

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.

H.270 - A Bill Relating to Increasing Expanded Learning Opportunities & Structuring the Expanded Learning Opportunities Special Fund

Statement of purpose: To create an Expanded Learning Opportunities Grant Program developed and administered by an Expanded Learning Opportunities Review Committee to support and encourage increased student participation in and access to Expanded Learning Opportunities programs offered outside of school hours and during the summer throughout Vermont.

Background: In 2015, the Expanded Learning Opportunities (ELO) Working Group under the PreK-16 Council met to develop recommendations about how to use the Expanded Learning Opportunities Special Fund (ELO SF) to increase access to ELOs, how to prioritize funding areas, and how best to oversee the ELO SF. This bill takes the recommendations of the ELO Working Group and would create a structure and process for the ELO SF grants.

Specifically, the bill would do the following:

- Create the Expanded Learning Opportunities Review Committee to:
 - Collect information and data annually to determine the state and extent of ELOs in Vermont, including recommendations for how to leverage, integrate, and augment available federal, local and private dollars to meet the need for quality ELOs throughout Vermont.
 - Develop all aspects of an ELO Grant Program, including creating an application process, setting funding priorities, and determining criteria for evaluating applications and for awarding grants and other incentives, such as professional development.
 - Recommend to the Agency of Education grants to be awarded from the ELO SF (the Agency retains the right and power to award grants); work with the Agency to monitor the administration and implementation of the grants.
 - Work with philanthropic and business communities to pursue and accept grants or other funding from any public or private source for the ELO SF.
- Set overall priorities for the grant funding (although the committee outlined above still has some discretion for priorities). The priorities in the bill are:
 - Expand access to ELO programs for children and youth from low-income families
 - Expand programming in parts of the state where few or no ELO options are currently available
 - Expand access to ELO programs that build STEM skills or support career awareness and workforce readiness skills
- Require matching funds for funds awarded through the ELO SF Grant Program (in-kind match allowed)
- Require an annual report from grantees with a focus on Results Based Accountability (specific requirements to be developed by the ELO SF Review Committee with the Agency of Education and the Department for Children and Families)



Holly Morehouse, Executive Director
hollymorehouse@vermontafterschool.org
(802) 598-4005

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.