ESSER Summer Learning Academy Report
Prepared by the Department of Research & Performance Management

December 2022 *Author: Hannah Pallotta*

Key Findings

- 9,079 students attended at least five days of SLA; rising third grade having the most in attendance with 3,380 students (37%).
- Overall, students who participated in SLA did not seem to experience summer slide.
- SLA students gained 6 scale score points on average on their ELA fall i-Ready in comparison to their spring score.
- SLA students on average maintained their math scale score through the summer, whereas the national trends show a decrease of around 5 points, depending on grade level.
- In both ELA and math SLA students experienced more gains than those who did not attend the District's SLA program.

Program Overview

The Summer Learning Academy (SLA) is a four-week summer educational program, as part of the learning loss remediation and student acceleration program, that is designed to support student academic needs and remediate student learning loss. This program is optional for all students except for second graders who would otherwise be held back due to the Third Grade Commitment policy. SLA is required for these second graders if they are to move up to third grade. SLA provides additional reading and math instruction as well as intervention and activity for identified students. Students also participate in a STREAM course. The STREAM course provides remediation and engagement through programming in which students participate in real-world experiences and problem solving across several content areas.

SLA is one of the biggest ways for the District to reduce summer slide, and thus the achievement gap. Summer slide is the loss of learning over the summer break. However, as research shows, summer slide often impacts low-income students more than their higher-income peers. "Almost all of the increase in the achievement gap over the elementary school years traced to differences across social lines in summer learning, and two-thirds of the reading comprehension gap separating children from low-income families and those from middle-income families in 9th grade (up to 3.5 grade equivalents at that point) likewise originated in differential summer learning over the elementary school years" (Alexander et al., 2016). Table 1 shows median summer gain/loss of i-Ready scale scores on a national level (data shown are from i-Ready in 2018–19). The overall national trend shows a 5 point decrease in math from spring to fall and a half point decrease in ELA.

Table 1.

Historical Median Summer i-Ready Scale Score Gain/Loss based on National Norms		
Grade Transition	**Math**	**Reading**
Kindergarten to 1st Grade	–2	2
1st Grade to 2nd Grade	–5	6
2nd Grade to 3rd Grade	–6	–3
3rd Grade to 4th Grade	–6	–1
4th Grade to 5th Grade	–9	0
5th Grade to 6th Grade	–7	–6
6th Grade to 7th Grade	–4	0
7th Grade to 8th Grade	–3	–2

Program Goals

- Increase mastery of prerequisite skills
- Increase summative data (TCAP) performance (student, school, and District)

Data

All Summer Learning Academy attendance data are tracked in a dashboard created by Research and Performance Management's Decision Analytics and Information Management (DAIM) team. K–8 i-Ready assessments from spring 2021–22 and fall 2022–23 were used to compare summer slide between SLA and non-SLA attendees. There were 9,492 students who were initially enrolled in SLA; 9,079 students attended at least five days of SLA and this subset was used for analysis. Table 2 shows the breakdown of enrollment and attendance rates by grade.

Rising third grade had the most students enrolled (*n* = 3,380, 37%) and the highest attendance rate for primary grades averaging 85.5% attendance. Tenth through 12th grade students participated in a two-week ACT prep program.

Table 2.

SLA Student Enrollment and Attendance Rate by Grade		
Rising Grade	*N*	Attendance Rate
1	1,153	83.6%
2	1,084	77.5%
3	3,380	85.5%
4	1,073	76.3%
5	847	76.9%
6	673	81.6%
7	335	86.0%
8	265	76.3%
9	157	40.2%
10	50	76.4%
11	43	82.2%
12	19	86.5%
All Students	9,079	81.0%

For the following analysis, students were included if they had a valid test for both the spring 2021–22 and fall 2022–23 i-Ready assessment. There were 6,933 SLA students who had both ELA i-Ready assessments and 7,058 SLA students who had both math assessments. For non-SLA students there were 33,823 students who had both ELA and 35,000 who had both math assessments.

Findings

SLA students were compared to non-SLA students on the difference between their spring i-Ready and fall i-Ready scale scores. If a student's scale score was lower in the fall than their spring score, that would indicate they experienced summer slide. The hypothesis of this evaluation was that students who participated in SLA would experience less summer slide (or even optimistically, would maintain or gain in comparison to their spring scale score) than students who did not participate in SLA. Figure 1 shows the average difference in spring to fall scale scores for SLA and non-SLA students in both ELA and math. SLA students had on average a fall ELA scale score that was 6.0 points higher than their spring scale score. Non-SLA students had a slightly lower average difference of 5.4 points. For math, SLA students on average maintained their spring scale score, while non-SLA students experienced some summer slide, with a decrease in their scale score of –1.3.

Figure 1.

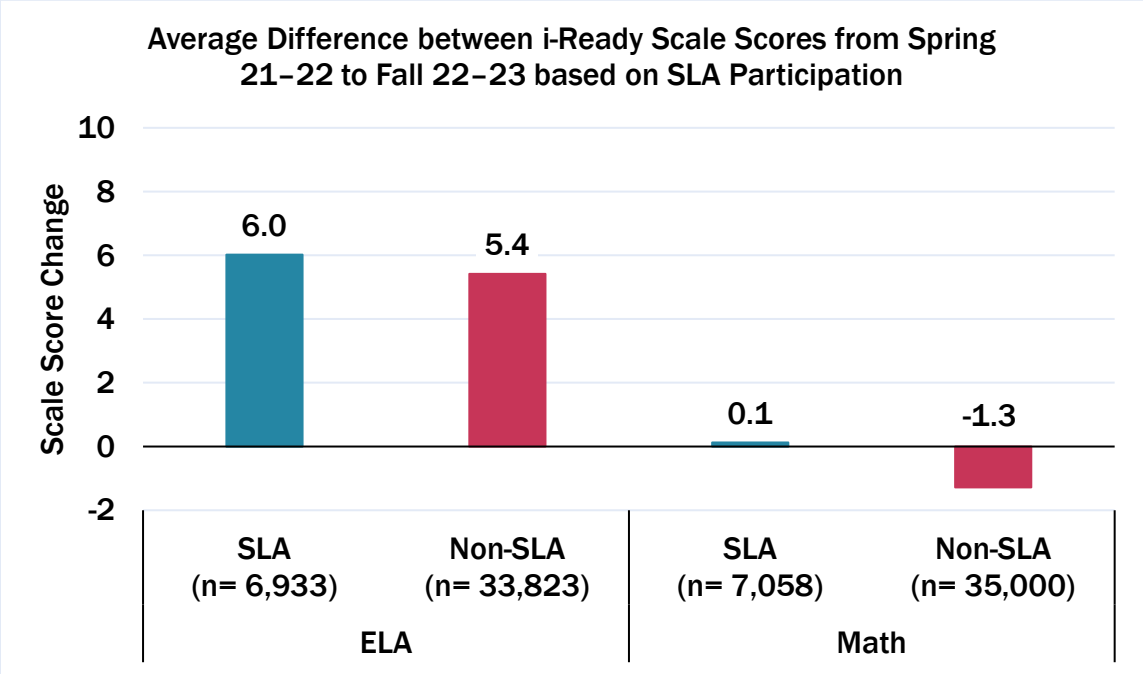
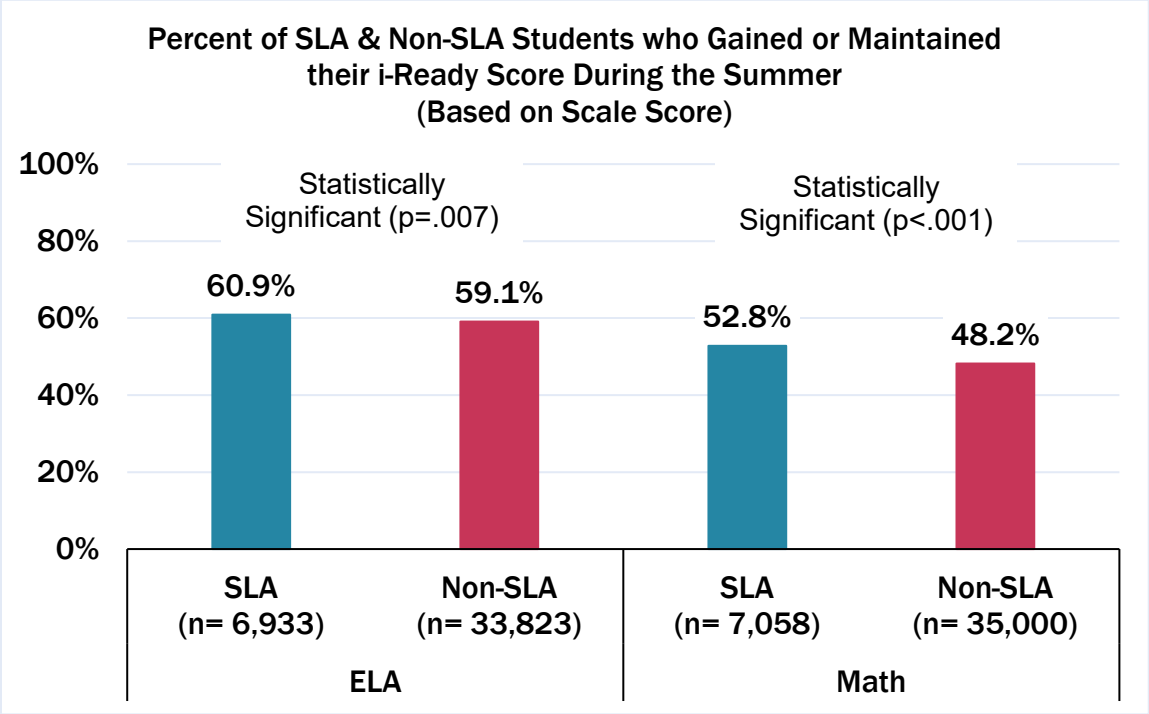


Figure 2 shows the percent of each group that either maintained their spring scale score or made gains in their fall scale score. Nearly 61% of SLA students maintained or gained over the summer. In comparison, 59% of non-SLA students did the same. There was more of a difference between SLA and non-SLA students in math. Forty-eight (48%) percent of non-SLA students maintained or gained over the summer while nearly 53% of SLA students score the same or better on their fall assessment. These results were statistically significant in Chi-square tests of independence (ELA [$\chi^2_{(1)} = 7.28$, $p = .007$]; math [$\chi^2_{(1)} = 51.34$, $p < .001$]) and are shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2.



Figures 3 and 4 show the average summer slide/movement of each rising grade broken down by participation in SLA. For example, rising fifth graders who participated in SLA averaged eight points higher on their fall ELA i-Ready assessment than their fourth-grade spring test, which is over two points higher than their non-SLA peers. In all grades, except rising fourth and eighth grade, SLA students had a higher average difference between their fall and spring score. For math, SLA students in all grades, except fourth grade, had less summer slide than non-SLA students. In third, seventh, and eighth grades, SLA students maintained or gained rather than suffering from summer slide.

Figure 3.

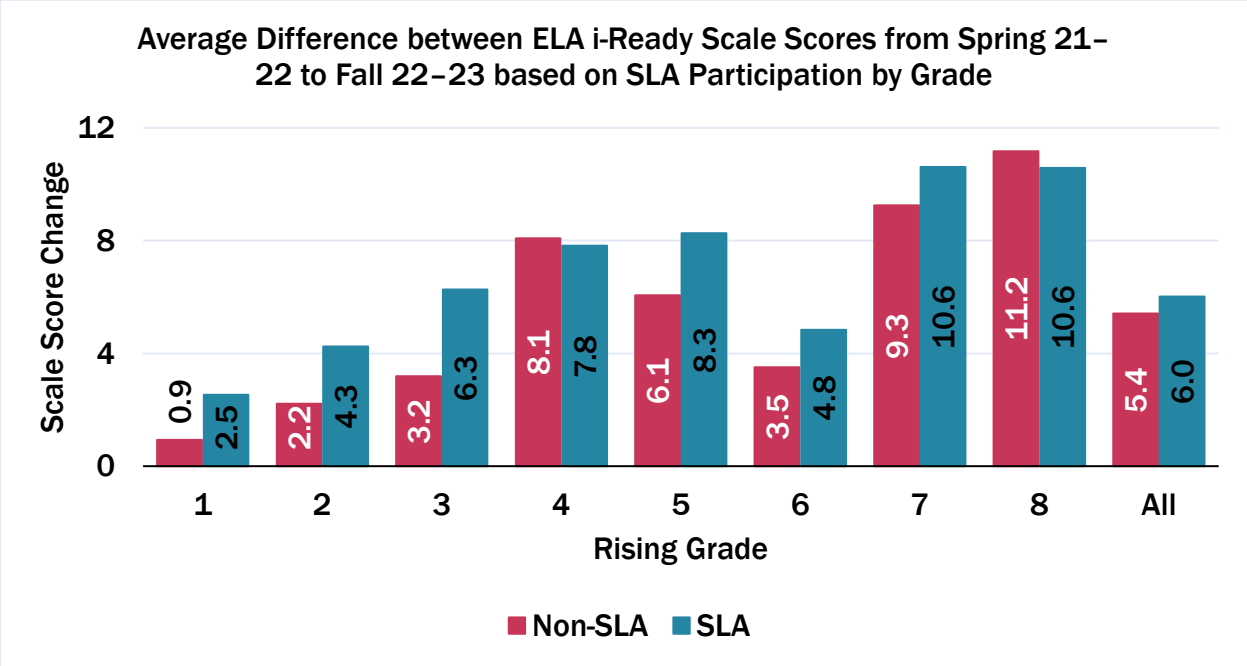
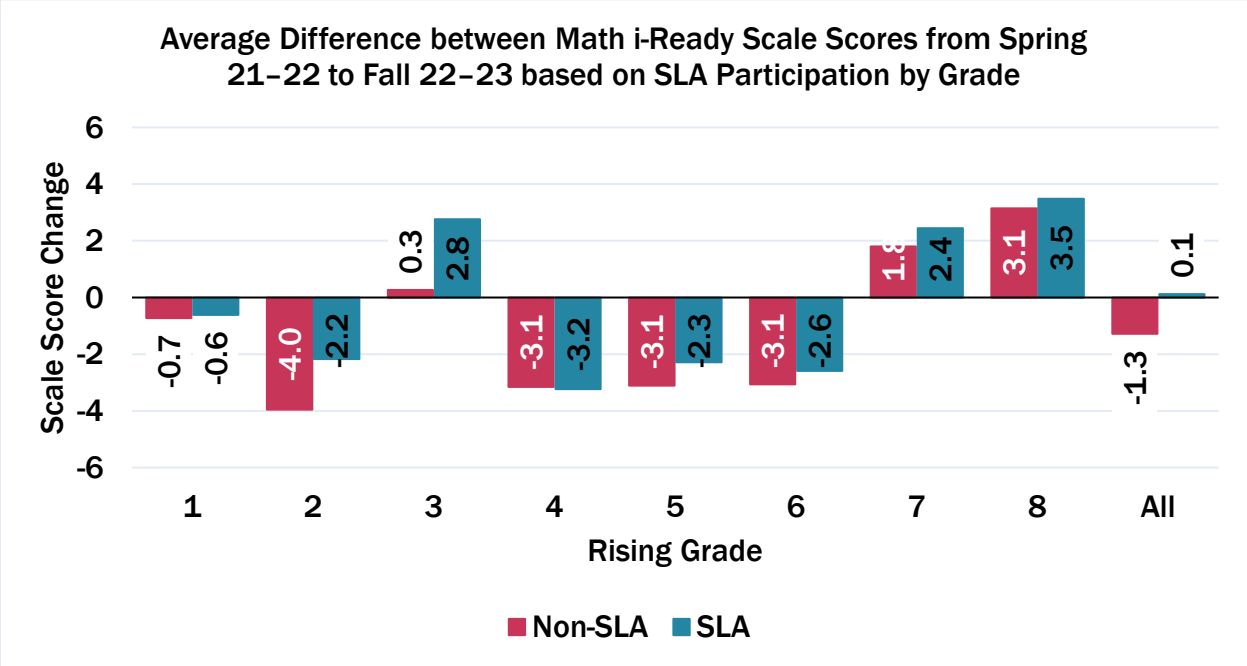


Figure 4.



Conclusion

Over 9,000 students participated in the 2022 Summer Learning Academy. In comparison to non-SLA students, SLA students had a higher average difference between their spring and fall i-Ready scale scores in ELA. For math, SLA students on average maintained their spring score while non-SLA students on averaged dropped at least one scale score point. SLA students gained or maintained their scale scores in both subjects at a higher rate than non-SLA students. This was found to be statistically significant. As noted in the program overview, lower-income students are often more affected by summer slide. To combat this, the District should continue to fund and possibly grow the SLA program (longer program, smaller classrooms, include field trips, etc.) and continue to promote the program to lower-income students in years to come.

References

- Alexander, K. L., Pitcock, S., & Boulay, M. (2016). *The summer slide: What we know and can do about summer learning loss*. Teachers College Press.