

Vermont Afterschool Communications Toolkit

Speaking with one voice . . .

Afterschool programs in Vermont have been working to *speak with one voice* for many years. When individuals and programs come together to deliver a clear and concise message, the results are powerful. The relationships individuals working within afterschool programs have been building with local leaders throughout Vermont have led to enormous local support for programs. The same results can be realized at a state level as we continue to craft and deliver a unified vision and message for afterschool and expanded learning programs for the children and youth of Vermont.

Some common definitions . . .

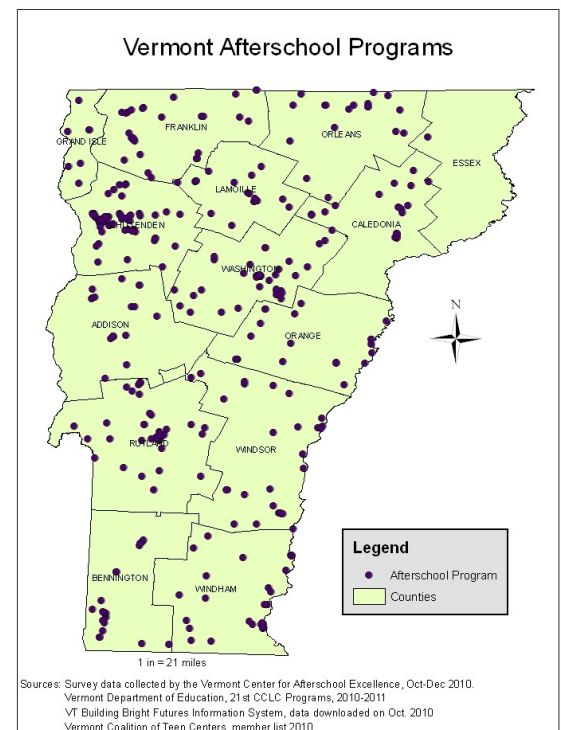
Afterschool refers to programs and activities that happen before school, after school and during the summer months. Afterschool programs encompass academic, enrichment and recreational offerings. Afterschool programs are typically provided by licensed school age care programs, 21st Century Community Learning Centers, teen centers, community organizations and schools.

Expanded Learning refers to programs and activities with the three following components:

- 1) Engaged learning
- 2) School/ community partnerships
- 3) Family engagement¹

Afterschool programs typically provide expanded learning opportunities within their program structure and many high-quality afterschool programs fully embody an expanded learning model.

Extended Learning Time refers to increasing the length of the school day and/or school year. Extended learning time models provide additional school time to *all* students, and participation is mandatory.



February 2011

Setting the stage . . .

When crafting an argument for the value of afterschool programs, our natural tendency is to tell people about **what** we do. Although it is important to provide facts and details at this level, it is critical to begin with **why** afterschool programs are essential. The Vermont Afterschool Talking Points help to build this framework and are the place to begin a conversation.

Vermont Afterschool Talking Points

- **As a society, it is our job to ensure that the future is in good hands.** That means making sure our young people have access to a full range of opportunities throughout their childhood. When young people have opportunities to be positively engaged in their schools and communities, they are more likely to develop into healthy and productive citizens and leaders.
- **Where are our Kids?** Children spend, on average, *1,000 hours a year in school but 5,000 in their communities* and with their familiesⁱ. How they spend this time can facilitate positive development and growth experiences, or place them at risk for negative outcomes.
- **We know that this time students spend out of school matters.** Research tells us that youth who are engaged in constructive pursuits during their free time are more likely to develop initiative, better understand themselves in relation to others, experience optimism toward the future, and develop skills and competencies that promote a successful transition to adulthoodⁱⁱ.
- **Afterschool programs help build a strong foundation.** Quality afterschool programs give young people the opportunity to explore new ways of learning, to acquire new skills, and to form positive relationships with adults in their community. Good afterschool experiences literally help build a foundation that can transform a young person into a productive and engaged member of our community. When that happens, we all benefit.
- **We need to work together to make sure our kids are on the road to success.** Since quality afterschool programs play an important role in assuring our children have the opportunities they need to be successful citizens and future leaders, we need to take collective responsibility for supporting and replicating them across the state.

ⁱ David Berliner, *Our Impoverished View of Educational Research*, Teachers College Record 108, no.6: 949-95 (2006).

ⁱⁱ Erin Hiley Sharp, *Out of School Time Matters: Activity Involvement and Positive Development Among Coos County Youth*, Carsey Institute New England Issue Brief No. 17 (2010).

Special thanks to Nicole Mace, formerly with Voices for Vermont's Children, for her assistance in the development of the Vermont Afterschool Talking Points.

The reason that I am going to fight so hard as your governor to ensure that every child has quality afterschool programs is because had I not, I would not be here today. Together we'll make it work in Vermont and we'll show the rest of the country that by spending resources on afterschool programs, we will produce the workforce for the 21st century where kids succeed.

Governor Shumlin



Afterschool Legislative Day, 2010

Students from Kingdom Afterschool Kids—Newark meet with Representative Mrowicki

Summer Learning Talking Points . . .

In addition to speaking with one voice around the importance of afterschool programming, the Vermont Center for Afterschool Excellence has crafted talking points specific to summer programming.

Vermont's Summer Learning Talking Points

Background

During the summer months too many children, especially disadvantaged children, lose academic ground and suffer what's known as the summer slide. Summer slide results in students falling further behind academically and widens the academic achievement gap. Summer learning programs, often run by afterschool providers, keep kids on track. These programs also provide critical support to working families by keeping kids safe and offering healthy meals and snacks. Slots in such programs are in high demand, and budget cuts at the federal, state and local levels are putting programs under financial strain.¹

Poverty

- The gap between the poor and the wealthy continues to widen and low-income students in Vermont consistently perform at significantly lower levels academically.²
- Parents with the means invest more time and money than ever before in their children while lower-income families are increasingly stretched for time and resources.³

Equity

- All children and youth in Vermont deserve a summer filled with rich learning opportunities.
- More than half of the achievement gap between lower- and higher-income youth can be explained by unequal access to summer learning opportunities.⁴

Access

- Over 30,000 children and youth in Vermont do not have access to summer learning programs.⁵
- It is important for every child to learn during the summer to avoid losing skills they have gained during the school year.⁶

Solution

- All communities in Vermont need high-quality summer learning programs to ensure that our children and youth thrive.



View the Summer Learning Video highlighting summer learning in Vermont at: www.vermontafterschool.org

¹ Afterschool Alliance. (2012). *Uncertain Times 2012: Summer Learning Matters*. Available at: http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/UncertainTimes2012_SummerLearningMatters.pdf

² Vermont Department of Education. *School Data and Reports: NECAP Assessment Report*. Available at: <http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/maindata.html>

³ National Summer Learning Association. *Summer Learning Can Help Close the Achievement Gap*. Available at: <http://www.summerlearning.org/?page=TheAchievementGap>

⁴ National Summer Learning Association. (2009). *Research In Brief: Summer Can Set Kids on the Right – Or Wrong – Course*. Available at: http://c.ymcdn.com/sites/www.summerlearning.org/resource/collection/CB94AEC5-9C97-496F-B230-1BECDFC2DF8B/Research_Brief_02_-_Alexander.pdf

⁵ Afterschool Alliance. (2010). *America After 3PM Special Report of Summer: Missed Opportunities, Unmet Demand*. Available at: http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/documents/Special_Report_on_Summer_052510.pdf

⁶ National Summer Learning Association. *Summer Learning Day Key Messages and Story Angle*. Available at: http://c.ymcdn.com/sites/www.summerlearning.org/resource/resmgr/sld2012_/summer_learning_day_2012_key.pdf

Some facts in Vermont . . .

Once the groundwork for *why afterschool programs are critical* has been laid, providing a state-level context can help build further understanding.

- Vermont currently has 358 afterschool programs², serving over 20,000 children and youth³ across the state. Vermont's afterschool programs include:
 - ◆ 235 Licensed School Age Care Programs
 - ◆ 121 21st Century Community Learning Centers
 - ◆ 23 Boys and Girls Club Sites
 - ◆ 31 YMCA Program Sites
 - ◆ 43 Teen Centers

Note: These numbers are not mutually exclusive

- Nearly 70% of afterschool programs participating in the Center's 2011 mapping project report that they also provide summer programming.²
- Schools across Vermont often provide some type of afterschool programming, but the offerings are inconsistent across schools and leave a significant number of students without programming. 64% of schools report offering academic enrichment programming, yet only 52% provide tutoring services.

The issue of making sure that we have afterschool programs available in every region of our state . . . is something that I believe very, very strongly in. I think we've got to understand that what happens to kids afterschool is as important as what happens to them during school. I want the day to come when every school in the state of Vermont has good summer programs for their kids.

Senator Sanders

What's happening in your program . . .

Legislators and policy makers are often persuaded into action by hearing the details about what is happening within their own districts. Consider the highlights within your program and be prepared to speak to the following points. Putting together a one-page overview that captures these details is an effective way to provide critical information (see information pages 6—10).

- Types of programs offered
- Positive outcomes seen within program
- Program examples of *engaged learning, school/ community partnerships, and family engagement*
- Number of children and youth served
- Number of low income children served
- Number of children/ youth on a wait list and resources needed to serve those youth
- Resources needed to build/ sustain your program
- Contact information for program and director



Afterschool Legislative Day, 2011

Students from Wings Community Programs meet with Governor Shumlin

Building an "Ask" . . .

A typical question asked by policy makers is *How can I help?* The Vermont Center for Afterschool Excellence is spearheading a campaign to build and expand the number of summer learning programs across the state. Please see our Summer Learning Expansion Project one-sheet and supporting materials for details.

References

- ¹ Afterschool Alliance. (2012). *Principles of Effective Expanded Learning Programs: A Vision Built on the Afterschool Approach*. Available at: [http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/Principles%20of%20Expanded%20Learning%20Programs_Jan_2012\(2\).pdf](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/Principles%20of%20Expanded%20Learning%20Programs_Jan_2012(2).pdf).
- ² Vermont Center for Afterschool Excellence. (2011). *Vermont's Landscape for Expanded Learning*. Available at: <http://vermontafterschool.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/10/Vermont-Afterschool-Mapping-Report.pdf>.
- ³ Afterschool Alliance. (2009) *Vermont After 3pm*. Available at: http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/documents/AA3PM_2009/AA3_Factsheet_VT_2009.pdf.

Next Steps . . .

- **Become a member of the Vermont Center for Afterschool Excellence-** The stronger our membership, the stronger our ability to *speak with one voice*.
For membership registration: <http://vermontafterschool.org/membership/membership-registration/>
- **Attend the annual Vermont Afterschool & Summer Learning Day-** This event provides a forum for afterschool program directors and staff to speak with their legislators about the important working taking place in programs across the state. For more information: http://vermontafterschool.org/advocacy/afterschool_day/
- **Host a Lights On Afterschool Event-** Lights On Afterschool is a national campaign held each fall to promote afterschool programs. Hosting a Lights On and/or an open-house event at your program is a great way to bring visibility to your program. Keep in mind when scheduling such events that the Vermont Legislature is in session January – May and meets Tuesday through Friday. Fall is a great time to invite your legislators, as are Mondays throughout the year. For more information: www.afterschoolalliance.org
- **Talk with your legislators-** Knowing who your legislators are and developing relationships with them is a critical step in advocating for your program. Use the forums above (Vermont Afterschool & Summer Learning Day and Lights On) to talk with your legislators and invite them to visit your program.
For a listing of Vermont legislators: <http://www.leg.state.vt.us/legdir/legdirmain.cfm>
To search for elected officials in your district: <http://sparkaction.org/act/officials>
- **Provide feedback to the Vermont Center for Afterschool Excellence-** As Vermont’s statewide network dedicated to supporting afterschool programs, the Center is interested in feedback from legislators you connect with and their reaction to afterschool programs and issues. Please complete the form below after all conversations with legislators so that we can keep abreast of those who support afterschool.

Legislator Visit Feedback Form

Please complete this form and return to the Vermont Center for Afterschool Excellence to provide feedback from interactions with legislators pertaining to afterschool in Vermont. Complete a form for each legislator you have contact with.

Your Name _____ Telephone _____

Your Title _____ Email _____

Your Program _____ Town(s) _____

Representative

Legislator Name Senator _____

Please indicate the type of interaction

Feedback received from legislator

Telephone Call _____

Email Correspondence _____

Meeting _____

VT Afterschool Legislative Day _____

Lights On/ Open House _____

Can we contact you for continued communication with this legislator? Yes No

Vermont Center for Afterschool Excellence
c/o CVEDC-ESA • 123 Ethan Allen Avenue • Dupont Hall #309 • Colchester, VT 05446
www.vermontafterschool.org

Developing a program overview . . .

A one-page overview of your program can help highlight the opportunities available for youth, the outcomes being realized, and the needs your program faces. Templates for creating overview sheets are available through the Vermont Center for Afterschool Excellence as both Publisher and Word documents. The following pages provide a view of the template, as well as examples created by programs in Vermont.

The template is meant to be a flexible document to be altered as each program sees fit. Please consider submitting completed overview sheets to the Vermont Center for Afterschool Excellence to be used as examples for programs across the state. If you are willing to share your work with others, be sure to also submit signed photo release forms for any students pictured within the document. A photo release form can be downloaded from the Center's website through the link provided below.

Link to download template, examples, and other pertinent information:

<http://vermontafterschool.org/advocacy/toolkit/>

To submit your program overview to share, please email Lynne Feal-Staub at lfealstaub@gmail.com.

Tips for creating a powerful one-sheet . . .

Developing strong language:

- Keep each thought short and succinct. Make each point in as few words as possible.
- Create headings to make it easy for the reader to skim the page and understand the main points being made.
- Group common facts and figures together under one heading.
- Bullet out your thoughts, especially when you have several points that back-up an overarching idea.

Examples:

Program highlights . . .

The Afterschool Program Serves the Neediest Students

- 120 students served throughout school-year and summer programming, 82% of the total school population.
- Of children and youth who attended, 75% are low-income and participate in the free and reduced meal program.

The Afterschool Program Keeps Kids Safe

- 92% of youth who attend programs report feeling safe and developing strong relationships through the afterschool program.
- 56% of parents state that their child would likely be home alone if not for the afterschool program.

Program highlights . . .

BEAMS serves 60% of the total school population

180 7th and 8th graders served in 2011/2012

BEAMS serves the neediest students

54% of regular attendees (students who attend 60 hours or more) qualify for free/reduced lunch

BEAMS runs programs throughout the entire calendar year

7 weeks of summer programming, 30 weeks of afterschool clubs, Big Brothers/Big Sisters mentors, Guiding Good Choices Parenting Class

Participation in BEAMS results in academic gains

92% of BEAMS regular attendees' standardized math scores went up or stayed the same. 95% reading scores went up or stayed the same on standardized test scores.

Speaking with one voice . . .

If your program is an organizational member of the Vermont Center for Afterschool Excellence, display the emblem to the right on your overview sheet and use this emblem on other promotional pieces you create to show your support for *speaking with one voice*. If your program is not currently an organizational member, consider signing on as one.



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Using a powerful image:

- Choose a photo that exemplifies a critical element of your program (e.g. hands-on learning, academic skill-building, peer mentoring, etc.).
- Avoid group shots or posed shots.
- Insert a caption that explains the image or a quote that captures the essence of the program.



Hands-on science in afterschool



Building literacy skills through read-alouds



Summer adventure-based programming

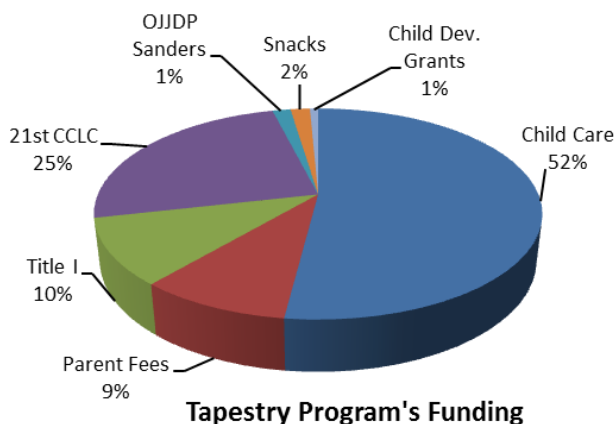
Creating pie charts that address your needs:

- Focus on current revenue sources supporting your program within the pie chart.
- Consider embedding a funding need within your pie chart, i.e. cost for increased transportation or expanded summer programming.
- Include information within the narrative that points to fiscally responsible management of the program (e.g. diversified funding sources, strong support from VTDOE, use of subsidy reimbursement to ensure affordability, etc.).
- Use text to outline unmet needs and/or future funding needs.
- Frame your unmet need in terms of *youth need*, in addition to the financial need.
- Be specific about financial needs of the program.
- Include percentages or dollar figures to the pie chart.

Examples:

Our funding . . .

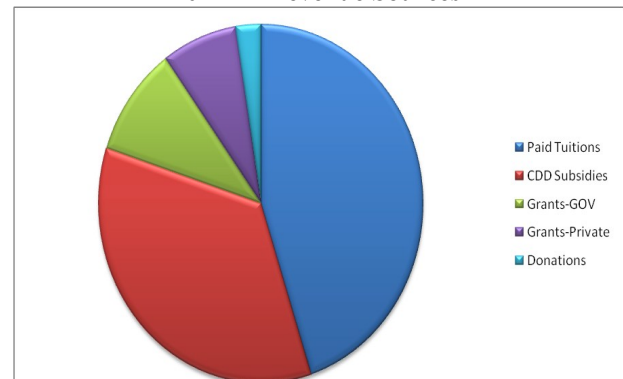
The program has been sustained over 12 years by diversifying with stable funding sources and securing small grants. The budget total is \$1,078,904 for fiscal year 2012. The total school population is over 2,000 children in K – 8th grade. Therefore the program is only serving 40% of the children. Given the fact that six of the seven schools have free/reduced rates from 50.4 to 78.54%, there is a need to serve more children.



Our funding . . .

Privately-paid tuitions account for 43% of our operating budget; Child Development Division tuitions subsidies for those who qualify by income are 37%. Grants available competitively, with no guaranteed results, are relied upon for 19% of the budget, with donations (solicited and unsolicited) less than 1%. We continue to strive to offer spots for children whose parents make too much money to qualify for subsidy payments, but too little to be able to afford these afterschool opportunities. There is a gap here that we are constantly building a bridge to overcome on behalf of 20-30% of our kids.

2011-12 Revenue Sources

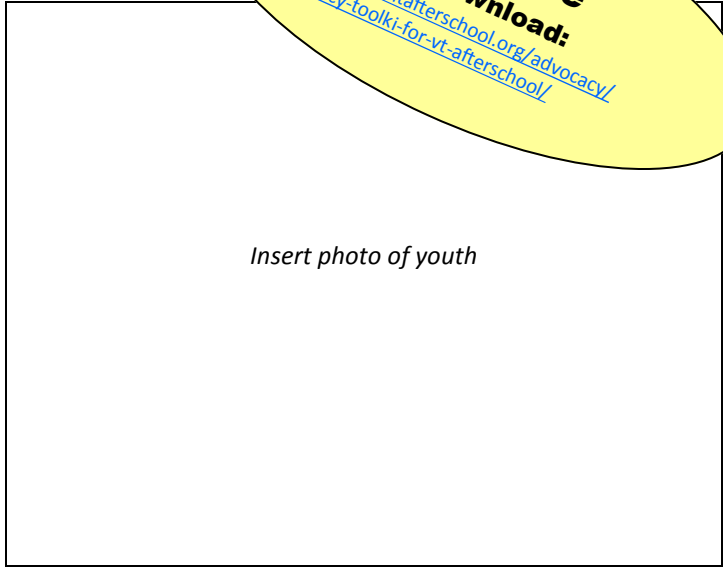


Program Name

Template
To download:
<http://vermontafterschool.org/advocacy/advocacy-toolki-for-vt-afterschool/>

Our vision and goals . . .

Include vision statement, specific program goals and/or sites at which the program operates.



Insert photo of youth

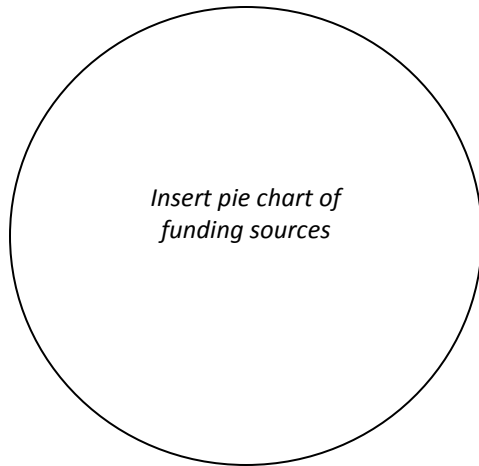
Caption for photo

Program highlights . . .

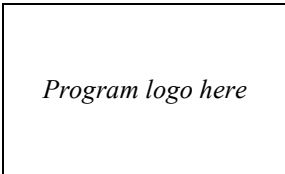
- Number of children and youth served
- Age/ grade level served
- Number of low income children served
- Types of programs offered
- Program examples of *engaged learning, school/ community partnerships, and family engagement*
- Positive outcomes seen within program
- Community partnerships supporting program

Our funding . . .

Statement around funding sources currently supporting program. Highlight information pertaining to unmet need within the community (i.e. children on a waiting list) if applicable.



Insert pie chart of funding sources



Program logo here

Program Name
Street Address • Town, Vermont Zip
802-____-____
website address and/or general email address



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BEAMS Brattleboro Enrichment Activities for Middle Schoolers After-school and Summer Programs at Brattleboro Area Middle School

Our vision and goals . . .

- Increase academic achievement
- Improve social and emotional development
- Build connections between students, families, faculty, administration, and community members to support the needs of our children during afterschool and summer hours when middle school students are most at risk.

Program highlights . . .

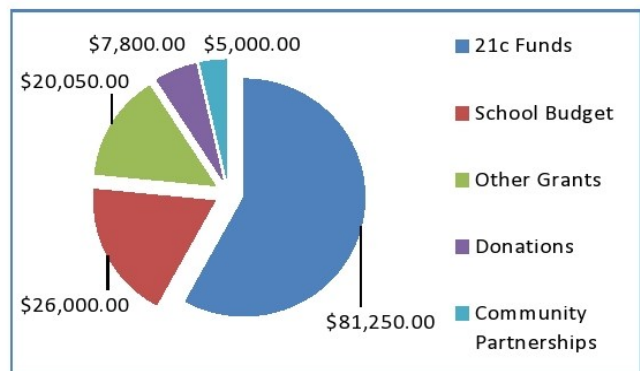
- **BEAMS serves 60% of the total school population**
180 7th and 8th graders served in 2011/2012
- **BEAMS serves the neediest students**
54% of regular attendees (students who attend 60 hours or more) qualify for free/reduced lunch
- **BEAMS runs programs throughout the entire calendar year**
7 weeks of summer programming, 30 weeks of afterschool clubs, Big Brothers/Big Sisters mentors, Guiding Good Choices Parenting Class
- **BEAMS offers a variety of program choices**
Afterschool Clubs include: Wilderness Adventure, BEAMS Theatre Company, Videography, Food and Farm Club, Humane Society, International Cooking Club, Circus Arts, Homework Club, Video Game Design, Robotics, Computer Animation, Kitchen Chemistry, Intramural Soccer, Jewelry Making
- **Participation in BEAMS results in academic gains**
92% of BEAMS regular attendees' standardized math scores went up or stayed the same. 95% reading scores went up or stayed the same on standardized test scores.
- **Community partnerships include:**
Big Brothers, Big Sisters of Youth Services
Brattleboro Area Prevention Coalition
Brattleboro Humane Society
Experiential Tools, Inc.
New England Center for Circus Arts
Windham County Farm to School Program
Windham Regional Career Center
Vermont Agriculture Business Education Center Farm



Students participating in BEAMS' Summer Program

Our funding . . .

65% of our funding is through a 21st Century Community Centers grant from the VT Department of Education, BEAMS is currently in Year 5 of a 5-year grant. There is a great need to expand funding, especially for more afterschool clubs and weekend, vacation and summer programming.



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BEAMS Afterschool, Brattleboro Area Middle School

109 Sunny Acres Rd, Vermont 05301, 802-451-3588, Betsy Stacey- Program Director
bstacey@wsesu.org www.bams.k12.vt.us/beams.html

Example:

Student Success—Winooski & Beyond

Our vision and goals

The Student Success—Winooski & Beyond program is designed to provide high quality enrichment and academic support opportunities for students in grades K-12 afterschool and during the summer months.

Program highlights

Serving the neediest students

- During 2011-2012, our afterschool program served 525 students in grades K-12—62% of the student body.
- Our 2012 Brain Camp summer school program served over 100 students in grades 1-6.

Providing a variety of program activities

Our afterschool program provides a wide variety of enrichment learning opportunities in STEM (43%), literacy (32%), the Arts (12.5%), and Tutoring (12.5%). Programs include:

- Digital Photography
- Cooking
- Science Programs
- Kindergarten Literacy
- Window Farming
- Jiu Jitsu
- Science Club
- Read Aloud
- Red Clover Book Club
- Woodworking
- Math Games
- Broadcasting Club
- Strategy Game Room
- Empty Bowls-Hungry Bowls
- Vocal And Instrumental Music
- Debate Club
- Dorothy Canfield Fisher Book Club
- Manga Book and Drawing Club

Connecting afterschool and school-day programming

All 21C programs are taught by licensed teachers and connect to school day learning to provide well planned and intentional enrichment, academic support, and tutoring opportunities.

Building community partnerships

Community Partnerships include:

- VSAC Gear-Up Program
- O'Brien Community Center
- The Abbey Group
- Vermont Youth Orchestra Association
- UVM Extension-4H Program
- Winooski PTO
- Sawmill Studio
- Martial Way Arts



Blowing up a balloon with baking soda and vinegar in Super Science

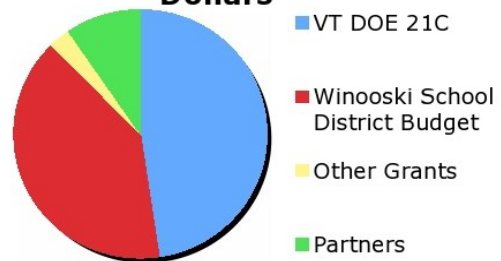
Our funding

21st Century Community Learning Centers funding and school district funds currently support over 85% of our program costs. We have been extremely fortunate to have school district support over the past 10 years. Additional state funding would allow us to expand high quality summer learning programs beyond grades 1-6 to help ensure that our children and youth thrive.



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2012-2013 Funding Dollars



Student Success—Winooski & Beyond
 60 Normand Street, Winooski, Vermont 05404
 802-383-6041 wdschools.org bruss@wdschools.org

For an electronic version of the Vermont Afterschool Communications Toolkit,
visit: <http://vermontafterschool.org/advocacy/toolkit/>

Special thanks to the following . . .

The Vermont Afterschool Communications Toolkit was created with support from afterschool program directors from across the state.

A special thanks to the individuals involved in the 2012-13 ISS-AP group focusing on sustainability for the assistance they provided, specifically around improvements to the one-sheet tips and templates. Thank you: Teresa Bedell, Ginny Burley, Jeff Fournier, Diane Janukajtis, Tammy Lynch, Barbara Russ, Betsy Stacey, and Kate Toland.

Thanks also to the following programs for use of photos and other supporting materials:

- Page 2, Kingdom Afterschool Kids, Lyndonville
- Page 3, School's Out, South Burlington
- Pages 4 and 7, Wings Community Programs, Halifax
- Page 7, One Planet, South Royalton
- Page 9, BEAMS at BAMS, Brattleboro
- Page 10, Student Success—Winooski & Beyond, Winooski

This document was compiled and created by :

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With support from:

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The Vermont Center for Afterschool Excellence is a public-private partnership that supports organizations in providing quality afterschool, summer, and expanded learning experiences so that Vermont's children and youth have the opportunities, skills, and resources they need to become healthy, productive members of society.

Find us online at: www.vermontafterschool.org

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