

From: Sarah Willey [swilley@stjbsd.org]
Sent: Monday, February 12, 2018 1:54 PM
To: Theresa Utton
Subject: Re: budget hearing written statement

Hello. My name is Sarah Willey and I live in St. Johnsbury, VT. Thank you so much to the Vermont House and Senate Appropriations Committees for holding this hearing and taking public testimony in regard to the potential cuts to Afterschool and Summer Learning opportunities. I am here advocating for the continued funding of the Extending Learning Opportunities Special fund with an appropriation of \$2.5 million, which will ensure that VT communities are able to continue providing quality after school and summer programming to families in need.

As the Director of the Catamount Community (CatCH) Hours Afterschool Program I am able to provide St. Johnsbury's children with academic and enrichment learning opportunities; along with recreation, and socialization; in a safe environment led by kind and inspirational adults. All of these things may not be accessible to them without an inclusive afterschool and summer program.

In St. Johnsbury, the CatCH Afterschool Program has allowed students to become sportsmen and women as they practice archery; work as carpenters as they learn woodworking skills; and experiment as engineers while putting together and programming robots, and designing traps to catch invasive species . They have learned the importance of physical wellness through countless recreational and nutritional opportunities; including cooking classes, swimming and sports clinics. They have also become artists who are inspired to create in new ways- making comic books with illustration and storylines, paper mache masterpieces, and seeing their community in a new light as they capture it in their sketchbooks.

Acquiring new skills ingrains a sense of self-worth and pride, allowing children to believe in themselves and create goals for their future. If we want to see a hopeful future for our country we must first give our children what they need to contribute to it.

As educators, we see children experiencing consistent stress and trauma in their lives. Their homes and families are affected by poverty, drug use, and abuse and neglect. Afterschool and summer programs provide an outlet for children where they can establish connections and engage in experiences that will carry them through these times.

Afterschool and Summer learning opportunities provide working families with safe places for their children to learn, and to develop and experience enrichment, with the guidance of supportive adults. These learning opportunities provide them with skills that they will carry with them into the workforce and inspire them to be lifelong learners.

I hope that the Appropriations Committee will make the financial commitment to support Afterschool and Summer Learning programs by allocating funds to the ELO Special Fund for FY19, allowing us to continue supporting our children and their futures.

Thank you

Sarah Willey, St. Johnsbury, Vermont, USA

On Mon, Feb 12, 2018 at 1:53 PM, Theresa Utton <TUTTON@leg.state.vt.us> wrote:

Sarah –

Could you send your testimony as a text document? I am unable to open the attachment. Thank you,
~Theresa

Theresa Utton-Jerman (Room 40)

[Legislative Joint Fiscal Office]

House Committee on Appropriations (Room 42)

Vermont State House

Montpelier, Vermont 05633

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From: Sarah Willey [mailto:swilley@stjtd.org]

Sent: Monday, February 12, 2018 1:47 PM

To: Theresa Utton

Subject: budget hearing written statement

Hi Theresa

I will be sharing this statement with the committee tonight in St. Johnsbury. Here is my statement attached. Thank you!

 **Afterschool and Summer Learning**

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Sarah Willey

Catamount Community Hours-CatCH Program Director

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