

Implementation of the Restorative Justice Principles Grant Program

Act 11 (Special Session) of 2018, Sec. E.500.6

REPORT

December 20, 2019

**Report to the House
Committees on Education and on Judiciary
and the Senate Committees on Education
and on Judiciary**

Submitted by

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Summary

The Vermont Agency of Education (AOE), in response to Act 11 of the 2018 Special Session, has established two opportunities to support Vermont schools in the implementation of whole-school Restorative Approaches (RA): The Restorative Approaches Grant Program and the Restorative Approaches Professional Learning Contract.

This is the second of three reports describing the actions the Agency of Education has taken in order to provide grant funds that will assist public and approved independent schools with the adoption and implementation of restorative justice principals for responding to school discipline problems.

Restorative Approaches Grant Program

The Restorative Approaches Grant Program is a one-year, state-level grant that began on July 1, 2019 and will run through June 30, 2020. On January 1, 2019 the grant application opened to all of Vermont's public and approved independent schools. Applications were due to the AOE by May 13, 2019. The AOE received seven applications from public schools or Supervisory Unions/School Districts. No approved independent schools applied.

A committee of three AOE staff reviewed each application using the application's scoring rubric. The committee recommended four applications be funded. Grant recipients are Highgate Elementary School for \$15,055, North Country SU for \$76,348, Bakersfield-Richford Schools for \$76,381, and Champlain Valley SD for \$9,520. The official start date for each grant is July 11, 2019. The grant period will end on June 30, 2020.

In order to monitor the status of each grant's progress, each award recipient received a survey in October 2019 asking for a narrative description of the status of their grant's scope of work, including successes they've had with implementing the whole-school Restorative Approaches as well as the challenges they've encountered with implementation. All four grantees responded to the survey. Responses to the survey indicate that grantees have been implementing the professional learning following the plans they submitted with their applications. Respondents also indicated time being a factor in achieving the outcomes in their plans.

All grant recipients will complete a final survey after the end of the grant period in June 2020.

Restorative Approaches Contract

The Restorative Approaches Professional Learning Contract was awarded to a collaborative of trainers, researchers, Community Justice center staff, as well as educational practitioners and leaders. UP for Learning is the lead fiscal agent. The contract, in the amount of \$75,000.00, was executed on August 14, 2019 and is set to end on June 30, 2020.

At the start of SY19-20, the coordination team representing the collaborative invited all SU/SDs, including individual schools to apply to be included in the professional learning that will be offered through the contract. The team received 37 applications representing 75 individual schools. Based on a review of the applications, and subsequent availability of the qualified candidates, the collaborative established two cohorts of professional learning communities

(PLC). The first cohort is comprised of 7 individual schools, and the second cohort is comprised of three SUs and 13 schools (see chart below).

Cohort 1:

School Count	School or SU/SD	Application Score
1	Cabot School	30/33
2	Flood Brook School	30/33
3	Newbury Elementary School	30/33
4	Kurn Hattin	28/33
5	Northwest Primary School	28/33
6	Twinfield Union School	28/33
7	Rutland Intermediate	28/33

Cohort 2:

School Count	School or SU/SD	Application Score
	Milton Town SD	29/33
8	Milton Elementary	
9	Milton Middle	
10	Milton High	
	Rutland Northeast SU	29/33
11	Barstow Memorial School	
12	Lothrop Elementary School	
13	Neshobe Elementary School	
14	Otter Creek Academy	
15	Otter Valley Union High School	
	Mount Mansfield Unified Union School District	28/33
16	Brewster-Pierce Memorial School	
17	Jericho Elementary School	
18	Richmond Elementary School	
19	Smilie Memorial School	
20	Underhill Central School	

Process

The PLCs are meeting a total of four times: October 17, 2019, December 6, 2019, March 18, 2020, and May 5, 2020. Individual schools in both cohorts will receive ongoing training and support from coaches who have been matched to the schools. In addition, PLC members can schedule in-service trainings. Both the ongoing coaching and in-service training is provided by a member of the collaborative.

The coordinators of the contract, Lindsey Halman with UP for Learning, along with Amy Wheeler-Sutton and Dr. Valerie Wood with the University of Vermont, have requested an additional \$6,000 to ensure that each member of the PLCs experiences a cohesive training and coaching experience by providing additional professional learning to the practitioners who are providing the on-site coaching and training. That request for an amendment has been approved.

The collaborative's coordinators provide a monthly summary of the work that has been done as well as updates around the deliverables that are still in-progress. At the conclusion of the contract, the contractor will submit a final report that will provide the relevant information about the intended outcomes of the contract. The summary report will also contain any participant feedback evaluations. The final project report, due December 2020, will contain that summary information.