

AOE Suggested Changes to H.688

Summary of Draft Changes

The agency recommends the following changes to the language to better support the intent of the bill.

Page 3 and 4

Current Draft:

(2) “Eligible applicant” means four or more supervisory unions, where each supervisory union is geographically adjacent, or would be geographically adjacent but for a lake or river, to one or more of the other supervisory unions applying for the same grant under this section.

AOE Suggested Language:

N/A

Rationale/Comment:

Grants can only be awarded to one entity (SU/SD)

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Current Draft:

(line 1) Subject to the terms of the program, grants shall be provided to eligible applicants for each of two consecutive years.

AOE Suggested Language:

Subject to the terms of the program, grants shall be ~~provided~~ awarded to eligible applicants for ~~each of up to~~ two consecutive years.

Rationale/Comment:

Consistent with state grant-awarding process, can only award grants on a year-to-year basis. (also see subsequent section xxx).

Current Draft:

(c) Application for, and approval of, grant funding. (1) On or before July 31, 2020, the Advisory Group shall create a uniform application for the grant, which shall be posted on the Agency’s website, and shall include:

AOE Suggested Language:

(1) On or before July 31, 2020, the ~~Advisory Group~~ Agency of Education, in partnership with three members of the Advisory Group who will not be applying for nor will directly benefit

fiscally from the grants program, shall ~~create a~~ develop ~~uniform an~~ application and application criteria for the grant, which shall be posted on the Agency's website, and shall include:

Rationale:

- Agency must use its state grant application process already approved by Agency of Administration.
- An entity may not be involved in application materials or scoring of any grant proposals should there be an actual or perceived conflict of interest regarding grant awards.

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Current Draft:

(E) the eligible applicant's theory of improvement for literacy teaching and outcomes;

AOE Suggested Language:

(E) the eligible applicant's theory of improvement for literacy teaching and outcomes, including specification of which systemic Education Quality Standards lever(s) (i.e., curriculum coordination, education support teams, comprehensive local assessment, and/or needs-based professional learning) the applicant consortium will focus on.

Rationale:

Aligns with Agency's framework and workplan for Act 173

Current Draft:

(2) An Eligible applicant shall submit an application for grant funding to the Advisory Group.

AOE Suggested Language:

(2) ~~An~~ Eligible applicants shall submit an application for grant funding to the ~~Advisory Group~~ Agency of Education.

Rationale:

- Agency already has infrastructure and process set up for receiving grant applications from SUs.
 - More secure process for application submission through Agency.
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Current Draft:

(3) The Advisory Group shall review applications for grant funding and shall, within 30 calendar days after receipt of the application, recommend approval of the grant funding if it finds that the application is complete and that granting the application satisfies the purpose of the Act. If the Advisory Board recommends approval of an application, it shall, within five calendar days of making its decision, send to the Agency of Education a written notification of, and explanation for, its recommendation. If the Advisory Board does not recommend approval

of an application, it may provide the applicant with additional time to supplement its application.

AOE Suggested Language:

~~(3) The Advisory Group shall review applications for grant funding and shall, within 30 calendar days after receipt of the application, recommend approval of the grant funding if it finds that the application is complete and that granting the application satisfies the purpose of the Act. If the Advisory Board recommends approval of an application, it shall, within five calendar days of making its decision, send to the Agency of Education a written notification of, and explanation for, its recommendation. If the Advisory Board does not recommend approval of an application, it may provide the applicant with additional time to supplement its application.~~

(3) Delegates/designees for the Advisory Group will work with the Agency to develop proposal scoring criteria consistent with (c) 1 (A-J). Same designees for the Advisory Group will be members of a review panel, including AOE personnel, that will jointly review and score grant applications based on the scoring criteria. Following the application review process, the review panel will select successful applications based on both review scores and funding dollars available. These successful proposals will be recommended to the Secretary for funding. The grant review and selection process will be conducted within 60 days of application deadline. Applicants will be notified of funding decisions immediately after the 60 day period.

Rationale:

Current language does not align with key elements of approved state granting procedure. For instance, AOE must have a final deadline for grant applications, not “rolling applications” with additional time given to certain applicants. The processes and procedures the AOE must follow are in place to ensure that all eligible entities have fair and equitable access to apply for and receive taxpayer-supported grant funds, based *solely* on stated grant scoring criteria developed and published along with the application materials. Application scoring criteria can assign more points to applications that are in a “planning” or “preliminary work begun” category, if the Committee is aiming to target funds to those SUs who need more assistance.

In addition, the suggested timeline is more realistic and in keeping with approved Grant Plan procedures. Original timeline would likely be impossible to meet.

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Current Language: None

AOE Suggested Language: New section: (4) To demonstrate progress, the AOE and AG delegates shall send a copy of the grant application and scoring criteria, as well as the agreed upon timeline for posting the call for grant applications, submission deadline, review panel

process and selection, and anticipated final award date, to the Chairs of both House and Senate Education Committees, no later than July 15, 2020.

Rationale:

Aligned with existing state granting protocols

Current Language:

(4)(A) The Agency of Education shall award the first year of grant funding in the amount of \$150,000 to an eligible applicant if it finds, after consideration of the recommendation of the Advisory Group under subdivision (c)(3) of this section, that the application is complete and that granting the application satisfies the purpose of this act. If the Agency makes these findings, the Agency shall award the grant funding within 30 calendar days after receipt from the Advisory Group of its recommendation to approve the grant funding. (B) The Agency of Education shall award the second year of a grant funding in the amount of \$150,000 to an eligible applicant if it finds that, under subdivision (e)(1)(A) of this section, that the eligible applicant has or will make sufficient progress in implementing its action plan under that subdivision. The Agency shall make this award within five calendar days after making this determination.

AOE Suggested Language:

(5)(A) Based on review panel recommendations, the Agency of Education shall award the first year of grant funding, up to \$150,000 per application, to successful applicants. First year of grant funding will be awarded up to \$150,000, based on applicant's proposed budget and total availability of funds. (B) Successful applicants from the first year of funding will be eligible for a second year of funding, contingent upon successful progress toward goals in the first grant year. Along with their final Year 1 report, successful applicants shall submit a budget request for Year 2, along with any revised or updated action plan items. Second year of grant funding will be awarded up to \$150,000, based on applicant's proposed budget and total availability of funds.

Rationale:

Aligned with existing state granting protocols

Page 9

Current Language:

(4) (e) Evaluation and reporting. (1)(A) At the end of the first year of the two-year grant period of grant award, each eligible applicant shall submit to the Advisory Group and the Agency of Education a report that describes progress and concerns with the implementation of the eligible applicant's action plan to improve literacy teaching and outcomes under subdivision (c)(1)(F) of this section. If the Agency of Education, in consultation with the Advisory Group, does not believe sufficient progress has been made by the eligible applicant to implement its action plan,

then the Agency shall request an explanation and a plan from the eligible applicant to address the concerns raised by the Agency, and the Agency shall release the grant funding for the second year only if it is satisfied that the plan will satisfy the purpose of this act.

AOE Suggested Language:

(1)(A) *At the end of the first fiscal year, eligible applicants shall submit* to the Advisory Group and the Agency of Education a report that describes progress and concerns with the implementation of the eligible applicant’s action plan to improve literacy teaching and outcomes under subdivision (c)(1)(F) of this section. If the Agency of Education, in consultation with the Advisory Group, does not believe sufficient progress has been made by the eligible applicant to implement its action plan, then the Agency shall request an explanation and a plan from the eligible applicant to address the concerns raised by the Agency, and the Agency shall release the grant funding for the second year only if it is satisfied that the plan will satisfy the purpose of this act.

Rationale:

Aligned with existing state granting protocols

Page 11

Current Language:

(18) Adopt a benchmark literacy assessment for all students in prekindergarten-grade 3 with scores that can be reported in a format determined by the Secretary. The benchmark literacy assessment shall include an assessment of phonemic awareness, phonics, reading fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.

AOE Suggested Language:

Add:

(19) A process for identifying struggling readers, and a description of the intervention processes dedicated to address the needs of these students, and

(20) A requirement for the board to formally review and publish an annual monitoring report on student literacy outcomes.

(21) A requirement for an annual evaluation of superintendent job performance including goals for improving student literacy outcomes.

Rationale: AOE recommendations to ensure local engagement and accountability efforts at board level