

Act 67 – Community Schools Grant Summaries

With the passage of [Act 67 – The Community Schools Act](#) in June, the Agency of Education developed a competitive grant opportunity for eligible applicants to develop and pilot Community School models. Community Schools serve as resource hubs that provide a broad range of easily accessed, well-coordinated supports and services that help students and families with increasingly complex needs.

This grant program supports Vermont schools and community partners to develop, expand, and sustain a community school model that demonstrates five pillars: integrated student supports, expanded and enriched learning time and opportunities, active family and community engagement, collaborative leadership and practices, and safe, inclusive, and equitable learning environments. The following Supervisory Unions/Supervisory Districts (SU/SDs) are recipients of the three-year Community Schools Programs grant award: Addison Northwest Supervisory District, Caledonia Central Supervisory Union, North Country Supervisory Union, Orleans Southwest Supervisory Union, and White River Valley Supervisory Union. The total award amount for year one, \$1,003,933.00, will support five community school models and 44 community partners statewide. This grant program was developed with state set-aside federal ESSER funds. The following summaries were developed from excerpts of grant recipients' applications. Those seeking to review the full application should contact the awardees directly.

Cabot School, Caledonia Central Supervisory Union (CCSU): \$163,620

The Cabot School, a small, rural, community school, serves approximately 160 students in grades PreK - 12 through a unique and innovative project-based program that is deeply connected to the community. This three-year grant award will improve and expand Cabot's current school goals outlined in both their Recovery Plan and Continuous Improvement Plan which aim to strengthen project-based learning, community partnerships with outdoor learning, farm to school, and local health organization partnerships. This year, Cabot School will hire a Community School Coordinator to bring together the multiple and complex community partnerships to envision a K-12 program of community learning that includes afterschool, leadership, field trip, and internship/CTE opportunities based in the community. To set a trajectory for equitable family and community engagement, Cabot will engage in a needs and asset assessment to gather information from a broad array of community members;

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this data will be analyzed to inform strategies to eliminate the identified barriers and increase participation among the broader learning community. Another focus for year one is to create school-wide structures that support safe, inclusive, and equitable learning environments. This includes school-wide celebrations of students, establishing a space for restorative and wellness services that is student-centered and student-led, and eliciting feedback from students about how these structures support their learning. This award will support the development and expansion of ten community partnerships to deepen, strengthen, and sustain the relationships and offerings between the school and community. Over the next three years, Cabot aims to fully implement the five core elements of the Community Schools model with intentional strategies for sustainability.

For more information contact: Rebecca Tatistcheff, Principal, Cabot School at rebecca.tatistcheff@ccsuvt.net

Hazen Union High School, Orleans Southwest Supervisory Union (OSSU): \$123,000

Hazen Union High School located in Hardwick, VT serves approximately 350 students grades 7-12 from the towns of Hardwick, Greensboro, and Woodbury. Hazen will utilize their on-site Leadership Team to structure the work of transitioning to a community school model. During year one, Hazen will hire a Community School Coordinator that will serve on the leadership team to ensure tasks, projects, and goals align with both on and off-site plans. The Community School Coordinator will map local assets, connect local assets and regional resources to local needs, and better facilitate the diminishment of barriers that students and families experience when trying to access and engage in learning opportunities. The Community School Coordinator will be the liaison between existing and new partnerships, the school, and the broader learning community with the support of this grant award. The Community School Coordinator will also work to expand Hazen's existing Pathways Program that assesses students' assets, aspirations, and pathway after high school through the creation of a learning plan using community resources and supports. Hazen will use separate funds to invest in medical equipment to build an in-school telehealth framework capable of serving students, staff, and family members with the purpose of reducing student absenteeism. During year two and three, funds from this award will support the piloting and implementation of the telehealth framework. Hazen will also work with OSSU's Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) Coordinator to strengthen their data teams, interventions, and effective wrap-around supports for students. Hazen will partner with seven community organizations and providers to expand upon existing structures and implement new initiatives to fulfill the five pillars of the community school model.

For more information contact: Jason DiGiulio, Principal, Hazen Union High School at jdigiulio@ossu.org

North Country Supervisory Union (NCSU): \$ 228,370

North Country Supervisory Union will use grant funds to deliver a comprehensive educational program across the twelve schools within their multi-district union. To coordinate and implement the five pillars of the community school model, NCSU will utilize site-based leadership teams from each school to collaborate on community school integration and implementation. These teams will inform the core team's responsibility to execute the grant and define a Community Schools Steering Committee that is responsible for ensuring community outreach, evaluating the success of partnerships through surveys and conversation, and meeting project benchmarks on a year-to-year basis. In year one, NCSU will hire a Community School Coordinator to develop community school programming with students, educators, parents, and community partners and support family engagement at the local school level. The Community School Coordinator will also be responsible for responding to urgent student requests by overseeing an emergency supplies budget to provide emergency food, clothing, and hygiene items for all students in need. In order to develop integrated student supports, NCSU will focus their efforts on improving school attendance, healthcare access, and food security. This award will support the creation of learning opportunities for students and community members that address employment, financial literacy, and positive psychology and skill development. NCSU's commitment to prioritize active family and community engagement across each of the core elements will begin with building and strengthening culturally relevant and responsive teaching and learning. NCSU will partner with ten organizations over the next three years to meet their goal of equitable learning environments to support a more fair and inclusive community.

For more information contact: John Castle, Superintendent, NCSU at john.castle@ncsuvt.org

Vergennes Union Elementary School, Addison Northwest Supervisory District (ANWSD): \$238,943

The ANWSD Community School model will develop and sustain a full-service community school through expanding Vergennes Union Elementary School (VUES) to act as a community hub. This grant project aligns with the goals outlined in both ANWSD's Continuous Improvement Plan and Recovery Plan which are aimed at achieving equitable access and outcomes for all learners. In year one, grant funds will be used to hire a Community School Coordinator that will oversee the development of the Vergennes Community Schools Coalition (VCSC). The VCSC will create the

framework for a viable and sustainable student mentoring program, expand on health services for students during and after school, establish adult learning opportunities for the community, address community issues related to food insecurity, expand outdoor learning and community recreation spaces, improve the school gardens, and engage with the community around instructional programs -- specifically Universal Design for Learning and Literacy initiatives underway. Year one will also focus on improving the Multi-Tiered System of Supports by targeting layer one universal instruction to improve outcomes in the classroom in response to an anticipated and diverse set of needs. This three-year project encompasses bridging community health care to VUES and the Vergennes Community to support greater accessibility to health services. In year one the nursing team, with the support of the Community School Coordinator, will establish partnerships so that by year two targeted health services will be available to students and families. Expanded work on horizontal and vertical alignment of ANWSD's proficiency-based curriculum will aim to prioritize their curriculum, instruction, and assessment systems. This curriculum will continue to be expanded and improved upon to ensure that all students are represented, with intentional shifts toward anti-racist and anti-oppressive curriculum. This award will support the creation and strengthening of seven community and school partnerships to development and implement of ANWSD's community school model.

For more information contact: Sheila Soule, Superintendent, ANWSD at ssoule@anwsd.org

White River Valley Middle School, White River Valley Supervisory Union (WRVSU): \$250,000

This grant award will fund a pilot Community School model at the White River Valley Middle School (WRVMS). WRVMS is based in Bethel, shares a campus with Bethel Elementary, and is part of the White River Valley School District (WRVSD) that serves the towns of Bethel and Royalton. The WRVSD is part of the broader White River Valley Supervisory Union (WRVSU), which serves 10 small towns nestled in Central Vermont and enrolls 1,300 students in grades PreK - 12. The WRVSU, WRVSD, and WRVMS were all formally established in 2018 through a merger process. As a result, WRVMS was developed in collaboration with the Tarrant Institute for Innovation in Education to foster best practices and innovation. This award will support the advancement of implementing WRVMS' current equity and achievement initiatives, while also expanding their approaches throughout WRVSU using Bethel's creative community development and pop-up community building strategies. In year one, WRVMS will hire a Community School Coordinator to engage community members and partners to understand existing economic and geographic barriers to opportunities. The Community School Coordinator will coordinate efforts and conduct strategic outreach to recruit, train, and support individuals from the school and town, including

students, faculty/staff, parents/guardians, community leaders and members to comprise the site-based leadership team. In year two, WRVMS aims to implement robust pilot projects and solutions that are directly informed by the community engagement and collaborative planning from its first year. Key components include researching program sustainability needs and opportunities comprised of policy development, funding and capacity, coordination and staffing, and alignment with other emerging plans like Bethel for All and White River Valley Consortium. Year three will focus on building a sustainability plan for the WRVMSU community and developing program models to scale across other regions in Vermont. This pilot program involves over ten partnerships from local mental and dental health organizations to broader Vermont academic programs designed to meet the needs of the WRVMSU learning community.

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