

**Working Group on Expanded Learning Opportunities (ELO)
 Status Report to PreK-16 Council
 September 20, 2015**

Purpose

The ELO Working Group was given two charges this summer: (1) Develop recommendations for the new Expanded Learning Opportunities Special Fund as established in Act 48; and (2) Explore how ELO’s could be better utilized in Vermont to support personalized learning plans and proficiency-based graduation requirements (Act 77)

Overview

Four meetings to date (July 7, July 30, Aug 25, Sept 15); each 4-5 hours
 Membership is strong; eight members continued on from last year and four are new
 Tried to balance work between the two charges in order to give enough time and thought to each
 Heard from a number of witnesses; due to tight schedule for developing recommendations also used extra meetings with 1-2 working group members and key individuals to gather added information
 Next meeting scheduled on October 13th with Secretary Holcombe

Members

Tom Alderman, VT Agency of Education	Representative Ann Manwaring
Ginny Burley, Central Vermont New Directions Coalition	Katie Mobley, Community College of Vermont
Senator Brian Champion	Holly Morehouse, Vermont Afterschool
Jim Fitzpatrick, former principal/superintendent	Barb Russ, former 21 st CCLC Director
Harry Frank, VT School Boards Association	Karen Scott, Vermont Afterschool; UVM Education Doctorate Program
David Gurtman, Vermont Business Roundtable	Sarah Teel, Voices for Vermont’s Children

Witness List

- Kathleen Kesson, Long Island University, Brooklyn (7/30)
- Amy Yeakel, Newfound Regional High School (7/30)
- Paul Costello, Vermont Council on Rural Development (8/25)
- Christy Gallese, Burlington School District (8/25)
- Julia Chafets, Vermont Works for Women (8/25)

Additional Meetings

- Stuart Comstock-Gay, Vermont Community Foundation (H. Morehouse)
- Fagan Hart, Vermont Children’s Trust Foundation (D. Gurtman, H. Morehouse)
- Kathleen Dolan, Dolan Family Foundation (H. Morehouse)
- Penny Bishop, UVM, and John Downes, Tarrant Institute (K. Scott, H. Morehouse)
- Martha Maksum and Raquel Aronhime, United Way of Chittenden County (H. Morehouse)
- Helen Beattie, Up for Learning (H. Frank, H. Morehouse)

Issues explored:

- Priority Areas for funding
 - Children who qualify as low-income (all ages)
 - Parts of the state with little or no programming available (all ages)
- Other priorities could be:
 - Programs for middle school and high school students
 - Programs that run 10-15 hours/week during the school year and six weeks, full-day during the summer
 - Other underserved populations
- Funding challenges
 - Models for public-private partnership
 - Different roles for public vs private
 - Amount \$ needed and required match
- Structural issues
 - State leadership
 - Committee composition
 - Agency role
- Access vs Innovation

Rough draft for a report by end of September

Sections- Intro, Key Principles, Fund Overview, Main Recommendations; format will look similar to last year's report

Key Principles:

- Build on the strong base of quality ELO programming in VT
- Increase access to ELO programs for more students, communities, and families
- Create opportunity for state leadership
- Ensure funding is flexible, aligned, and streamlined
- Allow for joint vision and public-private partnership

The ELO Special Fund is set up to accept private contributions, grants, and donations. In order to do so, the following issues must be taken into consideration:

- An intentional plan needs to be developed around how to go about soliciting private contributions in Vermont
- May need to consider public-private match where the state puts forward money before private donors will give; state will need to play a role
- Clarify the legal/tax issues around giving to the a state fund
- Need to make sure that the funding is sustainable; not just a one-time grant or donation; private foundation funding is often short-term (1-3 years) and focused on innovation or seed ideas
- Recognize that private donors often prefer to give locally and to have control over how their money is used
- Will not want to compete for private funding that is already going to local programs

Recommendations on ELO Special Fund needed by the end of October; Secretary Holcombe reports to legislature by November 15th

Examples from other states (NH and RI)

Vermont Background- both statewide perspectives and local program perspectives

Individual experiences vs group programs

What can we learn from high school athletics, drama programs and other clubs, work internship programs, etc.

Issues Explored

- Access is important; how is this available for every student?
- System must be transparent and permeable so that outside partners are able to participate
- Communication is important; call for unified system
- Point person or coordinator becomes an important role in a school or community
- Opportunity for schools to meet student needs and for ELO providers to increase intentionality and connections to proficiencies
- Culture of self-directed learning is new both for students and for teachers
- ELO's can provide support for goal setting, etc. as well as specific proficiencies
- Need to address cost issues and determine funding models (who pays for all these opportunities?)
- Who certifies proficiency and how to make sure we don't go back to seat time
- How to make sure the whole system doesn't fall back into the status quo; need strong pilot programs connecting ELOs and schools

Draft Recommendations

- Pay attention to communication needs as well as logistical challenges
- Design as a continuum of experience/ layers of exposure
- Build into the VTAOE's assessment framework
- Training needed both for schools and for ELO providers
- Hold a summit for schools, ELO providers, and students together