

Implementation of Restorative Justice Principles Grant Program

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

REPORT

November 30,
2018

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

Submitted by

Daniel M. French, Ed.D., Secretary of Education



Summary

The Agency of Education will carry forward \$250,000 of FY2018 general funds in order to assist public and approved independent schools with the adoption and implementation of restorative justice principals for responding to school discipline problems.

Recommendations

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.

The Restorative Approaches Grant Program is a one-year, state-level grant that will begin on July 1, 2019 and run through June 30, 2020. This grant opportunity is available to all Vermont public and approved independent schools. Grant funds will be available to enter into a contract with a vendor and fund stipends for staff time and/or substitute coverage. We anticipate that there will be approximately \$175,000 available for the grants. The amount of each grant will be contingent upon the number of grants that are approved. Any leftover funds will be made available for the contract and vice-versa.

The Restorative Approaches Professional Learning Contract will provide sites the opportunity to participate in professional learning, including technical assistance (TA) in the form of consultation and/or coaching. The professional learning will give participants the opportunity to learn alongside others in the state from a provider selected through a standard bid Request For Proposals (RFP). The contract period and grant period will run concurrently. We anticipate the contract amount to be approximately \$75,000.

Both of the RA opportunities are designed to strengthen district and school-level efforts to adopt and implement a whole-school approach to using a Restorative philosophy and practices as a part of a school's system of behavior. At a minimum, the whole-school use of RA will identify the systemic features that are needed to decrease the need for exclusionary discipline and ensure that disciplinary measures are applied fairly and equitably.

For foundational information and guidelines about Restorative Justice and Restorative Practices in Vermont, refer to the [Integrated Educational Frameworks](#) section of the Multi-Tiered System of Supports page of the AOE's website.

Timeline

The two funding opportunities will be announced on January 2, 2019. The timeline for each is as follows:

- [Restorative Approaches Grant](#)
 - January 1, 2019—Application Opens
 - May 13, 2019—Application Due
 - July 1, 2019—Grant Funding Cycle Begins
 - June 30, 2020—Grant Funding Cycle Ends; summary report due to identified AOE staff

- [Restorative Approaches Professional Learning Standard Bid](#)
 - January 1, 2019—Request for Proposals posted
 - February 15, 2019—Deadline for questions
 - May 6, 2019—Proposal submission deadline
 - July 1, 2019—Anticipated commencement of contract

Eligibility Requirements

In order to be considered for either a grant award or participation in the contracted professional learning, applicants must provide evidence of board-level approval of adopting and implementing whole-school RA as well as demonstrate readiness to adopt and implement whole-school RA.

Scoring Guidelines

For the competitive grant application, the minimum threshold score for funding is a 36 out of 80 points, and priority points will be given for both the inclusion of as well as the strength of the responses to the following:

- The complexity of the need
- Implementing in multiple schools (no negative impact for non-supervisory union/supervisory district applicants such as approved independent schools)
- The implementation plan as described in the application:
 - Providing training to all staff,
 - Integrating RA into classroom instruction,
 - Monitoring staff fidelity using implementation science tools,
 - Examining student-level behavior and academic data,
 - Creating a sustainability plan,
 - Providing AOE documentation/evidence of what was accomplished by the end of the grant period.

Scoring of the grant applications is intended to clarify strengths and weaknesses of proposals relative to one another and to provide guidance to decision-makers.

For both grant applications and the bids received through the RFP, one or more knowledgeable individuals from the Agency of Education will take part in a scoring committee. Evaluation will be based upon the bidder's responses to the sections outlined in either the grant application or the standard bid RFP.

For the RFP, scores are determined by the strength of the bidder's proposal to support multiple school sites' adopting and implementing whole-school RA as part of the universal system of social-emotional/behavioral practices, specifically:

- Experience organizing and facilitating collaborative research-practice partnerships.
- Knowledge of the common principles and practices involved in using whole-school RA, as well as social-emotional learning, in educational settings.

- Knowledge of Vermont’s educational context and recent findings regarding restorative practices.
- Experience with the systemic features that are needed to implement whole-school RA at the school level.
- Experience using improvement science principles to implement school-level initiatives.
- Ability to support multiple school sites’ adopting and implementing whole-school RA as part of the universal system of social-emotional/behavioral practices.
- Ensuring projects remain on track for proposed period.

Priority points are awarded to the lowest bid received.