



Task Force for Universal Afterschool Access
February 10, 2021, 12:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Draft Meeting Minutes

Microsoft Teams Virtual Meeting

Call In: 1-802-552-8456

Conference ID: 834 010 607#

Per H.969 of 2020, Sec. B.1120.1, a [Task Force for Universal Afterschool Access](#) was created to consider and make recommendations on the framework for, the costs of, and related long-term funding sources for access to universal afterschool programs.

Task Force (TF) Members Present: Representative Kelly Pajala; Senator Perchlik; Jess DeCarolis, Director, Agency of Education (AOE); Geoffrey T. Pippenger, Senior Advisor to the Commissioner, Department for Children and Families (DCF); Chelsea Myers, Associate Executive Director, Vermont Superintendents Association (VSA); Sandra Cameron, Director of Public Policy, Vermont School Boards Association (VSBA); Erin Maguire (Essex-Westford School District), Vermont Council of Special Education Administrators (VCSEA); Matthew DeBlois, (Vergennes Union Elementary School), Vermont Principals' Association (VPA); Retta Dunlap, President, VT Home Education Network; 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; and Holly Morehouse, Executive Director, Executive Director, Vermont Afterschool, Inc.

Others: Lynne Robbins; Katie Mobley; Susan Fortier; Vicky Smith; Kim Peters; Nicole Rau; Melanie Sheehan; Maryann Morris; Lori Uerz; Kelly Dougherty; Maureen Gaidys.

Call to Order, Roll Call/Introductions/Amendments to Agenda

Co-Chair Perchlik called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m. He explained that he would be facilitating until he needed to leave then Co-Chair Pajala would take over. There were no amendments to the agenda.

Approve Minutes from January 25, 2021 Meeting

Morehouse moved to approve the minutes; Pippenger seconded the motion. There was no discussion. The motion passed.

Opportunity for Public to be Heard

There were 5 members of the public to be heard.

Katie Mobley, CCV, Chair of Board of VT Afterschool and member of 2015 Extended Learning Opportunities (ELO) Working Group and Afterschool for All Oversight committee: She spoke to the historical perspective of the ELO working group and its cross section of community members/partnerships. She highlighted the critical role of a plan with clear priorities, that is flexible and community-oriented, brings in partners and has a high-quality focus. Many grants targeted low-income and geographical gaps. She hopes the TF will integrate this into proposals moving forward.

Susan Fortier, Meeting Waters YMCA, which serves southeastern Vermont: She shared what they do and why partnerships are important. They have 7 Afterschool programs and a summer camp and collectively serve 300 children across 20 different communities. Without busing many of these children wouldn't have access. They provide quality enriching programs and essential childcare needs until 6:00 p.m. on vacation days and days when schools are closed. They handle all administrative duties from the schools and ensure that families have access to financial assistance if qualified (about 54% receive some sort of financial assistance) and do so with efficiency and sustainability. This is why they are often asked to come in when 21C programs end. Their programs run about 50 weeks a year, so that working parents can work. She hopes the TF will consider how important these partnerships are to providing successful equitable access.

Vicky Smith – King Street Center (Center), Burlington: She spoke about the Center's mission is to create a place where kids meet opportunity through learning, play and community and that they started in 1961 and they now welcome a widely diverse group of participants, the majority of whose first language is not English. Prior to COVID-19, they provided 48 weeks of care for over 130 participants, served over 3,000 meals, provided over 2,500 tutoring sessions, and offered 50 different enrichment blocks. The goal is to equip low-income children with tools to challenge the achievement and opportunity gap. They enroll families to provide stability of high-quality care with community connections. For over 20 years, the Center has had Burlington School District (BSD) on speed dial; there is a close collaboration. They can't do their best work without the BSD – all programs have a strong academic focus; they bridge between early education and use mentoring programs. They hope the TF will keep community connections in mind as they move forward.

Kim Peters, Superintendent of Rutland Recreation Department: She explained that they are typically the fun department, but this last spring they became a school. They had just purchased a 25,000 sq. ft. gymnasium and were able to open that as essential care and ended up opening a second location. They were not ready for this but provided 10 months of essential care and remote learning. The work they have done opened doors to new visions/partnerships that will be tested this summer. They were going to continue with remote learning but didn't receive a third grant and financially couldn't continue. They supported 4 different supervisory unions (SUs) and this was challenging, but all SUs worked well with them. They have started meeting with recreation directors around the state and shared best practices (safety plans) and stepped up together.

Jeff O'Hara, Part 2 Afterschool Programs, Chittenden and Washington Counties: He spoke about three programs - Afterschool, early years (which provide services on either end of the day), and a standalone preschool. They run Afterschool programs in at least seven towns and serve 500 kids. He also served as principal for 8 years and talked about how Afterschool and school are completely different and require specific expertise. They have administrative staff that allows them to run high-quality programs including summer programs and adventure camps. He encouraged this group to reach out to people in the Afterschool world and make sure their voice is heard.

Discussion - Substance Misuse Prevention Council (SMPC)

Nicole Rau Mitiguy, Substance Misuse Prevention Manager who supports SMPC. She explained that Deputy Commissioner Dougherty would be joining as well. She asked her staff to introduce themselves: Melanie Sheehan, Mt. Ascutney Health, co-chair, SMPC; Maryann Morris, executive director, The

Collaborative, Londonderry, SMPC; Lori Uerz, Director of Prevention and Recovery Services, Vermont Department of Health (VDH).

Sheehan started the presentation, [“Overview of the Substance Misuse Prevention Oversight and Advisory Committee and Prevention in Vermont.”](#) She spoke about the history of the SMPC, their tasks, composition, and goals. She spoke about prevention inventory and recommendations for the Afterschool bill: mapping existing programs to identify gaps and address equity, working together to analyze gaps, and examining funding and administrative costs-sharing structures with substance misuse coalitions, supporting communities in the planning process for universal PreK implementation, ongoing program evaluation activities, and professional development for program staff.

Uerz spoke about the Strategic Prevention Framework (SPF) and the Vermont Prevention Model and the focus on planning, finding a way to impact all spheres of influence. She spoke about the SPF as a planning tool for prevention planning, and the five steps involved in the SPF model as described by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).

Sheehan added that there was a lot of collaboration with prevention coalitions across the state and flexibility to respond to local needs; responsibility was needed at the local level and to look upstream to prevention. She explained that prevention was hard to describe – it is across all ages and there is a lot of potential for collaboration with preschool and Afterschool programming because it is still within the mission of risk and protective factors.

Morris spoke about her substance misuse prevention program (The Collaborative) and that it did many different things, and that her presentation focused on the Afterschool/Extended Day Program (EDP), which operates from Flood Brook School, with about 280 participants and focused on working with families starting with Afterschool through high school. They use a combination of substance misuse prevention and Afterschool programming to help parents to monitor when they are away from their children. This program continues to grow and change using the SPF to ensure they meet community needs. They have a drop-in component and have encouraged the entire school to register for this program in case they have an unanticipated need. Her towns have some unique needs specific to ski communities. She spoke about youth substance misuse prevention taking community involvement and strong partnerships (youth, families, businesses, schools, law enforcement, health care professionals). They use third space as a verb (“it’s an attitude not a location”) and practice code shifting and building resiliency skills. She spoke about how prevention works in afterschool environments. Morris offered to take questions, as did Deputy Commissioner Dougherty.

There was discussion on using funding to provide opportunities to have families spend time together (tickets to museum), restrictions on federal funding, third space and belonging/active engagement, honoring families that are school-resistant, and training for safe LGBTQ conversations.

Discussion: Expanded Learning Opportunities (ELO) Advisory Board Structure and Function

Co-chair Pajala introduced this topic and asked Morehouse to share who was on the ELO working group so that structure could be considered. Cameron asked about proposed edits to the report since she had to leave early. Co-chair Pajala offered that any edits for the report should be directed to Gaidys to be shared with

the full TF. Morehouse shared membership of the ELO working group and who was on the current Vermont Afterschool for All Grant Oversight Committee and added that it included some ELO working group members and private philanthropists, Hunger Free Vermont, Child Development Division, VDH, and Division of Vocational Rehabilitation.

There was discussion on AOE representation on this committee, that AHS led this committee, that AOE was invited to designate a delegate, key consumers were not being tapped (youth voice), community-based programs enhancing community pride/sustainability, state agencies that were important to include, practicing educational leaders (superintendent, principal, curriculum coordinator) being an important voice, school board member, involving families and attuning to equity. Co-chair Pajala asked how the group felt about having an oversight committee. There was discussion on addressing substance misuse prevention/including SMPC members, a section on funding priorities that includes substance misuse, getting clarity from SMPC, demand for funds and conflicts of interest, considering ideal committee size, building on an existing structure, recurring themes of flexibility and importance of partnerships, and braided funding.

Discussion – Task Force Priorities and Outline of Report Considerations

Co-chair Pajala acknowledged that the discussion had moved toward the report considerations and opened it up to other suggestions. There was discussion on authorized activities and lack of summer enrichment being responsible for the achievement gap, where this information came from (John Hopkins University) and tethering it with Vermont data, measures of effectiveness in reporting requirements, and making sure access is increased with an eye on equity. There was discussion on enrichment, quality/intentionality, essential access for students with moderate or severe disabilities, inclusion/belonging/equity being essential in this work and not reflected in the draft, transportation, definitions needing more discussion, universality might implicitly address equity but needs to be more explicit, to ensure universal access we need to prioritize the universal component so that those most marginalized have access, SMPC recommending best practices for prevention, more focus on substance misuse, clarification on the interconnectedness of substance misuse and afterschool, youth engagement/development of protective factors, using data to connect Afterschool and prevention, advocating for an oversight committee that was well connected to specific Afterschool expertise, prevention needs to be explicit/intentional, substance misuse professional development and overlying metrics that can be tied in, and long-term goals for Afterschool youth in adulthood (happy, healthy, resilient, productive individuals).

Next Steps, Preview of Next Meeting

Co-Chair Pajala listed topics for the next meeting: how to support students with disabilities (SWD), universal access and equity, funding transportation, inclusion, cannabis money and other funding streams. Co-chairs Pajala and Perchlik will coordinate with Gaidys to coordinate a Doodle poll for the remaining two meetings of this TF.

Adjourn

Co-Chair Pajala adjourned at 2:04 p.m.

Meeting minutes prepared by Maureen Gaidys.