

# **21CCLC – Community-based Afterschool**

Jess DeCarolis  
Division Director, Student Pathways  
Agency of Education

# Outline

- Charge of Task Force
- 21CCLC – legislation and structure
- 21CCLC – proven outcomes and lessons learned for sustainability
  - Integration with schools/systems
  - Partnerships
  - State-level supports/infrastructure
  - COVID impact
- Defining Universal Afterschool
  - What is “afterschool”?
  - What would make it “universal”? – access, closing equity gaps
- Recommendations

# Task Force: Creation and Deliverables

- 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.
- 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.
- The Task Force shall map existing afterschool programs and highlight gaps in access and equity, including **equity for Vermonters with disabilities**.
- 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.
- the Task Force **shall prefer solutions that do not draw upon the State's Education Fund and shall explore the possibility of using potential revenue from the taxation and regulation of cannabis**.
- The Task Force may recommend legislative language to enact its recommendations.

# 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers

- (a) Purpose.--The purpose of this part is to provide opportunities **for communities to establish or expand activities** in community learning centers that—
- provide opportunities for **academic enrichment**, including providing tutorial services to help students, particularly students who attend low-performing schools, to meet the challenging State academic standards;
- offer students a **broad array of additional services**, programs, and activities, such as **youth development activities**, service learning, **nutrition and health education**, **drug and violence prevention programs**, counseling programs, **arts**, music, **physical fitness and wellness programs**, **technology education programs**, **financial literacy programs**, **environmental literacy programs**, mathematics, science, career and technical programs, internship or apprenticeship programs, and other ties to an in-demand industry sector or occupation for high school students that are designed to reinforce and complement the regular academic program of participating students;
- And **offer families of students** served by community learning centers **opportunities for active and meaningful engagement** in their children's education including opportunities for literacy and related educational development.

# Building Full Comprehensive Centers

- 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21CCLC or 21C in VT)
- Develops full comprehensive centers (large size/scope/variety/cost)
- Renewable 5-year grants; years 1-3=100% year 4=75% funding, year 5=65%, after 5=~50%
- Schools/non-profits/municipalities may apply, schools must be lead or partner
- Integrated with school systems and structures (infrastructure-staff-leaders-finance) AND student-centered learning values (PL, ELO, student agency)
- Staff (teachers and school day staff, partners, AND even youth)
- Programming = choices, depth and variety! Larger middle school program may have 25 engaging program choices at one time
- Partner types: (local individuals & programs, organizational and state contract with VAS)
- Sustainability (built to 54% other/48% 21C over 20 years: 21C and other cash-doubled the original investment annually)! Communities leveraged millions in other cash resources over two decades!

# Pre-COVID Outcomes

- 12,000 students served, 5500 regular attendees, in 100 school communities
- 32% of public schools are funded
- 35 Childcare sites
- Afterschool program averages: 34 afterschool weeks, 12 hours weekly
- Summer program averages: 5 weeks in summer, 37 hours weekly
- 600 community partners (one-year highest count)
- 39% Project Directors with M.A. or higher, **35% Licensed educators as staff**
- 90% of sites participate in Quality Assessment System (2020 focuses on 41 SEL items)
- 94% sites meet with principal at least monthly
- 71% sites target academics beyond Homework clubs
- **Minimum of 54% of regular attendees are low-income (29% of sites use the *community eligibility provision*, so the low income % is likely higher but ultimately unknown)**
- 20% of regular attendees are on IEPs
- Regular attendees attend school more on average (3 fewer in-school absences for secondary youth, 2 for elementary aged children)
- **64% of surveyed grade 5-12 youth report using their skills**
- 24% of regular attendees with data had SBAC reading scores (and 17% for math) go from not proficient to proficient or above

# Building Full Comprehensive Centers - Lessons

- *It takes 5-10 years to build a high-quality center*
- **23 projects, 100 funded centers**; each comprised of 1-9 centers K-12
- **18-20 new centers** created in last 5 years
- **41 projects/centers did not work over 20 years**
- 100 centers total costs ~**12 million [cash]** (21CCLC and other sources combined)
- A 21C **Center budget**: Minimum 30 hr. director, site coordinators, large program budget, contracts, partners, supplies, PD, transportation
- **Investing strategy** 5 years declining than 50% supports **sustainability**
- 21c has invested in center development from 5-20 years (new and returning)

# Integration with the Local School

- **School** and district organization is very often the only **infrastructure in small rural towns that have the capacity to do afterschool**, (space, safety, finance, mission, computers, heat, meals, leadership, accountability, continuous improvement)
- 21C programs **complement but do not duplicate** the school day
- Summer programs by half-day or full-day that **align with ESY** services as well as tutoring
- Other School year examples; one project **aligning sports schedules**, now kids have more choices to do more (sports and other) – efficiency and flexibility
- 21C-funded programs – [Integration examples](#)

# Supporting Partnerships

- Partnerships are essential to program success
- Local "smaller" program partners deliver great programming
- Larger School/Community organizational partnerships
- Statewide organizational partnership impact (e.g., Girls on the Run, Vermont Afterschool Network initiatives)
- Partner component integrated and supported in application, evaluation, support, TA, reporting
- 600 varied partners (pre-COVID, 21C one-year high count)

# Statewide Supports

- Personalized approach to project support based on attributes
- First time applicant, start up, new project directors
- **Readiness assessment**
- **Sustained contract** for PD and TA, coaching, network improvement – could expand contract with additional admin funds for tailored, sustained coaching
- **State Coordinator, housed in division at crossroads of SCL** – can add personnel
- **Grants management infrastructure**
- Public private partnerships
- **Supportive accountability**
- Strategic design
- Knowledge of program start-up – intentional approach with long on-ramp

# New COVID Context and Afterschool

- Expansion = **Rebuilding existing statewide system** (21C seen ~ 50% attendance drop in many cases)
- Staffing challenges even harder (e.g., teacher use normally at 33%; very low now)
- Partnerships reduced or on hold (e.g., can't come into buildings as before)
- Also, SO MANY POSITIVES:
- Directors and leaders and schools working very hard to adapt
- Piloted safety protocols last summer that schools used for fall reopening
- Maintaining quality programs
- New remote and other program models and approaches
- Current Federal Funds: 21C, ESSER 2 Funds (4X!) Title I and IV, child nutrition exist to support "expansion"
- A new challenge: Old programs are "new again," and need time and funds to **rebuild in order to stabilize the system**

# “Afterschool”

## Generic Definition

a program serving children and youth on a regular basis outside the school day and over the summer; particularly during the hours when schools are out and family members are at work (2-5pm or 3-6pm during the school year, on in-service days and school vacation weeks, and 8am-5pm during the summer).

## Proposed Vermont Task Force Definition

a structured program for children and youth that occurs on a regular basis anytime outside of the school day. This can include academic, enrichment and family engagement activities and programs that can occur before school, afterschool, on weekends and evenings, and during the summer and school vacations.

# Focus on Equity and Access

## Protecting the vulnerable

Every learner matters and matters equally. Valuing all learners regardless of their contexts and personal characteristics ensures that all learners have access to high quality education that values diversity and respect for human dignity.

**Addressing the needs of the most marginalized learners does not necessarily demand extra funding and additional resources, but rather a commitment to the inherent value of diversity.** (*Adapted from UNESCO*)

## Growing the Economy

“The benefits of greater equity in education extend to all; when inequity persist it costs everyone in terms of lost opportunities for economic development, [results in] greater dependence on government supports, and fewer [Vermonters] ready to” contribute to the economy and growth of the state. (*Adapted from CCSSO*)

## Making VT Affordable

Educational inequity has an exponential impact on a society and its economy. By prioritizing equity for all learners, which can include targeted resources and differentiated funding, the Vermont AOE commits to reducing the economic impact of chronic unemployment, recidivism, and addiction.

# “Universal” = Access

- Program exists and is safe and of high-quality;
- no waiting lists;
- either low/no cost or subsidy, scholarships and sliding fee scales are available;
- hours of operation work for working families;
- children/youth can get to and from the program safely;
- supports and staffing are in place to accommodate a wide range of needs (e.g., ELL, SPED, trauma-informed, disabilities, etc.)
- Situated within school systems; safe spaces with [safety standards](#)
- Free/sliding scale; 12,000 children served/5500 regular attendees
- Before school/after school/vacation/ summers
- Situated within school systems with access to bussing may include funds for transportation
- Staff (teachers and school day staff, partners, and youth); 39% Project Directors with M.A. or higher, 35% Licensed educators as staff
- 60% FRL; 20% IEP (regular attendee data)

# Recommendations

- Equity priority
- Promote partnerships
- Competitive process
- Goal = Center development for sustainability
- Minimum 3 years of funding for any initiative
- State funds support quality implementation
- Designed intentionally to complement and leverage existing funds and partnerships
- Differentiated strategies for building centers versus programs only
- Program grants are in service to center development for sustainability

# Responsible Expansion: Flexible Pathways to Developing Centers

## New context, new need...

- Up to 3-year grants not 5 but could pair with 21C; 1-year state and 5-year federal or 3-year state and then apply for federal
- State funds could co invest and support either 1, 2, or 3 years of it
- Not conceived for content-only grants
- Flexible pathways:
  1. Applicants could complete full 5-year app and may be dropped into this tier if panel decides that is the best path (i.e., coordinated scoring mechanism):  
<https://education.vermont.gov/sites/age/files/documents/edu-21-century-cc>
  2. Applicant could choose this pathway option (only) from the outset (flex on scale)
  3. Expansion sites might choose this option (existing centers)

# Responsible Expansion: Flexible Pathways to Developing Centers

## 2. Smaller program size and scope (build the “foundation”) for start-up phase – Zone of Proximal Development

- Designed for those who need more time to build (capacity issues) and are not ready to implement a full comprehensive center
- Planning and system-building time
- Start smaller program centers after 6 months versus after 3 months
- Streamlined process for grant funding without sacrificing quality
- Would pay for director and leaders
- New intensive mentorship component through contract
- New more intensive training component from AOE or through existing contract or other directors
- Ideally aligned to ESSA equity and comprehensive supports