

The Vermont Framework for Proficiency-Based Learning Grant Application

I. Introduction

The Vermont Agency of Education (AOE) invites supervisory unions/districts (SUs/SDs) to apply for Secondary School Reform grant funding, totaling \$150,000, for the purpose of improving their Framework for Proficiency-Based Learning. This competitive grant will be for FY23 (2022 - 2023 academic year). Applicants may apply for grants for up to \$10,000 to fund expenses related to participation in the Vermont Framework for Proficiency-Based Learning professional learning series facilitated through the Agency's contract with the Great Schools Partnership. Grant applications will be reviewed by the Agency of Education after the February 3, 2023 application deadline. Competitive awards will be granted to SUs/SDs that show the greatest promise to fulfill grant requirements and meet Agency priorities. Approved grants may be fully or partially funded. The final award will be determined by the reviewers.

Grant funds can be used to support the following activities:

- Faculty and staff participation at regional meetings: and/or
- Convening community forums either in-person, virtually, or both, to support the development of a local Portrait of a Graduate.

II. Background and Evidence Base

Legislation such as [Act 77](#) of 2013, [Act 173](#) of 2018, and [Act 1](#) of 2019 and are examples of Vermont's ongoing efforts to ensure that Vermont's educational systems are accessible and equitable for all learners, value individual differences, and prepare all students for postsecondary success.

To support our supervisory unions/districts (SUs/SDs), schools, and educators in this collective effort, the AOE is providing a competitive grant opportunity to engage SUs/SDs in activities that facilitate the development and implementation of coherent systems of proficiency-based learning. This work will focus on improving outcomes for all students by refining local proficiency-based systems to ensure that each and every student develops the cognitive, personal, and interpersonal skills, and knowledge identified within the Vermont Portrait of a Graduate.

The draft Vermont Framework for Proficiency includes:

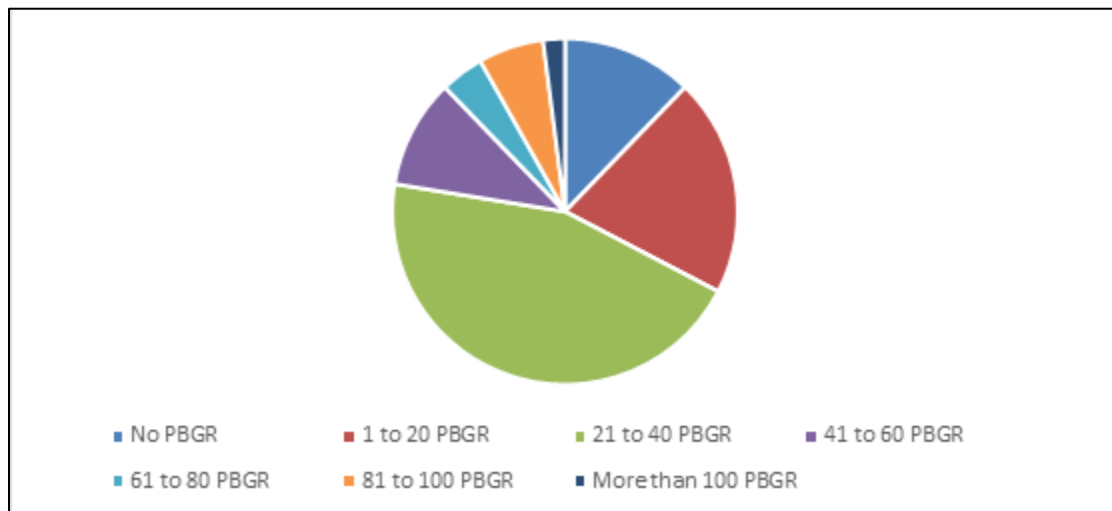
- A Portrait of a Graduate that specifies the cognitive, personal, and interpersonal skills and knowledge that students should demonstrate upon graduation;
- Connected literacies that are common across content areas and support the development of a student's equity lens, transferable skills, and Portrait of a Graduate attributes;
- Proficiency-Based Graduation Requirements (PBGRs) that encompass the content knowledge and transferable skills that students must exhibit for college and career readiness, thus qualifying a student for high school graduation;
- Critical Proficiencies (CPs) that promote high expectations for all students, and support

- students' personal, professional, and academic development;
- Priority Performance Indicators (PPIs) that are chosen to determine the proficiency of the larger grain size Critical Proficiency: PPIs are taught and assessed;
- Proficiency Scales that are designed to show a continuum of distinct levels of knowledge and skills relative to a specific performance indicator;
- Performance Assessments that engage students in meaningful learning in authentic contexts, show genuine applications of knowledge, and yield a tangible product and/or performance that serves as evidence of learning; and
- Rubrics that clearly define academic expectations for learners in a particular context and help to ensure consistency in the evaluation of academic work from learner to learner, assignment to assignment, or course to course.

Although Vermont educators have been working hard to implement proficiency-based learning systems since 2014 when the Education Quality Standards went into effect, there is still more to do. For instance, graduation requirements throughout Vermont vary from approximately six to one-hundred thirty-five. The data below were gathered through the Proficiency-Based Graduation Requirements and Personalized Learning Plans survey in 2020.

What is the total number of PBGRs that students must meet in order to graduate?

Figure 1. Total Number of PBGRs Required by SUs/SDs



Most respondents (22 of 49) reported that their SU/SD requires between 21-40 total PBGRs in order for a student to graduate, but the breakdown of how content and skill requirements are reflected in these PBGRs may not be consistent among this group of respondents. Please note that of the six respondents that reported zero PBGRs, two SUs/SDs were kindergarten through grade eight systems, while four respondents mistakenly entered zero for that item. After follow-up, it was determined that PBGRs are in place at the four corresponding high schools.

In summary, there is currently a wide variation of expectations for graduation from high school creating systemic inequities that need to be addressed.

III. Vermont Agency of Education Priorities

This first grant to support the development and implementation of the Vermont Framework for Proficiency is anticipated to begin in February 2023 and extend until June 30, 2023. It will support SUs/SDs and school Leadership Teams to participate in the Vermont Framework for Proficiency professional learning opportunities that best meet their needs. Leadership teams can select to participate in one or any combination of the sessions below.

1. Portrait of a Graduate:
 - a. Attend face-to-face as well as virtual convenings to refine the VT Portrait of a Graduate to reflect a local context and communicate a narrative of hope, rather than learning loss, for the future.
2. Personalized Learning Planning Process:
 - a. Refine the local personalized learning planning process (in alignment with state-level guidelines) to align with and inform other school processes such as Education Support Teams; identify how to integrate PLPs into classroom practice, so PLPs can provide a pathway for achieving the attributes of the Portrait of a Graduate and career and college readiness.
3. Vermont Framework for Proficiency:
 - a. Provide feedback to improve Vermont's revised exemplar Proficiency-Based Graduation Requirements (PBGRs), Critical Proficiencies (CPs), and Priority Performance Indicators (PPIs).

IV. Project Award and Timeline

Grant awards will be announced on February 7, 2023 and begin on the date that final signatures are executed. Funds will expire on June 30, 2023, with the expectation that program objectives are met and all reporting and monitoring requirements are successfully fulfilled. Grantees are expected to provide a plan, timeline, and budget request and justification for the identified grant activity period.

Timeline:

- Grant Application Released: Friday, January 13, 2023
- Application Deadline: February 3, 2023
- Anticipated Grant Duration: June 30, 2023
- Number of Awards: Multiple awards are anticipated and are contingent on available funding

V. Project Requirements

- A. **Contact Information:** Name, address, phone number, and e-mail information for Lead Grant Contact, Partners, and Business Manager.

- B. **Organizational Structure:** Define roles and responsibilities for a leadership team that ideally

includes representation by administrators, staff, and/or community members.

- C. **Communication System:** Identify intended strategies for communication with and among the school(s), AOE staff, and any stakeholders. Additionally, explain how the work from this project will be disseminated.
- D. **Project, Plan, Evidence, Timeline, and Benchmarks of Success:** Provide a clear plan for how activities will be accomplished from February 2023 to June 30, 2023, what you hope to accomplish, a timeline, and indicators of success.
- E. **Budget and Budget Justification:** Include a cost-effective budget and justification for line items that reflect the goals and priorities of this project. This budget and budget justification must be for the time period between February 2023 and June 30, 2023.

VI. Application Requirements

The narrative sections of the application must be double-spaced, and the font must not be smaller than 12-point and shall not exceed 5 pages. Each application must contain the following sections:

A. Grant Narrative: (Please see Appendix A)

Project Description and Justification:

A brief description of how the project will meet the Vermont Agency of Education Priorities:

1. A justification for which of the following professional learning activities leadership teams will participate in as well as the projected team members who will participate.
 - a. The development of a local Portrait of a Graduate; and/or
 - b. Refinement of the personalized learning planning process; and/or
 - c. Feedback sessions to improve the AOE's exemplar PBGRs, CPs, and PPIs as part of the developing Vermont Framework for Proficiency.
2. An explanation of how this work will be integrated systemically into the SU/SD to support coordination and coherence across schools, and sustained through ongoing initiatives; and
3. Identify if this work is connected to any of the following:
 - a. Recovery (yes/no)
 - b. Continuous Improvement Plans (yes/no)

Project Management:

1. Roles and responsibilities of participants as well as the Leadership Team are clearly defined and demonstrate that the team has the capability of managing the project, organizing the work, and meeting deadlines; and
2. Intended strategies for communication with and among the school(s), community partners, AOE staff, and any stakeholders are identified.

B. Project Timeline and Benchmarks: (Please See Appendix B)

A description of the project timeline and benchmarks that includes:

1. A clear and concise description of goals, a plan for implementation, a timeline and projected outcomes for completing activities within the grant period. This scope and sequence must be developed for the projected time period between February 2023 and June 30, 2023.; and
2. A description of the measures that will be used to determine success including numeric objectives for defined goals and specific outcomes; and
3. A plan for sustaining this work at the end of the funding period.

C. Budget and Budget Justification: (Please see Appendix C)

A description of the budget as well as the budget justification that includes:

1. A project budget for anticipated funding up to \$10,000; and
2. A budget justification that is clearly tied to the scope and requirements of the project.

D. Contact Information: (Please see Appendix D)

Name, address, phone number, and e-mail information for the Superintendent, Lead Grant Contact, and Business Manager.

VII. Application Submission and Review

A. Submission: Applicants must submit an electronic copy signed by an authorized institutional official to Pat Fitzsimmons at pat.fitzsimmons@vermont.gov by 5:00 PM on February 3, 2023. Electronic signatures will be accepted. Any questions regarding this grant opportunity should be directed to Pat Fitzsimmons via email.

Note: Applications without e-signatures: The completed cover page, Appendix D, of this application will be converted into a OneSpan document which will then be routed to the current superintendent for signature to be maintained on file. Signatures indicate understanding and approval of the grant application submission.

B. Review Process: A review panel will evaluate the eligible applications in accordance with the required application components.

Criteria:

Criteria	Points
<p>Grant Narrative</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A justification for which of the following professional learning activities leadership teams will participate in as well as the projected team members who will participate. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The development of a local Portrait of a Graduate; and/or b. Refinement of the personalized learning planning process; and/or c. Feedback sessions to improve the AOE’s exemplar PBGRs, CPs, and PPIs as part of the developing Vermont Framework for Proficiency. 2. An explanation of how this work will be integrated systemically into the SU/SD to support coordination and coherence across schools, and sustained through ongoing initiatives; and 3. Identify if this work is connected to any of the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Recovery (yes/no) b. Continuous Improvement Plans (yes/no) 	<p>40</p>
<p>Project Timeline and Benchmarks</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A clear and concise description of goals, a plan for implementation, a timeline and projected outcomes for completing activities within the grant period. This scope and sequence must be developed for the projected time period between February 2023 and June 30, 2023.; and 2. A description of the measures that will be used to determine success including numeric objectives for defined goals and specific outcomes; and 3. A plan for sustaining this work at the end of the funding period. 	<p>40</p>
<p>Budget and Budget Justifications</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A project budget for anticipated funding up to \$10,000; and 2. A budget justification that is clearly tied to the scope and requirements of the project. 	<p>20</p>

The Agency reserves the right to award in full or in part, to reject any and all applications in whole or in part, and to waive technical defects, irregularities or omissions if, in its judgement, the best interest of students would be served. After receiving the application, the Agency reserves the right not to award a grant, to negotiate specific grant amounts, and to select certain grantees regardless of points awarded as part of the process to meet federal requirements or State Board of Education priorities.

Applicants may be asked to clarify or rewrite certain aspects of their applications. Finalists may be asked to participate in an interview before funds are awarded. Applicants will be contacted if such information or actions are necessary.

VIII. Award Administration

Notification of the Award: The SU/SD designee will be notified of the status of their application within one week of the application deadline.

A. Final Report: A final report will be submitted no later than July 5, 2023. The Leadership Committee or SU/SD designee will provide a detailed description of how the project goals were met, as well as any challenges that were encountered. Additionally, the final evaluation will include:

- Qualitative as well as quantitative data regarding participation, and accomplishments;
- An explanation of how the professional learning opportunities met the needs of the educational system, including strengths and challenges, if applicable; and
- An explanation for how this work will be sustained.

Appendix A: Grant Narrative

Project Management:

Project Description and Justification:

Appendix B: Project Timeline/Benchmarks

Goals	Projected Outcomes	Implementation Plan	Timeline	Measures of Success	Plan for Sustainability

Appendix C: Budget

Functions	Salaries (100)	Employees Benefits (200)	Professional and Technical Services Consultants Contracts (300)	Rental of Space (400)	Other Purchased Services Travel Printing (500)	Supplies Food Books Periodicals (600)	Total
2212 - Instruction and Curriculum Development							
2213 - Instructional Staff Training							
2219 - Other Improvement of Instruction Services							
2290 - Other Support Services - Instructional Staff							
2610 - Rental of Space							
2999 - Family Engagement							
3300 - Community Services Operations							
Total							

Budget Justification

Explain how appropriated funds will enable the SU/SD to meet the project goals.

Appendix D: Cover Page with Contact Information

Superintendent

Institution or Organization: _____
Name: _____
Title: _____
Address: _____
Telephone: _____
Email: _____
Fax: _____
Signature: _____

Lead Grant Contact

Institution or Organization: _____
Name: _____
Title: _____
Address: _____
Telephone: _____
Email: _____
Fax: _____

Business Manager

Institution or Organization: _____
Name: _____
Title: _____
Address: _____
Telephone: _____
Email: _____
Fax: _____