

Cathy Lehmann-- some ideas to build on...

Chair Doherty and members of the committee.

As a principal of a school where we host summer school, we rely on transportation for 75% of our students to get to school. School is where they can not only get closer to their reading goals, thus setting them up for further development, but also a safe place where they receive health and food support. If it wasn't for transportation, these students would not come to school.

Our low income youth have a lack of access to summer opportunities that will keep them at grade level & keep the achievement gap from widening over the summer. Many of our families experience food insecurity and the meals that they have at summer programming are often the only ones they have during the summer weeks. Some of our students often will not get dinner at home.

Additionally at Lot Whitcomb elementary we provide Harvest Share for families, which provides fresh produce to help increase food security. We also open our library during these summer programs for families to have access. Without transportation to and from our families will not have access to these services.

These summer programs for our Youth in poverty can be a part of a summer camp environment that is common to affluent youth; they may take their first dance, film making, or theater class in summer school/camp.

We have also have many families reach out for social services during the summer because other school resources are closed. We've helped families with electricity, rental assistance, food, clothing, and other basic needs that help provide stability to youth & families.

Last summer we have one first grade boy who increased his reading skill level by 9 months growth in our short 6 week summer program. He was able to take books home to read and share with his family.

In our neighborhood, transportation is a vital part of summer programming because youth live across busy streets and should not be navigating them by themselves. Your support of House Bill 3496 will help students access to the services that they need during the summer.