S.232 Follow-up Testimony

Vermont Agency of Education

February 26, 2026

Current State

- Libraries are already eligible to participate under the existing legislation
  - Currently, 18 grant recipients are already partnering with libraries to deliver extended learning opportunities
- Any carve out for a single group reduces funding available for other applicants and sets a precedent for future reductions in available funding
  - A carve out does not resolve the resource issue of applying for and managing a grant
- Existing program design supports:
  - Affordability
  - Access
  - Workforce development

Follow-up questions

- Based on the testimony of 2/24, the AOE would like to address the following specific questions:

  - LEA eligibility – Are SU/SDs eligible to receive funding in the first place?

  - Budget structure – How is the AOE budgeting multi-year cohorts and not letting money sit fallow?

  - A "skinny" application – How can the AOE reduce complexity in the application and oversight space?

  - Read Vermont, which was also discussed, falls outside the purview of this presentation, but we can provide a brief update on the longstanding work with the Department of Libraries and other community partners to support Read Vermont

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Are SU/SDs eligible to receive funding in the first place?

- Per 16 V.S.A. § 51(a)(2), "…Eligible recipients can be public, private, or nonprofit organizations."

- No language exists which indicates that SU/SDs should not be considered public entities for this purpose.
  - This is also true of public libraries and state departments or agencies

- Any conversation around a "poison pill" was in reference to a previous version of Act 78 which used the Education Fund rather than create a Universal Afterschool and Summer Special Fund

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How is the AOE budgeting multi-year cohorts and not letting money sit fallow?

- Focus is on providing stability and predictability while maximizing use

- Funds do not sit unused, they pay for previous years' cohorts
  - "multi-year" awards are functionally a commitment to support sequential single year awards over a set period

- In the initial years of the programming, there is some slack as capacity is built.
  - This slack builds shock absorbency as the cannabis tax revenue normalizes
  - It also enables the AOE to experiment with other delivery models and priorities
    - Technical assistance grants
    - Regional provider grants
    - Intensive literacy instruction grants

	FY 25	FY 26	FY 27	FY 28	FY 29	FY 30
FY 24 Cohort	$1,330,971.56 10 programs 7 Centers	$1,330,971.56 10 programs 7 Centers	$1,330,971.56 10 programs 7 Centers	$731,592.56 7 Centers	$731,592.56 7 Centers	-
FY 25 Cohort	$463,474.00 15 programs	$2,401,055.36 15 programs 10 centers	$2,401,055.36 15 programs 10 centers	$2,401,055.36 15 programs 10 centers	$1,414,979.36 10 centers	$1,414,979.36 10 centers
FY 26 Cohort	-	$394,285.71 20 programs	$2,156,571.43 20 programs 10 centers	$2,156,571.43 20 programs 10 centers	$2,156,571.43 20 programs 10 centers	$1,368,000.01 10 centers
FY 27 Cohort	-	-	$394,285.71 20 programs	$2,156,571.43 20 programs 10 centers	$2,156,571.43 20 programs 10 centers	$2,156,571.43 20 programs 10 centers
FY 28 Cohort	-	-	-	$394,285.71 20 programs	$2,156,571.43 20 programs 10 centers	$2,156,571.43 20 programs 10 centers
FY 29 Cohort	-	-	-	-	$394,285.71 20 programs	$2,156,571.43 20 programs 10 centers
Total	$1,794,445.56 25 programs 7 centers	$4,126,312.63 45 programs 17 centers	$6,282,884.06 65 programs 27 centers	$7,840,076.49 75 programs 37 centers	$9,010,571.92 80 Programs 47 Centers	$9,693,958.72 80 Programs 50 Centers

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How can the AOE reduce complexity in the application and oversight space?

- Identifying areas of complexity

- Planning for support

- Modifying existing materials

- Creating new competitions or materials

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Where are the complexities?

- **Systemic complexities**
  - Grant Management System enrollment
  - AOA Bulletin 5 compliance

- **Programmatic complexities**
  - Application design
    - Description of programs
    - Budget breakdown
    - Qualifications of staff
  - Award monitoring
    - Participant safety
    - Program quality measures
    - Financial responsibility

Contextual Details

- In FY 25, our average awardee:
  - ○ delivered over 100 days of programming
  - ○ delivered over 360 hours of programming
  - ○ Served 100 youth in the school year
  - ○ Served 260 youth in the summer

- All application materials are publicly posted eight weeks before the due date
- [2025 Legislative Report: Act 78 of 2023 Afterschool Grant](#)
- [2025 Afterschool and Summer Programs Grant Opportunities Overview](#)

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Read Vermont Collaboration Strategies

- Department of Libraries sits on Literacy Advisory Council and the Council receives presentations from libraries and VSLA.

- Partnering with community organizations and the Department of Libraries to equip families as literacy partners with clear, accessible resources.

- Aligning external partners statewide to advance the shared vision and goals of Read Vermont.

- Collaborating with Vermont Public and Education Ambassadors to curate standards-aligned resources for educators and caregivers. [Advisory Council on Literacy | Agency of Education](#)

- Launching a partnership with the Department of Libraries to promote high-quality texts, reading engagement, mentor text sets, and home–school literacy connections.

- Developing a literacy-focused Afterschool grant

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Key Takeaways

- Libraries are already eligible applicants for existing Afterschool grant programs and recipients are already partnering with libraries to support extended learning opportunities

- Carving out afterschool funds sets up a precedent that should be considered and will result in a reduction of afterschool funds for other eligible applicants

- The Agency of Education has in its purview the ability to add additional funding programs that align with key priorities, including literacy, and it actively engaged in those conversations

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