



No Child Left Behind Summer Reading Achievers

U.S. Department of Education 2004 No Child Left Behind Summer Reading Achievers Pilot Program FACT SHEET



What is the purpose of the program?

The No Child Left Behind Summer Reading Achievers Program encourages school children in grades K-8 to read actively during the vacation in an effort to mitigate the loss in reading skills that research shows takes place during the summer months. Recognizing that summer learning loss is especially acute among low-income and disadvantaged students, the pilot will encourage reading during the vacation to help ensure students come back to school prepared to learn and achieve.

In 2004, the Department is expanding last year's pilot with the Atlanta Public Schools to include 10 cities and one State, to help create a model for nationwide expansion. This year's pilot sites were selected based on their commitment to student success, effective leadership, and strong community and business partnerships.

How does it work?

Participating students must read 10 or more age-appropriate books over the summer months, and log what they liked about each of those books. Prizes and certificates will be awarded to successful students, and special recognition will be given to schools with the highest percentages of participating students. In addition to covering the costs of promotional materials and certificates, the Department will conduct outreach to national and local partners; conduct local workshops; and provide support for kickoffs, celebrations, and other promotional events. Each district will appoint a high-level staff person to conduct outreach and communication, promote the program, and approach local businesses and community organizations to garner their support.

Why is the U.S. Department of Education expanding this program?

Last summer, nearly 18,000 of the Atlanta Public Schools' 41,000 students took part in Summer Reading Achievers, and almost 11,000 met the goal of reading at least ten books. In addition, some 90,000 free, new books were distributed to Atlanta students, and more than two dozen local and national organizations actively supported the program. The 2003 pilot provided valuable lessons toward developing a model for the nation. This year's effort aims to further refine the pilot and test its effectiveness in diverse locations and all regions of the country.

Where are the 2004 pilot sites?

This year's pilots are in Springfield, Massachusetts; Portsmouth, New Hampshire; Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; Camden, New Jersey; Atlanta, Georgia; Gainesville, Florida; Kansas City, Kansas; Minneapolis, Minnesota; Albuquerque, New Mexico; San Diego, California; and the state of South Dakota.

How do we plan to implement the program?

- In May, letters co-signed by the local or State Superintendent and the U.S. Secretary of Education will be sent to principals of all public and charter elementary and middle schools in participating areas to explain the program. Upon request, staff from the Department will conduct workshops with principals and library staff members to train them on the components of the program.





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- Principals will estimate how many students might participate during the summer months and order the appropriate number of NCLB Summer Reading Achievers certificates from ED. Participating students are expected to read 10 age-appropriate books during the summer months.
- To qualify for their certificates, students will be required to describe briefly what they liked about each book they have read by filling out a preprinted form.
- Products (brochures and posters) will be developed and sent to all K-8 schools, libraries, and partner organizations throughout the district. In May, principals will be asked to distribute them to families to encourage participation in the program.
- Certificates will be mailed to schools in time for Back-to-School assemblies. Certificates will be high quality, embossed, and signed by the Secretary and Superintendent, designating students as "NCLB Summer Reading Achievers." Partner organizations will provide other incentives and forms of recognition.
- Events featuring senior officers of the Department and State or local superintendents, corporate sponsors, parents, and students will be held in April, May and September to kick off the program and subsequently to celebrate its accomplishments.

Who are our contributing partners?

Corporate and nonprofit partners with both a strong presence in the participating pilot sites and a focus on reading and literacy skills development will be invited to participate. Key partners to date include:

- First Book
- Target Corporation
- Scholastic, Inc.
- The Boys & Girls Clubs of America
- Communities in Schools
- The National PTA
- USA Football
- Verizon
- Barnes and Noble
- Time Magazine for Kids
- MeadWestvaco
- Fisher-Price

How will we assess the effectiveness of the program?

The Department will work closely with the Atlanta Public Schools to develop an evaluation design that may serve as a model for all participating districts if the program goes nationwide next year. In the meantime, the Department is encouraging all participating districts to assess the effectiveness of the Summer Reading Achievers program among their students.

- For more information, call 1-800 USA LEARN or send an email to nochildleftbehind@ed.gov.