To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council  
From: Children, Youth and Recreation Commission  
Submitted by: Julie Sinai, Chairperson, Children, Youth and Recreation Commission  
Subject: Referral Response - Summer Learning Loss

RECOMMENDATION
The Children, Youth and Recreation Commission recommends that the City Council direct the City Manager to assign the appropriate City staff to meet with appropriate Berkeley Unified School District staff as a first step toward understanding the issue of summer learning loss in Berkeley, and the existing summer learning activities available to elementary school students.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION
The fiscal impact of this recommendation will include City staff time.

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS
On June 13, 2017, Berkeley City Councilmembers Bartlett, Davila, and Hahn issued a Council referral to the Children, Youth and Recreation Commission (CYRC) regarding the summer learning loss too frequently suffered by children from low-income families. (See Attachment 1.) The CYRC shares City Council concerns about the problem and are eager to help identify ways that the City of Berkeley can more effectively address the challenge.

Your memo laid out a number of steps for us to address summer learning loss:
- Develop a database of summer academic learning opportunities for elementary school children.
- Host workshops about summer academic learning opportunities.
- Conduct outreach to low-income families regarding the database and the workshops.
- Survey BUSD elementary schools to assess low-income families’ access to summer learning activities.
- Make policy recommendations to the Council about how to expand access to summer learning activities for elementary school children.

If data regarding low-income families’ summer learning activities is not available, then perhaps such research would be appropriate, either by BUSD or City staff. If adequate
and affordable summer learning opportunities are available but are not being accessed by Berkeley's low-income youth, then perhaps workshops and outreach would be appropriate. If programs are not accessible, then we would work with staff to develop recommendations for expanding access, potentially by adjusting the focus of future funding competitions, and/or identifying other solutions. In order to determine the right next steps we would need staff assistance in conducting at least an initial assessment.

High-quality summer learning opportunities could play a key role in closing the achievement gap in Berkeley, and we are committed to doing what we can to help pursue that goal in the context of our role as an advisory committee to the Council.

BACKGROUND
At a regular meeting on October 23, 2017, the Children, Youth and Recreation Commission took action to accept the amended version of this item and nominate Julie Sinai (Chair) to finalize the item and, if necessary, represent the Children, Youth and Recreation Commission at the City Council Meeting.

(M/S/C: Bautista/Freeman; Ayes: Sinai, Tseng; Nayes: None; Abstain: None; Absent: Echols, O'Keefe, Shireman, Taylor.)

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY
No adverse effects to the environment.

RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION
At our June 26, 2017 meeting, the CYRC adopted a mission statement that commits us to seeking to achieve equity in the policies and programs under our purview. And in our annual work plan (See Attachment 2) we committed to use an equity lens to examine, amongst other things, the gaps in out-of-school educational offerings, including during the summer.

In our funding recommendations, we prioritize programs that serve low income youth, including addressing summer learning loss. We, like the Council, are also committed to the 2020 Vision for Berkeley’s Children and Youth, the partnership among the City, the Berkeley Unified School District, the University of California and others to end the disparities in academic achievement that exist along racial lines among children and youth in Berkeley. Addressing summer learning loss is, of course, consistent with the 2020 Vision.

We are eager to follow up on these ideas. However, as an advisory committee to the Council we are limited in what we are able to do directly. We do not run programs nor do we have the authority to direct staff to conduct surveys or to do outreach.

Once the City Manager’s assigned staff has scoped out the current knowledge base on the issue of summer learning loss in Berkeley, we would be more than willing to review the information and provide our advice to the Council regarding next steps.
ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS CONSIDERED
None.

CITY MANAGER
See City Manager companion report.

CONTACT PERSON
Steph Chu, Secretary, Children, Youth and Recreation Commission, 510-981-6651

Attachments:
1: City Council Referral Memo Regarding Summer Learning Loss (6-13-17)
2: Children, Youth and Recreation Commission Work Plan
To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Councilmembers Ben Bartlett, Cheryl Davila, Sophie Hahn

Subject: Direction to the Children, Youth, and Recreation Commission: Tackle the Summer Learning Loss for Elementary School Children

RECOMMENDATION
Direct the Children, Youth, and Recreation Commission to tackle the summer learning loss for low-income elementary children through:

1. **Consolidation, Education, & Outreach.**
   
i. **Database.** The commission shall develop and maintain a database containing all summer academic opportunities and learning activities for elementary school children in Berkeley, along with any associated costs, application processes, and scholarship opportunities. The commission shall work with the City to ensure that this database is publicly available and accessible in public libraries and on the City website.

   ii. **Workshops.** On an annual basis, the commission shall provide at least two educational workshops about available summer academic opportunities and learning activities for elementary school children in Berkeley. The workshops shall include information about the costs associated with any programs, guidance on the application processes, and guidance on scholarship opportunities.

   iii. **Outreach.** The commission shall conduct outreach to low-income families in Berkeley to inform them about paragraphs i and ii. The outreach shall be done in partnership with the Berkeley Unified School District (BUSD) Family Engagement and Equity Staff.

2. **Assessment & Policy Recommendations.**
   
i. **Assessment.** The commission shall design and carry out a survey of BUSD elementary schools, in order to assess the extent to which low-income
families do not have access to summer learning activities for their children, and the reasons for the lack of access.

ii. Policy Recommendations. The commission shall make policy recommendations to council about how to expand access to summer academic opportunities and learning activities for low-income elementary school children. The policy recommendations can include budget referrals, recommendations to expand existing partnerships with UC Berkeley, recommendations to establish or expand public-private partnerships, and other policy solutions to increase equity in academic achievement through providing equal access to summer learning.

BACKGROUND

For middle-class families, summer means fun outdoor activities and a break from school schedules. But for kids from low-income families, it also means too much free time. Middle-class options such as camps and sports are often too expensive for low-income families and families. The lack of high-quality, educational or recreational summer programming means low-income children often experience the “summer learning loss.”

The “summer learning loss” is the well-documented phenomenon of students, particularly those from low-income families, losing achievement gains that were made during the school year. A number of empirical studies have found that learning gains made during the school year are similar for students from different social and economic backgrounds. However, when school is not in session, middle-class children continue to advance their quantitative and verbal achievement gains, while low-income children’s academic gains decline.

In a study conducted by Johns Hopkins researchers, low-income children made as much progress in reading during the academic year as middle-income children, but the poorer children’s reading skills slipped away during the summer months. The researchers found that “on average, youth from lower-income families lose two months of learning, or 22% of the school year, during their summer break—and those losses are cumulative, meaning that lower-income youth are also less likely to graduate from high school or attend college.”

The summer learning loss is considered to be a key element of the achievement gap between middle-class white families and low-income families. The researchers found that “two-thirds of the 9th grade reading achievement gap can be explained by unequal access to summer learning opportunities during elementary school.”

BUSD has one of the highest racial achievement gaps in California. According to research conducted by BUSD in 2014, 42% of African American third-grade students and 53% of Hispanic and Latino third graders read at grade level, compared with 89% of white third graders.

It is widely agreed upon that high-quality summer learning programs for low-income children can curtail the racial achievement gap. This item intends to help ensure that the
children of Berkeley receive equal access to opportunities for academic achievement, regardless of socioeconomic status.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS
Staff time.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY
This is in line with the City’s environmental goals.

CONTACT PERSON
Councilmember Ben Bartlett, 510-981-7130
MISSION STATEMENT
The Children, Youth, and Recreation Commission shall be an advisory board and shall seek to achieve equity in policies, programs, planning efforts, activities, and funding associated with youth, families, early childhood education, recreation, and other related City-sponsored activities. The Commission shall advise the City Council on these matters.

1. Identify needs/gaps in City’s community and recreation services for Berkeley’s youth
   a. Invitations for public input at regular Commission Meetings and report to Council on findings.
   b. Review program data including, but not limited to, demand, utilization, demographics and funding for existing programs.
   c. Make recommendations to Council.

2. Examine out of school time/afterschool resources throughout community for Berkeley youth.
   a. Document current successes and potential gaps in educational offerings in out-of-school time programs, including after school and summer programs.
   b. Provide recommendations to Council regarding academics in after school programs.

3. Provide support to Recreation Division staff and make Council recommendations regarding the outreach and marketing of programs to the Berkeley community.
   a. Make recommendations to Council regarding approaching outreach through equity lens (entire community), particularly access to scholarships, free programs, and youth employment opportunities.
   b. Make recommendations to Council regarding city-wide communication (which can include City of Berkeley, Community Agency contractors, and BUSD)

4. Coordinate with Parks & Waterfront Commission regarding alignment of future T1 facility improvement and program provision.
   a. Develop a tool/rubric to recommend to Council for staff to use when determining alignment for:
      i. Equity/Access
      ii. Adaptability for program shifts in the future

5. Review and recommend revisions to Community Agency Grant application and review process
b. Learn more about grantees through site visits and presentations.

c. Make recommendations to City Council regarding RFP outreach to new organizations

6. **Make recommendations to City Council to further the goals of the 2020 Vision for Berkeley’s Children and Youth, as well as the health, safety and well-being of Berkeley’s children and youth.**