

Educationally Speaking  
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Summer school does not always make sense to me. I understand the concept when students are taking summer school classes in order to access more rigorous courses and elective options during the regular school year. For example, we have many students who are enrolled in physical education classes this summer so that they can enroll in AVID and other elective classes during the school year. That makes sense to me. I also understand when students take classes during the summer in order to increase the likelihood of success during the regular school year. This summer we have two classes of freshman English and two classes of algebra for incoming ninth grade students. Students in these classes are improving their reading, writing, or math skills in order to be more successful when school begins in late August. Again, this makes sense to me.

But the majority of students in summer school are attending in order to make up one or two classes that they failed during the regular school year. Making up the class(es) in order to graduate makes sense, but failing the class to begin with doesn't. Fundamentally, students do not fail classes because the curriculum is too difficult or rigorous. Most failing grades can be directly attributed to not doing class work and homework. So, let's see. If I fail a class during the regular school year because I did not do class work and/or homework, I can go to summer school where I will have to do the class work in order to pass the class. There is no homework during summer school, so is this where the advantage is? I can't imagine concluding that spending more time in school, approximately an additional 70 hours of seat time during the summer, is worth it. But, like I said, it doesn't make sense to me.

I do suspect that this may change. Funding for summer school has been severely cut and has been blended into the district's primary funding. One of the choices that our district will need to consider is maximizing the use of funding during the regular school year and severely limiting/reducing summer school programs. If this happens, I am convinced that more students will choose to pass the classes that they take during the regular school year because summer school will no longer be an option. This will mean more time for students to relax and play during the summer. That makes sense to me.

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