

June 2021



Independent School Newsletter

Introduction:

I have not been out of the classroom long enough to alter my relationship with the month of June. I still work my way through assignments in the same melancholy way I used to prepare myself to say farewell to graduating seniors or to send the next year's students off on summer vacation.

This June is not typical, though. Educators and members of the Agency of Education will look back on the last nine months with very fatigued eyes, assess what needs to be done next, and keep on working...

The Independent School Team would like to thank all of you for your patience with our work during the darkest days of our shared COVID-19 experiences. We are humbled by the sheer grit, creativity, fortitude, and commitment you have demonstrated to ensure educational opportunities for all students. We look forward to partnering with you this summer and next year.

This newsletter will be on summer vacation until August. However, we encourage folks to submit suggestions for future issues. If interested, please submit newsletter suggestions or requests for technical assistance topics to:

deborah.ormsbee@vermont.gov

During the summer months do not hesitate to contact a member of the AOE's independent school team for support at:

Pat.PallasGray@vermont.gov

Deborah.ormsbee@vermont.gov

In this issue:

- ESY Guidance and Reminders
- Summer Professional Development Opportunities
- EANS II Future Support Notification
- Program of the Month- Mt. Mansfield Ski Club & Academy

Extended School Year:

The Agency of Education Special Ed Director recently released guidance to LEAs regarding extended school year programming. The sections relevant to independent school ESY programs are excerpted below. To review the [entire guidance document](#), please visit our website.

Considerations for ESY Summer 2021

The term "ESY services" means special education and related services that are provided to a child with a disability:

1. Beyond the normal school year of the public agency;
2. In accordance with the child's IEP;
3. At no cost to the parents of the child; and
4. Meet the standards of the state educational agency. (34 CFR 300.106 (b))

The purpose of ESY is to provide special education and related services beyond the duration of a school

ESY Continued:

year or school day to a child with a disability who would be likely to significantly regress when school is not in session. Under the IDEA, ESY services must be provided only if a child's Individualized Education Program (IEP) team determines, on an individual basis, that the services are necessary for the provision of FAPE to the child based on data showing the child requires ESY to prevent regression.

However, state law and regulations can impose greater requirements than the IDEA. ESY decisions must be made prior to the end of the regular school year. ESY services must be documented in the student's IEP. The IEP team may also log goals to be addressed and services to be provided.

As the spring and summer breaks approach, IEP teams should account for the needs of students with disabilities and collect data to ensure that they receive appropriate ESY services if necessary. Since the COVID-19 pandemic forced schools to cease in-person operations in school year 2020, [there continues to be the need to collect as much data as possible to make well-informed decisions and determine what is required to provide FAPE to students with disabilities.](#) Using the data as a frame of reference, the IEP teams should make final ESY determinations.

Some Basic Requirements of ESY services at Independent Schools:

Unlike compensatory services, the need for ESY is not triggered by an interruption or gap in providing IEP services. Rather, the purpose of ESY is to provide special education and related services beyond the duration of a school year or school day to a child with a disability who would be likely to significantly regress when school is not in session.

Typically, a child's IEP team determines whether ESY services should be included in the IEP during an annual IEP review meeting. Extended School Year services **are not** day care or respite services.

They **are not** a summer recreation program or other programs or services that are not required to ensure the provision of a free, appropriate public education (FAPE) to a student — even if they provide some educational benefit.



(Painting: Kinhaven Music School Campus, Weston Vermont artist unknown)

Summer Professional Opportunities:

Online Professional Learning Experience: CREST 2.0 - Champlain Research Experience for Secondary Teachers

We are currently recruiting grade 7-12 teachers (any subject area) for the CREST 2.0 Online Professional Learning Program from June 21 – to July 1, 2021. Teachers interested in learning about project and place-based education within the context of the Lake Champlain Basin are encouraged to apply. This program is fully funded by VSAC GEAR-UP Grant and is led by UVM scientists, STEM educators and STEM graduate students. Participation gives you access to a variety of STEM resources, project templates, and data applicable to your curriculum and teaching. Includes free registration and three graduate credits. For more information, see [our website](#) and [apply online](#). Contact: Regina Toolin at rtoolin@uvm.edu

Professional Development Continued

Providing Effective Work-Based Learning Opportunities for Students, Schools and Businesses

This summer, VT-HEC will be offering the foundational course in our Work-Based Learning Program, "Providing Effective Work-Based Learning Opportunities for Students, Schools and Businesses" taught by Rich Tulikangas, Director of Vermont's Linking Learning to Careers (LLC) project. This course is ideal for those who are new to WBL, looking for more WBL tools and resources, or pursuing the WBL endorsement. It is also appropriate for anyone responsible for student learning outside the school walls (i.e. community-based learning coordinators, coop coordinators, flex pathway coordinators). This course will provide a thorough overview of labor and safety laws and practices, sales and marketing, career development strategies, and effective systems for organizing, monitoring, and evaluating student learning opportunities with businesses and community partners. 6/29-8/3 with three live-stream meetings (6/29, 7/13 and 7/27, 4-7pm) and the remainder online. For more details, visit the [VT-HEC website](#).

Contact: Kim McKellar at kim.mckellar@vthec.org

Forest and Garden Educator Residency Now Open

Limited spots are open for this PreK-8th professional development immersion in botany, wild crafting and plant literacy for the nature-based classroom, July 26-31, 2021 in central Vermont. Can you integrate the plants living near your outdoor classroom into the daily tea, snack and experiential play and curricula based on the qualities these plants offer?

Educators passionate about empowering students in a constructivist, mindfulness-based, exploratory, nature-immersion journey are encouraged to register now. VSAC Grants available to qualifying Vermont residents. [Learn more and register online](#).

Contact: Angie Barger

at angie5lunaroot@gmail.com or (802) 595-2512

EANS II Support Program for Eligible Independent Schools

In the days ahead, the AOE will send information about a second support program to assist with mitigating impact of lingering COVID-19 disruptions on educational programming to eligible schools.

The process will be similar to GEER EANS I in that schools will receive the following notifications:

- **Introductory Memo**
- **Intent to Apply Survey**
- **Invitation to attend Office Hours**
- **An application**
- **Consultation opportunities**
- **On-going technical assistance, as needed**

AOE's EANS II program team will maintain the designated email for schools to submit surveys, applications or to request technical assistance:

AOE.GEEREANS@vermont.gov

Or to contact a member of the independent school team, please reach out to:

deborah.ormsbee@vermont.gov



Featured Program of the Month- Mt. Mansfield Ski Club & Academy



Introduction

In March of 2018, the Mt. Mansfield Ski Club Board and the Mt. Mansfield Winter Academy Board merged. The new governing board includes an Executive Director, a Director of Academics, an Athletic Director, and a Finance Director. This winter-term program has been in existence and approved by the State Board of Education for the last 26 years.

Program FAQs

- Approved school by the State Board of Education in October 2019 to add 6th grade and expand to include a regular year-long academic calendar
- Provides athletic and academic programming for up to 60 students
- Offers intensive, core instruction and assessment
- Provides extra-curricular academic opportunities to include advanced placement courses, foreign languages, Fine Arts, Music, STEM, Service Learning, Business, Economics and Health
- Aligns the curricula offerings with the Common Core and the Next Generation Science Standards

- Implements, through the academic staff, comprehensive grade level literacy and math instructional services as well as advanced learning opportunities through an expanded academic program
- Ensures that students have access to specialized services, as needed, such as but not limited to career and college exploration, physical therapy, or mental health services for the students

A Conversation with Mt. Mansfield Education Director, Lori Furrer:

AOE: The first year, for any independent program is difficult even under pre-COVID circumstances. How did Mt. Mansfield Ski Club & Academy manage to finish building construction, expand academic offerings, and integrate governing boards?

Lori Furrer: “The focus for the year was first to provide a safe environment for our staff and students and second, to attempt to create some sense of normalcy. Our program is one that requires great flexibility from all given the coordination with over 25 sending schools, changes in daily schedules to accommodate travel and the pacing of teaching to keep students on track. The practice of “pivoting” is the norm for the Academy – COVID did add another layer to that – but everyone adjusted taking changes in stride.”

“We were incredibly fortunate to have just completed construction of a new academic building, moving in just a few days before school opened. This new space gave us the ability to configure teaching areas generously allowing for distancing while creating a positive and healthy environment for students.”



To learn more about Mt. Mansfield Ski Club & Academy contact education director Lori Furrer at: lfurrer@mmsca.org