

Mitigating Summer Learning Loss

4.1 months in math achievement in just 4 weeks

SUMMER ADVANTAGE USA FAST FACTS

- Disadvantaged K to 8th grade students
- 3,000 total students at 23 sites in 4 states
- 4 week schedule
- Diverse communities – urban, rural, suburban
- Established in 2009
- Targeted to students with the most need

DREAMBOX IMPLEMENTATION

- Deployed since summer 2013
- 210 K-5 students
- 20 minutes/day, 4x/week
- Blended learning model

FUNDING SOURCE

- Title I funds, 21st Century Learning Community grants, philanthropy, general state funding

ABOUT DREAMBOX LEARNING

DreamBox® Learning Math provides a deeply personalized, PreK–6 math learning experience that differentiates content, pace, and sequence for the highest levels of student achievement. Powered by Intelligent Adaptive Learning™ technology, DreamBox Learning combines rigorous elementary math, an engaging, game-like learning environment, and real-time feedback for each student. It motivates and guides all levels of learners to persist, progress, and achieve math proficiency. This results in increased achievement, deep understanding, and life-long confidence in math.

→ CHALLENGE:

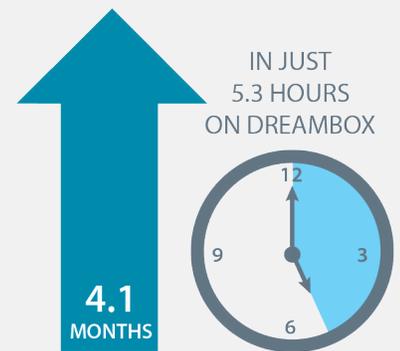
Combating the summer brain drain

Students in the countries outpacing the United States in academic success attend school for 30-45 days more per year than US students. It's a fact that Summer Advantage USA founder Earl Martin Phalen is quick to mention, but it's also the major reason this Yale- and Harvard Law-educated product of the foster system chose to focus his educational crusade in the summer. "Summer learning loss is a major contributor to the achievement gap," reports Summer Advantage Strategic Initiatives head Michelle Ciccone. "Students in low-income situations tend to lose 3 months' worth of math learning over the summer. Earl knew he would have a greater impact on learning if he focused on summer programs rather than after school programs."

"By employing DreamBox as part of our overall math instructional plan, our scholars were able to achieve amazing academic growth and we were able to significantly reduce costs."

— Earl Martin Phalen,
Founder and CEO

Summer Advantage USA Students Improvement



Based on the IOWA Test of Basic skills

The solution turned out to be academic summer camps built to reinforce the learning of the previous school year. The program has quickly grown to 23 sites in Indiana, Colorado, Alabama, and Illinois.

→ SOLUTION:

Effective technology to allow students to hit the ground running

Summer Advantage is built around the blended learning model, but they recognized that no math solution on the market is built for short summer programs. As there is no time for training or professional development on any new technology, the system they adopt must be user-friendly and easy to use for both teachers and students right out of the box. A track record of closing

the achievement gap in challenging situations would be a plus as well. DreamBox met those requirements and more.

The goal of Summer Advantage is to reinforce what a child learned in the previous school year. By design, students are struggling with that content in order to be invited to the program in the first place. That means there are usually gaps to fill. “DreamBox increases the number of concepts a student is exposed to and helps to fill any gaps in understanding regardless of their ability level,” Ms. Ciccone said.

→ IMPLEMENTATION: Making the most out of very limited time

Summer Advantage has chosen to maximize one-on-one and small group learning time with a rotational blended learning model. The classes are broken into thirds during math time with; one third working on DreamBox while the remaining two thirds work with a teacher and an assistant. The program’s student: teacher ratios are low, greatly increasing the individual attention students receive. The Summer Advantage teachers use the data from DreamBox to form the small groups in the rotational model, allowing for easier differentiation.

The goal is for each kindergarten to 5th grade student to use DreamBox at least 20 minutes per day for four days per week in the morning. Afternoons are reserved for enrichment activities and Fridays are for field trips and guest speakers. After all, it is a summer camp.

The Summer Advantage model also calls for weekly assessment to inform the instruction for the next week, but the teachers started noticing a problem: because DreamBox was so efficient at filling in the students’ learning

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— Michelle Ciccone,
Strategic Initiatives Manager

gaps from the previous school year, they were starting to work ahead of expectations—even starting concepts scheduled for the next school year. “DreamBox helped to close gaps in conceptual understanding. It allows students to cover more and other concepts that are not being taught that week,” said Ms. Ciccone.

→ RESULTS: Changing educational trajectories in just 4 weeks

The Summer Advantage programs themselves are not subject to state testing, but that doesn’t mean the difference the programs have made in the academic success of their students cannot be tracked. In Indiana, for example, they have seen that graduates of the Summer Advantage summer programs increased their performance by 12 points in math in the following year’s state testing.

“The amazing thing about using DreamBox in our Summer Advantage USA program was that it allowed us to—in some cases—more than double the skills and content each child was able to practice and master. In just 4 weeks of using DreamBox for 20 minutes 4 times a week, as part of the math instructional block, we saw a full 4.1 months of improvement in math

achievement,” Ms. Ciccone reports. If you do the math, that means a net gain of more than 7 months’ worth of math learning for students who would have lost 3 months.

The program’s success has been so transformative to the communities it serves that Mr. Phalen, Ms Ciccone, and the rest of the Summer Advantage team are expanding past summer education. They opened the first of ten blended learning charter schools in Indianapolis this year.

And yes, the schools will be following the international model of 225 school days, rather than 180.

That should be more than enough time to raise the achievement level of struggling learners and create more success stories.

For more information, contact Client Care at 877.451.7845, email schools@dreambox.com, or visit dreambox.com.