



The Importance of Equity and Access in Expanded Learning Time

Vermont's Academic Achievement Gap

One of the most critical education issues facing Vermont is the significant proficiency gap between students who live in poor and low-income households and those who do not. Vermont students who qualify for free or reduced-price lunch tend to score lower on both reading and math proficiency tests regardless of gender or grade level.¹

Importance of Summer Learning

Studies show that 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.² Research has shown that 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, such as those offered by quality afterschool and summer learning programs.³

Importance of Afterschool Programs

Recent research also demonstrates that more consistent time spent in afterschool activities during the elementary years is linked to narrowing the proficiency gap. In one such study, income differences in math achievement were eliminated for elementary students who had consistent participation in afterschool.⁴

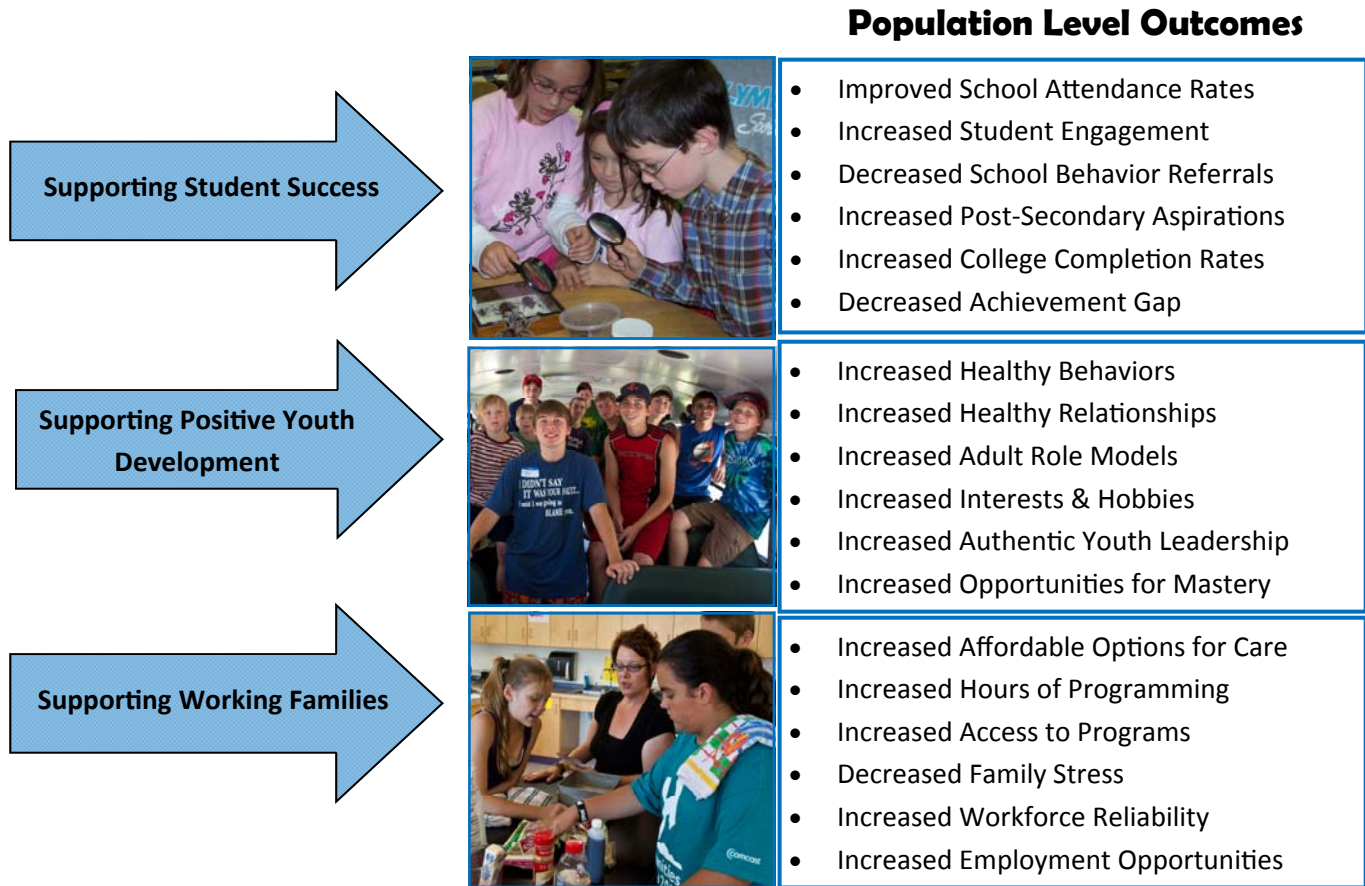
The Challenge of Unequal Access

Similar supports to learning can be found in Vermont's expanded learning programs.⁵ However, the afterschool and summer learning opportunities that a Vermont child has access to vary greatly depending on family income and on what community they live in. For instance, 70-80% of public schools in Vermont offer summer programming, but less than half of these schools (45%) operate at the recommended level of five weeks or more. One-third of the schools that offer summer programming (32%) are open for only 1-3 hours per day for just a few weeks. Likewise, access to quality afterschool programming also varies and finding affordable options can be particularly challenging in Vermont's small rural towns.

Action Needed:

A legislative working group be formed to look at issues of equity and access with regards to afterschool and summer learning programs in Vermont.

Quality Afterschool and Summer Learning Programs Impact Three Key Areas



Vermont Afterschool's Mission

To support organizations in providing quality afterschool, summer, and expanded learning experiences so that Vermont's children and youth have the opportunities, skills, and resources they need to become healthy, productive members of society.

References

- 1 Bailey, G., Bryant, N., Hayes, S., et al. *Roots of Success: Effective Practices in Vermont Schools*. Vermont Department of Education, Oct. 2009.
- 2 Cooper, H., Nye, B., Charlton, K., Lindsay, J., & Greathouse, S. (1996). The effects of summer vacation on achievement test scores: A narrative and meta-analytic review. *Review of Educational Research*.
- 3 Alexander, K. Entwisle, D., & Olson, L. (2007). Lasting consequences of the summer learning gap. *American Sociological Review*.
- 4 Pierce, K. M., Auger, A. & Vandell, D. L. (April, 2013). *Narrowing the Achievement Gap: Consistency and Intensity of Structured Activities During Elementary School*. Unpublished paper presented at the Society for Research in Child Development Biennial Meeting, Seattle, WA.
- 5 Mace, Nicole L. *Afterschool Programs in Vermont: Supporting Success for All Students*. Voices for Vermont's Children, Mar. 2010.