

S.335

An act relating to universal access to afterschool programs

It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

Sec. 1. FINDINGS

(a) Children who participate in afterschool activities and programs do better in school and in life generally than children without these options.

(b) Access to universal afterschool programs expands equity and choices for children and families and supports working parents by reducing the logistical and financial burden of afterschool care.

(c) Current research demonstrates that involvement in high-quality afterschool programs decreases a child's risk for substance abuse. For example, a 2018 McDowell Group report for the Alaska Afterschool Network found that high school students who participated in afterschool programs were 39 percent less likely to experiment with marijuana.

Sec. 2. TASK FORCE FOR UNIVERSAL AFTERSCHOOL ACCESS

(a) Creation. There is created the Task Force for Universal Afterschool Access to consider and make recommendations on the framework for, the costs of, and related long-term funding sources for access to universal afterschool programs.

(b) Membership. The Task Force shall be composed of the following 15 members:

- (1) one current member of the House of Representatives, who shall be appointed by the Speaker of the House;
- (2) one current member of the Senate, who shall be appointed by the Committee on Committees;
- (3) the Secretary of Education or designee;
- (4) the Secretary of Human Services or designee;
- (5) the Executive Director of the Vermont Superintendents Association or designee;
- (6) the Executive Director of the Vermont School Boards Association or designee;
- (7) the Executive Director of the Vermont Council of Special Education Administrators or designee;
- (8) the Executive Director of the Vermont Principals' Association or designee;
- (9) the Chair of the Vermont Council of Independent Schools or designee;
- (10) a representative of Vermont home study programs, appointed by the Governor;
- (11) a representative of Vermont Boys and Girls Clubs, appointed by the Governor;

(12) three representatives of afterschool programs who represent the breadth of geographic areas within the State, appointed by the Governor; and

(13) the Executive Director of Vermont Afterschool, Inc. or designee.

(c) Powers and duties. The Task Force shall consider and make recommendations on the framework for, the costs of, and related long-term funding sources for access to universal afterschool programs.

(1) The Task Force shall map existing afterschool programs and highlight gaps in access and equity, including equity for Vermonters with disabilities.

(2) The Task Force shall recommend, as part of the framework, best practices and key evidence-based strategies to maximize health and substance abuse prevention and shall consult with the Substance Misuse Prevention and Advisory Council.

(3) The Task Force shall consider the report entitled “Closing the Gap in Vermont: The Expanded Learning Opportunities (ELO) Special Fund,” dated November 2015, issued by the Working Group on Expanded Learning Opportunities of Vermont’s PreK–16 Council.

(4) The Task Force shall review the status and results of the Afterschool for All Grant Program administered by the Department for Children and Families.

(5) The Task Force shall explore all funding sources and shall prefer

solutions that do not draw upon the State's Education Fund.

(6) The Task Force may recommend legislative language to enact its recommendations.

(d) Assistance. The Task Force shall have the administrative, technical, and legal assistance of the Agency of Education.

(e) Meetings.

(1) The Governor shall call the first meeting of the Task Force to occur on or before June 30, 2020.

(2) The Task Force shall select a chair from among its members at the first meeting.

(3) A majority of the membership shall constitute a quorum.

(4) The Task Force shall cease to exist on December 16, 2020.

(f) Reports. On or before December 15, 2020, the Task Force shall submit a written report to the Governor and the House and Senate Committees on Education with its findings and recommendations.

(g) Reimbursement.

(1) For attendance at meetings during adjournment of the General Assembly, a legislative member of the Task Force serving in his or her capacity as a legislator shall be entitled to per diem compensation and reimbursement of expenses pursuant to 2 V.S.A. § 406 for not more than

six meetings. The Legislative Branch shall administer reimbursement for legislative members of the Task Force.

(2) Members of the Task Force who are not employees of the State of Vermont and who are not otherwise compensated or reimbursed for their attendance shall be entitled to per diem compensation and reimbursement of expenses pursuant to 32 V.S.A. § 1010 for not more than six meetings. The Agency of Human Services shall administer reimbursement for the Task Force members specified in this subdivision from funds available from the appropriation made in 2018 (Special Session) Acts and Resolves No. 11, Sec. C.106.2, specifically from the funds allocated for afterschool programing in the spending plan for this appropriation adopted by the Joint Fiscal Committee at its July 27, 2018 meeting.

Sec. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on passage.