

## Every Hour Counts: Vermont Students Succeed with Expanded Learning Opportunities



### A Report from the Working Group on Expanded Learning Time Vermont's PreK-16 Council December 2014

In June 2014, Vermont's Prekindergarten-16 Council created the Working Group on Expanded Learning Time to review and evaluate issues of equity in and access to Vermont's Expanded Learning Opportunities, including afterschool and summer learning programs. The Working Group was charged with identifying: key elements of quality Expanded Learning Opportunities; ways to increase access and remove barriers to Expanded Learning Opportunities across the state; and recommendations for how Expanded Learning Opportunities can play an integral role in supporting student success.

## Working Group Membership

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## **We know that Vermont’s Expanded Learning Opportunities:**

### **Support Vermont’s Vision for Education.**

In many Vermont communities, Expanded Learning Opportunities are well-positioned to **support Vermont’s major education initiatives**, including the new Education Quality Standards, flexible pathways for graduation, personalized learning plans, proficiency based graduation requirements, and 21<sup>st</sup> century skills.

### **Address the Opportunity Gap.**

One of the most critical issues facing Vermont today is the persistent proficiency gap between low-income students and their higher income peers. What happens during the formal school day and in the regular classroom is not the source of this gap. **Where low-income students lose ground is outside the school day and over the summer when they do not have access to the same types of learning experiences and enrichment opportunities** as their more affluent peers.<sup>1</sup>

### **Keep Kids Safe, Inspire Learners,**

### **Help Working Families.**

Students in Vermont spend on average **1,000 hours per year in the classroom and another 5,000 hours in the community and with their families**. How they use this time can facilitate positive development and growth experiences, or place them at risk for negative outcomes. Expanded Learning Opportunities, such as quality afterschool and summer learning programs, play an important role in Vermont’s communities by keeping kids safe, inspiring learners, and helping working families.

### **Are an Integral Part of Vermont’s Education System.**

Vermont has a strong base already in place for doing this work. We have a vibrant and valued statewide afterschool network, a strong 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers program, and supports for quality initiatives and professional development. **Expanded Learning Opportunities are an integral part of Vermont’s education system; we need to make sure that they are fully utilized and sustainable.**

### **Promote Access for All.**

Vermont has adopted an expanded concept of education, one that makes visible and valued the learning and experiences that happen not only in the classroom but also in other settings outside the school day. **It is our goal that by 2020 all Vermont children and youth have access to quality Expanded Learning Opportunities that help fulfill Vermont’s vision for personalized, flexible, and relevant learning.**

#### **Demand is High; The Cost of Doing Nothing is Even Higher.**

There are more than 22,000 Vermont students who would be participating in an Expanded Learning Opportunity today if they had access to one.<sup>2</sup>

This means that there are more than 22,000 chances for bad choices, dangerous behaviors, or falling behind each and every day.

It also means that there are more than 22,000 lost opportunities every day to help these children and youth reach their full potential.



## Recommendations

**Given the importance and immediate relevancy of this issue, the Working Group on Expanded Learning Time makes the following recommendations:**

**Recommendation #1:** Develop systems, partnerships, and funding strategies to ensure that by 2020 the **children and youth in every Vermont community have access** to Expanded Learning Opportunities.

**Recommendation #2:** Include Expanded Learning Opportunities in the Vermont Agency of Education's **Balanced Accountability Model** in order to measure access, quality, and integration with school systems.

**Recommendation #3:** As Vermont moves towards **proficiency-based graduation requirements** by 2020, fully incorporate and recognize the learning and growth that takes place in quality Expanded Learning Opportunities.

**Recommendation #4:** Include **data on student participation** in Expanded Learning Opportunities, as well as metrics for **associated student outcomes**, in state data systems and projects, including the Vermont Agency of Education's longitudinal data system, the Vermont Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), and Vermont's Bright Futures Information System.

**Recommendation #5:** Explore every possible opportunity to leverage federal programs, including the Child Care Financial Assistance Program, to **help working families access** Expanded Learning Opportunities for children up to age 16.



*See Page 9 for more detail on these recommendations.*

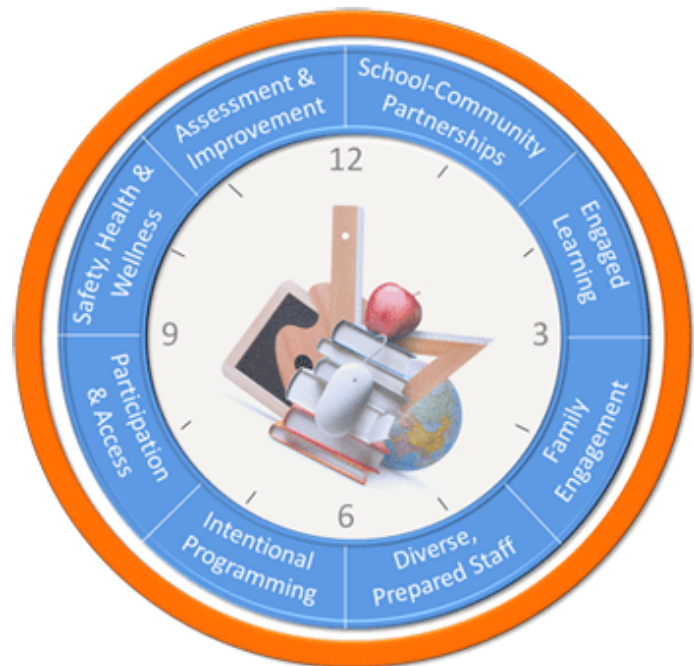
## Definition of Expanded Learning Opportunities

The Working Group defines **Expanded Learning Opportunities** as *structured programs designed to serve children and youth outside the school day on a regular basis—including before school, after school, and during the summer—by providing opportunities for care, learning, growth, and development.* Expanded Learning Opportunities serve students of all ages— preK, elementary, middle, and high school— although the structure and focus of programs change appropriately depending on the ages and needs of the students.

In order to ensure quality and consistency across different program types, the Working Group recognizes that effective Expanded Learning Opportunities in Vermont must be based on the following key principles as outlined by the Afterschool Alliance:<sup>3</sup>

- (1) school-community partnerships;
- (2) engaged learning;
- (3) family engagement;
- (4) intentional programming;
- (5) diverse, prepared staff;
- (6) participation and access;
- (7) safety, health, and wellness; and
- (8) ongoing assessment and improvement.

*See Appendix B for more information on the eight principles.*



Quality Expanded Learning Opportunities in Vermont are most often supported by collaborations between schools, afterschool programs, and partners (including community groups, youth-serving organizations, cultural institutions, recreation departments, libraries, museums, teen centers, local businesses, and others). The resulting programs provide a safe place for students to strengthen academic skills, develop social and emotional skills, participate in college and career awareness and exploration activities, and work with hands-on projects that complement course curriculum. **Expanded Learning Opportunities are not about creating more time for learning solely by extending the school day or the school year.** Rather they seek to create opportunities for learning, exploration, and growth that expand beyond the traditional classroom and outside the regular school day.

## Findings

Effective Expanded Learning Opportunities help students succeed in school and in life by (1) keeping children and youth safe and healthy, (2) inspiring learners, and (3) helping working families. Quality Expanded Learning Opportunities also (4) align with and support Vermont’s vision for education in an important and integral way. Relevant research and Vermont data are given below for each of these key findings.

### Finding #1: Expanded Learning Opportunities Keep Children and Youth Healthy and Safe.

- **Peak Hours.** On school days, the hours between 3-6pm are the peak hours for youth to commit crimes, be in or cause an automobile accident, be victims of crime, smoke, drink alcohol, or use drugs.<sup>4</sup>
- **Dangerous Behaviors.** Teens who do not participate in structured activities after school are nearly three times more likely to skip classes at school, experiment with drugs, and engage in sexual activity than teens who do participate.<sup>5</sup>
- **Supervision After School.** According to the 2014 *America After 3PM* Report, 24% of Vermont children and youth regularly spend time unsupervised after school for an average of 7.92 hours per week.<sup>2</sup>
- **Return on Investment.** For every dollar spent on quality Expanded Learning Opportunities, Vermont gets back \$2.18 in long-term savings from reduced criminal activity and substance abuse treatment, as well as accruing additional benefits from increased high school completion and work productivity.<sup>6</sup> (For more information see Appendix D.)
- **Healthy Snacks and Meals.** The Food Research and Action Council identifies Expanded Learning Opportunities, like afterschool programs, as effective venues for improving nutrition, nutrition education, and physical activity.<sup>7</sup> Over 40% of Vermont students rely on free or reduced-price meals during the school day. Expanded Learning Opportunities continue to provide children and youth with healthy snacks and meals in the afternoon and evening hours, as well as during the critical summer months. In 2014, 270 summer meal sites and 53 Afterschool Meal Program sites were active in the state, serving more than 3,300 children each day.<sup>8</sup>
- **Physical Activity.** A meta-analysis published in the *American Journal of Preventative Medicine* found that afterschool programs can improve students’ health by providing a safe environment for children and youth to get a significant portion of their recommended daily exercise, as well as develop lifelong physical activity habits.<sup>9</sup>

For every dollar spent on quality Expanded Learning Opportunities, Vermont gets back \$2.18 in long-term savings and benefits.<sup>6</sup>



## Finding #2: Expanded Learning Opportunities Inspire Learners.

- **Personal, Social, and Academic Skills.** A meta-analysis of 73 studies concluded that high-quality Expanded Learning Opportunities that promote personal and social skills were consistently successful in producing multiple benefits for youth including improvements in children’s personal, social, and academic skills.<sup>10</sup>
- **Student Outcomes.** Studies show that students involved in quality Expanded Learning Opportunities have: improved school attendance, including fewer absences and less tardiness; more engagement in learning and better grades; more time spent on homework and higher rates of homework completion; increased rates of family involvement in school; greater sense of the relevance of curriculum; enhanced problem solving and conflict management skills; and increased responsibility and improved effort in school.<sup>11</sup>
- **Community Connections.** Expanded Learning Opportunities play an important role in reconnecting schools and communities. Programs offer children and youth the opportunity to move beyond traditional classroom activity and engage with their surrounding neighborhoods, organizations, businesses, and individuals.<sup>12</sup>
- **Summer Learning.** Research has shown that nationally up to two-thirds of the academic achievement gap between lower and higher income youth can be explained by unequal access to summer learning opportunities.<sup>13</sup> Studies show that many students tend to lose about two months of grade level equivalency in mathematical skills over the summer. Low income students also lose ground in reading achievement.<sup>14</sup>
- **Achievement Gap.** New studies demonstrate that more consistent time spent in afterschool activities during the elementary years is linked to narrowing the academic achievement gap. In a recent longitudinal study, income differences in math achievement were eliminated for students who had consistent afterschool activities across their Kindergarten to Grade 5 years.<sup>15</sup>

**24% percent of Vermont’s children, grades K-12, are currently enrolled in Expanded Learning Opportunities. Of those children not currently in programs, 33% would participate if a program were available.<sup>2</sup>**





### Finding #3: Expanded Learning Opportunities Help Working Families.

- **After School Gap.** For most families there is an “after school gap” of 15-25 hours per week when parents are still at work while children are out of school.<sup>16</sup>
- **Parent Concerns.** According to polls, 87% of working mothers say the hours after school are when they are most concerned about their children’s safety. This “after school stress” often can lead to distraction causing lower productivity, high turnover in jobs, and absences from work.<sup>17</sup>
- **Ability to Work.** 81% of Vermont parents agree that afterschool programs help give working parents peace of mind about their children when they are at work. 79% of Vermont parents agree that Expanded Learning Opportunities help working parents keep their jobs.<sup>2</sup>
- **Cost to Companies.** Researchers at Brandeis University have identified that the stress parents experience regarding their children’s after school arrangements costs companies nationally between \$50-\$300 billion per year in healthcare and lost job productivity.<sup>16</sup>
- **Parent Satisfaction.** With a 95% parent satisfaction rate, afterschool programs in Vermont are valued by parents for their quality, the services offered, and the academic supports provided.<sup>2</sup>
- **High Demand.** Vermont parents are looking for Expanded Learning Opportunities for their children. 43% of parents without access to a summer learning program for their child would be interested in enrolling their child if a program were available. 33% of parents whose child is not currently in an afterschool program would enroll him/her if one were available.<sup>2</sup>
- **Ability to Pay.** In a recent study, Vermont ranked 51st in the nation, including the District of Columbia, for having the lowest level of low-income children in Expanded Learning Opportunities. According to that study, only 14% of Vermont children in an Expanded Learning Opportunities after school qualify for the Federal Free and Reduced Price Lunch Program compared to 45% nationally. In addition, Vermont parents listed program cost as one of the predominant obstacles to enrollment in an Expanded Learning Opportunity.<sup>2</sup>

**88% of Vermont parents support public funding for Expanded Learning Opportunities.<sup>2</sup>**





## Finding #4: Expanded Learning Opportunities Support Vermont’s Vision for Education.

- **Credit for Learning.** Vermont’s Education Quality Standards (EQS) recognize learning can happen anytime, anywhere: “students may receive credit for learning that takes place outside of the school, the school day, or the classroom” (EQS 2120.8 Local Graduation Requirements).<sup>19</sup>
- **Flexible Pathways.** Schools in Vermont are expected to provide students with the “opportunity to experience learning through flexible and multiple pathways” (EQS 2120.2 Flexible Pathways).<sup>19</sup>
- **Personalized Learning.** All students in grades 7 through 12 in Vermont must have a personalized learning plan and be able “to access academic and experiential learning opportunities that reflect their emerging abilities, interests, and aspirations” (EQS 2120.4 Personalized Learning Plans and EQS 20210.5 Curriculum Content).<sup>19</sup>
- **Transferable Skills.** Vermont’s vision for education includes giving students opportunities to become proficient in transferable skills, “including communication, collaboration, creativity, innovation, inquiry, problem solving, and the use of technology” (EQS Curriculum Content).<sup>19</sup>
- **Proficiency-Based Graduation Requirements.** Proficiency-based graduation requirements will be in place by 2020 for all Vermont students.<sup>19</sup> Opportunities to practice skills and apply knowledge both in and outside of the school day will be important in helping students develop and demonstrate proficiency.

**Vermont’s Education Quality Standards recognize that learning can happen anytime, anywhere.**

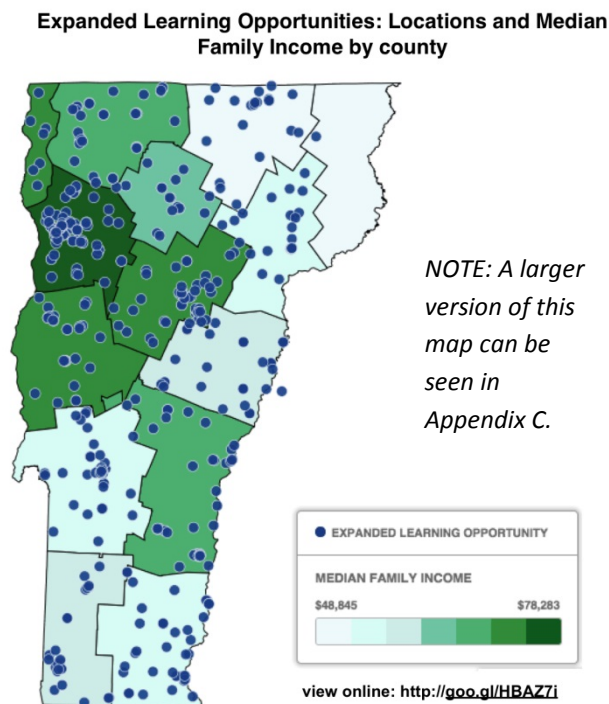
**They also make clear that approaches to learning should be flexible, personalized, and proficiency-based.**



- **Community Partnerships.** 82% of public school principals responding to a statewide survey on Expanded Learning Opportunities indicated that they were interested in increasing partnerships with community organizations in order to provide learning experiences for students outside the school day.<sup>20</sup>
- **Current Programming.** 55% of Vermont schools provide at least six hours per week of Expanded Learning Opportunities outside the school day during the school year. 22% provide more than 10 hours of programming per week. 80% of Vermont schools provide some type of summer programming: 55% of these schools offer less than five weeks of programming in the summer; 41% run programs for less than five days per week; and 32% offer programming for three hours per day or less in the summer.<sup>20</sup>

## Program Cost and Location

Vermont Afterschool has been able to identify over 450 programs offering Expanded Learning Opportunities in Vermont. The identified programs serve a wide range of students from preschool through high school. Most offer services during the typical afterschool hours (3-6pm) but many also include additional options, such as before school programming, weekend and evening hours, school vacation camps, and summer programs. The map below shows the distribution of Expanded Learning Opportunities by county with median family income depicted.



• Median Family Income is from 2010 US Census Data.  
 • Locations of Expanded Learning Opportunities were gathered by Vermont Afterschool, Inc. between 2010 and 2014.

**85%** of Vermont’s Expanded Learning Opportunities are located in a **public school building**.<sup>2</sup>

**Of the 458 identified Expanded Learning Opportunities in Vermont:**

**264** are afterschool programs licensed to operate by the Child Development Division, Department for Children and Families, VT Agency of Human Services;

**121** receive 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers funding from the VT Agency of Education;

**257** are run by schools, school districts, or supervisory unions;

**43** are operated by a YMCA; and

**21** are associated with a Boys and Girls Club.

*NOTE: These numbers are not mutually exclusive.*

The average cost of running an Expanded Learning Opportunity in Vermont varies depending on the number of students served and the amount of programming hours offered. Smaller programs serving up to 40 students per day during the school year and for six weeks in summer have an average annual cost ranging from \$67,802 to \$94,926. Large programs, serving 75 to 120 students a day, cost between \$141,741 and \$164,355 for school year and summer. Programs receive funding from a variety of sources including: federal grants and entitlement programs; local school budgets; city, town, or county budgets; partner organizations; participant fees; private donations and foundation grants.<sup>18</sup> More information on program cost and funding sources is provided in Appendix E.

## Recommendations and Justification

### **Recommendation #1: Develop systems, partnerships, and funding strategies to ensure that by 2020 the children and youth in every Vermont community have access to Expanded Learning Opportunities.**

Vermont has high aspirations for our children and youth. We also have work ahead to make sure that all Vermont students have the experiences, resources, and supports they need to reach their full potential. Quality Expanded Learning Opportunities have been proven—both in research and in practice—to help us do just that. They keep kids healthy and safe; they inspire learning; and they help working families. They also reinforce Vermont’s expanded vision for education, one that recognizes the importance of learning and experiences both inside and outside of the formal education system. In order to support Expanded Learning Opportunities statewide, we need to maintain and grow our infrastructure and resources for professional development, evaluation, and quality assessment. We need to include Expanded Learning Opportunities in teacher preparation programs, facilitate flexible schedules for teaching and learning, and address challenges such as transportation, affordability, sustainability, and staffing so that we can ensure equity and access to these opportunities for all Vermont’s children and youth.



### **Recommendation #2: Include Expanded Learning Opportunities in the Vermont Agency of Education’s Balanced Accountability Model in order to measure access, quality, and integration with school systems.**

Vermont’s Education Quality Standards embrace the vision of anytime, anywhere learning and require an approach to learning that is flexible, personalized, and rewards proficiency. Expanded Learning Opportunities can help schools meet the new standards by providing additional strategies and avenues for learning. When working with schools to implement and assess their progress with the Education Quality Standards, the Vermont Agency of Education should include Expanded Learning Opportunities in these conversations in a tangible and transparent way. The Balanced Accountability Model should assess the quality and accessibility of Expanded Learning Opportunities for students, as well as the ways in which these opportunities are integrated with the school’s overall vision, delivery systems, and range of offerings.

### **Recommendation #3: As Vermont moves towards proficiency-based graduation requirements by 2020, fully incorporate and recognize the learning and growth that takes place in quality Expanded Learning Opportunities.**

Proficiency-based graduation requirements require schools to broaden how they view and assess learning. The Education Quality Standards state that “students must be allowed to demonstrate proficiency by presenting multiple types of evidence, including but not limited to teacher- or student-designed assessments, portfolios, performances, exhibitions and projects.”<sup>19</sup> Applications and demonstrations of knowledge can and should include options outside the regular classroom. Expanded Learning Opportunities should be incorporated and intentionally designed to provide additional avenues for students to explore interests, build skills, and demonstrate knowledge.

**Recommendation #4: Include data on student participation in Expanded Learning Opportunities, as well as metrics for associated student outcomes, in state data systems and projects, including the Vermont Agency of Education’s longitudinal data system, the Vermont Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), and Vermont’s Bright Futures Information System.**

Vermont does not currently have a way of collecting information on student participation in Expanded Learning Opportunities in a centralized and consistent way. State agencies should include fields in statewide data systems for noting participation in Expanded Learning Opportunities, such as afterschool or summer learning programs. Following examples in other states, these fields should be formatted so that level of participation (e.g., days or hours of participation) over time can be analyzed against indicators of student achievement (e.g., grades, standardized test scores, graduation rates, behavior referrals, youth assets, absentee rates, etc.).

**Recommendation #5: Explore every possible opportunity to leverage federal programs, including the Child Care Financial Assistance Program, to help working families access Expanded Learning Opportunities for children up to age 16.**

Efforts should be made to ensure that Vermont’s working families have the supports and financial assistance they need to be able to enroll children and youth in Expanded Learning Opportunities. In order to access subsidies available under the Child Care Financial Assistance Program, public schools running afterschool programs are currently required to operate under two set of standards and expectations, one set by the Vermont Agency of Education and one set by the Department for Children and Families, Vermont Agency of Human Services. State regulatory and administrative expectations regarding the operation of Expanded Learning Opportunities, including afterschool and summer programs, should be aligned and/or streamlined.

In addition, Vermont should explore avenues for providing funding for schools and community organizations to offer more afterschool and summer opportunities for middle school and early high school youth. Child care subsidy dollars stop when most children reach their thirteenth birthday leaving a large gap in funding for programs serving Vermont’s young adolescents. At no other time in their development, other than early childhood, do children and youth undergo such an intense period of physical, emotional, and mental growth as in adolescence. It is important to provide engaging and relevant out-of-school time programming, healthy relationships with adult role models, and a focus on positive youth development for children and youth during these critical years.





## Endnotes

- 1 The Broader Bolder Approach to Education is a national campaign that acknowledges the impact of social and economic disadvantage on schools and students and proposes evidence-based policies to improve schools and remedy conditions that limit many children’s readiness to learn. The campaign’s mission statement, *A Broader, Bolder Approach to Education*, outlines the importance of out-of-school time programming and opportunities. Retrieved on 11/15/2014 from [http://www.epi.org/files/2011/bold\\_approach\\_full\\_statement-3.pdf](http://www.epi.org/files/2011/bold_approach_full_statement-3.pdf).
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- 6 Vermont Afterschool. (2014). *Return on Investment Study*. Available at: <http://bit.ly/1zqTHp0>
- 7 Food Research and Action Council. (2006). *School Wellness Policy and Practice: Meeting the Needs of Low-Income Students*. Retrieved on 11/15/2014 from <http://frac.org/federal-foodnutrition-programs/national-school-lunch-program/local-school-wellness-policies/>
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11 National Institute on Out-of-School Time. (2009). Making the case: A 2009 fact sheet on children and youth in out-of-school time. Wellesley Centers for Women, Wellesley College.

12 State of Connecticut. Commission on Children. (2008). Connecticut's Playbook for Prevention. [www.kidsforCT.org](http://www.kidsforCT.org).

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14 Cooper, H., Nye, B., Charlton, K., Lindsay, J., and Greathouse, S.. (1996). The effects of summer vacation on achievement test scores: A narrative and meta-analytic review. *Review of Educational Research*, 66, 227-268.

15 Vandell, D., Reisner, E., and Pierce, K. (2007). Outcomes linked to high-quality afterschool programs: Longitudinal findings from the study of promising after school programs. Washington, DC: Policy Studies Associates, Inc. See also Vandell, D.L. (2013). Afterschool program quality and student outcomes: Reflections on positive key findings on learning and development from recent research. In *Expanding Minds and Opportunities: Leveraging the Power of Afterschool and Summer Learning for Student Success*. Washington, DC: Collaborative Communications Group.

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19 Vermont State Board of Education. Education Quality Standards. State Board Rule 2000. Adopted April 5, 2014. Retrieved on 7/16/2014 from <http://education.vt.gov/state-board/rules>.

20 A survey of public school principals was conducted by Vermont Afterschool (formerly Vermont Center for Afterschool Excellence) in 2012. 164 school principals responded to the survey resulting in a 95% confidence level with a +5.27% margin of error.

## Photo Credits:

Thank you to the following programs for the photos used in the report. Photos were taken by Cassie Willner, Vermont Afterschool (except for photo on Page 4 shared by Wings Community Programs).

Cover Page: Edmunds Middle School, Burlington Afterschool (upper left); Visions Program at Rivendell (lower left); Student Success-Winooski and Beyond (upper and lower right)

Working Group Membership Page- Visions Program at Rivendell

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Page 6 – MASK Program, Milton Family Community Center

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Appendix C – Maps of Expanded Learning Opportunities in Vermont

Appendix D – Return on Investment Study

Appendix E – Program Cost and Funding Analysis



## **Appendix A – Background on the Working Group**

The Expanded Learning Time Working Group met regularly, once a month June through December. The Working Group began with an overview of available research on expanded learning opportunities and a look at available data in Vermont. The group also discussed a study from the National Conference of State Legislatures outlining references to Expanded Learning Opportunities in state education codes. According to the findings of this study, Vermont is one of only nine states that does not currently have any language in state education code referring to Expanded Learning Opportunities, including afterschool or summer learning programs.

Sensitive to concerns about the rising costs of Vermont’s education system, much discussion focused on how Expanded Learning Opportunities can best align with and support the broader educational agenda in Vermont. In addition to supporting working families and keeping children and youth healthy and safe, the working group looked at how Expanded Learning Opportunities can help address the academic achievement gap and summer learning loss, support schools in meeting the new Education Quality Standards, including the use of personalized learning plans, and provide opportunities in line with Vermont’s flexible pathways legislation.

Throughout our work, the Working Group paid special attention to the following issues: the challenges of building and sustaining Expanded Learning Opportunities in Vermont’s small, rural schools; the important role school principals play with regards to Expanded Learning Opportunities; the benefits/challenges of working with community partners; the benefits/challenges of building strong linkages to the school day; the differences in programming needs and models for older youth; the importance of summer meals and afterschool snacks/suppers; return on investment calculations and cost-benefit analyses; and the need for systems and structures to support quality and sustainability.

In conducting this work, members heard testimony from a number of individuals, including:

- John Fischer, Deputy Commissioner, Vermont Agency of Education
- Reeva Murphy, Deputy Commissioner, Child Development Division, Department for Children and Families, Vermont Agency of Human Services
- Brooke DeBonis, Principal, Mettawee Community School, West Pawlet
- Todd Rivver, Principal, Albany Community School
- Julie Peterson, Director of School Age Programs, Greater Burlington YMCA
- Kate Toland, UNBOUND Director and Social Studies Teacher, Peoples Academy, Morrisville
- John Castle, Superintendent, North Country Schools Supervisory Union, Newport
- Jay Nichols, Superintendent, Franklin Northeast Supervisory Union, Enosburg
- Ellie Mitchell, Director, Maryland Out of School Time Network
- Margaret MacLean, Member, Vermont State Board of Education, and Lead Trainer at the Rural School and Community Trust
- Emanuel Betz, 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers State Coordinator, Vermont Agency of Education
- Derrick Lambert, Child Nutrition Advocate, Hunger Free Vermont



## Appendix B – Principles of Effective Expanded Learning Programs

### Principles of Effective Expanded Learning Programs: A Vision Built on the Afterschool Approach



Effective expanded learning programs help students succeed in school and in life.

Expanded learning opportunities are inclusive of before-school, afterschool, summer learning, and extended day or expanded learning time (ELT) programs. Decades of research documenting the outcomes of afterschool and summer programs reveal a core set of key principles that are essential to yielding the best results. Aligning the spectrum of expanded learning opportunities with these principles will ensure quality and consistency across all programs. This document can be used to guide expanded learning policy at the local, state and federal levels.



**1. School-Community Partnerships:** Strong partnerships between community organizations and schools are at the core of successful expanded learning programs. These partnerships should be characterized by alignment of goals and services, effective lines of communication, and data and resource sharing.

**2. Engaged Learning:** Expanded learning programs engage young people because they make learning meaningful and relevant. Activities tap in to a young person's interest, sparking their imagination and igniting a fire within. They engage young people initially by providing choice and voice over what is offered, and maintain engagement through positive relationships with adults and peers.

**3. Family Engagement:** A wide body of research points to active parent involvement in their child's education as a key factor in student success; community-based organizations, partnering with schools on expanded learning, can often help facilitate that involvement. Expanded learning programs that provide safe environments for children to learn, offer parental choice and facilitate communication are crucial to parents, schools and most of all students.

**4. Intentional Programming:** Explicit goals and intentionally designed activities that align with those goals are critical to the success of expanded learning programs. In addition, successful programs must also engage participants in meaningful ways and meet their developmental and academic needs.

**5. Diverse, Prepared Staff:** Successful expanded learning programs ensure that staffing ratios, qualifications, ongoing professional development and overall staff diversity are closely linked to program goals and activities. In most instances, staffing involves a combination of both in-school staff and community partners.

**6. Participation & Access:** Studies show that frequency and duration of participation matter; the more kids participate, the more likely they are to show academic gains. However, participation should not be mandatory; when children choose and direct their enrichment experiences, they become more ardent learners and stronger leaders.

**7. Safety, Health & Wellness:** Adequate space, supervision, and security are necessary for young people to have the comfort and freedom to focus solely on the task at hand. In addition, the best programs provide opportunities for exercise and access to nutritious meals that otherwise might be unavailable.

**8. Ongoing Assessment & Improvement:** Programs that employ sound data collection and management practices focused on continuous improvement have the most success in establishing and maintaining quality services. Frequent assessment (both informal and formal) and regular evaluation (both internal and external) are ingredients needed to refine and sustain expanded learning programs.

For more on Expanded Learning Principles and to download the full publication, visit us online:  
[www.afterschoolalliance.org/policyexpandedlearning.cfm](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/policyexpandedlearning.cfm)

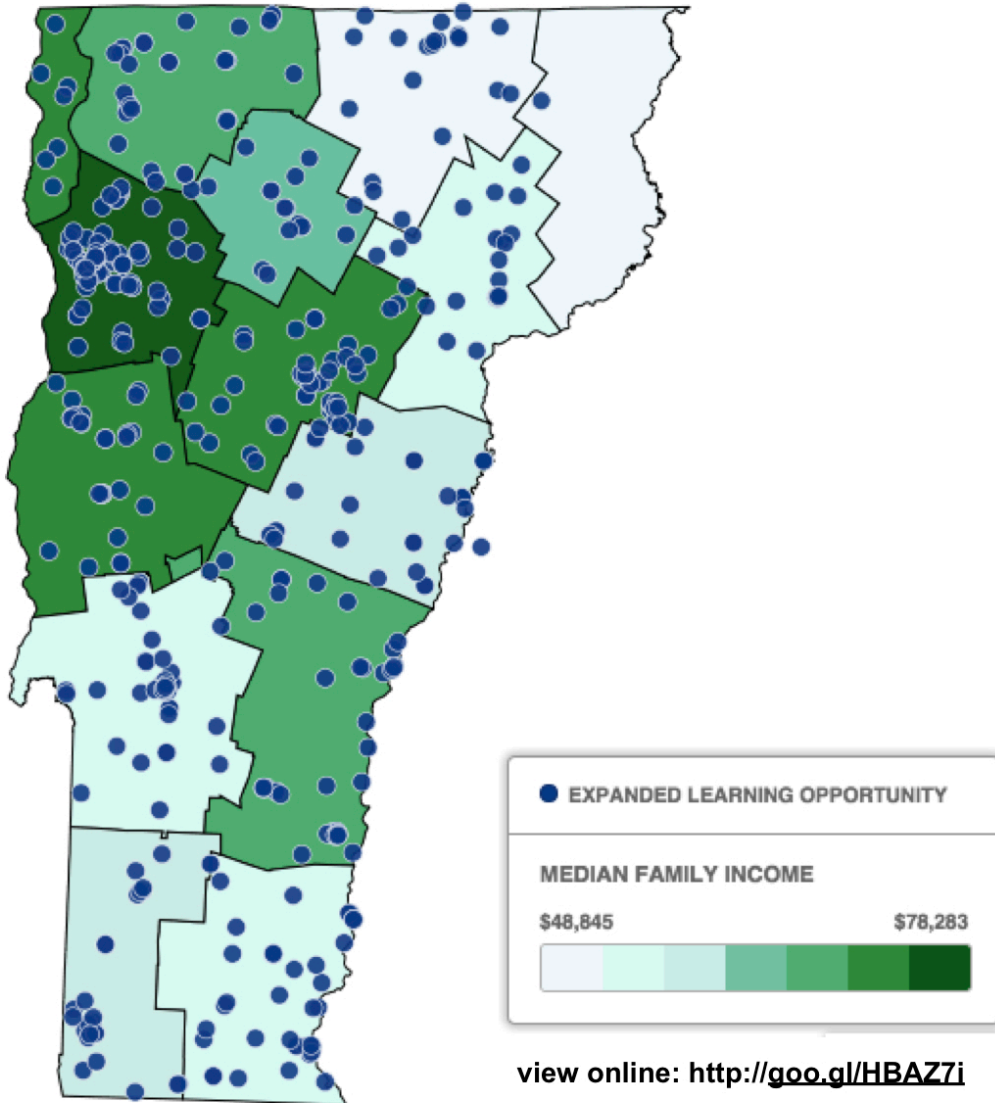
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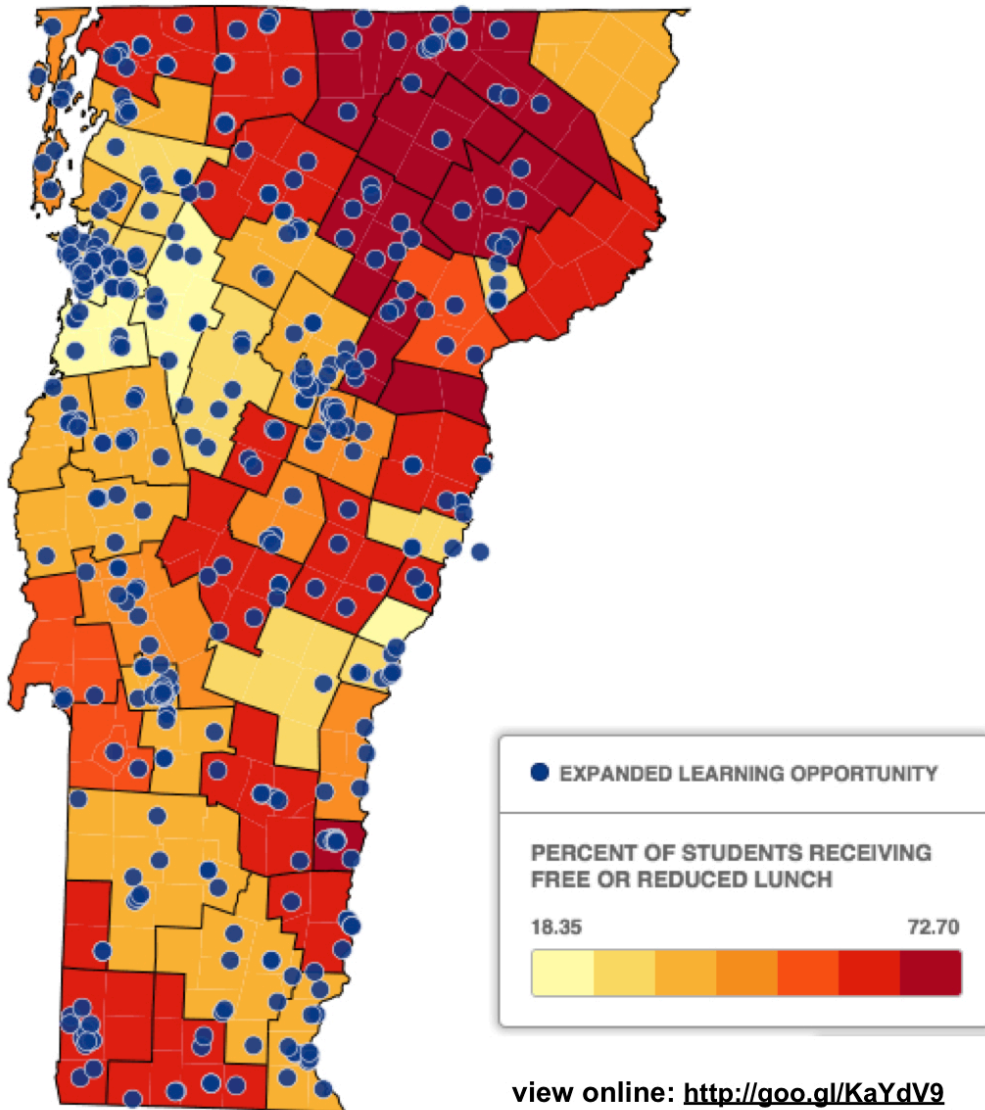
## Appendix C - Maps of Expanded Learning Opportunities in Vermont

### Expanded Learning Opportunities: Locations and Median Family Income by county



- Median Family Income is from 2010 US Census Data.
- Locations of Expanded Learning Opportunities were gathered by Vermont Afterschool, Inc. between 2010 and 2014.

## Expanded Learning Opportunities: Locations and Low Income Students by supervisory union



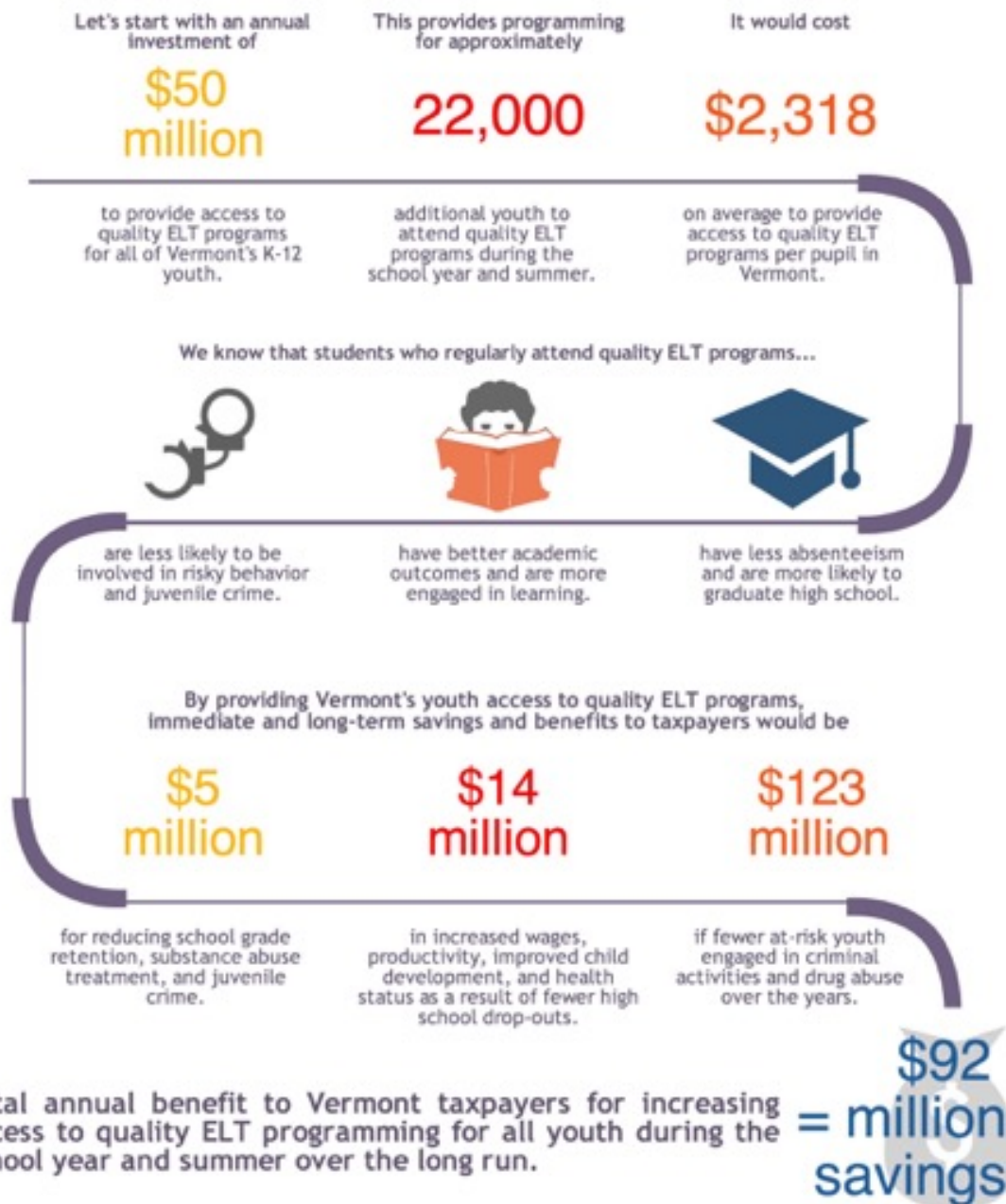
- Locations of Expanded Learning Opportunities were gathered by Vermont Afterschool, Inc. between 2010 and 2014.
- Free and Reduced Lunch Data is for the 2012-13 school year, obtained from the VT Agency of Education Child Nutrition Programs Annual Statistical Report: [http://education.vermont.gov/documents/EDU-Child\\_Nutrition\\_2013\\_Eligibility\\_Report.pdf](http://education.vermont.gov/documents/EDU-Child_Nutrition_2013_Eligibility_Report.pdf)



## Appendix D – Return on Investment Study

Providing quality expanded learning time (ELT) opportunities for children and youth pays off in the long run:

**Every \$1 invested in Vermont afterschool and summer learning programs leads to a return on investment of \$2.18!**



Research and methodology for these findings can be found here: <http://bit.ly/1zqTHp0>  
 Vermont Afterschool, Inc. | [www.vermontafterschool.org](http://www.vermontafterschool.org) | [info@vermontafterschool.org](mailto:info@vermontafterschool.org)



## Appendix E – Program Cost and Funding Analysis

A number of different federal funding sources are available and can be used to fund Expanded Learning Opportunities. However, the only federal funding source dedicated solely to programming outside the regular school day is the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers Program (21<sup>st</sup> CCLC). Vermont’s allocation for 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC in FY14 was \$5.3 million. 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC grants must be awarded competitively, run for 3-5 years, and cannot be less than \$50,000/year. For this reason, smaller sites in Vermont are encouraged to apply together and many of Vermont’s 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC grants are awarded to supervisory unions or school districts and cover multiple sites/schools. Returning grantees are expected to be sustaining with other dollars at least 50% of their annual project budget. Only communities with at least 40% free/reduced price lunch rate are eligible to apply.

A second major source of federal funding is administered through the US Department of Health and Human Services. Vermont’s federal allocation in FY14 for the Child Care and Development Funds (CCDF) was \$9.7 million for early childhood and afterschool. This funding is used primarily to provide child care assistance for eligible low-income families (children ages birth to 13). Thirty-one percent of the children receiving childcare subsidies in Vermont through this funding source are school age (ages 5-13). Vermont’s Child Development Division, Department for Children and Families, is currently required to set aside 4% of CCDF dollars each year to support quality initiatives. In addition to accessing subsidy reimbursements for qualifying families, licensed afterschool programs can apply for a Quality Improvement Grant (max: \$5,000/year) or a one-time Program Startup or Expansion Grant (max: \$15,000/year).

Fees paid by parents and families also play a strong role in supporting programs. Over 71% of programs surveyed in 2010 reported using fee income to run their programs. The average amount of income generated from program fees was \$13,000/year per site. Many programs offer sliding fee scales, discounts for multiple siblings or for regular participations, and/or financial scholarships for eligible students.<sup>18</sup> Other sources of funding include: local school budgets; Title funds; city, town, or county budgets; contributions from partner organizations; private donations from individuals and businesses; and grants from foundations or other sources.

| <b>Cost Comparison based on Program Size and Dosage Level</b> |                                       |   |  |
|---|---------------------------------------|---|--|
| <b>Program Size</b>   | <b>Number of Regular Participants</b> | <b>Average Annual Operating Cost<br/>(based on data from existing 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC programs in Vermont)</b> | <b>Estimated Annual Operating Cost if Providing Recommended Dosage<br/>(At least 5 days/wk for 6 wks at 40 hrs/wk in the summer AND at least 15 hrs/wk during the school year)</b> |
| small   | up to 40                              | \$67,802  | \$94,926   |
| medium  | 40-75                                 | \$96,480  | \$104,907  |
| large   | 75-120                                | \$141,741   | \$164,355  |
| extra large   | 120 and above                         | \$183,666   | \$231,000  |

**Notes on Cost Calculations:**

The current average annual operating cost of each size group of programs was calculated as follows:

- The total project expenditure for each currently funded 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC project was obtained through a spreadsheet provided by the Vermont Agency of Education (based on FY14 data). The analysis relied on 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC data because that is the only program that collects program cost information on a regular basis at the state level.
- A list of sites within each project was obtained from each project's Annual Performance Report for FY14, also provided by Vermont Agency of Education.
- For each site, the total number of annual operating hours and the total number of students served were determined from the Annual Performance Report data.
- The estimated percentage of each project's funding allocated to each site was calculated by using a weighted average determined by each site's annual operating hours and total number of students served.
- The allocation percentage for each individual 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC program site was used to calculate the total annual operating cost for each.
- The size group of each currently operating 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC site was determined based on the number of regular attendees served by the site each year. Regular attendees are defined as those who have attended programming for at least 30 days throughout the school year.
- Within each size group, the average annual operating cost for a 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC site was calculated.

The estimated annual operating cost to provide sufficient dosage was calculated as follows:

- Current 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC program sites were filtered by those that met the following criteria:
  - Open for at least 15 hours per week during the school year.
  - Open for at least 6 weeks during the summer.
  - Open for at least 5 days per week during the summer.
  - Open for at least 40 hours per week during the summer.
- The information related to each program site, as calculated above, was retained for the filtered list of sites and used to calculate the average annual operating cost for 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC sites in each filtered group.