

# Show your support for Zap the Gap by writing a Letter to the Editor!

1. Write a letter to your local newspaper. A list of papers with their email addresses is below.
2. Send your letter by email, and only *send it to one paper at time*.
  - a. Do not cc (or bcc) multiple newspapers.
3. In your 3-paragraph letter:
  - a. In your first paragraph, say that you believe every Vermont community and family should have access to an Expanded Learning Opportunity (ELO) program and dedicated state funding for afterschool and summer learning programs is a great step toward that goal.
  - b. In the second paragraph, write 1 or 2 short sentences about why you support ELOs. Some reasons you might want to use are on the back of this page, or feel free to add your own!
  - c. Wrap up by reminding readers that more expanded learning programs = more opportunities for Vermont's children and youth to succeed. If you are comfortable making "the ask," say that you hope Vermont legislators will support a \$2.5 million appropriation to the ELO Special Fund to close.
4. Keep your entire letter to no more than 150-300 words (three short paragraphs maximum).
5. Be sure to include your:
  - a. Full name
  - b. Town
  - c. Phone Number and Email Address
6. If your letter gets published, please send a copy or link to [cassiewillner@vermontafterschool.org](mailto:cassiewillner@vermontafterschool.org).

#### Daily Papers, Location, LTE contact

Bennington Banner, Bennington, [news@benningtonbanner.com](mailto:news@benningtonbanner.com)  
Brattleboro Reformer, Brattleboro, [news@reformer.com](mailto:news@reformer.com)  
Burlington Free Press, Burlington, [letters@bfp.burlingtonfreepress.com](mailto:letters@bfp.burlingtonfreepress.com)  
Caledonian Record St., Johnsbury, [news@caledonian-record.com](mailto:news@caledonian-record.com)  
Eagle Times (NH), Claremont, NH, [news@eagletimes.com](mailto:news@eagletimes.com)  
Newport Daily Express, Newport, [editor@newportdailyadv.com](mailto:editor@newportdailyadv.com)  
Rutland Herald, Rutland, [david.moats@rutlandherald.com](mailto:david.moats@rutlandherald.com)  
St. Albans Messenger, St. Albans, [emerson@samesessenger.com](mailto:emerson@samesessenger.com)  
Times Argus, Barre-Montpelier, [letters@timesargus.com](mailto:letters@timesargus.com)  
Valley News, Upper Valley, [forum@vnews.com](mailto:forum@vnews.com)

#### Weekly Papers, Location, LTE contact

Addison Independent, Middlebury, [news@addisonindependent.com](mailto:news@addisonindependent.com)  
Barton Chronicle, Barton, [news@bartonchronicle.com](mailto:news@bartonchronicle.com)  
Brandon Reporter, Brandon, [news@brandonreporter.com](mailto:news@brandonreporter.com)  
Charlotte News, Charlotte, [news@charlottenewsvt.com](mailto:news@charlottenewsvt.com)  
Colchester Sun, Colchester, [news@essexreporter.com](mailto:news@essexreporter.com)  
County Courier, Enosburg Falls, [countycourier@gmail.com](mailto:countycourier@gmail.com)  
Deerfield Valley News, West Dover, [letters@vermontmedia.com](mailto:letters@vermontmedia.com)  
Essex Reporter, Colchester, [news@essexreporter.com](mailto:news@essexreporter.com)  
Hardwick Gazette, Hardwick, [news@thehardwickgazette.com](mailto:news@thehardwickgazette.com)  
Manchester Journal, Manchester Center, [news@manchesterjournal.com](mailto:news@manchesterjournal.com)  
Milton Independent, Milton, [indy@together.net](mailto:indy@together.net)  
Montpelier Bridge, Montpelier, [mpbridge@sover.net](mailto:mpbridge@sover.net)  
& Citizen, Morrisville, [edit@newsandcitizen.com](mailto:edit@newsandcitizen.com)  
Northfield News, Northfield, [nnews@trans-video.net](mailto:nnews@trans-video.net)  
Randolph Herald, Randolph, [editor@ourherald.com](mailto:editor@ourherald.com)  
Shelburne News, Shelburne, [news@shelburnenews.com](mailto:news@shelburnenews.com)  
Stowe Reporter, Stowe, [news@stowereporter.com](mailto:news@stowereporter.com)  
The Islander, South Hero, [islander@vermontislander.com](mailto:islander@vermontislander.com)  
The Journal Opinion, Bradford, [editor@jonews.com](mailto:editor@jonews.com)  
The Message, Chester, [message@vermontel.net](mailto:message@vermontel.net)  
The Observer, Jamaica, [news@vermontobserver.com](mailto:news@vermontobserver.com)  
The World, Barre, [editor@vt-world.com](mailto:editor@vt-world.com)  
Town Crier, Bellows Falls/Brattleboro-Wilmington, [thagerman@thetowncriers.com](mailto:thagerman@thetowncriers.com)  
Transcript, Morrisville, [edit@newsandcitizen.com](mailto:edit@newsandcitizen.com)  
Vermont News Guide, Manchester Center, [vng@hersamacomvt.com](mailto:vng@hersamacomvt.com)  
Vermont Standard, Woodstock, [vstand@sover.net](mailto:vstand@sover.net)  
Waitsfield Valley Reporter, Waitsfield, [news@valleyreporter.com](mailto:news@valleyreporter.com)  
Waterbury Record, Waterbury, [news@waterburyrecord.com](mailto:news@waterburyrecord.com)  
Williston Observer, Williston, [editor@willistonobserver.com](mailto:editor@willistonobserver.com)

**For every dollar spent on quality Expanded Learning Opportunities, Vermont gets back \$2.18 in long-term savings and benefits.**

**More than 21,000 Vermont K-12 youth are enrolled in afterschool, but 22,000+ kids are waiting for an available program.**

# **We know that Vermont's Expanded Learning Opportunities:**

## **Support Vermont's Vision for Education.**

In many Vermont communities, Expanded Learning Opportunities are well-positioned to **support Vermont's major education initiatives**, including the new Education Quality Standards, flexible pathways for graduation, personalized learning plans, proficiency based graduation requirements, and 21<sup>st</sup> century skills.

## **Address the Opportunity Gap.**

One of the most critical issues facing Vermont today is the persistent proficiency gap between low-income students and their higher income peers. What happens during the formal school day and in the regular classroom is not the source of this gap. **Where low-income students lose ground is outside the school day and over the summer when they do not have access to the same types of learning experiences and enrichment opportunities** as their more affluent peers.<sup>1</sup>

## **Keep Kids Safe, Inspire Learners,**

## **Help Working Families.**

Students in Vermont spend on average **1,000 hours per year in the classroom and another 5,000 hours in the community and with their families**. How they use this time can facilitate positive development and growth experiences, or place them at risk for negative outcomes. Expanded Learning Opportunities, such as quality afterschool and summer learning programs, play an important role in Vermont's communities by keeping kids safe, inspiring learners, and helping working families.

## **Are an Integral Part of Vermont's Education System.**

Vermont has a strong base already in place for doing this work. We have a vibrant and valued statewide afterschool network, a strong 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers program, and supports for quality initiatives and professional development. **Expanded Learning Opportunities are an integral part of Vermont's education system; we need to make sure that they are fully utilized and sustainable.**

## **Promote Access for All.**

Vermont has adopted an expanded concept of education, one that makes visible and valued the learning and experiences that happen not only in the classroom but also in other settings outside the school day. What we need to do now is scale up across the state so that the ELOs that a Vermont child has access to are not limited by his/her family's circumstances or where they live in the state. This effort will take **strong state leadership and investment** and all of us working together to ensure that Vermont's children and youth have the resources and opportunities they need to succeed in school and in life.

### **Demand is High;**

### **The Cost of Doing Nothing is Even Higher.**

There are more than 22,000 Vermont students who would be participating in an Expanded Learning Opportunity today if they had access to one.<sup>2</sup>

This means that there are more than 22,000 chances for bad choices, dangerous behaviors, or falling behind each and every day.

It also means that there are more than 22,000 lost opportunities every day to help these children and youth reach their full potential.