A Look Back at Summer of Summit

Program Overview
During the summer of 2013, Summit Public Schools developed a bold program to contribute to its transition to an Optimized School Model. In designing the Summer of Summit experience, we recognized the opportunity to accomplish some important goals:

- Develop a world-class curriculum publicly accessible online to educators worldwide
- Engage in meaningful professional development with peers across organizations
- Shift curriculum writing to the summer to allow teachers to focus on students during the year
- Contribute to the enhancement of a bold school model advancing public education

Summer of Summit attracted the participation of over 60 educators who committed a collective 7,200 hours of work over the summer. The program was designed to be a unique experience, including:

- Product-based professional development deeply rooted in practice
- Participation of educators from a wide range of organizations
- Close partnerships with innovative education technology companies

Educators would work in teams to curate a 6-12 curriculum that propels every student towards college and career readiness. The curriculum would enable students to engage in authentic, real-life experiences and to develop the necessary content knowledge, cognitive skills, and non-cognitive skills. The vision was to create:

- Subject Guides for content knowledge in five core subject areas as well as college knowledge, academic literacy, personal finance, and health and wellness
- Content Knowledge Playlists that correspond to the Subject Guides and allow students to drive their own learning
- Content Assessments that correspond to each playlist and give students immediate feedback and give teachers specific data with which to drive instruction and intervention
- Learning Modules that lead students through rich, project-based learning experiences
- Performance Tasks that culminate projects by assessing students’ cognitive skills.

Products Created
Summer of Summit participants made significant progress in curating our 6-12 assessments and curriculum, including:

- In addition to completing competency-based Content Guides for our five academic subjects of English, Math, Science, History, and Spanish, we have guides for College Knowledge, Academic Literacy, Personal Finance, and Health and Wellness that define college-ready knowledge.
• To assess students’ progression along these Content Guides, we have created 558 on-demand content assessments that give students instant feedback and a different version of the quiz every time. Each content assessment is paired with a diagnostic assessment that allows students to self-assess before working on a focus area.

• Supporting self-directed learning of content focus areas, we created 106 multimodal playlists that provide students with a diverse array of learning resources to meet their individual needs.

• We created 157 performance tasks to anchor rich project-based learning activities and to develop and assess students’ cognitive skills, along with 101 learning modules to support their work on these projects.

Professional Development
Summer of Summit brought together Summit teachers, as well as educators from around the country, to not only leverage the vast internal expertise and resources of its teachers, but to also provide professional development to every teacher.

Culture of Inclusion
• Twenty-five visitors and new teachers came from as far as New York to learn about the core principles and systems of Summit Public Schools during Boot Camp for the week of June 17.

• A total of fifteen new Summit hires acclimated and meaningfully contributed over the summer.

Culture of Innovation
• Our work has been grounded in a theory of innovation, informed by The Lean Startup by Eric Ries and other related readings.

• Teachers grew to trust the ongoing process of revision and iteration that will continue into the school year, measuring student data, learning from it, and then improving products as needed.

• We created a structure of Teacher Project Implementation Notes for teachers to record, update, and collaborate on instructional strategies aligned to each project.

Culture of Collaboration
• Participants met on site at least 20 hours every week for face-to-face collaboration.

• Every Tuesday and Wednesday, teachers organized and participated in discussion sessions on topics such as
  o Writing Quality Multiple Choice Questions
  o Building a Self-directed Student Culture
  o Chromebooks and Google Apps
  o What happens when the Internet goes down? Brainstorm!

• All of the products we created went through a detailed peer review process that involved collecting thoughts and feedback from other teachers in and outside of the department.
THANK YOU and your team for such a wonderful week at the Summer of Summit. I know that I have NOT had a professional experience which has had such an immediate impact on my instructional practice and my personal direction in blended instruction! I am truly grateful for the experience...

– Erika Mitchell, City Bridge

Culture of Discipline

- We continued to refine instructions and protocols for authoring and reviewing assessments and curriculum, compiling all resources into Summit’s Optimized Common Assessment Plan playlist.
- Our workflow has been, and will continue to be, organized via Trello, an online project management system.

External Partnerships

Although the majority of the work of Summer of Summit was done by new and returning Summit teachers, we greatly benefited from the participation and contributions of multiple partners.

Educational Technology Companies

Summer of Summit has been a chance to build on Summit’s collaboration with educational technology start-ups. By openly sharing our perspectives with these companies, we are able to contribute to the development of their platforms, enhancing their capabilities and readying the platforms for use by our schools and faculty this fall. In addition, all of the products we built this summer are publicly available on free or low-cost platforms for anyone to use.

- Activate Instruction publicly launched at the beginning of August, prominently featuring the work of Summit teachers as examples of what is possible for playlists on their platform.
- We have strengthened our collaboration with Illuminate Education, and they have developed features like fill-in-the-blank questions for pooled content assessments based on our requests.
- Show Evidence continued to seek input from our teachers as it works on its teacher- and student-facing platform.
- As Gobstopper develops their e-reading platform, they were on campus day after day gauging how teachers might use the tool. This summer, we were the first people to ever upload a document to their site!
- We partnered with Washington DC based EverFi, an online educational organization, to support our work with financial and digital literacy.

Other Educational Organizations

Many educators from around the country were excited to join Summer of Summit to:

- Participate in professional development
- Curate curriculum and assessments aligned with Common Core standards
- Engage with Summit educators and experience the organization’s innovation and curation process.

We were joined by educators from:

- Intrinsic Schools, San Francisco Unified School District, New York City Public Schools, Hillsdale High School, Foundations College Prep, City Bridge, and Educurious
Integration with the Optimized Model

Coordinating with teams
- A key ongoing focus of Summer of Summit was **zooming out** and placing our work in the context of the entire optimized model.
- We collaborated frequently with Red Team, the group of all school site leaders, as they reviewed Summer of Summit products, gave updates about implementation decisions, checked in with new hires, and built community among teachers from their school sites.

Building excitement
Given that the teachers participating in Summer of Summit are the same individuals who will be implementing its curriculum in the fall, it was also important to build excitement for the coming year.

- Over time, teachers became more excited at the prospect of teaching using the products that they were creating.
- **Course Level Teams**, all teachers of a single course throughout Summit Public Schools, began meeting this summer to engage in meaningful collaboration that will continue into the year.
- From relationship-building activities to constantly available snacks to authentic collaboration around important work, Summer of Summit has used many tools to build community. We have grown into a strong, closely-knit group collectively committed to the vision of optimized and excited to implement our work in the year to come!

How excited are you to teach using the products you created?

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<th>Week 1</th>
<th>Week 3</th>
<th>Week 5</th>
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<td>% of Respondents</td>
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- 1 (Not at all)
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 (Couldn't be more)