

My name is Holly Morehouse, and I am the Executive Director of Vermont Afterschool, a statewide nonprofit. Thank you for your time and efforts to hear from so many different voices.

I'd like to ask the Appropriations Committee to fund the Expanded Learning Opportunities (ELO) Special Fund with an appropriation of \$2.5 million for Fiscal Year 2018. The legislature created the ELO Special Fund in 2015, but no money has yet been allocated. An appropriation of \$2.5 million would help ensure that all high-needs communities in Vermont are able to provide access to quality Expanded Learning Opportunities for their children and youth.

While access to afterschool and summer learning programs won't solve all our problems, research from across the nation, and experiences here in Vermont, tell us that without adequately addressing what is happening with our children and youth outside the school day and over the summer, we won't be able to make meaningful progress on some of the most critical issues that we face today. Consider the following:

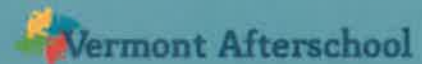
- Afterschool and summer learning programs allow parents and family members to hold jobs and be at work. They keep children safe, provide positive adult role models, and time to build strong, healthy relationships with peers.
- They help address childhood hunger by providing important access to healthy snacks and meals in the evenings and throughout the long weeks of summer.
- They engage students, offer help and remediation where needed, prevent summer learning loss, and are recognized as an essential strategy in addressing the academic achievement gap.
- Afterschool and summer learning programs are also an effective prevention strategy. Studies have shown that children and youth who participate on a regular basis are less likely to experiment with alcohol and drugs, get into trouble, or engage in other risky behaviors.
- Afterschool programs also create jobs, currently more than 5000 full and part time jobs across the state, including some of the only work experience available to high school students in VT's rural communities.
- Finally, many of Vermont's quality afterschool and summer programs place a strong emphasis on building skills in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM)—all skills that are important to the future of VT's workforce.

Research shows that students who are consistently involved in extracurricular activities like afterschool programs are about 70 percent more likely to go to college than those who are not. At the same time, trends over the last 15 years show a widening gap between families of means and low-income families when it comes to spending on and participation in afterschool and summer enrichment activities. With the lowest percentage of low income children participating in afterschool programs in the nation, this opportunity gap exists here in Vermont and is in danger of getting even wider.

The request for \$2.5 million for the ELO Special Fund was arrived at with great care and intention and is based on two years of research by the ELO Working Group under Vermont's PreK-16 Council. The handout accompanying my testimony describes in further detail what the state appropriation would contribute to, the role of matching dollars, and how funding would support those most in need.

In closing, an investment of \$2.5 million in the ELO Special Fund in FY18 is an investment in Vermont's children, youth, and families that is research-based, leverages other dollars, addresses key state concerns, targets those most in need, and supports a working Vermont- both now and in the future. Thank you for your consideration.

ZAP THE GAP!



With Afterschool
& Summer Learning



SUPPORT STATE FUNDING OF \$2.5 MILLION IN THE EXPANDED LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES (ELO) SPECIAL FUND

Quality afterschool and summer learning programs keep kids safe & healthy, inspire learners, help working families, and support Vermont's vision for education. Vermont has the lowest level of low-income children enrolled in afterschool in the entire nation. Help to **zap all the gaps**—the achievement gap, opportunity gap, geographic gap, and homework gap—by supporting a \$2.5 million appropriation to the ELO Special Fund.

Vermont currently has no dedicated state funding to ensure that afterschool and summer learning programs are available and accessible to all.

The **ELO Special Fund** was passed in 2015 as part of Act 48, which included language establishing a state fund for ELOs. The purpose of the ELO Special Fund is to expand access to programs that serve preK-12 children and youth outside the school day on a regular basis, including before and after school, school vacation weeks, and summer.

More than 21,000 Vermont K-12 youth are enrolled in afterschool, but 22,000+ are waiting for an available program.

An annual appropriation of \$2.5 million would help to ensure that **all high-need communities** in Vermont get the support they need to make sure that children, youth, and families have access to quality afterschool and summer learning programs.

Vermont Child Poverty Council Report January 2017

“Studies have shown that students who do not participate in enrichment activities outside core school hours are more likely to fall behind their peers in terms of academic achievement; are more likely to engage in risky or dangerous behaviors; and are less likely to continue on to college. The Council requests that the General Assembly provide funding to the Expanded Learning Opportunities Special Fund to expand access to afterschool and summer learning programs, particularly in underserved areas of the State and in communities with a high percentage of students from families with low income.”

Vermont Early Childhood Alliance Agenda January 2017

“Quality afterschool and summer learning programs keep children safe, inspire learners, and help working families. The Alliance supports Vermont Afterschool’s ‘Zap the Gap’ campaign to create a state appropriation for the Expanded Learning Opportunities Special Fund, which if funded can provide grants to increase access to these programs, particularly for low-income children and families.”

Blue Ribbon Commission on Financing High Quality, Affordable Child Care November 2016

“The Commission focused on early care and learning for children birth to five years old; however, the Commission recognizes that early care and learning needs for families do not end at five years old. Before, after-school, and summer-time care is critical for supporting working parents and for providing safe, nurturing and educational environments for young children.”

PreK-16 Council Working Group on Expanded Learning Opportunities November 2015

“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 it is critical that the Legislature and Administration take leadership with investment and action on this issue by following the recommendations [detailed in the report] and allocating state funding to work toward providing access to Expanded Learning Opportunities for the children and youth in every Vermont community.”



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Vermont Afterschool is a statewide nonprofit dedicated to supporting and sustaining innovative learning opportunities that extend beyond the school day for all Vermont’s children and youth.

Investing in Vermont's Kids

Here's what an appropriation of \$2.5 million in the ELO Special Fund will support:

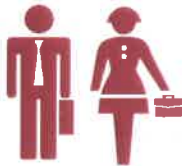


8,711
regular attendees
in high-need
communities



Afterschool and summer
learning programs in
218
communities with at least
50% poverty rate

Across **218** afterschool & summer learning programs
serving grades K-12 in high-need communities,



79% of children ages 6-17
have all available
parents in the work
force



\$1,148 average cost per pupil
at recommended
dosage level



33% of students are
likely to attend ELOs
on a regular basis



2,287 full and part-time jobs
created to run
afterschool and
summer programs

FOOD

60
summer
meals



185
afterschool
suppers

served per student
plus healthy snacks

HOURS

240 hours of
programming



per student
over the
summer

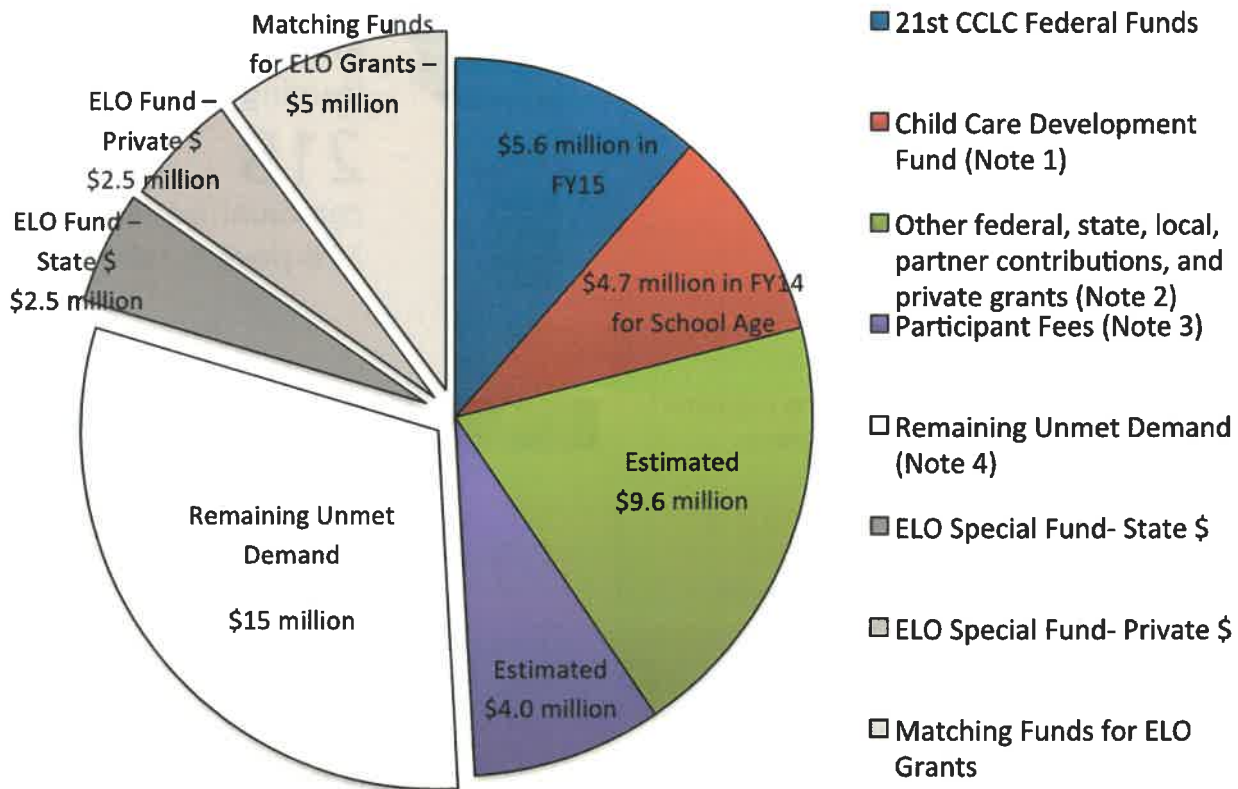
555 hours of
programming



per student
over the
school year



ELO Funding in Vermont: Sources and Needs



The Gap: 22,000 more children and youth in Vermont would be in afterschool and summer learning programs if more programs were available and accessible

Notes and References

Note 1: Total FY14 Child Care Development Funds in Vermont were \$14,771,095. The federal share was \$9,872,288. 32% of children receiving childcare subsidies in Vermont were school age (ages 5-13). Additional funding for child care subsidies is included in the next category.

Note 2: Estimate based on data from VT Agency of Education, 21st CCLC Program, sustainability charts. Also includes additional funding for child care subsidies not already accounted for in Note 1 (waiting further confirmation from DCF).

Note 3: In 2011, 70% of afterschool programs reported charging participant fees. The average amount of annual fees per program was \$13,000. (*Vermont's Landscape for Expanded Learning*, Feb 2011, Vermont Afterschool)

Note 4: An estimated 22,000 Vermont children are in need of afterschool programming. The average program cost per student is \$1148/year. Some, but not all, of this demand would be met by the ELO Special Fund under the scenario presented. (*Closing the Gap: Vermont's ELO Special Fund*, report by the PreK-16 Council's Working Group, Nov. 2015)

Note 5: Recommendation for the ELO Special Fund is that it be set up as a matching grant process.

AFTERSCHOOL & SUMMER LEARNING IN VERMONT

KEEPING KIDS HEALTHY AND SAFE

- **Peak Hours.** On school days, the hours between 3-6pm are the peak hours for youth to commit crimes, be in or cause an automobile accident, be victims of crime, smoke, drink alcohol, or use drugs.¹
- **Dangerous Behaviors.** Teens who do not participate in structured activities after school are nearly three times more likely to skip classes at school, experiment with drugs, and engage in sexual activity than teens who do participate.²
- **Healthy Snacks and Meals.** 1 in 5 children in Vermont live in households that are struggling to keep food on the table. Programs that provide afterschool and summer meals and snacks make it easier for parents to make ends meet, and may be a child's only chance to access nutritious food until the next school day.³
- **Return on Investment.** For every dollar spent on quality afterschool and summer learning programs, Vermont gets back \$2.18 in long-term savings from reduced criminal activity and substance abuse treatment, as well as accruing additional benefits from increased high school completion and work productivity.⁴

Unmet Demand

24% percent of Vermont's children, grades K-12, are currently enrolled in Expanded Learning Opportunities. Of those children not currently in programs, 33% would participate if a program were available.⁵

INSPIRING LEARNERS

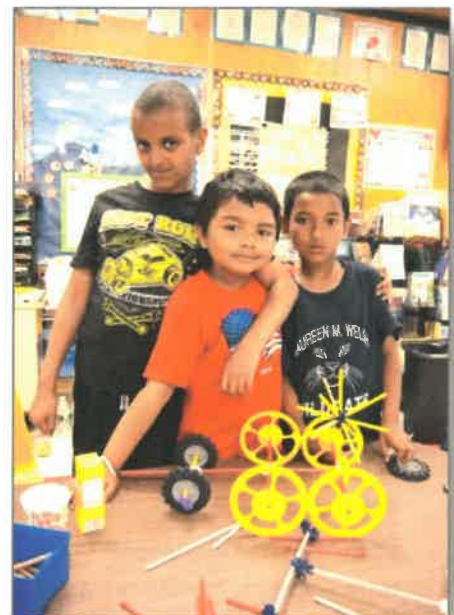
- **Improved Student Outcomes.** Studies show that students involved in quality afterschool and summer learning programs have: improved school attendance, including fewer absences and less tardiness; more engagement in learning and better grades; more time spent on homework and higher rates of homework completion; increased rates of family involvement in school; greater sense of the relevance of curriculum; enhanced problem solving and conflict management skills; and increased responsibility and improved effort in school.⁶
- **College Connections.** 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.⁷
- **Opportunity Gap.** Trends over the last 15 years show a widening gap between families of means and low-income families when it comes to spending on and participation in afterschool and summer enrichment activities.⁸



- **Summer Learning.** 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.⁹
- **Achievement Gap.** Studies demonstrate that more consistent time spent in afterschool activities during the elementary years is linked to narrowing the academic achievement gap. In a recent longitudinal study, income differences in math achievement were eliminated for students who had consistent afterschool activities across their Kindergarten to Grade 5 years.¹⁰

HELPING WORKING FAMILIES

- **Need for Care.** In Vermont, 79% of children ages 6-17 have all available parents in the workforce.¹¹ For most families, there is a gap of 15-25 hours per week when parents are still at work and children are out of school and need supervision. This need for care is even greater during school vacation weeks and over the summer.
- **Parent Stress.** According to polls, 87% of working mothers say the hours after school are when they are most concerned about their children’s safety. This “after school stress” often can lead to lower productivity, high turnover in jobs, and work absences. In fact, parents miss an average of five days of work per year due to a lack of afterschool care.¹²
- **Cost to Companies.** Researchers have identified that the stress parents experience regarding their children’s after school arrangements costs companies nationally between \$50-\$300 billion/year in healthcare and lost productivity.¹³
- **Peace of Mind.** 81% of Vermont parents agree that afterschool programs help give them peace of mind about their children when they are at work, and 79% agree that afterschool and summer learning programs help working parents keep their jobs.⁵
- **Parent Satisfaction.** With a 95% parent satisfaction rate, afterschool programs in Vermont are valued by parents for their quality, services offered, and the academic supports provided.⁵
- **Public Support.** 88% of Vermont parents support public funding for Expanded Learning Opportunities, including afterschool and summer learning programs.⁵



References:

(1)Fight Crime: Invest in Kids. Website: www.fightcrime.org; (2)YMCA of the USA. (2001). After School for America’s Teens ; (3) Hunger Free Vermont. Website: <https://www.hungerfreevt.org/afterschoolmeals-resources>; (4) Vermont Afterschool. (2014). Return on Investment Study. <http://bit.ly/1zqTHp0>;(5) America after 3PM: Afterschool programs in demand. Afterschool Alliance; (6) National Institute on Out-of-School Time. (2009). Making the case: A 2009 fact sheet on children and youth in out-of-school time. Wellesley Centers for Women, Wellesley College; (7) Zaff, J.F., Moore, K., Pappillo, A., and Williams, S. (2003). Implications of Extracurricular Activity Participation During Adolescence on Positive Outcomes. Journal of Adolescent Research 18 (November 2003): 599-630; (8) Putnam, R. (2015). Our Kids: The American Dream in Crisis; (9)Alexander, K., Entwisle, D., and Olson, L. (2007). Lasting consequences of the summer learning gap. American Sociological Review, 72, 167-180; (10) Vandell, D., Reisner, E., and Pierce, K. (2007). Outcomes linked to high-quality afterschool programs: Longitudinal findings from the study of promising after school programs. Washington, DC: Policy Studies Associates, Inc. ; (11) Kids Count Data Center. (2009-2013). <http://datacenter.kidscount.org/> ; (12) Afterschool Alliance. (2003). Afterschool programs help working families. Afterschool Alert: Issue Brief #16; (13) Chait, B.R. and Sabattini, L. (2006). After school worries: Tough on parents; bad for business. Brandeis University Women’s Studies Research Center/ Catalyst Study.

Afterschool Works! IN VERMONT



Jobs related to science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) are driving economic growth in Vermont.

Investing in afterschool and summer learning STEM programs will help prepare our kids for the jobs of tomorrow and connect them with opportunities that will encourage them to stay in Vermont, increase their earning potential and build a prosperous economy for all of us.

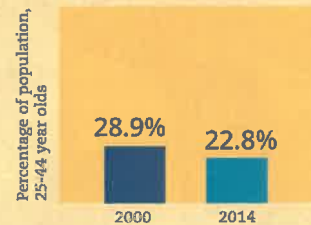
In Vermont, technology jobs are growing, but the workforce is retiring, forcing employers to import the talent they need.



STEM jobs comprise 25% of all employment in Vermont.



Technology jobs are the fastest growing jobs in Vermont—projected to grow 7.5% annually from 2014 to 2022.



Vermont's population of 25-44 year olds declined from 28.9% in 2000 to 22.8% in 2014 and young adults are leaving the state.

Afterschool and summer learning STEM programs can help bridge this gap.



Afterschool STEM programs spark interest by engaging students in hands-on experiences and help them build workforce skills such as critical thinking and collaboration.



Afterschool STEM programs boost students' proficiency in math and science, increase their likelihood of graduation and put them on the path to pursuing a career in the STEM fields.



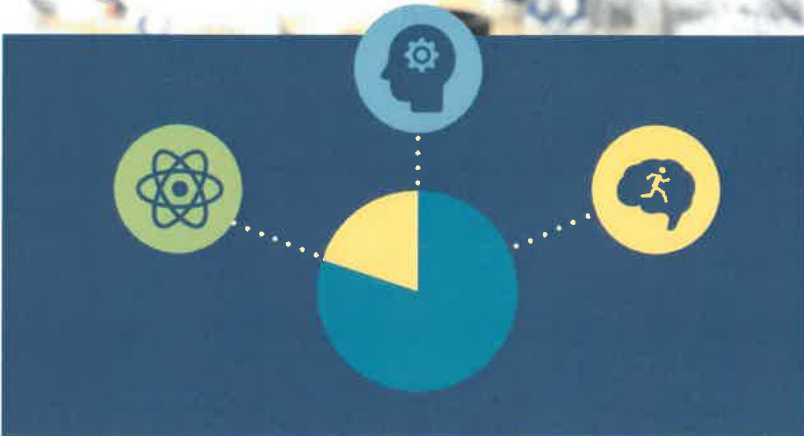
75% of Vermont parents say afterschool should provide youth with opportunities to explore and engage in hands-on STEM learning.



Afterschool Works! IN VERMONT

Afterschool and summer learning STEM is a smart investment in Vermont's economy and future generations.

Afterschool STEM helps students develop interest in high-demand career fields and gain skills that Vermont businesses value most—and see lacking in the current workforce.



A 2016 *survey of Vermont students across 13 afterschool STEM programs found that 80% or more reported significant gains in science interest, critical thinking or perseverance since the program began. Compared with the national sample, Vermont afterschool students in this survey had significantly higher ratings of science interest, especially among middle school students.

*According to data from Partnerships in Education and Resilience (PER)

Every \$1 invested in afterschool and summer learning programs saves \$2.18 by:



1

Increasing kids' earning potential

2

Improving kids' performance at school

3

Reducing crime and juvenile delinquency

**Afterschool Works in Vermont.
Invest in afterschool STEM.**

For more information visit:

<http://www.vermontafterschool.org/stem/>

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Sources:

- <http://www.vtfuturesproject.org/>
- <http://www.vtmi.info/vttechstudy2015.pdf>
- <http://www.vermonttechnologyalliance.org/page/techreport>
- http://afterschoolalliance.org/AA3PM/detail.html#s/VT/stem/p_of_children_in_programs_2014
- <http://www.vermontafterschool.org/stem/data/>
- <http://www.vermontafterschool.org/advocacy/know-the-facts/#ROI>
- <https://cew.georgetown.edu/cew-reports/stem/>
- <http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/stem-afterschool-outcomes.pdf>





Vermont Afterschool

Quality expanded learning programs play an important role in Vermont's communities by:

- Keeping kids safe
- Inspiring learners
- Helping working families
- Supporting VT's vision for education



HOW MUCH?

There are an estimated **430** organizations in Vermont that provide afterschool and summer learning programs for youth in grades K-12. Organizations running programs include schools, parks and recreation departments, community organizations, licensed childcare centers, teen centers, and nonprofits. Currently, 85% of Vermont's afterschool programs take place in a school building and 59% of regular attendees at 21st Century Community Learning Centers qualify for free or reduced-price lunch.



21,690

or (24%) of Vermont's children and youth are enrolled in afterschool programs

On average, afterschool programs run for 34 weeks during the school year with children and youth attending 7.51 hours per week



31,529

or (35%) of Vermont's children and youth are enrolled in summer learning programs

On average, summer learning programs in Vermont run for 5.6 weeks with programming offered 36 hours per week

MEALS

Afterschool & summer learning programs serve approximately

60 summer meals and 185 afterschool suppers

per child per year, plus healthy snacks



JOBS

Individuals employed by afterschool & summer learning programs work for an estimated

2,387,704 hours

per year, which averages to

1,148 full-time

equivalent positions



HOW WELL?

With **95%** of Vermont parents reporting that they are satisfied with their child's afterschool program, Vermont's programs are well liked and valued in their communities.



QUALITY

93%

of students in grades 5-12 participating in a statewide survey reported that they feel like they belong in their afterschool program



DAVID P. WEIKART
**CENTER FOR YOUTH
PROGRAM QUALITY**

90%

of 21st Century Community Learning Centers and 67% of all afterschool program sites use a quality improvement process such as Youth Program Quality Intervention (YPQI) that is proven to support positive youth outcomes



79%

of licensed afterschool programs have three or more STARS in Vermont's quality rating and information system

STAFFING

53%

of staff members at an afterschool program and/or summer learning program hold a BA or higher

100%

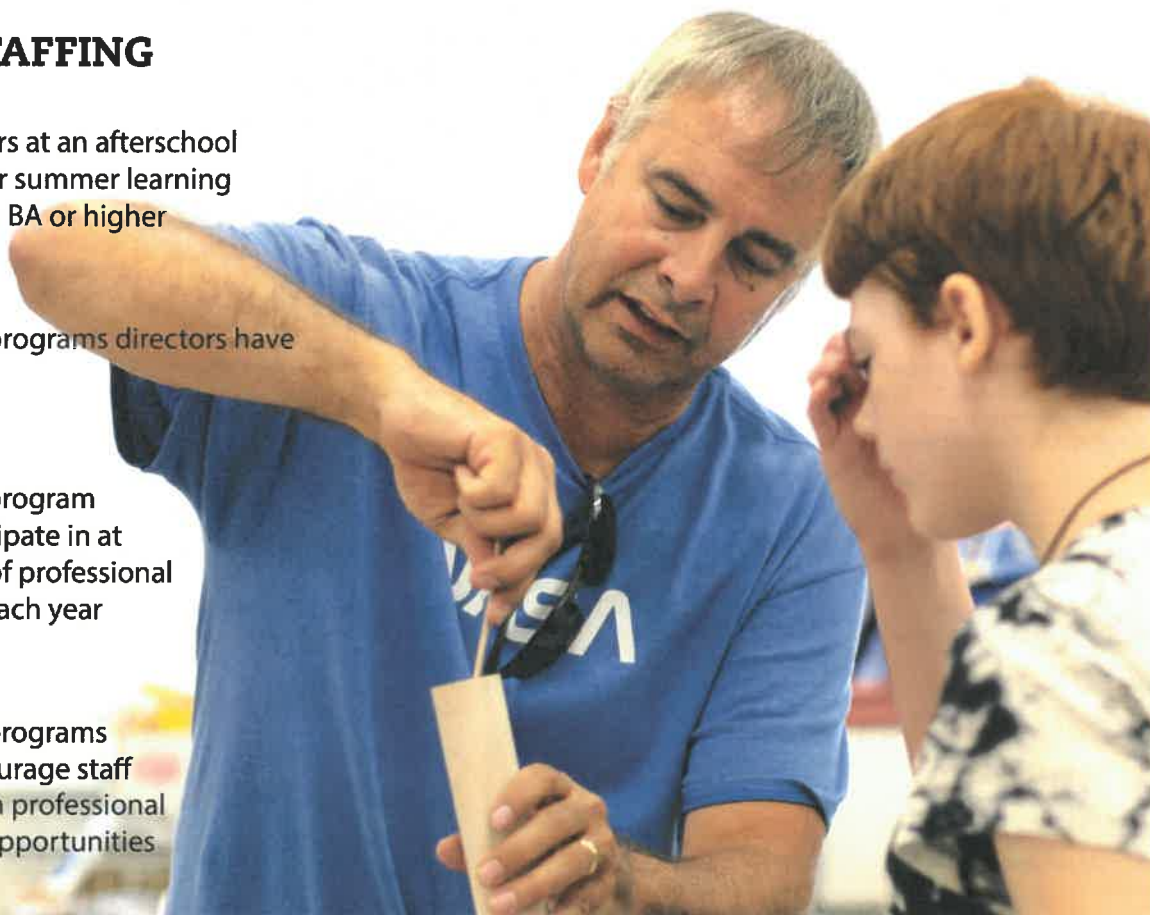
of afterschool programs directors have a BA or higher

100%

of afterschool program directors participate in at least 12 hours of professional development each year

95%

of afterschool programs require or encourage staff to participate in professional development opportunities



IS ANYONE BETTER OFF?

Working Families Depend on Afterschool



According to a 2014 nationwide report, **81%** of Vermonters surveyed said that afterschool programs provide working parents with peace of mind and **79%** of parents said that afterschool programs help them keep their jobs.

STUDENT GAINS

80%+

of Vermont students participating in afterschool STEM tinkering programs reported significant gains in science interest, critical thinking, and perseverance since beginning their programs



RISKY BEHAVIORS

According to the Youth Risk Behavior Survey, Vermont high school students who participate in afterschool activities (up to 19 hours/week) are

less likely to consume alcohol, use illegal drugs, or be in a physical fight

when compared to peers who do not participate in afterschool activities

VT TAXPAYERS

\$2.18

Every \$1 invested in afterschool programs saves Vermonters between \$2.18 and \$9.00 in the future by increasing students' earning potential, improving performance at school, and reducing crime, drug abuse, and juvenile delinquency



OTHER INFO TO KNOW:

→ Improved Student Outcomes

Studies show that students involved in quality afterschool and summer learning programs have: improved school attendance, including fewer absences and less tardiness; more engagement in learning and better grades; more time spent on homework and higher rates of homework completion; increased rates of family involvement in school; greater sense of the relevance of curriculum; enhanced problem solving and conflict management skills; and increased responsibility and improved effort in school.¹

→ College Connections

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.²

→ Opportunity Gap

Trends over the last 15 years show a widening gap between families of means and low-income families when it comes to spending on and participation in afterschool and summer enrichment activities.³

→ Summer Learning

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.⁴

→ Achievement Gap

Studies demonstrate that more consistent time spent in afterschool activities during the elementary years is linked to narrowing the academic achievement gap. In a recent longitudinal study, income differences in math achievement were eliminated for students who had consistent afterschool activities across their Kindergarten to Grade 5 years.⁵

→ STEM Engagement

Evidence shows that participation in afterschool and expanded learning STEM programs can spark interest, build skills, and put students on the path to pursuing a career in these fields.⁶

(1) National Institute on Out-of-School Time. (2009). *Making the case: A 2009 fact sheet on children and youth in out-of-school time*. Wellesley Centers for Women, Wellesley College; (2) Zaff, J.F., Moore, K., Pappillo, A., and Williams, S. (2003). *Implications of Extracurricular Activity Participation During Adolescence on Positive Outcomes*. *Journal of Adolescent Research* 18 (November 2003): 599-630; (3) Putnam, R. (2015). *Our Kids: The American Dream in Crisis*; (4) Alexander, K., Entwisle, D., and Olson, L. (2007). *Lasting consequences of the summer learning gap*. *American Sociological Review*, 72, 167-180; (5) Vandell, D., Reisner, E., and Pierce, K. (2007). *Outcomes linked to high-quality afterschool programs: Longitudinal findings from the study of promising after school programs*. Washington, DC: Policy Studies Associates, Inc.; (6) Afterschool Alliance. (2013). *Defining Youth Outcomes for STEM Learning in Afterschool*. Washington, DC.