

Microsoft Teams Virtual Meeting
Call In: 1-802-552-8456
Conference ID: 487 602 0#

Advisory Committee (AC) Members: **Monica Hutt**, State Chief Prevention Officer; **Janet McLaughlin**, Commissioner for Children and Families designee; **Ilisa Stalberg**, Commissioner of Health designee; **Laurel Omland**, Commissioner of Mental Health designee; **Alison Thomas**; Secretary of Natural Resources designee; **Nate Formalarie**, Secretary of Commerce and Community Development designee; **Nicole Miller**, Vermont Afterschool Executive Director; and **Kendal Smith**, Governor's Office.

DRAFT MEETING MINUTES

AC Members Present: Monica Hutt; Chief Prevention Officer; Janet McLaughlin, Commissioner for Children and Families designee; Laurel Omland, Commissioner of Mental Health designee; Alison Thomas; Secretary of Natural Resources designee; Nate Formalarie, Secretary of Agency of Commerce and Community Development designee; Nicole Miller, Vermont Afterschool (VAS) Executive Director; Kendal Smith, Governor's Office; and Heather Bouchey, Interim Secretary of Education.

Agency of Education (AOE): Maureen Gaidys, Administrative Services Coordinator.

Members of the public/others: Tara Howe, Vocational Rehabilitation Regional Manager.

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

Smith called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m.

Approve Meeting Minutes from [December 14, 2023](#)

Stahlberg moved to approve the minutes; Thomas seconded. There was no discussion. Smith called the vote. The minutes were approved. Omland abstained.

Agenda Item

Smith thanked the group for meeting on short notice. She said there has been a lot of discussion at the legislature over the last two weeks related to afterschool and she thought it was important to make sure that AC members were aware of those conversations. She provided background and reminded the group that in the fall, there was discussion on adding language into the Budget Adjustment Act (BAA) that would further clarify the accounting construct for the cannabis funds. Last legislative session there was language in the budget as those funds needed to be assigned to an agency, and they were assigned to the AOE and a mixed delivery systems was prescribed for with a list of eligible entities. Over the fall, it was noticed that unlike the original cannabis law, language to not-withstand Education Fund

language that typically directs monies to LEAs was not included and so a technical correction was added to the BAA address that. The policy direction established over the last four years was not changed, this was only to make sure the accounting construct was as clear as possible. Over the last two weeks, there has been much debate on if these funds should run strictly through public schools and not directly to private, non-profit, and municipal community partners. The House removed the technical correction from the BAA and the Senate is considering restoring it. There has been a lot of advocacy around if this is a change in policy, and/or if a change in policy is needed.

Bouchev added that it appears that the primary concern is the direct allocation of any state funds to private and non-profit entities and is related to discrimination against students. She said it is unfortunate that this has become an ideological/political battle when it was intended to be a technical correction.

There was discussion on understanding legislative intent, how access was ensured especially for students with disabilities, articulating this attention and the safeguards that were put in place, competitive grant processes, and a lot of direct outreach happening on this issue from various organizations.

Smith shared her [Draft Status Update on Afterschool, Summer, and Third Space Programs](#). She said that she would like to make this document more official, as this topic will be taken up in testimony next week and this is an opportunity to educate on the initiative and goals. She offered to revise this document and share it on behalf of the AC. It is being used in 1:1 conversations with legislators, but it would be great if it could be used more broadly. Bouchev suggested including success with the approach (quantitative data) and using examples of braided/blended funding through the schools, how having funds flow through schools limits flexibility and hearing testimony from districts that supports the success stories.

There was unanimous agreement from AC members in revising this document to include an executive summary, adding some visual representation of impact, and distributing on behalf of the AC.

Smith said there was a joint hearing scheduled with the House Education and House Human Services committees scheduled for February 7, 2024, at 9:00 a.m. Hutt, McLaughlin and Bouchev are scheduled to testify. Smith encouraged other AC members to attend or testify if available and interested in showing support. The Senate Education and Senate Health and Welfare committees are also reviewing this issue.

There was discussion on the grant being open, number of applications received, due date is March, impact on the application if language is changed, need to convey a lot of different information to legislature, adding depth to the conversation in the realm of substance misuse prevention, and equity considerations (geographic, transportation, etc.),

Smith confirmed that AC members are comfortable with Hutt and McLaughlin speaking to the legislature in testimony on behalf of the AC in upcoming testimony.

There was discussion on specific testimony topics, and who would testify on what, order of testimony, roles represented, legislature needing full understanding across committees of

afterschool programming and what is licensed under the Child Development Division (CDD), making it clear that we are **adding** to the federal money to support **more** afterschool programming, the whole point is to expand/build and bring new innovative ideas to the forefront, existing checks and balances, suggesting legislative opponents visit an afterschool program, funds are meant to be flexible, need better access to federal programs especially at the middle and high school level, potential for subcontracting for Local Education Agencies (LEAs) and this is not necessarily appealing to the field, adding an executive summary with some key points of the impact, incorrect assumption that all schools want this money to flow through them, protecting the LEA from risk, grant is for those interested and willing to expand access, need community-based options outside the schools to create true equity and access, need prevention tenet, 21C eligibility includes non-profits, and these funds are meant to be flexible.

Smith asked AC members to pass information on to her if they have other ideas of topics to be included/highlighted in this document or people who should be included in testimony.

Public to be Heard

There was none.

Smith summarized that she would revise the document as discussed, add an executive summary, make a visual impact, and circulate it to AC members. Hutt and McLaughlin will have the authority to speak on behalf of the AC. Smith will connect with them on the order of testimony to offer a complete picture. Miller said she will be speaking to the Senate Health and Welfare Committee, and she will be doing so on behalf of Vermont Afterschool, representing the afterschool field and not the AC.

Smith thanked the group for meeting on shorter notice than usual and thanked the AC members for their input.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 10:55 a.m.

Meeting Minutes recorded by: Maureen Gaidys