

COVER PAGE

2- PAGE EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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INTRODUCTION

In his January 2020 State of the State address, Governor Phil Scott proposed an initiative to offer Universal Access to afterschool programs in Vermont. As stated in his speech, the rationale for this far-reaching goal is based on four considerations. In Governor Scott's words:

- *First, it's based on a successful model from Iceland focused on preventing drug use as well as improving academic and social outcomes. And the evidence is clear: Kids who participate in afterschool activities and programs do better in school and in life than kids who don't.*
- *Second, a universal program expands choices for every kid—it doesn't limit them. And it would be voluntary. Those who currently go home to their families, or participate in drama, music, sports, debate, or older kids who choose to work could all continue to do so.*
- *Third, it supports working parents by reducing the logistical and financial burden of afterschool care.*
- *Finally, we're not recreating the wheel, but we are creating more equity. Many schools already have afterschool options through organizations like the YMCA and others, but it's far from universal.*

(Office of the Governor, State of the State Address, January 9, 2020)

The Task Force's overall vision for Universal Afterschool in Vermont reflects the Governor's charge and direction. The overarching goal is that every child and youth in Vermont has a place to be in the afterschool hours outside the school day and over the summer. In addressing Universal Afterschool it is important to note that "afterschool" is about more than the hours of 3-6pm on a week day. It is also about programming during school vacation weeks, programming in the evenings and weekends especially for older youth, before school programs, and summer programs to help bridge the gap between June and September. The Task Force also recognizes that it will take a wide variety of community partners, schools, and organizations working together to provide universal afterschool across Vermont.

More than anything, the Task Force focused on equity at the very core of this work. In order to truly achieve Universal Afterschool every aspect of the system must be based on inclusion. Universal Afterschool is about more than providing programming for many children and youth. It is also about ensuring that none are left out because of where they live, what languages are spoken at home, how much money their families have, any special needs or disabilities that have that may require special accommodations, their race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or any other factor.

The Task Force discussed a wide range of priorities relating to the design and implementation of Universal Afterschool. The sections that follow categorize these priorities into two key areas: (1) Program Funding Priorities- that speak to how funding should be directed to meet specific needs and gaps in the state; and (2) Grant Program Implementation Priorities- that address the system itself and the key principles that it should embody as Vermont moves towards Universal Afterschool.

PROGRAM FUNDING PRIORITIES

The 2020 America After 3PM report found that 39%, or over 26,000 Vermont children and youth, who are not currently participating in afterschool programs would be today if more were available and accessibleⁱ. While all communities in Vermont should be allowed to apply for funding, the Universal Afterschool Task Force recommends the following funding priorities:

Expanding access to programs for children and youth of all ages who qualify as low-income and middle-income. According to the 2020 America After 3PM study, Vermont has the lowest level of low-income children enrolled in afterschool in the nation, and Vermont parents listed program cost as one of the key barriers to participation.ⁱ

Expanding programming in parts of the state where few or no options are currently available. Parents in Vermont also report lack of available programs in their area as a barrier to participation. These disparities in program availability are further substantiated by data collected at the state level. Grant funds should be targeted to support programs in these communities.ⁱ

Making sure that underserved populations are well-represented in the mix of children/youth participating in programs. Analysis of afterschool participation rates across different sub-populations of youth should be an ongoing and integral part of the funding process. Data from Vermont's Youth Risk Behavior Survey in recent years show that special consideration should be taken to ensure participation among racial/ethnic groups, New Americans, and LGBTQI youth.ⁱⁱ In addition, programs that serve older youth are important, as well as options that encourage participation in non-traditional offerings (e.g., engineering clubs for girls and non-binary gendered youth).

Providing additional resources so that students with disabilities and/or special needs are able to fully participate in programs. All afterschool opportunities created through public funds or using public facilities should develop capacity with the financial support of the state to be equitably accessible to students with disabilities. Children and students should not be denied access to afterschool opportunities due to the need for services and supports in order to access the opportunities. The design of afterschool programs should consider universal design concepts to ensure inclusion of all children.

Strengthening key elements of program quality within all afterschool programs, including in the areas of Social-Emotional Learning, STEM, transferable skills, positive youth development, universal design, youth voice, and program intentionality). Afterschool programs should offer a wide range of offerings and opportunities for youth. Youth voice must be incorporated into how a program is designed and what programming is offered. Particular attention should be paid to offering programming and supports around Social-Emotional Learning, STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math), transferable skills, positive youth development, and youth voice/engagement as these areas have been shown to contribute to positive and long-lasting impacts for youth.^{iii,iv}

Building protective factors that align with youth substance misuse prevention. Afterschool programs reduce the risk of substance abuse by helping youth strengthen their connection to school and build self-control, self-confidence, and quality peer relationships. They also help to keep kids away from drugs by engaging them in educational, stimulating activities.^v Vermont's afterschool programs should

promote a sense of belonging, positive relationships with staff and peers, and opportunities to practice decision making and explore sense of self.

GRANT PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION PRIORITIES

Flexibility. Every community in Vermont has a unique mix of resources, partners, strengths, and opportunities. Flexibility in the system will allow funds to be geared towards specific needs in the local community, including staffing, transportation, supplies, etc. While program quality is important, the Task Force recommends allowing for a wide variety of program types and programming options as essential given Vermont's varied landscape. The application process should be accessible to all communities (e.g., small, rural, etc.).

Eligibility. The Task Force recommends a mixed delivery model that would allow a broad array of entities to apply for funding to expand afterschool access. Eligible entities should include a school, district, supervisory union, nonprofit organization, municipality, and licensed childcare center. Eligible programs should serve students on a regular basis outside the regular school day/year (e.g., before school, after school, summer, weekends, school vacation weeks, evenings, or teacher in-service days).

Broad Range of Priority Areas. The grant program for Universal Access must allow for a broader range of priority areas so that programs can apply for what their community most needs and/or what special populations within their community need.

Multi-Agency and Cross-Sector Collaboration and Coordination. As seen throughout COVID, multi-agency collaboration and coordination is essential to the success of any major initiative serving children, youth, and families. Because afterschool is a cross-cutting issue, close collaboration should include, but not be limited to, the Agency of Education- 21C Program, Agency of Commerce and Community Development, Agency of Administration/Department of Libraries, and Agency of Human Services, in particular the Department of Health, Department of Mental Health, Department for Children and Families- Child Development Division, Family Services Division, and Licensing Unit. This cross-agency collaboration is essential to creating a coordinated system that has the broad perspective of the whole field.

Multi-Year Funding. Multi-year funding is essential to give programs time to get up-and-running and to build staff and programming options. Multi-year grants also place the emphasis on designing and running quality programs instead of on writing one grant after another. It also takes time for parents, families, and children/youth to get to know program staff. Knowing that a program will be around for a number of years also increases the likelihood that children and youth will participate.

Program Sustainability. The grant application process should include questions about program sustainability. With limited resources, the state should invest in programs that are most likely to be able to sustain for multiple years and even beyond the scope of the current grant.

Childcare and Learning. Universal Afterschool must meet the childcare needs of working families while also providing opportunities to enhance learning, foster positive youth development, and build protective factors for children and youth. Meeting the needs of working families includes ensuring that

programs run on a regular basis five days a week and that they are open for enough hours each day to better align with the regular work schedule of parents and family members.

Youth Voice. Authentic youth engagement requires intentional programming, skilled staff, and a deep understanding of how to build youth voice into every aspect of programming. Research shows that afterschool programs that support true youth engagement have stronger positive youth outcomes.^{iv} The Task Force recommends that youth voice be an integral and foundational component within all afterschool programs, from collecting youth input into program structure and options to the establishment of local youth councils and other opportunities for young people to have a say in the program and in their community.

Protective Factors. Research shows that afterschool programs play an essential role in primary prevention measures. As recommended by Vermont's Opioid Coordination Council and the Vermont Marijuana Commission, expanded access to afterschool programming can build protective factors for youth.^{vi} Universal Afterschool program must include key protective elements such as a sense of belonging, support from caring adults and mentors, positive peer relationships, and youth agency.

Provides Safe Transportation. The Task Force recommends that all afterschool programs address the need to safe transportation to and from the program location. If not providing transportation themselves, the program should show that the need for transportation has been assessed and addressed in another manner. The diversity of settings and increased opportunities will often be dependent on transportation availability.

Partnerships across Schools and Communities. Research has shown that children and youth thrive when there is alignment and close partnership across schools, community, afterschool programs, and family. (*NEED CITE*). Quality afterschool programs do not replicate the school day but rather complement and reinforce it. Close collaboration between school staff and afterschool staff is essential. Likewise, vibrant afterschool programs help connect children and youth to their community through service projects, field trips, outdoor adventure programs, career exploration programs, as well as, bringing in guest speakers, local artisans, and community members to share skills, information, and interests.

Cost to Families. Universal afterschool must mean access for all children and youth. The Universal Afterschool system in Vermont should lower the cost to families across the board rather than only helping a subset of children/youth pay for access to programs.

Supports Staff. The quality and success of the afterschool system in Vermont relies heavily on the people who staff and run the programs. The system must build up, strengthen, and support individuals working in afterschool through livable wages, opportunities for learning and advancement, meaningful work, and support from supervisors as well as the organizations and communities in which they work.

Monitors Outcomes. Outcomes should be monitored at both the state level and at the program level. Monitoring outcomes and their alignment with established implementation priorities will allow Vermont to modifying the grant program over time in order to make continual progress.

BACKGROUND

The move to provide Universal Afterschool in Vermont did not come about overnight. Rather, Vermont's efforts to expand access to afterschool and summer learning programs began in earnest more than seven years ago. Where we are today is the result of extensive and ongoing efforts by the administration, General Assembly, stakeholders, and advocates for many years.

2013-2014

House & Senate Education Committees both included language in the Misc. Ed Bill that charged the PreK-16 Council with creating an Expanded Learning Opportunities (ELO) Working Group to "review and evaluate issues of equity in and access to Vermont's Expanded Learning Opportunities, including afterschool and summer programs" (H.876). While the Misc. Ed. Bill was not enacted that year, the PreK-16 Council took on this work, given that the legislature had put forward the request.

ELO Working Group met for six months and created the report, "Every Hour Counts: Vermont Students Succeed with Expanded Learning Opportunities." This report outlined both national and state data on the value of afterschool and summer programs. It also created a database and accompanying mapping tool to assess available program locations, indicators of need, and issues regarding access.^{vii}

Vermont Afterschool received a grant from the National Conference of State Legislatures to support the work of the ELO Working Group, particularly around data and mapping.

Another product the ELO Working Group was a comprehensive Return-on-Investment (ROI) study. The methodology behind the Vermont ROI study has since been replicated by several other states and at the national level.

2015-2016

Increasing access to afterschool and summer learning programs was supported by a number of councils and groups, including: Vermont's Child Poverty Council, Working Vermonters Caucus, Vermont Early Childhood Alliance, Voices for Vermont's Children, and Hunger Free Vermont.

Rep. Mike Mrowicki introduced a bill (H.391) to create the Expanded Learning Opportunities (ELO) Special Fund.

House Education Committee created the ELO Special Fund in Misc. Ed bill (H.480) and charged the ELO Working Group under the PreK-16 Council with developing recommendations for how the fund should be set up and administered.

ELO Working Group met for 6 months and created the report, "Closing the Gap in Vermont: The Expanded Learning Opportunities (ELO) Special Fund." This report provides the framework for creating a state level grant program in order to increase access to afterschool and summer learning programs.

The ELO Working Group also created a further report at the direction of the PreK-16 Council called, "All Learning Counts: How Expanded Learning Opportunities Support Flexible, Personalized, Student-centered, and Proficiency-based Learning in Vermont."

2017-2018

The Vermont Childhood Poverty Council named funding for afterschool and summer learning in the ELO Special Fund as a top priority. Voices for Vermont's Children and Hunger Free Vermont both actively support the ELO Special Fund request.

Rep. Diane Lanpher introduced H.270 to recognize the priorities of the Vermont Childhood Poverty Council, which she co-chaired, and to implement the recommendations of the ELO Working Group on the structure, priorities, and administration of the ELO Special Fund.

House Education Committee took up H.270, marks it up, and recommended \$1 million in the ELO Special Fund in March 2017 in its memo to the Appropriations Committee.

The ELO Working Group language contained in H.270 was eventually moved to the Miscellaneous Education bill. Even though the language passed the House of Representatives, and the House and Senate conferees agreed to the ELO language, a last minute disagreement over unrelated issues stopped the bill from passing before adjournment.

The budget approved by the legislature included \$2.5 million in one-time money to be used for substance use disorder prevention efforts, and the Secretary of Human Services was charged with determining how to spend these funds. Ultimately, recognizing the connection between afterschool programming and the state's prevention goals, \$600,000 of these funds were allocated for expanding access to afterschool and summer learning programs. To allocate and oversee the use of these funds, the Afterschool for All grant program was created under the Child Development Division, Department for Children and Families, Agency of Human Services (see under 2018-2019 for implementation details).

2018-2019

Vermont's Opioid Council and Marijuana Council recommended that the state "Increase geographic equity and access to afterschool programs and out-of-school activities" as one of four key strategies identified under Prevention.^{viii}

The Prevention and Education Subcommittee of the Governor's Advisory Commission on Marijuana recommended funding for substance misuse prevention. Under prevention, they recommended \$6 million to fund six regional prevention networks for activities including "fund prevention programs, such as afterschool programming, youth leadership, and community coalitions".^{ix}

In spring 2019, the Afterschool for All Grant Program was established by the Child Development Division to award the \$600,000 set aside from the tobacco settlement. Vermont Afterschool was given a grant from the state to help run the grant process and provide technical assistance and coaching support to the grantees. A Grant Oversight Committee was created, and the grant program was designed to follow the program intent as outlined in H.270. In that first round, over 100 Letters of Interest were submitted with 2-year requests totaling approximately \$5.4 million. The Oversight Committee recommended awards for 12 organizations and specified that all awards would be for 2-year grants.

2019-2020

Governor Scott's State of the State Address in January 2020 included a major initiative to provide universal afterschool in Vermont.

The Senate Education Committee introduced S. 335 to create a Universal Afterschool Task Force. The language from the bill was eventually incorporated into H.969 and passed in fall 2020.

Also in fall 2020, one of Vermont's key responses to the need for childcare and out-of-school time programming for children when schools re-open in the fall with adjusted in-person schedules and remote learning days was to create the School-Age Childcare Hubs. \$12 million was allocated to the Hubs initiative including \$6.9 million for grants to organizations to open School-age Hubs and a \$5 million increase to the Child Care Financial Assistance Program (CCFAP). The Hubs initiative was administered by the Child Development Division, Department for Children and Families, Agency of Human Services.

In December 2020, a second round of Afterschool for All grants was made possible due to a financial contribution to Vermont Afterschool from the Vermont Community Foundation (\$50,000) and remaining state dollars (\$61,000). Grant proposals were collected from 87 programs totaling over \$900,000 in requests. Ten new grants were awarded in this second round of Afterschool for All grants.

The Vermont Community Foundation later gave an additional \$110,000 from the VT COVID-19 Response Fund to Vermont Afterschool to run a similar grant program to support teen centers in Vermont. Fourteen grants were awarded to teen centers that were continuing to operate and run programming during COVID.

Also in December 2020, Secretary of Education Dan French convened the first meeting of the Universal Afterschool Task Force.

WORK OF THE UNIVERSAL AFTERSCHOOL TASK FORCE IN 2020-2021

Purpose: To consider and make recommendations on the framework for, the costs of, and related long-term funding sources for access to universal afterschool programs.

Membership:

- Senator Andrew Perchlik (Co-chair)
- Representative Kelly Pajala (Co-chair)
- Jess DeCarolis, Director, Agency of Education
- Geoffrey T. Pippenger, Senior Advisor to the Commissioner, Department for Children and Families, Agency of Human Services
- Chelsea Myers, Associate Executive Director, Vermont Superintendents Association
- Sandra Cameron, Director of Public Policy, Vermont School Boards Association
- Erin Maguire (Essex-Westford School District), Vermont Council of Special Education Administrators
- Matthew DeBlois, (Vergennes Union Elementary School), Vermont Principals' Association

- Mark Tashjian, Chair, Council of Independent Schools
- Retta Dunlap, a representative of Vermont Home Study programs
- David Woolpy, Executive Director, Vermont Boys and Girls Clubs of Rutland County
- Heather Moore (Franklin County), Afterschool Program Representative
- Carrie McDonnell (Windsor/Orange County), Afterschool Program Representative
- Christy Gallese (Chittenden County), Afterschool Program Representative
- Holly Morehouse, Executive Director, Executive Director, Vermont Afterschool

The Task Force met six times between December 2020 and April 2021.

The Task Force's work on the six specific tasks as assigned in H. 969:

- **The Task Force shall map existing afterschool programs and highlight gaps in access and equity, including equity for Vermonters with disabilities.**
 - For baseline data on where programs are located and what geographic gaps may exist, the Task Force utilized the database and online map created by Vermont Afterschool for the ELO Working Group through the earlier grant from the National Conference on State Legislatures. This data is updated annually. ^{vii}
 - In December 2020, the Afterschool Alliance released a national report, America Afterschool 3PM. ⁱ This report ranks Vermont as one of the Top Ten states for quality of afterschool programming and parent satisfaction. The report also states that more than 26,000 Vermont children and youth would be in afterschool programs today if more were available and accessible. Based on parent survey data, the report identifies three main barriers to participation: (1) Affordability- cost of programs; (2) Availability- having programs located in their community; and (3) Accessibility- challenges due to transportation.
 - The Task Force was also able to draw on lessons learned through the School-age Childcare Hubs program implemented by AHS/DCF/CDD in fall 2020.
 - In addition to having directors of afterschool programs as members on the Task Force, a number of leaders from afterschool programs in different parts of the state provided input through the public comment process embedded in the meeting agendas.
 - The Task Force heard testimony from the Agency of Education on the 21st CCLC Program and from the Agency of Human Services, Department for Children and Families, Child Development Division on the Afterschool for All Grant Program.
 - **Include information from the field on how equity for Vermonters with disabilities is currently addressed in the afterschool setting and what barriers exist (still need to do this)**
- **The Task Force shall recommend, as part of the framework, best practices and key evidence-based strategies to maximize health and substance abuse prevention and shall consult with the Substance Misuse Prevention and Advisory Council.**
 - Members of the Substance Misuse Prevention and Advisory Council presented to the Task Force providing information on the prevention framework, best practices, and evidence-based strategies. They made five recommendations to the Task Force:

- Work with the Substance Misuse Prevention and Advisory Council (SMPC) to cross analyze the Inventory of Substance Misuse Prevention services as required by Vermont Act 82 to further identify gaps in services and identify potential partnerships for afterschool expansion.
- Examine funding and administrative cost sharing structures with substance misuse prevention coalitions and organizations to maximize the potential for both afterschool activities and prevention programming throughout the state without redirecting or diminishing the current funding structure for substance misuse prevention in Vermont.
- Identify a way to support communities in a planning process to ensure the implementation of universal afterschool access meets communities' needs and interests to ensure engagement in the resources provided.
- Require ongoing program evaluation activities into all programming recommendations to ensure effectiveness and to drive quality improvement.
- Implement a professional development requirement of afterschool staff which includes training on substance use prevention and building resiliency among Vermont youth.
- In addition, the Task Force considered data from the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) connecting prevention and afterschool participation.ⁱⁱ
- The Task Force also explored the Vermont Youth Project through Vermont Afterschool as an example of how Vermont communities are utilizing primary prevention strategies from Iceland and Finland to build protective factors for youth through afterschool activities, parent co-collaboration, and community-wide strategies.^x
- **The Task Force shall consider the report entitled “Closing the Gap in Vermont: The Expanded Learning Opportunities (ELO) Special Fund,” dated November 2015, issued by the Working Group on Expanded Learning Opportunities of Vermont’s PreK–16 Council.**
 - The Task Force reviewed the Closing the Gap report and heard testimony from Katie Mobley who was a member of the ELO Working Group. Task Force member, Holly Morehouse, had also served as chair of the ELO Working Group for two years.
 - Key elements of the work of the ELO Working Group, including a number of their recommendations for the grant program, are reflected in this report, such as: the creation of an oversight committee; cross-agency collaboration; priority focus on low-income children and youth, underserved areas of the state, older youth, and STEM opportunities; eligibility being open to schools, districts, supervisory unions, non-profit organizations, municipalities, and licensed childcare centers; and multi-year and flexible funding.
- **The Task Force shall review the status and results of the Afterschool for All (AFA) Grant Program administered by the Department for Children and Families.**
 - Melissa Riegel-Garrett presented on the Afterschool for All grant program, including design of the grant program, implementation, administration, awarded grants, support to grantees, outcomes, and reporting.

- Katie Mobley, member of the Afterschool for All Grant Oversight Committee, shared information about how the AFA Oversight Committee has operations and continues to function in support of the grant program.
- The Task Force also heard from several programs that have Afterschool for All grants, including Heather Moore who runs the afterschool programs in Franklin Northeast Supervisory Union and is also a member of the Task Force.
- **In exploring funding sources, the Task Force shall prefer solutions that do not draw upon the State’s Education Fund and shall explore the possibility of using potential revenue from the taxation and regulation of cannabis.**
 - The budget bill specifies cannabis tax revenue to expand access to afterschool and summer programming. (NEED SPECIFIC BILL NUMBER)
 - May want to discuss funding further at one of the remaining meetings. Also see page 16 for rough estimates.
- **The Task Force may recommend legislative language to enact its recommendations.**
TBD

PROPOSED GRANT PROGRAM

The Universal Afterschool Task Force makes the following recommendations for a statewide grant program designed to increase access to afterschool and summer programs.

Purpose:

The purpose of the grant program is to provide Universal Afterschool in Vermont within a framework that emphasizes inclusion, belonging, and equity. The grant program should expand access for low and middle income children and youth and in underserved areas of the state. Afterschool programs funded as a part of this initiative should elevate youth voice and engagement; support working families; provide enrichment and learning experiences; build protective factors; support social-emotional learning, youth mental health, and well-being; and keep children and youth from kindergarten through high school healthy and safe. Programs should provide universally-designed learning (UDL) and enrichment experiences that are accessible and welcoming to all of Vermont’s children and youth.

Definitions:

- Afterschool Program- a structured program serving children and youth on a regular basis anytime outside the school day and over the summer. This can include academic, enrichment and family engagement activities and programs that can occur before school, afterschool, on weekends and evenings, and during the summer and school vacations.
- Access- means the ability and opportunity for all children and youth to participate
 - Program exists and is safe and of high-quality;
 - no waiting lists;

- either low/no cost or subsidy, scholarships and sliding fee scales are available;
 - hours of operation work for working families;
 - children/youth can get to and from the program safely;
 - supports and staffing are in place to accommodate a wide range of needs (e.g., ELL, SPED, trauma-informed, disabilities, etc.)
- Equity- According to the Vermont Agency of Education, educational equity means that every student has access to the resources, opportunities and educational rigor they need at the right moment in their education, whatever their race, gender/identity, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, language, disability, family background, or family income may be. (Adapted from CCSSO, Leading for Equity). Also see the Equity Lens Tool created by the Racial Equity Director/Agency of Administration and in use by the Vermont Agency of Education.
 - Quality- see the National Afterschool Association’s Focus Brief^{xi} and the Quality Assessment Tool from the Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality.^{xii}
 - *Other definitions that might be needed: UDL, STEM/STEAM, evidenced-based practice, results-based accountability, protective factors*

Eligibility:

Eligible entities should include schools, school districts, supervisory unions, nonprofit organizations, municipalities, and licensed childcare centers.

Funded programs must fulfill defined safety requirements as determined by the state (e.g. facilities, background checks) and are encouraged to:

- Demonstrate strong collaboration with the school district(s) and local mentoring programs
- Demonstrate readiness to support children/youth with varying ability levels
- Demonstrate understanding of methods to support children/youth with limited English proficiency
- Engage in ongoing professional development, including cultural competence, substance abuse prevention, resilience and universal design for learning
- Utilize evidence-informed practices
- Demonstrate competence with stated high-quality program standards and ongoing program evaluation

Funding Priorities:

- Low-income and middle-income children and youth
- Underserved areas of the state
- Underserved/marginalized populations to ensure equity
- Access, supports, and accommodations for students with disabilities and/or special needs
- Quality programming content and design (e.g., Social-Emotional Learning, STEM, transferable skills, positive youth development, universal design, youth voice, and program intentionality)
- Substance misuse prevention

Oversight Body:

The grant program will be overseen by an inclusive advisory committee made up of state agency staff, afterschool and youth development experts, parents, teachers, youth, providers, and other stakeholders (see proposed list below). Members of the committee will be selected to bring a variety of ideas, perspectives, and approaches to the table. Having an inclusive oversight body also helps with transparency and allows for the program to be adapted and modified over time by an informed and invested group as the needs in the state change. The oversight body should help inform the development of the application and grant-making process, the selection of funded programs, and the assessment of overall program outcomes at the state level.

NOTE FOR TASK FORCE: Language from H270 about the duties of the oversight committee:

(1) Collect information and data annually to determine the state and extent of ELOs in Vermont. This analysis shall include an exploration of trends in funding in Vermont and recommendations for how to leverage, integrate, and augment available federal, local, and private dollars to meet the need for quality ELOs in communities throughout Vermont... (2) develop all aspects of the ELO Grant Program, including creating an application process, setting funding priorities, and determining criteria for evaluating applications and for awarding grants and other incentives, such as professional development opportunities, for ELOs in Vermont.

Oversight Committee Membership:

- Child Development Division, Dept for Children and Families
- Department of Health (prevention and youth focus)
- Department of Mental Health
- Department of Libraries
- Agency of Education
- Agency of Commerce and Community Development
- Vermont Afterschool
- Hunger Free Vermont
- Private Philanthropy
- Higher Education
- Representatives from the Field (from Afterschool Programs and/or youth-serving organizations)
- Practicing educational leader (e.g., school administrator or member of a school leadership team; school board member)
- Teacher and/or school guidance counselor
- Special Education Teacher or Administrator or Social Worker
- Parents/ Families
- Youth/Children

Committee members should declare any potential conflicts of interest prior to participating in any discussions about the grant competition design, process, or funding decisions.

Administration

Funding for administrative purposes is often written into the grant program at the state level. It is important that the grant program is administered by an agency that is familiar with the needs of children, youth, and families. The agency/department responsible for administration of the grant program will also collect and analyze data, reporting to the General Assembly annually.

Partnerships:

Community and school partnerships are strongly encouraged to diversify resources and provide more sustainability. The grant process should include a requirement or priority for organizations working with school and community partners.

Authorized Activities:

- High-quality afterschool programs provide access to healthy snacks and meals.
- Time for physical activity – another component of health and wellness- the recommended time is about 30 minutes per day
- STEAM or STEM
- Youth Voice
- Meeting the needs of working families
- Social and emotional learning, resilience
- Protective factors, primary prevention
- Summer –Summer is a time when students can lose both math and reading skills. Lack of summer enrichment through elementary may be responsible for more than half the 9th grade achievement gap between low and high income students.

Key Program Elements

The section details what organizations applying for funding should include in their grant application regarding expected program elements, such as local advisory groups, sustainability, staff qualifications or ratios, transportation, etc.

- Proposed Application Elements:
- Program sustainability
- Transportation
- Universal Design
- Specific staff training, including knowledge of strategies to support children/youth with special needs and those with limited English proficiency
- Safe and supportive environments

Quality Supports

Supports to the field must include ongoing professional development opportunities, coaching, and technical assistance. Quality supports should encourage the following:

- Collaboration with community partners, school district(s), and local mentoring programs
- Ability and readiness to support children/youth with varying ability levels
- Understanding of methods to support children/youth with limited English proficiency

- Cultural competence, substance abuse prevention, resilience, and universal design for learning
- Use of evidenced-informed practices for both instruction and prevention
- Competence with stated high-quality program standards and ongoing program evaluation

Measures of Effectiveness and Reporting Requirements

A comprehensive evaluation process for afterschool programs is key to determining program success and identifying opportunities for improvement. Where possible, data should be reported to the Oversight Committee and administering state agency/department in both aggregated and disaggregated formats:

- Demographic data
- Enrollment and participation data (including data on regular attendees and why families may have declined to enroll)
- Child and youth outcome data and program improvement plans
- Children, youth, and family feedback

Funding Authorizations:

Funding for the grant program should be divided into three components: (1) It is important to specify the minimum grant amount that can be given to an organization and to also consider if multi-year grant awards will be required. Also, could include here whether or not a match requirement will be included.

NOTE TO TASK FORCE: Language from H391 about the funding as an example of how different pots of funding might be specified is provided below. Our task force may want to consider specific fund category to support inclusion.

FROM H391- Grants. Grants shall be available in the following three categories:

(1) The Committee may award grants to school districts or supervisory unions that operate an ELO program or that have contracted with an ELO program or a Licensed Child Care Center to provide expanded learning opportunities, or both. The Committee shall determine the award based upon the size of the program. If a grant recipient is contracting with an ELO program or Licensed Child Care Center that is not located in the school that the children enrolled in the program attend, then the grant recipient shall provide safe transportation from the school to the ELO program site, and may use grant funds to provide the transportation.

(2) The Committee may award grants to organizations providing technical assistance or professional development opportunities to ELO programs. An award under this subdivision shall not exceed \$300,000.00 annually to any one recipient.

(3) The Committee may award grants to grants to community organizations in order to assess whether an ELO program is needed in the community, to determine how families might access an ELO program, or to explore opportunities for ELO partnerships in the community. An award under this subdivision shall not exceed \$5,000.00.

FUNDING ESTIMATES FOR UNIVERSAL AFTERSCHOOL

If no other funding were to be used (e.g., no parent fees, no local match) other than current levels of federal 21C and CCFAP, VT would need between \$22-\$28 million in additional funding to provide universal access to afterschool/summer, assuming that approximately 33% of children/youth would participate on a regular basis. Providing fully inclusive programs would increase this cost. Expecting that more than 33% of children and youth would participate if programs were free or very low-costs would also raise the cost estimate. Requiring a 1-to-1 match through parent fees or local contributions would cut these totals in half.

In the calculations below, school year and summer programming is defined as programs that are in operation for 15 hours per week during the school year and 5 days per week, 40 hours per week, and 6 weeks total during the summer. Vermont Afterschool filtered data from 21C programs by those that met these criteria in 2018-19 and grouped them by size (small, medium, large, extra large) based on the number of students served to come up with an average annual operating cost for each size group. Note that the estimates below are based on costs of providing programming in 2018-2019 without requirements for fully inclusive models.

NOTES:

- If roughly 33% of students would participate in programs on a regular basis, it would cost roughly \$37.3 million to provide school year and summer programming to 33% of elementary and middle school students. Each school would need an average of \$138,288. Subtract \$15 million for current federal funding levels and you get \$22 million, which would require a state investment of \$22 million (or with a 1-to-1 match would require \$11 million).
- It would cost roughly \$42.8 million to provide at school year and summer programming to all elementary and middle school students (100% participation). Each school would need an average of \$158,634. Subtract an estimated \$15 million for current federal funding levels and you get \$28 million. Add a 1-to-1 match requirement, and the number is \$14 million in additional state dollars.
- It would cost roughly \$39.5 million to provide at school year and summer programming to 33% of all K-12 students (including high school). Each school would need an average of \$133,976. Subtract \$15 million from this and you get \$25 million or \$12.5 million with a local match.
- It would cost roughly \$44.4 million to provide school year and summer programming to all K-12 students (high schoolers included). Each school would need an average of \$150,489. Subtract \$15 million from this and you get \$29 million or \$14.5 million with a match.

MOVING TOWARD UNIVERSALITY

- Need for ongoing evolution and guidance/adaption from the Oversight Committee
- Inclusion- Disabilities, vulnerable/marginalized populations- equity and inclusion/ racial
- Transportation and other considerations related to the rural nature of VT

- How do we handle for profit vs non profit if we want it to be free or low cost; other sources of funding coming into the system
- How to channel youth and parent voice into the leadership model

CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

- Possibly point to a bill if the timing makes sense
- Mapping out a 3-year plan (?) to get to universality
 - Refined elements of program planning
 - Scaled expansion over time

ⁱ American After 3PM. December 2020. Afterschool Alliance.

ⁱⁱ Vermont’s Youth Risk Behavior Survey 2017 and 2019.

ⁱⁱⁱ Expanding Minds and Opportunities. FINISH CITATION

^{iv} Durlak, J.A., Weissberg, R.P., and Pachan, M. A meta-analysis of after-school programs that seek to promote personal and social skills in children and adolescents. *American Journal of Community Psychology* 45 (3-4): 294-309, 2010.

^v SAMHSA’s Center for the Application of Prevention Technologies. (2014). CAPT Decision Support Tools—Strategies and Interventions to Prevent Youth Marijuana Use: An At-a-Glance Resource Tool Using Prevention Research to Guide Prevention Practice. SAMHSA’s Center for the Application of Prevention Technologies.

^{vi} Youth Resilience: Strategies for the Third Space. 2019. Vermont Afterschool.

^{vii} Vermont Afterschool. <https://www.vermontafterschool.org/impact/map/>

^{viii} Building Bridges: The Opioid Coordination Council’s Recommended Strategies for 2019.

^{ix} (Report from the Prevention and Education Subcommittee as Revised and Adopted by the Governor’s Advisory Commission on Marijuana, December 2018.

^x Vermont Youth Project, Vermont Afterschool. <https://www.vermontafterschool.org/vyp/about-vyp/>

^{xi} Why Afterschool Quality Matters. National Afterschool Association. A series of focus briefs: State of Afterschool Quality. www.naaweb.org

^{xii} <https://forumfyi.org/work/the-weikart-center/>