

**ELO Working Group  
Report DRAFT- September 11, 2015  
Recommendations for the ELO Special Fund**

**Key Principles for the ELO Special Fund**

**Builds on the Strong Base of Quality Programming in Vermont**

Vermont places a high value on quality expanded learning opportunities, including afterschool and summer learning programs, because they keep kids safe, inspire learners, help working families, and support Vermont's vision for education. Approximately 24% of Vermont's children and youth currently participate in expanded learning opportunities. In 2014, Vermont ranked fourth in the nation in a national survey on afterschool due in part to high parent satisfaction rates and program quality.

**Increases Access to Programs for More Students, Communities, and Families**

The ELO Special Fund was established to increase access to programs. We know that what children and youth are doing in the hours outside the classroom and over the summer plays a significant role in their future success. However, Vermont is faced with an opportunity gap where the types of experiences and ELO programs that a student has access to afterschool and over the summer varies greatly depending on where the student lives and the level of their family income. One in three, or 22,000 Vermont children and youth, who are not currently participating in expanded learning programs would be today if more were available and accessible.

**Creates Opportunity for State Leadership**

It is essential that the state take strong leadership on this issue. A statewide effort to ensure access in every Vermont community requires state vision and a long-term view. If eliminating the academic achievement gap, ensuring equity in educational opportunities, and fulfilling the vision of Vermont's Education Quality Standards are indeed priorities for the state, then access to expanded learning opportunities must be seen as a public good and the legislature and administration should step forward in full support of the ELO Special Fund.

**Ensures Funding is Flexible, Aligned, and Streamlined**

The grant process for the ELO Special Fund should be flexible and responsive to the needs of the local community; aligned with other grant processes in the state; and streamlined so that applying and utilizing the funds ensures quality without placing undue burdens on local communities and schools. The grant process should be designed so as not to exclude in particular Vermont's small, rural communities.

**Allows for Joint Vision and Public-Private Partnership**

The ELO Special Fund creates a unique opportunity to eliminate funding/program siloes and bring together all those working to improve afterschool, summer, and expanded learning programs in Vermont. The creation of the grant process and the oversight of the Fund should be established from the start as a collaborative and inclusive process.

## Outline for the ELO Special Fund

<b>Purpose</b>	The ELO Special Fund was established to ensure that children and youth in every Vermont community have access to quality afterschool, summer, and expanded learning opportunities
<b>Definition</b>	“Expanded Learning Opportunity (ELO) program” means a structured program designed to serve prekindergarten through secondary school-age children and youth outside the school day on a regular basis, including before and after school and during the summer, by providing opportunities for personal, emotional, and academic growth for children and youth.
<b>Eligibility</b>	<p>Eligible programs must serve students on a regular basis outside the regular school day/year (e.g., afterschool, summer, weekends, vacation weeks, etc.)</p> <p>Eligible programs can be run by a school, district, or supervisory union or by a community organization, nonprofit, or licensed childcare center</p> <p><b>(What about independent schools? Licensed childcare centers can be private businesses and independent schools can be nonprofits.)</b></p>
<b>Required Program Elements</b>	<p>The grant process should ensure that the following elements of program quality are addressed at every funded site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School-Community Partnerships</li> <li>• Engaged Learning</li> <li>• Family Engagement</li> <li>• Intentional Programming</li> <li>• Diverse, Prepared Staff</li> <li>• Participation and Access</li> <li>• Safety, Health and Wellness</li> <li>• Ongoing Assessment and Improvement</li> </ul>
<b>Allowable Use of Funds</b>	<p>Grant funds should be limited to the following uses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Starting a new afterschool/summer/ELO program</li> <li>• Increasing participation in an existing program (especially for students who qualify for free or reduced price lunch)</li> <li>• Making quality improvements to an existing program</li> <li>• Sustaining an existing program, such as one receiving 21st CCLC funding or other grant</li> </ul>
<b>Target Populations and Program Types</b>	<p>The following four priorities should be reflected in the grant process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children who qualify as low-income</li> <li>• Parts of the state with little or no programming available</li> <li>• Programs for middle school students</li> <li>• Programs that run 10-15 hours/week during the school year and six weeks, full-day during the summer</li> <li>• Picking up where 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC leaves off; filling in gaps</li> </ul>
<b>Match Requirement</b>	<p>A one-to-one local match should be required</p> <p>Grant recipients may satisfy this requirement through in-kind support and through the use of federal, state, or local funds</p>

**Expected Outcomes**

- Look at United Way's common RBA measures
- Include social-emotional measures; transferable skills

**Special Considerations**

Do not put added restrictions on the funding or make it too difficult for small, rural communities to apply

**Committee Membership**

Create an Expanded Learning Opportunities Committee (perhaps under the PreK-16 Council?) with broad stakeholder representation including the following:

- 1) the Secretary of Education or designee;
- 2) the Commissioner for Children and Families or designee;
- 3) the director of Vermont Afterschool, Inc., or designee;
- 4) one current member of the Vermont House of Representatives, appointed by the Speaker of the House;
- 5) one current member of the Vermont Senate, appointed by the President Pro Tem;
- 6) one member who is a current or past superintendent with experience with afterschool programs in his or her district or supervisory union appointed by the Vermont Superintendents Association;
- 7) one member who is a current or past school board member with experience with afterschool programs in his or her district or supervisory union appointed by the Vermont School Boards Association;
- 8) one member who is a current or past school principal with experience with afterschool programs in his or her school appointed by the Vermont Principals Association;
- 9) two members appointed by the Prekindergarten-16 Council; and
- 10) three members representing Expanded Learning Opportunities programs that have been running for at least one year, with one member to be appointed each by the Governor, the Speaker of the House, and the President Pro Tem.

**What about Voices, Hunger Free Vermont, Child Poverty Council?****Committee Role**

The ELO Committee shall have the following responsibilities:

- Develop recommendations for all aspects of the grant program, including the application process and the criteria for evaluating applications
- Participate in the grant review process and make recommendations for funding
- Provide regular oversight for the grant administration process, including any decisions where funding is to be awarded or taken away
- Serve as the state leadership group for policies concerning expanded learning opportunities
- Pursue and/or accept additional funding from other public and private sources

**Agency Authority**

The Agency of Education shall have the following responsibilities:

- Award grants based upon the recommendations of the Committee
- Administer the grants consistent with the terms of acceptance

- Provide technical assistance and resources to support grantees with quality programming
- Meet at least three times per year with the Committee to discuss funding awarded, outcomes achieved, and barriers or challenges encountered
- Provide an annual report to the Legislature on the grant program, dollars spent, and outcomes achieved

#### Administrative Support

The Agency of Education shall provide administrative support to the ELO Committee. The Agency may approve administrative support services for the ELO Committee provided at no cost by one or more members of the Committee.

A minimum of 3 percent of the annual amount in the ELO Special Fund shall be available for the Agency to use for training, technical assistance, evaluation, and state administration of the grant awards. These funds may be contracted out by the Agency for the purposes stated above.

#### Alternative Authority

If the Secretary of Education does not feel that the Agency has the capacity to administer the ELO Special Fund and grant program, consider placing the program with the Commissioner for Children and Families

#### Funding Goals

- \$500,000 would allow 10 sites to run comprehensive summer programs
- \$2million would serve the 70-80 low-income communities not already receiving 21st CCLC funding (assuming the required local match)
- \$3.5 million/year would provide \$50,000/year for every school that has at least 40% free or reduced priced lunch rate at a minimum level of programming
- \$5million/year would create full afterschool and summer programs in all communities with at least 60% free or reduced priced lunch rates at a comprehensive level of programming (15hrs/week during the school year and six weeks, full-day in the summer)

#### State Appropriation

A state appropriation is recommended in the amount of ?? for FY17 to create programming in ?? additional communities.

#### Private Contributions

The ELO Special Fund is set up to accept private contributions, grants, and donations. However, 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
- 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

### Annual Reports

The Agency shall report annually to the House and Senate Education and Appropriations committees on applications received, grants awarded, and outcomes achieved.

The ELO Committee shall report annually to the PreK-16 Council on the Committee's activities and the outcomes of the grant program ??

### Main Recommendations

- (1) Create the ELO Committee with broad representation and clear responsibilities
- (2) Keep authority with the Agency of Education unless the Secretary of Education says they don't have the capacity. An alternative option may be the Commissioner for Children and Families.
- (3) Build on state leadership and designate a state appropriation of ??? to create programming in ??? additional Vermont communities
- (4) Pull in partners and funding. Work with the private business and philanthropic community to develop a plan for creating a public-private partnership or match program
- (5) Provide technical assistance and training to support quality programming.
- (6) Build ELOs into the VTAOE assessment framework