



Summer Learning Update

Building Power Skills

In our first update, we noted the four student-centered outcome goals of the Summer Learning Project:

1. **Reverse** summer learning loss in ELA & Math
2. Develop three main **power skills**: critical thinking, perseverance, and relationships with peers
3. Strengthen school-community **partnerships** through high-quality programming
4. Promote student **health & wellness**

In the coming weeks we will be highlighting each of the four goals. This week, our focus is on the unique opportunity that summer programming provides for student skill development.

What are skills? Skills are tools we use to do things well. They give us the ability to solve problems and get tasks done, to connect with others and to take care of ourselves, even when difficulties arise.

Which skills matter? Skills must be identifiable and measurable. In addition, skills must be able to be developed through intentional program design, activities and experiences. [The ACT framework](#) features 12 skills which all contribute to success in and out of school. The power skills capture a number of these skills, and address student needs aligned with the ACT framework and the SAYO suite of tools.

Why power skills? The three power skills identified above were developed based on input from Boston Public Schools, PEAR (Program in Education, Afterschool, and Resiliency) and site managers. Similar to "power academic standards," the power skills allow teachers and non-profit staff to jointly delve deeper into a common set of skill goals that can be addressed over a summer session. In May and June, staff from all 28 SLP sites received training on addressing these power skills through programming.

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Featured Summer Partner:

MathPower



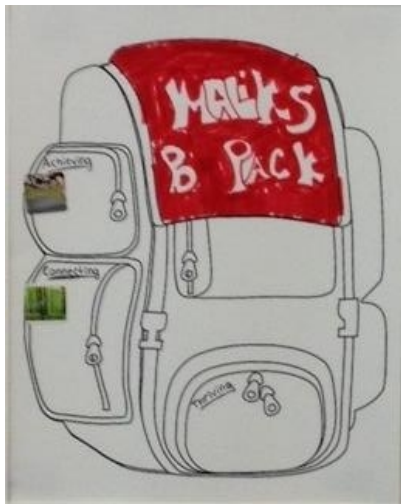
When are skills best developed? Skill building is crucial to a student's school, career and life goals, and thus is a continuous process. Free from some of the pressures of the school year, summer offers a unique opportunity to put into practice an expanded definition of learning that focuses not just on knowledge, but also on the skills and experiences that equip young people for success.

Spotlight:

MathPower, Dearborn Middle School, Higginson/Lewis K-8 and Timilty Middle School

Essential Question: What skills do you need for the backpack of life?

Entering its 4th year, the MathPower-BPS site combines math and ELA instruction with enriching clubs - all located on Northeastern University's campus! At the beginning of the program, students were each given their own illustrated backpack to decorate and hang up in their classroom (see [below](#)). Each week, students reflect on the skills they developed and place stickers on their backpack as a reminder of their progress. Students place their skills in one of three pockets labeled Achieving, Connecting and Thriving. The program holds a graduation ceremony in August, and there, each student will be given a real backpack - with their skill sheet inside - that they can carry with them as a reminder of their growth.



At the beginning of the program, students also complete a Club Preference Sheet, which allows them to choose enrichment activities they are interested in. Each club lasts for a week. This week's clubs included Aerospace Engineering, Cooking & Eating with Class, and Games & How to Win Them. All clubs incorporate math lessons, skill development and FUN!

SUMMER SPOTLIGHT FAST FACTS:

Nonprofit:

MathPower

Sending Schools:

Dearborn Middle
Schol, Higginson/Lewis K-8 &
Timilty Middle School

Student Breakdown:

60 students entering 7th and 8th
grade in Fall 2013

Staffing:

2 BPS Teachers and MathPower
staff

Programming:

This partnership will offer 200 hours
of programming this summer.



Students participating in the "Games & How to Win Them" Club. ©Jeremy Skillings



A student prepares his airplane for a flight contest during "Aerospace Engineering." ©Jeremy Skillings

If you have any questions, comments, or ideas for future updates please contact David McAuley at dmcauley@bostonbeyond.org.