

Summer School

By Kellen Tibor, Office of Academic Support Intern

The new school year is fast approaching, and with that comes the close of something often intentionally removed from most students' minds – summer school. Although those two words are many times dreaded by most students, the dislike of the program may simply be a misunderstanding about both its identity and purpose. The reality is that summer school offers benefits and opportunities which are not shared by the relaxing carefree summer that will put summer school students ahead, especially for high school students. A student considering summer courses should carefully consider the costs and benefits of pursuing that option with his or her teachers and parents or guardians. Here are just a few examples of those benefits:

Summer school offers students a chance to get ahead. Taking a course over summer allows a student to free up space in their schedule to take more required courses or open a slot for classes a student is interested in outside of the required curriculum. This also makes room available for dual credit of AP classes for a fraction of the cost of a college course. Finally, students who are in need of remediation can re-take a course in summer, pass with the better grade on their transcript, and remain on schedule.

Summer school offers better instruction. Despite the drawback of listening to the same content for hours on end, the benefits of summer courses still outweigh the negatives. Smaller class sizes mean more individualized instruction for students and better instructional support. Without the distractions of all other courses in a school year, a student can focus all academic energy on one subject and learn the content in-depth rather than superficially.

Summer school also provides social benefits. Many students do not get out of the house during summer. Social interaction is a necessary part of human life, and problems such as anxiety and depression have been observed in kids and teens who are removed from a social environment for months at a time. Social interaction is a constant at summer school, and an active program can also provide an excuse for students to get some form of exercise.

In North Dakota, approximately 12,199 students have benefitted from summer school programs during the 2014-2015 school year in high school alone. Data is still being compiled for this school year, but with 218 programs providing summer courses and an increasing student population, that number can only go up.