
Teachers who are not regular full-time classroom teachers during the school year	23.6%
Teachers new to Summer Scholars in 2001	52.4%
Average years of teaching for Summer Scholars teachers	8.5
Percent Anglo	62.5%

# Attendance

A third of all students had perfect attendance. This is better than in previous years, reflecting the fact that the 2001 program only ran for 19 rather than 29 days. Another 42 percent of the students were absent for one to three days in 2001.



# Reading Gains

During the first and fourth weeks of Summer Scholars, second graders were assessed using the DRA (Developmental Reading Assessment). Trained testers administered the DRA to 197 second graders at both the start and close of the program. This comprised 67 percent of the 294 second graders enrolled in Summer Scholars. Second graders are supposed to be able to read books at DRA levels 18 to 28. Only 36.8 percent of students began the Summer Scholars at Text Level 18 or higher, and only 5.9 percent began the program able to read third-grade material.

At the close of the program, the percentage of second-grade students reading books at or above grade level on the DRA rose from 36.8 to 53.6 percent. Table 3 shows the percent below or at/above grade level at the start and close of the program. The shaded rows are below grade-level readers.

**Table 3: Second Graders DRA Reading Levels at the Start and Close of Summer Scholars 2001**

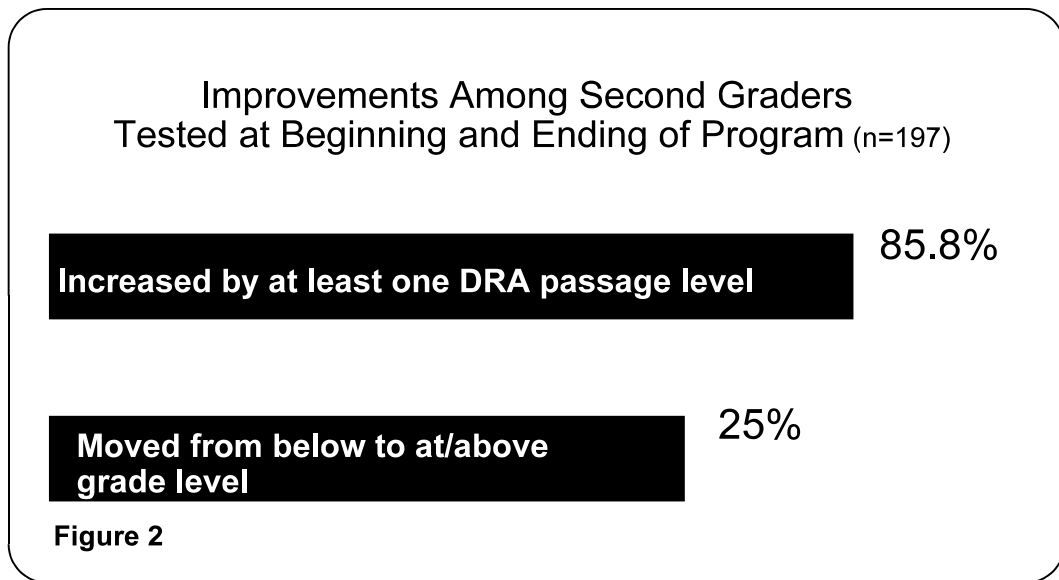
	Program Start	Program Close
Kindergarten level	4.2%	2.5%
Pre-Primer level	19.5%	12.1%
Primer level	14.0%	11.1%
Grade 1 level	25.4%	20.7%
Grade 2 level	30.9%	46.0%
Grade 3 level	5.9%	7.6%
Total	236	198

Students registered different amounts of improvement during the four-week program, with some staying at the same book level and others improving by as much as ten levels. On average, students improved by 2.9 book levels.

**Table 4: Second Grader DRA Reading Levels Gains From Start to Close of Summer Scholars 2001**

	Percent
No gain	14.2%
Gained one book level	2.0%
Gained two book levels	37.6%
Gained three book levels	1.0%
Gained four book levels	35.5%
Gained five book levels	0.5%
Gained six book levels	5.6%
Gained seven through ten book levels	3.5%
Average number of book levels gained	2.9
Total	197

Overall, 85.8 percent of second graders improved by at least one DRA book level. Because there are several books of progressive difficulty at each grade level, many students who improved and mastered more difficult material did not improve sufficiently to end the program reading at the third-grade level. Only 25 percent of tested second graders moved from reading below grade level to reading at or above grade level by the end of the program.



## **Family Visits**

Two-thirds (67.3%) of the students had a family visit, as compared with 73 percent in 2000. Like last year, most of these visits took place at the family home. However, visits at the school or library were also common. Teachers conducted most visits but were less apt than their counterparts in 2000 to feel that the visit helped the family to better understand how they might help the child with his or her reading. A full 38.4 percent of teachers and

paraprofessionals who conducted visits said that it did not help the family, and only 44.5 percent were convinced that it “definitely” helped. The lower rate of visiting and the less favorable ratings by visiting personnel in 2001 are probably due to the fact that the program was shortened from six to four weeks, which necessitated that the visits be conducted over an abbreviated period of time. Parents, on the other hand, rated the meetings quite favorably. Eighty-nine percent of parents who responded to evaluation surveys indicated the meetings were very helpful.

**Table 5: Family Visits in Summer Scholars 2001**

	Number	Percent
Was a family visit completed?		
Yes	832	67.3%
No, unable to contact family	331	26.8%
No	73	5.9%
If a visit was completed, where did it take place?		
Child’s home	356	44.2%
School	131	16.2%
Library	128	15.9%
Park	85	10.5%
Church	10	1.2%
Other	96	11.9%
If a visit was completed, who conducted the visit?		
Teacher	1068	86.5%
Paraprofessional	167	13.5%
Did the visit help the family understand how to help the child read?		
Definitely	527	44.5%
Probably	202	17.1%
No	454	38.4%



# Family Literacy

At Columbine, Gilpin, and Smith, Summer Scholars offered Spanish-speaking parents the opportunity to attend daily, four-hour classes on English as a Second Language (ESL) while their children attended morning literacy classes. Day care was provided for younger siblings. The program was conducted collaboratively with Focus Points, a community-based organization that specializes in ESL training. A total of 45 parents registered for the program, 30 came to at least one class, and 26 attended at least 15 days and received a \$100 stipend donated by a Summer Scholars Board Member.

One objective of the program was to help parents learn practical English that will be useful to them in their everyday lives — grocery shopping and trips to the doctor. Another goal of the program was to teach parents how to better monitor their children’s education, including reading report cards and questions to ask the teacher about their children’s progress. Finally, the program tried to get parents to read with their children and work with them on literacy projects by pairing them with their children on a daily basis in the classroom.

Teachers, Summer Scholars’ staff, and summer principals all gave the Family Literacy program high marks. According to teachers, parents’ “confidence levels soared” as the program progressed and they learned how to use English skills. For example, parents in one class who were concerned about the safety of a certain intersection worked together to compose a letter requesting a crosswalk that was sent to the appropriate city agency.

Parents enjoyed the program and were excited about improving their English skills. Responding to the question, “What did you like most about the class?” one parent wrote, “The spending time together with the teacher and my friends. Besides the teacher spoke Spanish to everyone. And the most important thing is that I know more English than I knew yesterday.” Parents also appreciated the opportunity to spend time with their children, read with them in class, and see how they “pay attention and work a lot.” Students liked it as well. One wrote that his favorite part of Summer Scholars was when “we went with our Moms.” A few parents said they wanted the class to be more rigorous and suggested that teachers give homework and exams.

There were some first-year glitches. For example, the Summer Scholars and Family Literacy teachers were initially confused about the purpose of parent-child time and who was responsible for orchestrating suitable activities. Teacher quality was also an issue, with some adopting more interactive and participatory styles than others. Finally, continuity was a concern since many parents expressed a desire to continue their lessons during the regular school year. Fortunately, Focus Points has secured funding for ESL instruction at all three school sites, and members of the Family Literacy classes were invited to participate in new classes that began in the fall of 2001.

## **Computer-Based Literacy**

Computer-based literacy instruction was the second program component that Summer Scholars introduced in 2001. Four schools experimented with two literacy software programs: Read, Write & Type (RWT) and Lexia. Each software program has an audio component that the children listen to by headphones. RWT teaches children to spell, pronounce, and use 40 different phonemes. Students also learn typing skills since the keyboard is covered. It has attractive graphics in a game-like setting with lively music and lots of rewards for correct answers. Lexia helps students recognize differences between similar letters or words. For example, one exercise shows a picture on the screen with several sentences and students are asked to pick the sentence that best describes the picture.

A total of 173 first and second graders spent approximately five hours working on RWT or Lexia over the 19-day Summer Scholars program, typically in daily, 25-minute sessions. The sessions were conducted in each school's computer lab and were staffed by a paraprofessional, volunteer, or teen intern. Most days, a technician visited the computer lab at each school to resolve hardware problems. Students visited the computer labs in small groups of 10 to 12 children. Students logged on to the same computer each time and began working from the place they left off the last time they were in the lab.

Students enjoyed working with computers so much that teachers were able to use computer time as a motivator. More to the point, computer instruction appears to have had a measurable impact on reading. A comparison of reading performance for 41 second graders who worked on the computer software with 156 second graders who did not showed that

second graders in the computer pilot were significantly more likely to improve by at least one book level on the DRA. While 83.3 percent of second graders who did not use the software improved by at least one DRA book level, this was the case for 95.1 percent of second graders who worked on computers.

Although there were no statistical differences in performance between RWT and Lexia users, teachers favored RWT and its emphasis on phonics. They felt that students were more able to detect that something was “wrong or funny” about a word or a phrase after they had worked with RWT. Several teachers felt that the program was particularly helpful for monolingual Spanish-speakers who were beginning to use English. One problem with the Lexia software is that it has an easily accessible art program with no literacy value that students frequently switched to instead of doing literacy work.

As with Family Literacy, there were a few first-year glitches. The computer labs were extremely hot and the students sometimes became listless. If teachers changed the composition of the groups that they sent to the computer lab, two or more students wound up trying to work on the same computer, requiring them to share the 25- minute session and getting only about ten minutes of actual practice time. Although all teachers at the pilot schools received training on the software, the labs were typically supervised by paraprofessionals or teen interns, some of whom had not been trained. Finally, the four-week Summer Scholars program offered only a brief exposure to the material covered in the 40-week RWT program. Fortunately, one of the sites, Garden Place, has chosen to use the RWT software as a regular part of its school year curriculum for first grade students and will be able to explore its impact over an entire school year.

## **Parent Satisfaction**

A total of 297 parents (24%) completed a survey at the end of the program. Those who responded were extremely pleased with the program. Most believed that their child liked both the morning literacy program and the afternoon recreation program.

Most also felt that their child’s reading improved as a result of participating in Summer Scholars. Responding parents also reported increases in the amount of reading they did with their children during Summer Scholars. Nearly all parents (93%) indicated that they had

met with their children’s Summer Scholars teacher and nearly all (89%) characterized the value of those meetings as “very helpful.”

**Table 6: Parent Ratings of Summer Scholars 2001 (n=297)**

	<b>Very True</b>	<b>Somewhat True</b>	<b>Somewhat False</b>	<b>False</b>
I would enter my child in Summer Scholars again next year.	88.3%	11.4%	0%	0.4%
My child liked the morning program.	81.4%	17.1%	1.1%	0.4%
My child liked the afternoon program.	78.1%	10.9%	3.6%	7.3%
Summer Scholars improved my child’s reading.	72.7%	25.0%	1.1%	1.1%
I got enough feedback about my child’s reading.	77.7%	18.2%	3.4%	0.8%
I felt my child was supervised and safe during recreation.	81.5%	15.0%	1.3%	2.1%
I need Summer Scholars to provide bus transportation.	28.1%	8.7%	5.6%	57.6%

## **Staff Satisfaction**

Surveys were returned by 90 teachers, 44 paraprofessionals, and 51 teen interns eliciting their reactions to the program and their recommendations for improvement. Table 7 shows that teachers were satisfied with most aspects of the program. A comparison of teacher ratings from 2000 and 2001 showed that ratings improved for the orientation session, weekly staff development classes, program organization, the executive director and staff, teen interns, VISTAs, and volunteers. Ratings were essentially unchanged but positive for pay, the hours, the summer principal, materials and supplies, and the recreation program. The areas that registered the highest levels of dissatisfaction were the facility and physical setting, in-class coaching and demonstration lessons, and family visit training.

**Table 7: Teacher Ratings of Summer Scholars 2001 (n=90)**

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Orientation session	19.2%	56.4%	17.9%	6.4%
Family visit training	13.5%	53.8%	25.0%	7.7%
Weekly staff development classes	26.8%	50.0%	14.6%	8.5%
In-class coaching and demonstration lessons	21.5%	43.1%	20.0%	15.4%
Recruitment process	20.3%	60.8%	12.2%	6.8%
Program organization	26.1%	50.0%	12.5%	3.4%
Executive director and staff	49.4%	46.0%	4.6%	0%
Pay	47.2%	46.1%	5.6%	1.1%
Hours	41.6%	48.3%	7.9%	2.2%
Summer principal	57.8%	32.2%	6.7%	3.3%
Physical setting/facility	29.2%	43.8%	20.2%	6.7%
Materials/supplies	45.3%	37.2%	11.6%	5.8%
Teen intern	56.3%	29.9%	11.5%	2.3%
VISTA Summer Associate Program	65.1%	22.1%	10.5%	2.3%
Recreation	55.6%	28.9%	13.3%	2.2%
Volunteers	57.1%	24.5%	12.2%	6.1%

Paraprofessionals and teen interns gave the program generally high ratings. The major source of dissatisfaction for both groups was the pay. More than half the teen interns and 38 percent of the paraprofessionals felt that the pay was no better than “fair.” While nearly all paraprofessionals (86.5%) felt that they had been “used effectively,” 43 percent of teens indicated that they “would have liked more responsibility.” Compared with last year, paraprofessional ratings improved in all areas except for pay. Teen ratings in 2001 were similar to those generated in 2000. In 2001, Summer Scholars reduced the number of teens from two to one per class, increased their pay, overhauled the training program to better align it with classroom activities, and created a teen advisory group that met weekly and provided staff with input.

**Table 8: Paraprofessional Ratings of Summer Scholars 2001 (n=44)**

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Orientation before Summer Scholars started	48.6%	40.0%	8.6%	2.9%
Family visits	37.1%	51.4%	5.7%	5.7%
Reading assistant	55.3%	44.7%	0.0%	0.0%
Program organization	50.0%	36.8%	5.3%	7.9%
Executive director and staff	52.6%	39.5%	7.9%	0.0%
Pay	16.2%	45.9%	29.7%	8.1%
Hours	44.7%	44.7%	7.9%	2.8%
Physical setting/facility	40.5%	40.5%	10.8%	8.1%
Materials/supplies	51.3%	30.8%	7.7%	10.3%
Recreation program	37.5%	34.4%	12.5%	15.6%

**Table 9: Teen Intern Ratings on Various Aspects of Summer Scholars 2001 (n=51)**

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Orientation before Summer Scholars started	26.7%	48.9%	22.2%	2.2%
Teen Training Session	25.0%	54.5%	18.2%	2.3%
Program organization	33.3%	56.3%	10.4%	0.0%
Executive director and staff	66.0%	29.8%	4.3%	0.0%
Pay	20.0%	24.4%	35.6%	20.0%
Hours	45.8%	39.6%	12.5%	2.1%
Physical setting/facility	43.8%	37.5%	16.7%	2.1%
Materials/supplies	37.5%	47.9%	14.6%	0.0%
Recreation program	45.7%	51.4%	0.0%	2.9%

# **Student Satisfaction**

To find out what students think of Summer Scholars, participants in the 2001 program were asked a few questions. A total of 178 students singled out “reading” as their favorite part of the program. Other frequently mentioned favorites were snacks (N=73), swimming (N=46), playing on computers (N=35), field trips (N=32), activity centers (N=27), writing in journals (22), and everything (N=19). To the question, “Do you think you are reading better?” 600 students wrote, “YES!,” and many more when on to explain that they had improved because, “I can read chapter books,” or “I can read the books that I couldn’t read before,” or because they “. . . like reading better.” Here’s a sampling of what they had to say about reading:

**I can read my favorite book.**

**I read more than my brother.**

**I know the words I did not know.**

**I never read better in my life.**

**I am practicing a lot.**

**I like reading more because I am getting better.**

Although some students said they didn’t want to come to Summer Scholars next year (“No, because I want to rest my brain.”), most said they wanted to return. As one student put it, “I do, because we do fun stuff that we can’t do in the summer with our family, and I learned a lot in the morning program.”

# **Summer Recreation**

The summer of 2001 marked the second year in which Summer Scholars managed the afternoon program as well as the morning literacy program. Summer Scholars administered the recreation programs at Ashley, Columbine, Garden Place, Gilpin, Harrington, Palmer,

Philips, and Pioneer. Denver Parks and Recreation administered programs at Barrett, Hallett, Harrington, Moore, Stedman, Swansea, Whittier, and Wyman.

A total of 684 students participated in afternoon recreation. Summer Scholars hired 48 counselors to staff its share of the recreation program. The program ran from 12:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

The afternoon recreation program is intended to provide an incentive for all eligible children to attend the morning literacy session. It is also a way to offer field trips and recreation that the students might not otherwise have and to promote social skills. Finally, combined with the morning literacy classes, afternoon recreation means that students have a full day of safe care and wholesome activity, and that working parents can enroll their children in Summer Scholars without having to make elaborate day care arrangements.

A focus group with staff revealed that most viewed the recreation program as highly successful. The most popular field trip was ice skating. Other activities the students enjoyed were crafts, jazz, making and writing in journals, yoga, and snack time. Due to space restrictions, several of the recreation programs did not get to have swimming lessons at Manuel High School. Directors at these sites orchestrated visits to local swimming pools, such as Congress and Curtis Park, for free swim time.

In addition to ice skating and swimming, students participated in singing with the Children's Chorale, a visit to a Historic Park, presentations by cultural groups, and participatory activities like Girl Scouts and Junior Achievement. Different activities were offered at various school sites, with all students exposed to some of the many activities.

The afternoon program did encounter common pitfalls, such as difficulty in hiring and keeping a high-quality staff, getting buses to transport the students to swim lessons and field trips in a timely manner, planning enough for the children to do, and some communication problems between morning Summer Scholars staff and afternoon recreation staff at the programs administered by the Denver Department of Parks and Recreation. Heat was also an issue at most schools, and the children were frequently hot and uncomfortable.

As in past years, the consensus is that recreation is a valuable program component and that Summer Scholars provides a tremendous community service by engaging so many young children in supervised recreation and exposing them to new experiences and activities.



## **Over the Years**

Since its inception in 1994, there has been a steady increase in the number of students participating in Summer Scholars, accompanied by an increase in the number of teachers and paraprofessionals. The number of teen interns declined in 2001 because Summer Scholars decided to assign one to each class rather than two (and to raise the pay). The percentage of students mandated to attend declined because DPS limited mandatory summer school interventions to students in grades four and five.

The cost of the afternoon recreation program was lower in 2001 because the program ran for four weeks rather than six. The cost of the morning program remained about the same since daily literacy instruction was offered for four hours rather than three.

The number of paid, Summer Scholars program staff grew from one individual in 1997 to five in 2001. Summer Scholars continues to hire recruitment coordinators at each participating school to assist with the selection and enrollment of eligible students. It continues to provide funds for family events and to require family visits to encourage parent participation. In 2000 and 2001, it did not provide a book allowance for each class because it developed a central library of over 4,000 books that is available to all Summer Scholars teachers. Summer Scholars continues to collaborate with SCFD for cultural arts experiences and to provide swimming lessons in the afternoon recreation program. Since 1998, it has enjoyed a collaboration with the AmeriCorps\*VISTA program, and in 2001, 18 VISTA associates worked in Summer Scholars schools during the summer program and four during the regular school year. In 2000, Summer Scholars implemented its own afternoon recreation program, and in 2001, it served approximately half of the 684 students who participated in afternoon recreation at 16 school sites.

In 2001, Summer Scholars added family literacy classes at three schools and computer-based literacy instruction at four. It also worked with ten schools to develop successful proposals for literacy grants awarded on a competitive basis to individual schools through the Colorado Reading Excellence Act and the Read to Achieve program. These awards dramatically increase the resources available to schools for literacy instruction during the regular school year.

**Table 14: Selected Aspects of Summer Scholars: 1994 - 2001**

	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Number in AM classes	511	677	774	914	953	1,157	1,206	1,238
Number of schools served	17	20	20	17	18	18	20	20
Number of school sites	11	14	15	17	18	16	16	18 i
Number of summer principals	2	4	4	8	7	7	8	9
Paid recruitment specialists	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Number of teachers	43	56	59	67	72	91	94	97
Number of paraprofessionals	22	30	30	37	39	45	52	53
Number of teens	45	56	59	67	73	95	92	58
VISTA Associates	No	No	No	No	Yes (17)	Yes (22)	Yes (26)	Yes (18)
Other volunteers	Yes	Yes	Yes (30)	Yes (75)	Yes (87)	Yes (73)	Yes (57)	Yes (56)
Teacher salary/hour	\$15.00	\$18.50	\$23.60	\$24.30	\$25.10	\$25.85	\$26.61	\$27.71
Paraprofessional salary/ hour	\$8.00	\$8.00	\$8.20	\$9.65	\$9.65	\$10.50	\$10.50	\$10.61
Teen salary/session	\$110- 225	\$225- 350	\$225- 350	\$250- 350	\$250- 600	\$250-600	\$275- \$600	\$5.15- \$6.31/hr
Family Literacy	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes (3)
Computer-Based Literacy	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes (4)
Family visit	Voluntary #				Mandatory #			
Year-round programs	No	Tutoring	Tutoring	Tutoring	Tutoring, Stedman Pilot	Tutoring, Stedman Pilot	Tutoring, Stedman Pilot	VISTA W CREA U grants
Funding for books per class	—	\$100	\$250	\$250	\$300	\$400	—	—
Funding for Family Events	—	—	—	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100
Morning program costs/child	—	\$320	\$311	\$385	\$441	\$479	\$541	\$559

**Table 14: Selected Aspects of Summer Scholars: 1994 - 2001**

	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Number in PM recreation	233	553	711	700	850	950	796	684
PM recreation costs per child	—	—	—	—	—	—	\$336	\$194
SCFD collaboration	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Swim lessons	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Paid program staff	0	0	0	1	2	2	3	4
DPS mandatory summer school	No	No	No	Grade 3	Grade 3	Grades 2-5	Grades 2-5	Grades 4-5
Percent mandatory students	—	—	—	—	—	23%	10%	6%
Total Budget	—	\$450,000	\$519,335	\$805,426	\$981,934	\$1,414,828	\$1,582,119	\$1,444,138

i Due to construction projects, programs at three schools were housed at other schools or churches.

W Year-round VISTAs work at three schools to help with literacy projects.

U Summer Scholars assists five schools with implementation and administration of their CREA grants.

While there have been dramatic changes in the scope of the program over the years, there have been fewer changes in the type of students served and the gains they make. Perhaps the most notable change is the increased percentage of Latino students served by Summer Scholars.

**Table 15: Comparison of Summer Scholars: 1994 - 2000**

<b>Student Characteristics</b>	<b>1994</b>	<b>1995</b>	<b>1996</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1998</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>
Students in morning program	511	677	774	914	953	1,157	1,206	1,238
Low income (free lunch eligible)	—	76%	83%	86%	85%	87%	84%	79%
Percent Anglo	14%	12%	7%	5%	4%	4%	5%	3%
Percent Latino	8%	12%	24%	31%	39%	36%	43%	46%
Percent 2 <sup>nd</sup> grade or below	62%	65%	62%	68%	65%	47%	60%	58%
Percent 2-parent household	33%	33%	35%	38%	42%	36%	44%	42%
<b>Attendance Patterns</b>	<b>1994</b>	<b>1995</b>	<b>1996</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1998</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>
Percent missing no days	19%	21%	23%	29%	29%	26%	25%	33%
Percent missing 1-3 days	36%	44%	43%	47%	45%	50%	39%	42%
Percent missing 4-6 days	18%	18%	12%	9%	14%	11%	13%	11%

**Table 15: Comparison of Summer Scholars: 1994 - 2000**

Percent missing 7+ days	27%	18%	22%	16%	15%	9%	23%	15%
Reading Patterns	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Below grade level at start	60%	65%	78%	70%	74%	64%*	64%**	63%*
At grade level at start	17%	24%	13%	15%	20%	23%	27%	30.9%
Above grade level at start	22%	11%	9%	12%	7%	17%	8%	5.9%
Showing improvement	61%	72%	91%	83%	80%	71%	81%	86%
Below grade level at end	45%	46%	59%	55%	55%	43%	34%	46%
At grade level at end	21%	13%	14%	14%	21%	26%	31%	46%
Above grade level at end	34%	41%	27%	31%	24%	31%	35%	8%

\*Second graders only

\*\* Third graders only

## Recommendations

**Summer Scholars should return to its six-week, three-hours per day format for morning literacy classes.**

While some staff liked the four-week session because it fostered a sense of intensity, the detractions of a short program outweigh the benefits. Principals reported that teachers felt “under-the-gun,” and that there was no opportunity to make corrections or fully implement every aspect of this large-scale and complex program. It was harder to perform home visits, orchestrate literacy events, and do staff coaching in the shorter time frame. Indeed, it took some coaches two weeks to visit all their classrooms, leaving them only two weeks to work with teachers and make any needed adjustments in student assignments, teaching style, and classroom organization. In a similar vein, it understandably took family literacy and Summer Scholars teachers time to figure out their respective roles in parent-child literacy activities, leaving little opportunity for implementing this aspect of the program.

Doing pre- and post-program reading assessments in a four-week program is challenging since the same reading material is used for both tests and the chances are higher that students will recognize the test material on the follow-up assessment. Teachers found it harder to fit in planning time with some expressing a desire for a “planned curriculum” that they could implement more automatically. Any problems obtaining instructional materials

were magnified by the shorter schedule. Summer Scholars staff found it harder to recruit and hire staff for a four-week employment stint, especially instructors in the recreation program. The ratio of planning to program time seemed particularly out of balance. Finally, by cutting the program off at week four, staff and students missed the segment of the program that has been historically viewed as the smoothest and best.

There were mixed reactions to the lengthier morning session. On the positive side, some teachers found that the four-hour class allowed them to create more activity centers to which students were exposed and to better focus on both reading and writing. The 8:00 a.m. start also allowed students and teachers to utilize the classrooms in the cooler hours of the day. On the other hand, the 8:00 a.m. start meant that teachers who wanted to do pre-class planning needed to arrive very early in the morning, and the noon end time created some conflicts with the lunchroom staff, who wanted students to line up by 11:15 or 11:30. The four-hour session was also long, especially for the youngest students, and some principals reported that students began to “wilt” by 11:00 a.m.

**Summer Scholars should continue to offer Family Literacy classes, but only at schools that commit to providing it during the regular school year.**

There is widespread support for Summer Scholars continuing to offer ESL classes for parents and day care for younger siblings while students attend regular, morning classes. Parents were excited about improving their English skills. They also enjoyed spending time in their children’s classes and doing reading and other literacy projects with them.

To heighten the effectiveness of the program, Summer Scholars and its partner agency, Focus Points, should clarify expectations for their respective teachers on the goals of the program and how parents and their children should interact when they are in the classroom together. Summer Scholars needs to over-enroll each class to accommodate a no-show rate of about 20 to 30 percent, although attendance is good among those parents who appear for at least one session. Family literacy teachers should adopt a more interactive style and encourage class participation. They should also consider making the classes more rigorous by giving homework. Finally, continuity during the regular school year should be stressed since a summer-only program is not likely to have a lasting effect on the English skills of participating parents. The collaboration between Summer Scholars and Focus Points has proven to be useful in this regard. Focus Points was successful in securing funding for ESL

instruction at the three school sites, and members of the Summer Scholars Family Literacy classes were invited to participate in new classes that began in the fall of 2001.

**Summer Scholars should continue to experiment with the use of literacy software in the morning program and try to work out the logistical difficulties. It should also explore the feasibility of having students use the software in the afternoon recreation component, as well as encouraging its use during the regular school year.**

First and second graders at four schools rotated in and out of the computer lab to work on RWT or Lexia software programs for approximately 25 minutes per day. Students loved working on computers; those who used the software were significantly more apt to improve by at least one book level on reading tests. Teachers favored RWT over Lexia and thought that its phonics approach helped students to better identify words that look “funny or wrong.”

Implementing the literacy software program presents several challenges. Since students need to work on the same computer each time they visit the lab, two or more students wound up trying to work on the same computer or splitting the practice session if teachers changed the composition of the groups they sent to the lab. Staff training is also important, and although teachers were trained on the software, the labs were typically supervised by paraprofessional or teen interns, some of whom had not been trained. Finally, the logistics of moving small groups of students in and out of the computer lab for daily, 25-minute practice sessions proved to be challenging in a four-hour morning program and may be even more difficult in a three-hour session.

Summer Scholars should continue to experiment with the use of computer software in the morning program and try to work out the logistical issues that have been identified. It should also explore the feasibility of gaining access to computer labs at some schools during the afternoon recreation program and having groups of students work on computers using literacy software. Recreation programs at some Summer Scholars schools have had great success with journal writing, hands-on science, and other literacy projects. Students love playing on computers so much, they would doubtless welcome the opportunity to work on RWT and Lexia in the afternoons.

Since RTW is designed to be a 40-week program, schools should also explore using literacy software during the regular school year. Fortunately, Garden Place has chosen to use the

RWT software as a regular part of its school-year curriculum for first-grade students and will be able to explore its impact over an entire school year.

**Communication continues to be a challenge in a program as large and complex as Summer Scholars, especially with respect to new types of staff who fall outside the range of normal school structures and activities.**

Summer Scholars made strong improvements in introducing its large and diverse staff to the program. Staff rated the orientation session better than in 2000. The required weekly staff planning meetings at each school were credited with improving coordination and communication.

Despite these gains, there were some misunderstandings about the roles and responsibilities of some staff groups. For example, some VISTAs felt that principals and teachers do not understand the purpose of the VISTA volunteer program and that they are not used to full advantage. Family literacy and Summer Scholars' teachers each thought the other was responsible for orchestrating parent-child learning activities. Some principals wanted more regular communication with literacy coaches about issues pertaining to teacher performance and classroom effectiveness. Finally, there were some communication issues between the morning staff and recreation instructors with the Department of Parks and Recreation.

The Summer Scholars VISTA, recreation, family literacy, and instructional coaching components are all outside the range of normal school structures and activities. The staff who perform these duties are unfamiliar players in school systems. Summer Scholars relies heavily on staff familiarity with normal school personnel and procedures to implement its program within a short period of time. Understandably, it is challenging to clarify roles, establish communication channels, and make individuals feel included in these less familiar components.

**The recreation program is a valuable feature of Summer Scholars that should be continued and enhanced.**

Originally begun to induce students to faithfully attend morning literacy classes, afternoon recreation is recognized as being extremely valuable in its own right. Thanks to this program component, nearly 700 students have a full day of safe care and productive activity. They swim, ice skate, sing with the Children's Chorale, and go on a variety of field trips.

Summer Scholars should continue to provide afternoon recreation and enhance it by broadening the range of special activities and experiences it offers. In addition to the popular journal-writing program, recreation instructors should explore the feasibility of sending groups to the computer lab to work on literacy software. Summer Scholars should continue to cultivate collaborations with cultural arts groups and others willing to work with Summer Scholars students.

**Summer Scholars substantially changed its teen intern program in 2001. Higher ratings of teen interns by principals and teachers suggest that the changes were successful.**

The number of teens assigned to each classroom was reduced from two to one. Rather than being paid a stipend, teens received an hourly wage ranging from \$5.15 to \$6.31 per hour, resulting in higher earnings. The training program was overhauled so that teens were trained on specific literacy activities that were recommended for use in the classroom. Finally, a teen advisory group was created which met weekly to give the staff input.

These changes appear to have paid off. Principals and teachers rated the teen interns much higher than they have in past years. Most teens reported being treated as a “member of the team.” In response to the statement, “I would like to be an intern next year,” more than half (53%) responded, “very true” and 39 percent said “somewhat true.”

**VISTA volunteers are a terrific resource for Summer Scholars. Their roles need to be more clearly defined and communicated to principals, teachers, and the rest of the staff.**

VISTAs have the unique opportunity to be involved with all aspects of Summer Scholars and at many sites they play a critical role coordinating the morning and afternoon programs, as well as handling attendance, administrative duties, fundraising, organizing family literacy events, assisting with the afternoon recreation program, and supervising students with discipline problems. While nearly all of the VISTAs said they were thankful for the opportunity to work for such a “worthy cause,” and many would like to return next year, several felt that they had been underutilized because teachers and principals did not understand their role. As one VISTA put it,

I do feel like I could have been more useful in some ways if the teachers had just taken advantage of their resources. I know that part of the problem was



a lack of communication beforehand. It may have been useful for many of the teachers to understand who the VISTA is, what she does there, and why she is there prior to the start of the program.

Although Summer Scholars has made repeated efforts to clarify the role of VISTAs, confusions persist. Part of the struggle is due to the fact that VISTAs do not exist in the normal school environment. It is hard to understand a new type of staff member in a short summer program. Another part of the problem is that VISTAs are supposed to be creative and flexible and fill different roles in different schools. In this type of situation, it is hard to generate a specific job description that can be easily communicated and understood at every school site. Summer Scholars should continue to try to clarify the VISTA role and expectations to all staff and maximize on the benefits of this wonderful resource.

**Experienced Summer Scholars teachers can be effective literacy coaches; formal mechanisms should be developed for principals and literacy coaches to communicate on a regular basis.**

In the past, Summer Scholars has used DPS literacy specialists to serve as instructional coaches. Due to their unavailability in 2001, Summer Scholars used experienced Summer Scholars teachers to serve as literacy coaches. Although teacher ratings for instructional coaching were somewhat lower than in past years, this was probably due to the shorter program and the fact it took some coaches two weeks to visit all their classes, leaving only two weeks for coaches to work with specific teachers on changes or improvements.

For their part, coaches were very enthusiastic about their new role in Summer Scholars. While they enjoyed working with teachers, they felt that experienced teachers did not require as much attention and favored focusing the coaching effort on new teachers. They also would like teachers to better understand the role of coaching in the program. Finally, they recommend reducing the amount of school-to-school travel they are required to perform and would prefer to work with all teachers in a single school rather than rotate across several different schools.

Principals were pleased with the new coaching personnel. Although Summer Scholars assigned principals and coaches to the same schools in order to promote closer working relationships between the two groups, this did not always occur. Principals and coaches tend to rotate across several school buildings, making it easy for them not to see one another in

the normal course of the day. To promote more regular communication, principals favor formal meetings with coaches on a weekly basis in order to discuss teaching concerns and coordinate responses.

**Summer Scholars should explore the possibility of routinely recruiting students with ILPs.**

Recruiting and enrolling Summer Scholars students is a decentralized process that is conducted at 20 different school sites. Appropriate students must be targeted, their parents must be contacted, and their paperwork must be completed. Ideally, student reading records should be conveyed to the Summer Scholars teacher. To ensure that each class is filled to capacity, a waiting list is developed at each school. When registered students fail to appear, Summer Scholars staff try to fill vacant spots with children on the waiting lists. Once replacement students are identified, the necessary paperwork for them must be generated, all within a short period of time.

Not surprisingly, some enrollment and reading assessment material never makes it to the Summer Scholars teachers or arrives late. As a result, some students are inappropriately placed. Summer Scholars has worked hard to improve student recruitment and enrollment. In 2001, it began the process earlier in the year, reduced the number of required forms and combined redundant information. It also provided teachers with computerized class lists with reading levels (when available) at the orientation program, well in advance of the start of Summer Scholars.

The inappropriate class assignments may stem from the fact that Summer Scholars drew heavily from students on the waiting lists to fill its classes and assessment data was frequently unavailable for these students. This is a difficult problem to resolve since Summer Scholars seeks to operate at full capacity and has a strict policy of replacing students who fail to show or those who exhibit excessive absenteeism.

One possible strategy is to draw more heavily on students with Individualized Learning Plans (ILPs) in the process of recruiting for Summer Scholars participants and candidates for the waiting list. Overall, 53 percent of Summer Scholars participants had ILPs. Since the ILP is a measure of low performance on the CSAP (or anticipated low performance), these students should be prime targets for Summer Scholars. They would also have a well-developed

dossier of reading assessments and other evaluative information that could help Summer Scholars' teachers get a fix on student performance and needs.

**Schools should assign rooms on the “cool” side of their building to Summer Scholars (if one exists) and try to resolve other facility issues.**

Few schools are air conditioned, and many classrooms become unbearably hot by late morning. In some buildings, little consideration was given to heat factors in classroom assignments with custodial staff cleaning rooms on the “cool” side of the building and classes being conducted on the “hot” side. Summer Scholars should be given access to the most comfortable spaces for both the morning and afternoon program. DPS or Summer Scholars should also purchase fans to help cool classrooms. If stored properly, they could be reused each year.

Principals of participating Summer Scholars schools need to emphasize the importance of Summer Scholars to their custodial staff and elicit better cooperation patterns. Many facility managers and their staff view Summer Scholars' teachers and staff as “outsiders.” As a result, they lack access to basic amenities, needed supplies, and parts of the building. Using the copier was a problem at some schools, and the issue of copier repairs was not addressed in site agreements negotiated with school year principals, leading to duplication of effort.

Several steps should be taken to enhance the support of facility managers. First, Summer Scholars staff should attend the annual custodial supervisors' meeting to explain the program and address any questions or concerns that are raised. Second, the facility manager for each school should attend the annual meeting that Summer Scholars holds with each year-round principal to discuss the portions of the building that the program will need and other facility issues. Third, the facility manager and his staff should sign any site agreement that Summer Scholars develops with year-round principals regarding facility use and maintenance. Fourth, facility managers should be recognized and thanked by having students write thank-you cards, and having pizza lunches provided for the custodial staff at both the beginning and end of the program. Finally, one staff person in each building should be assigned to monitor the copy machine and ensure that it is supplied, repairs are taken care of, and that copies are recorded properly.

**Implementing a program as complex and large as Summer Scholars requires a high-quality organizational infrastructure that should be continually upgraded and nurtured.**

Summer Scholars has grown from one paid staffer in 1997 to four in 2001. During peak season, temporary workers and consultants are retained. While these expansions make it possible to orchestrate the large and complex Summer Scholars program, they are not always adequate. For example, when an office manager resigned, program staff wound up doing payroll and data entry. More to the point, staff find themselves waiting for access to the few high-speed computers in the office.

Summer Scholars should purchase more computers, update existing ones, and develop lease arrangements to ensure that regular staff and temporary personnel brought in for the summer program have working conditions that optimize their efficiency. Summer Scholars should also review staffing levels and duties that various staff are expected to perform to avoid overload. While Summer Scholars prides itself on its low administrative costs and its “lean” staffing pattern with the bulk of funding going to direct service, it must recognize that the quality of its programs depend on having a high-quality organizational infrastructure. This needs to be constantly monitored and upgraded.