

STATE OF VERMONT
EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
EXECUTIVE ORDER 08-21

[Vermont Interagency Afterschool Youth Task Force]

WHEREAS, data has shown afterschool programs help youth learn, grow and avoid risky behaviors such as drug use and juvenile crime, and offering these opportunities helps strengthen the health and wellbeing of Vermont’s children, as well as improve academic achievement; and

WHEREAS, afterschool and summer programs support working families by reducing the logistical and financial burden of unsupervised time away from home or school; and

WHEREAS, afterschool and summer programs are community-based, school-based and partnerships between communities and schools, and there are partners that will be critical to expansion of opportunities including, but not limited to, the Vermont Agencies of Education, Human Services, Natural Resources and Transportation, the Vermont Department of Labor, Vermont Afterschool and the Vermont Youth Project; and

WHEREAS, in my 2020 State of the State address I proposed the creation of a universal afterschool network by 2025 that ensures every child has access to enrichment opportunities outside of current classroom time, and to align the students’ day with the length of the workday, with out raising property tax rates; and

WHEREAS, most recently to mitigate the negative social, emotional and academic impacts of the pandemic on youth and families, I prioritized creation of the 2021 Summer Matters campaign to expand opportunities for children and youth to reconnect with peers and communities, funding 93 programs which provided 238 additional weeks of programming serving approximately 12,810 youth; and

WHEREAS, because high school students are often the hardest to engage in afterschool and summer activities, as part of the Summer Matters campaign, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation created the Summer Career Exploration Program which provided 144 youth with a work experience and learning opportunity, engaged 110 employers, and included all students with disabilities, resulting in 23.6 percent of participants earning an offer of employment; and

WHEREAS, Senator Sanders successfully secured federal pandemic recovery funds for addressing learning loss through afterschool and summer programming, and 94 percent of Vermont school districts signaled intent to use their local share of federal American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds for summer programming, after school and extended learning opportunities for students; and

WHEREAS, the Universal Afterschool Task Force produced a set of recommendations for next steps to expand universal afterschool in Vermont including program funding priorities, grant program implementation priorities, funding estimates and how to build on Vermont’s strengths; and

WHEREAS, Act 164 of 2020 directs revenue from sales and use tax on the retail sale of cannabis and cannabis products to fund a grant program to start or expand afterschool and summer learning programs, with a focus on increasing access in underserved areas of the state; and

WHEREAS, Vermont has a transformational opportunity to expand afterschool and summer programs for the mental, emotional and educational wellbeing of all Vermont’s children and youth; and

WHEREAS, State government must continue to work with the local education and private sector partners to facilitate development of a statewide system offering universal access to safe, enriching and comprehensive options for afterschool and summer programming for Vermont youth from pre-kindergarten to grade 12.

NOW, THEREFORE, be it resolved that I, Philip B. Scott, by virtue of the authority vested in me as Governor, do hereby establish the Vermont Interagency Afterschool Youth Task Force as follows:

I. Composition and Appointments

The Vermont Interagency Afterschool Youth Task Force (the “Task Force”), shall consist of not more than 11 members to be appointed by the Governor to include the following members:

- (1) The Secretary of the Agency of Education, or designee;
- (2) The Student Pathways Division Director of the Agency of Education;
- (3) The Chief Prevention Officer;
- (4) The Commissioner of the Department of Children and Family Services, or designee;
- (5) The Commissioner of the Department of Health, or designee;
- (6) The Commissioner of the Department of Mental Health, or designee;
- (7) The Commissioner of the Department of Fish & Wildlife, or designee;
- (8) The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Transition Program Manager;
- (9) The Secretary of the Agency of Commerce and Community Development, or designee;
- (10) The Governor’s Director of Policy Development and Legislative Affairs; and
- (11) The Executive Director of Vermont Afterschool, or designee.

The Governor shall appoint the Chair and Co-Chair. The Task Force may convene subcommittees with additional members such as educational professionals, youth, parents and community partners, as needed, may consult with experts and stakeholder organizations as needed.

II. Meetings

The Chair shall call the first meeting of the Task Force to occur on or before November 15, 2021 and the Task Force shall meet as needed at the call of the Chair, but not less than monthly.

III. Powers and Duties

Building on the work of the Universal After School Task Force and the Summer Matters campaign, the Task Force shall work toward a statewide system offering universal access to safe, enriching and comprehensive options for afterschool and summer programming for Vermont youth from pre-kindergarten to grade 12. The system shall encourage the academic, social and emotional development of participants in safe, accessible environments where they can connect with peers and adults. Programs shall represent a range of school-based, private and community partnerships and should be available to all interested youth and families at reasonable or no cost, with particular emphasis on ensuring Vermont's most vulnerable students have ready access to affordable opportunities.

The Task Force shall:

- A. Create a framework to expand existing programs leveraging what is already in place, enhancing their accessibility, capacity and quality;
- B. Develop and support the creation of new program options for all age groups, understanding that high school students are often the most difficult cohort to engage;
- C. Develop a baseline for safety and quality standards for building strategies to ensure enrichment and expanded learning opportunities;
- D. Ensure equitable geographic coverage and prioritize areas that are currently underserved and/or have experienced the most significant contraction in the regional workforce.
- E. Target specific infrastructure gaps in the existing system such as transportation, access for children and youth with disabilities, geographic equity, and nutritional supports for youth during programming;
- F. Ensure options exist for youth employment and for education and acquisition of job skills;
- G. Develop opportunities for youth to explore post-secondary education, skills training and career planning and/or experiences such as work-based learning opportunities;
- H. Leverage existing federal, state and local funding opportunities to encourage sustainable expansion and extension of programs;
- I. Focus on evidence-informed planning and programming to document and measure impacts; and
- J. Engage with youth to ensure their voice and input are heard in the development of the system.

The Task Force shall be advisory to the Governor and report on progress towards achieving expanded universal afterschool and summer programming every two months. The Task Force shall also respond to the Governor upon request.

To the extent funded, the non-governmental members of subcommittees of the Task Force shall be entitled to per diem compensation, upon request, pursuant to 32 V.S.A. § 1010.

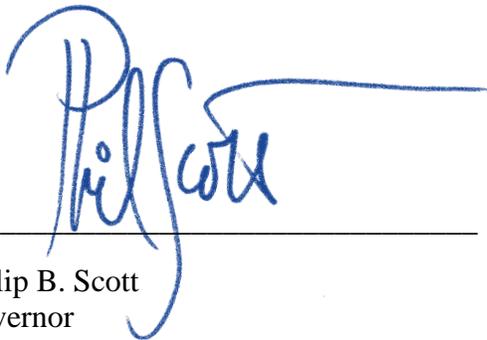
The Task Force shall have the administrative, technical and legal assistance of the Agencies of Education and Human Services.

IV. Effective Date

This Executive Order shall take effect upon execution and shall expire December 31, 2026 unless extended by the Governor.

WITNESS my name hereunto subscribed and the Great Seal of the State of Vermont hereunto affixed at Montpelier this 28 day of October, 2021.




Philip B. Scott
Governor

By the Governor:



Brittney L. Wilson
Secretary of Civil and Military Affairs

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