

**Working Group on Expanded Learning Opportunities (ELO)**  
**Status Report to PreK-16 Council**  
**September 21, 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  
 Committed to consistently bringing forward what we know from data and research  
 Next meeting scheduled on October 13<sup>th</sup> with Secretary Holcombe

**Members**

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| Tom Alderman, VT Agency of Education                   | Representative Ann Manwaring                     |
| Ginny Burley, Central Vermont New Directions Coalition | Katie Mobley, Community College of Vermont       |
| Senator Brian Campion                                  | Holly Morehouse, Vermont Afterschool             |
| Jim Fitzpatrick, former principal/superintendent       | Barb Russ, former 21 <sup>st</sup> CCLC Director |
| Harry Frank, VT School Boards Association              | Karen Scott, Vermont Afterschool                 |
| 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)

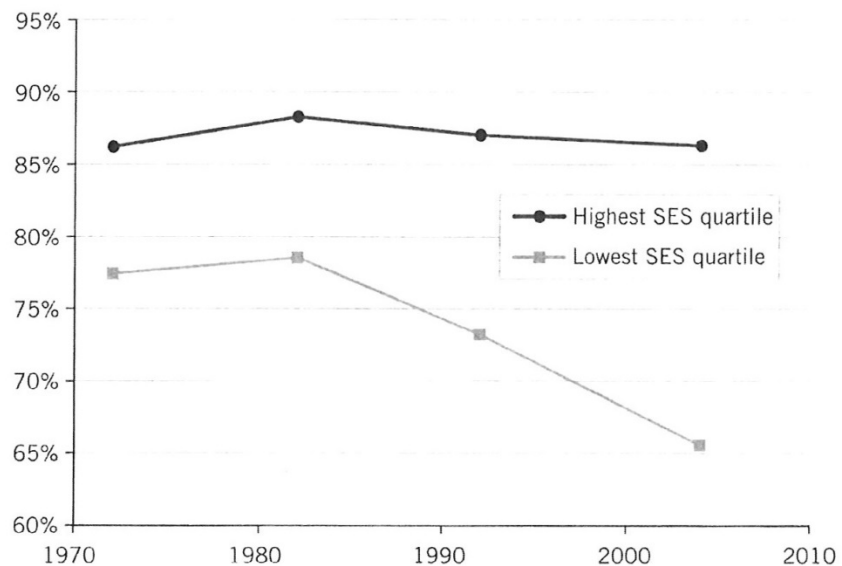
**Additional Meetings**

- 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)

## Important Data Points

- Up to 2/3 of that academic achievement gap between lower- and higher-income youth can be attributed to unequal access to summer learning opportunities (Alexander, et. al., 2007)
- Youth who are engaged in constructive pursuits during their free time are more likely to develop initiative, better understand themselves in relation to others, experience optimism toward the future, and develop skills and competencies that promote a successful transition to adulthood (Sharp 2010)
- **Students who are consistently involved in extracurricular activities (e.g., afterschool programs, sports, clubs, etc.) are about 70 percent more likely to go to college than kids who are only episodically involved—and roughly 400 percent more likely than kids who are not at all involved. (Zaff, et al. 2003)**
- In 2007, parents in the top tenth of the economic hierarchy spent about \$6,600 per child per year on in enrichment spending: **nine times the amount** (about \$750) spent annually on a child of parents in the bottom tenth of the income hierarchy (Putnam 2015, p.125)
- “During the past 15 years, activity levels in out-of-school clubs and organizations rose among affluent youth and fell among poor youth. From 1997 to 2012, the ‘extracurricular gap’ between poor kids and nonpoor kids aged 6-11 nearly doubled, from 15 to 27 percentage points, while the comparable gap among kids aged 12-17 rose from 19 to 29 percentage points” (Putnam 2015, p. 177)

**Figure 4.3: Growing class gap in participation in school-based extracurriculars, 1972–2002**



Sources: National Longitudinal Study of 1972, High School and Beyond (1980), National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988, Education Longitudinal Study of 2002.

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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

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Rough draft for a report by end of September

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

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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

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The ELO Special Fund is set up to accept both public and 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

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

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Examples from other states (NH and RI)

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Vermont Background- both statewide perspectives and local program perspectives

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Individual experiences vs group programs

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

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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

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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