

# Vermont School Improvement Grant Application

Spring, 2010

Supervisory Union/ District Name: Addison Northwest Supervisory Union

Contact Person: Sanford Bassett

Role: Principal, Vergennes Union Elementary School

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This grant application must be submitted with:

- Statement of Agreement signed by superintendent
- School Improvement plans for each Tiered school included in the grant
- Budget
- All relevant attachments Tier I and II: (B, D2, E) Tier III (B, E)

Superintendent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## LEA APPLICATION

**DIRECTIONS:** PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS APPLICATION MUST INCLUDE INFORMATION AND RESPONSES FOR ALL TIERED SCHOOLS IN YOUR SU OR DISTRICT. FOR SOME DISTRICTS YOU MAY HAVE MULTIPLE ENTRIES IN THE TIER III SECTIONS. FOR SUPERVISORY UNIONS /DISTRICTS WITH ONLY TIER III SCHOOLS, GO TO THE APPROPRIATE PORTION OF SECTION B INDICATED BY THE ARROW.



In Vermont, for the purposes of the School Improvement Grant, when we refer to the LEA, we are referring to the Supervisory Union/District.

**A. SCHOOLS TO BE SERVED: An LEA must include the following information with respect to the schools it will serve with a School Improvement Grant.**

An LEA must identify each Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III school the LEA commits to serve and identify the model that the LEA will use in each Tier I and Tier II school.

SCHOOL NAME	NCES ID #	TIER I	TIER II	TIER III	INTERVENTION (TIER I AND II ONLY)			
					turnaround	restart	closure	transformation
<b>Vergennes Union Elem. School</b>	00349	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Note: An LEA that has nine or more Tier I and Tier II schools

may not implement the transformation model in more than 50 percent of those schools.

**B. DESCRIPTIVE INFORMATION: An LEA must include the following information in its application for a School Improvement Grant.**

**REQUIREMENT 1**

**(1)** For each Tier I and Tier II school that the LEA commits to serve, the LEA must demonstrate that—

- The LEA has analyzed the needs of each school and selected an intervention for each school; and
- The LEA has the capacity to use school improvement funds to provide adequate resources and related support to each Tier I and Tier II school identified in the LEA’s application in order to implement, fully and effectively, the required activities of the school intervention model it has selected.

**TO MEET REQUIREMENT (1) ABOVE:**

**Analyze the needs of each Tier I, Tier II and Tier III school identified in the application and selected an intervention model (Tier I and Tier II) or activities (Tier III) for each school.**

**The Vermont Department of Education will evaluate the LEA’s needs assessment application based on the following criteria:**

**Tier I and Tier II ONLY**

**1) School Assets and Data Analysis:**

- a) Overview and assessment of school and community assets as well as needs

*Directions: Attach self- assessment (Attachment B). Include summary of findings here:*

NA

- b) Input from staff, public/private partnerships, parents and other community members

- i) For high schools this includes input from regional career center, postsecondary, non-profit and business partners and assessment of alternate pathways to graduation in the region.

*Directions: Include evidence of input here:*

NA

- c) Inclusion of analysis of recent and longitudinal New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP) results and other relevant common local assessment system data for all students and for subgroups (demographic categories as well as any subgroup of students relevant to school needs including at minimum, students with disabilities, students eligible for free and reduced lunch, and English language learners)

*Directions: Summarize conclusions from your analysis of data here:*

NA

- d) Inclusion of the following data and **summarization of conclusions** reached after assessing the data:
- i. Graduation rates,
  - ii. Drop-out rates,
  - iii. Discipline referrals,
  - iv. School action plan priorities,
  - v. Highly qualified teacher data,
  - vi. Child count by disability category
  - vii. Percent of students with disabilities in the general education classroom more than 80% of the time
  - viii. Number of out of district placements
  - ix. Number of students in “alternative” day placements
  - x. Number of ELL students
  - xi. Number of students eligible for free and reduced lunch
  - xii. Most recent Youth Risk Behavior Survey

**NOTE: The data above for each Tiered school will be sent to you electronically.**

*Directions: Please include a summary of conclusions about the data above and any other relevant data here:*

NA

- e) Inclusion of a guided self assessment, conducted by the Supervisory Union/District (SU) School Support team (this team must include the superintendent, principal of the school(s), curriculum coordinator and special education coordinator), on *Major Factors for Rapid Change in School Improvement* (See Attachment B – *Major Factors for Rapid Change Self Assessment Tool*, and Attachment C – *A Theory of Action*, Richardson, 2009) and agreement to participate in a comprehensive assessment conducted by an external evaluator of the VT DOE’s choosing to inform school improvement implementation plan development and VTDOE school improvement support team service plan development. If such an assessment has already been conducted, the School Improvement Support Team will assess the scope of that assessment to determine if additional evaluation is warranted.

*Directions: Attach self assessment Attachment B signed by the Superintendent and any accompanying narrative. Please note we have included a rubric you may choose to use to inform your responses on the self-assessment.*

NA

- f) If a school has an existing school improvement plan and/or plan for restructuring under the Vermont State Accountability System and the related Commissioner’s Required Actions, the School Improvement Support Team will review this plan with the SU School Support Team to assist them in incorporating new requirements under SIG and any information generated by the guided self-assessment. The initial school improvement plan is provided with the application and includes at minimum:

- Plan is attached
- i)  Establishment of self-defined annual achievement goals tied to state accountability measures and achievement for all students and relevant student subgroups.

- ii)  Those strategies defined as required actions through the state accountability system.
- iii)  Those strategies defined through the selection of one of the required models.
- iv)  Other strategies designed to assist in achieving school improvement targets.
- v)  A budget and timeline for implementing the plan.

**Tier I and II Schools Only - Selection of an Intervention Model**

- 1) **Demonstrated consideration of all four intervention models (see Attachment D1 - *Description of the Intervention Models*) using the LEA Tier I and Tier II School Model Selection Assessment Tool (Attachment D2) to justify the selected intervention linked to analysis of assessment and other relevant data.**

Based on the needs/self assessment and analysis of data, identify an intervention model (using Attachment D1) for each Tier I and Tier II school the LEA elects to serve. The justification for the selection of a specific model must be described in a narrative in the Model Selection Tool provided in Attachment D2.

**Questions the LEA should consider in the selection of an intervention model are included in the Model Selection Tool (See Attachment D2) – LEA Tier I and Tier II School Model Selection Assessment Tool).**

*Directions: Complete page 1 of Attachment D2 and attach. Indicate the Intervention Model selected below:*

NA

**Four School Improvement Models approved for Tier I and Tier II schools:**

**Turnaround Model:** Replace the principal and rehire no more than 50% of the staff and grant the new principal sufficient operating flexibility (including staffing, calendars/time and budgeting) to implement fully a comprehensive approach to substantially improve student outcomes.

**Restart Model:** Convert a school or close and reopen it under a charter school operator, a charter management organization, or an education management organization that has been selected through a rigorous review process.

**School Closure:** Close a school and enroll the students who attended that school in other schools in the LEA that are higher achieving.

**Transformation Model:** Implement each of the following strategies: (1) replace the principal and take steps to increase teacher and school leader effectiveness; (2) institute comprehensive instructional reforms; (3) increase learning time and create Community-oriented schools; and (4) provide operational flexibility and sustained support

(Section I.B.1 of 1003(g) allows an SEA to award SIG funds to an LEA for a Tier I or Tier II schools that has implemented in whole or in part, one of the models within the last two years so that the LEA and school can continue or complete the intervention being implemented. For example, if a Tier I or Tier II school has replaced its principal within the last two years, the SEA may award funds to the school's LEA to implement a turnaround model in the school even though the school will not be required to hire another new principal. A school that receives SIG funds in accordance with this flexibility must fully implement the selected model as required by the final requirements. In other words, if the school had been implementing the model only in part, it must use the funds it receives to expand its implementation so that it fully complies with the regulatory requirements. Addendum: the two years referenced with respect to this flexibility are the two years prior to the full implementation of the model in accordance with the notice using SIG funds for which and LEA has complete achievement data. In other words, with respect to the award of FY2009 funds for implementation in the 2010-2011 school year, the "last two years" are the 2007-2008 and 2008-2009 school years.) – USED Guidance document March 24, 2010.

#### **REQUIREMENT 1 (Continued)**

**2) The LEA has demonstrated that it has the capacity to use school improvement funds to provide adequate resources and related support to each Tier I, Tier II and Tier III school identified in the LEA's application in order to implement fully and effectively the selected intervention in each of those schools.**

#### **Tier I and Tier II ONLY**

**1) Vermont Department of Education will evaluate the LEA's capacity to implement fully and effectively the selected intervention using the following criteria:**

- a. Evidence of actions that the LEA/school has already taken related to the required elements of the chosen intervention.
  - i. Evidence should include documentation of progress toward existing school improvement plan strategies that are substantially aligned with required elements of the chosen intervention (e.g., The LEA indicates they have already developed and implemented a consistent annual evaluation system for teachers that is informed by student growth and outcomes (both individual and in the aggregate) in this case the LEA would be required to provide the reviewers the documentation that outlines that system and the progress they have made toward implementation.)

*Directions: Describe here the steps already taken related to the chosen intervention. Please note that any required elements not reflected here must be addressed in the improvement plan*

**NA**

- b. Evidence of actions that the LEA has already taken related to Commissioner's Required Actions under the state accountability system of AYP.
  - i. An end of year report documenting progress on implementing Commissioner's Required actions will be submitted with this application.

*Directions: Insert end of year report here:*

NA

- c. Provide a narrative description of current conditions (including barriers) related to the following:

**Directions:** For each item (i through x) describe current conditions, including any barriers and how they will be addressed over the funding period.

- i. Board support (e.g., minutes and/or board actions that indicate board support for the application and willingness to direct the school in implementing the forthcoming plan as defined.)

NA

- ii. Union support (e.g., documentation of local union willingness to include revised evaluation systems in upcoming contracts, or amend existing contracts to include these changes.)

NA

- iii. Financial capacity beyond SIG/sustainability (e.g., inclusion in budget of matching funds including use of other funding sources to support implementation efforts and sustain practices beyond the life of the grant)

NA

- iv. Current evaluation practices (e.g., outline of current evaluation system for principals and teachers, including model, frequency of evaluation, etc.)

NA

- v. Staff capacity/talent (e.g., description of staff experience level, special expertise, highlighting positions/individuals who will be actively engaged in implementing the school improvement plan and working closely with the state School Improvement Support team.)

NA

- vi. Statewide and regional partnerships (e.g., agreements with ESAs, local agencies, and/or institutes of higher ed.)

NA

- vii. Allocation of adequate time for teacher collaboration, job embedded professional development (i.e., as described in the LEA's application)

NA

- viii. Data systems that inform on-going assessment of student progress and instructional practices (e.g., describing current use of systems like Aimsweb, Dibels, SWIS, etc.)

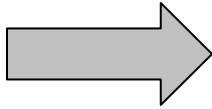
NA

- ix. Parent and community partner support (i.e., support and engagement of local parent organizations, businesses, agencies and associations in school decision-making and activities.)  
NA
- x. The sufficiency of the budget to implement the selected intervention fully and effectively in each Tier I and Tier II school identified in the LEA's application as well as to support school improvement activities in Tier III schools throughout the period of availability of those funds (taking into account any waiver extending that period received by either the SEA or the LEA). (i.e., reviewers will look to see if the budget includes staffing, consulting, contracts with partners, materials, substitute costs or stipends, costs for transitioning to new or expanded schedules sufficient to sustain improvement activities described during the period of the grant and matching or other funding sources to sustain strategies beyond the life of the grant.)  
NA

2) **The school will conduct a guided self-assessment of each school using the rubric provided (See Attachment E) to determine capacity and readiness for implementing the school improvement plan.**

*Directions: Attachment E to be completed by school staff. A compilation of the data on Attachment E with the Superintendent's signature should be attached and a summary of findings included here:*

NA



***For Supervisory Unions/Districts with ONLY Tier III schools, begin Section B here.***

For Supervisory Unions/District with Tier I or Tier II AND Tier III schools, enter information about Tier III schools here.

For all **Tier III schools**, the Vermont Department of Education (VTDOE) will evaluate the LEA's needs assessment application based on the following criteria:

**1) School Assets and Data Analysis:**

- a) Overview and assessment of school and community assets as well as needs

*Directions: Attach self- assessment (in Attachment B). Include summary of findings here:*

All identified members of the Addison Northwest Supervisory Union Support Team members have completed the "Initial Self Assessment of Major Factors for Rapid Change in School Improvement" survey (Attachment B). Overall analysis of the results indicate that the support team has confidence that there is "strong" evidence of the maner in which the principal has communicated the urgency for systemic reform, an understanding by the staff of the continuous improvement system being implemented, alignment of curriculum with state standards, and the availability of common planning time for data analysis and curriculum planning. In addition, the support team, on average, feels "strongly" that the data team in place is effective, professional development is focused on areas in need of improvement, the teacher evaluation system will assist in identifying teachers in need of additional training, and additional intervention opportunities occuring before and after school and during the summer are both available and effective. There is "emerging" evidence that all grade level teams are giving formative assessments on a regular basis, collecting those data, and reviewing it in team meetings and that the special education and student support system emphasizes regular class instruction. One member of the District Level Support Team identified indicator #15 (community and business support or partnerships) as an item where there is "no evidence ". As further information is shared with the public, this evidence should start to mount. Using a "3" for "Strong", a "2" for "Emerging", and a "1" for "No Evidence", the indicators with the average scores received are as follows: 1- 3.00 2- 2.50 3- 2.92 4- 2.83 5- 2.00 6- 2.92 7- 2.67 8- 2.50 9- 2.50 10- 2.08 11- 2.75 12- 3.00 13- NA 14- 2.75 15- 2.00. The three areas in need of attention, according to the surveys, are assuring that common formative assessments are given, tracked, and reviewed (#5), placing greater emphasis on regular education instruction and accountability for special education and other student supports (#10), and building stronger community/business support and partnerships (#15).

- b) Input from staff, public/private partnerships, parents and other community members
  - i) For high schools this includes input from regional career center, postsecondary, non-profit and business partners and assessment of alternate pathways to graduation in the region.

*Directions: Include evidence of input here:*

**The school staff at VUES, headed by the principal, have facilitated three recent activities in order to share results of recent initiatives and to gather input from staff, public/private partnerships, parents, and other community members on those initiatives in place and proposed for VUES. Recent NECAP and other accountability information was shared with the public through these activities. On May 17<sup>th</sup>, 2010, the school held a "School Report Night". At that event, the principal shared information on the most recent initiatives in place at VUES and accountability information and feedback was received from parents and members of the community. The attendees at this event had an opportunity to look at the most recent disaggregated NECAP scores and the trend lines that have been created based on NECAP scores for the past 5 years in math and literacy. In addition, input was gathered on possible goals to include in the next School Improvement Plan. Additionally, on May 20<sup>th</sup>, the principal had an opportunity to share much of what has been accomplished in the past year at VUES with the School Board as a part of a school improvement presentation. The principal shared the implementation of the RtI process, the work of data analysis teams as they analyze data collected through formative assessment and progress monitoring, and the initial forays into the Positive Behavior Supports process through the Vermont BEST Institute. The public was again invited to this School Board meeting and had an opportunity to gather information on the current initiatives in place, examine those initiatives and strategies proposed for the next 3 years, and provide their input to key district administrators. Finally, all of the information collected and shared at these two public gatherings is being added to the VUES website for easy access to the public.**

- c) Inclusion of analysis of recent and longitudinal New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP) results and other relevant common local assessment system data for all students and for subgroups (demographic categories as well as any subgroup of students relevant to school needs including at minimum, students with disabilities, students eligible for free and reduced lunch, and English language learners)

*Directions: Summarize conclusions from your analysis of data here:*

**A look at both longitudinal NECAP results show a trendline that demonstrates continued growth both for students who are not in the "Free and Reduced Lunch" (FRL) category and for the FRL disaggregated group. For the 2010 school year, 180 students were tested in reading and, as a school, the average index scores earned both the entire school and the "white" subgroup of the school the designation of making "adequate yearly progress". The "FRL" subgroup, however, missed earning AYP status in reading by one point as the Lower Confidence Boundry score for reading of 406 was one point higher than the 405 score achieved by this subgroup. None of the rest of the subgroups were large enough to determine proficiency as there were far fewer than the 40 students needed to make AYP decisions. In math, the same number of students participated in the assessment (180) and the school met the criteria for earning AYP status as a whole school group, in the "white" disaggregated group, and with the "FRL" group as well.**

Over time, the overall school population and the Free and Reduced Lunch subgroup have demonstrated consistent growth. The percentage of students, overall, at VUES identified as either "proficient with distinction" or "proficient" has increased steadily along with the state average. In the 2007 school year, VUES had 70% of students in reading and 61% of students in math identified as either "proficient with distinction" or "proficient". This was compared to the state average of 70% and 63% respectively. The following year, VUES scored identified as either "proficient with distinction" or "proficient" at 66% for reading and 60% for math, compared to the state averages of 71% and 66% respectively. This past year, VUES had 72% of the students who took the NECAP assessment score either "proficient with distinction" or "proficient" in reading and 68% in math. This was the first time that the school had been either at or above the state average in both categories. Reading index scores for the whole school have improved from 403 in 2006 to the current 439 in 2010 while the overall math index scores have increased from 393 in 2006 to 435 for the 2010 school year. The students who have been identified as low socio-economic at VUES have moved from an average score in Reading of 360 in 2006 to the current score of 405 and in Math from a score of 351 in 2006 to the current score of 407. Looking at the percentage of students in the Free and Reduced Lunch category who have scored proficient since 2005, there has been an increase from 32% to 58% in reading proficiency and from 34% to 52% in math proficiency. Given the gains seen in both reading and math, the staff at VUES feel that the work that they have put into meeting the needs of this particular subgroup of students has been validated, however, the staff also realizes that a gap continues to exist between the overall school population and the students identified as low SES. The 2010 index scores for reading in the low SES subgroup are at 405 compared to the 439 of their peers who are not low SES while the 407 index score for math, although a significant improvement from the 371 last year, is still 28 points lower than the 435 score of peers who are not low SES. Therefore, the proposed activities in this grant (a deeper evaluation of the RtI model, a book study on addressing poverty, a more concentrated emphasis on the fidelity of implementation of the initiatives currently in place, and the implementation of the "Cognitive Coaching" model) are warranted as appropriate interventions given the analysis of available data on student outcomes.

- d) Inclusion of the following data and **summarization of conclusions** reached after assessing the data:
- i. Graduation rates,
  - ii. Drop-out rates,
  - iii. Discipline referrals,
  - iv. School action plan priorities,
  - v. Highly qualified teacher data,
  - vi. Child count by disability category
  - vii. Percent of students with disabilities in the general education classroom more than 80% of the time
  - viii. Number of out of district placements
  - ix. Number of students in "alternative" day placements
  - x. Number of ELL students
  - xi. Number of students eligible for free and reduced lunch

xii. Most recent Youth Risk Behavior Survey

*Directions: Please include a summary of conclusions about the data above and any other relevant data here:*

**Graduation Rates-** Information is not applicable at the elementary school level; the 2008-09 data from the high school identifies this percentage at 86.9% while the graduation rate for the 2007-2008 school year was 93.1%.

**Drop-out Rates** - Information is not applicable at the elementary school level; the drop out rate at Vergennes Union High School was 1.2% in the 2008-2009 school year and 2.6% in the 2007-2008 school year.

**Discipline Referrals-** Overall discipline referrals have been reported at 76 (with another 5 weeks of school remaining) for the 2009-2010 school year compared to 113 in the 2008-2009 school year and 104 in the 2007-2008 school year. Of those 76 referrals, 2 students were responsible for 28% of those referrals (21). Given that 91% of those referrals were for aggressive behaviors (25), inability to follow directions (31), and disturbing class (14), the initial groundwork already in place to implement the Positive Behavior Supports model (staff participation is planned for the upcoming Summer BEST Institute) should act to reduce this number significantly.

**School Action Plan Priorities-** based on the Robert Marzano survey completed recently by the staff at VUES and on input from literacy and math coaches working with students at VUES, the following items were identified for inclusion in the action plan to be written in the upcoming summer for the upcoming 2010-2011 school year (this list also serves as the school's LEA plan for improvement under the requirements of Section 1116 of Title I):

1. Students will be involved in simulation games and activities that are inherently engaging.
2. Staff at VUES will systematically recognize students who are making observable progress toward learning goals.
3. Staff at VUES will systematically ask students to keep track of their own performance on their learning goals.
4. Teachers at VUES will begin instructional units by asking students to identify personal learning goals that fit within the learning goals presented by the teachers.
5. Students will be provided with opportunities to construct and work on long-term projects of their own design.
6. Students will be provided training regarding the dynamics of motivation and how those dynamics affect them.
  
7. School personnel will consistency check for fidelity of implementation of curriculum adopted by VUES.
8. Training and support will be provided to parents to enhance their communication with their children.
9. Training and support will be provided to parents to enhance their supervision of their children.
10. School personnel will strengthen literacy achievement of the lower SES students, understand impact of poverty; hold school-wide faculty and staff book study groups, provide professional development and coaching in the use of formative assessment techniques, including self assessment, move into phase 2 of Response to Intervention, emphasizing Tier 1 differentiation, and provide more options for Tier 2 supports, including before and after school tutoring or small groups and summer school.
11. School staff will ensure vertical alignment of literacy curriculum so all students have access to a guaranteed, viable curriculum aligned with the Vermont GEs; continue the use of monthly Bridging Project professional development for development of units; provide release time for teachers to more closely examine specific units of study and to visit others' classes to observe lessons

12. School staff will promote the continuous use of assessment data to inform and differentiate instruction; develop a calendar of common assessments that teams will look at on a quarterly basis; provide release time for teachers to look at "common" student assessment results or student work, set "smart goals" and decide on specific instructional strategies to implement

13. All school staff will provide all students with the skills and applied knowledge they need to meet the standards in Mathematics with a focus on those students who are identified as low SES. This will happen through the following initiatives:

- Data Teams will meet regularly to monitor the progress of identified students
- Focused interventions for up to 90 minutes per week – before, during and after school sessions
- Ongoing Professional Development for teachers and para-educators in Mathematics
- School Year 2010-2011 pilot of Grade 5, Bridges in Mathematics
- Develop Local Assessments/Profile Assessments as part of the Progress Monitoring System
- Develop a Title One resource for/of Mathematics instruction
- Expand standardized assessment options beyond the S.N.A.P., ie., Primary Number Observation Assessment (PNOA)

Highly Qualified Teacher data- currently, only one teacher at VUES has been categorized as not being highly qualified, although that "teacher" is no longer in the classroom but acting, instead, as a school consultant. In addition, all paraprofessionals now meet highly qualified expectations as per No Child Left Behind.

Child Count by Disability Category- The numbers reported in this category are fairly consistent across three successive reporting years for most of the categories although it should be noted that the overall numbers of students in specific disability categories is extremely low; oftentimes either 1 or 2. The child count numbers stayed basically the same (within 3 students) for all sub-categories. There were slight decreases in students with developmental delays, specific learning disabilities, speech/language impairments, vision impairment, and other health impaired, no change in students with learning impairments, orthopedic impairments, and traumatic brain injured although each of those categories had either 0 or 1 student. Finally, there was a slight increase in the number of students identified with autism spectrum disorder and emotional disturbance. The increase in students identified as autistic, however, has impacted the kinds of services that need to be in place and have, therefore, impacted the percentage of students who spend more than 80% of their school day in the general education classroom as their needs are often significant and isolated instruction often needs to occur as per the IEPs developed for each child.

#### **Percentage of Students with Disabilities in General Education More Than 85%**

Throughout the past school year, 86.7% of the students with disabilities at VUES spent more than 80% of their school day in the general education classroom with their age-appropriate peers. This percentage is lower by a few percentage points than the 2008-2009 school year (89.2%) and even lower than the 97.2% reported in 2007-2008 school year. School personnel are confident that the implementation of many of the initiatives proposed for the school, including follow-up on the fidelity of implementation of differentiated instruction, a better understanding of supporting students from poverty through a proposed year-long book/document study ("Teaching with Poverty in Mind"; Jensen and the "Roots of Success" research headed by

Susan Hayes from the Vermont Department of Education), and the implementation of the Positive Behavior Supports initiative will lead to a significant positive change in these numbers.

There is only 1 student at VUES this year who is in an out-of-district placement, no students in alternative day placements, and 2 students identified as ELL. Currently, VUES has identified 122 students eligible for free or reduced lunch, an increase of 10 students from the 2009-2010 school year and a 33 student increase from the 2008-2009 school year. Given what has been learned from studies on the impact of poverty on school achievement, the dramatic increase in these numbers gives one significant pause and presents increased challenges in instruction for the teachers at VUES and, again, validates the choices for continued intervention at the school.

**Most Recent Youth Risk Behavior Survey** The most recent student survey was completed in 2009 and 82 students from Vergennes Union High School participated. The survey specifically looked at issues related to fighting, weapons, bullying, personal safety (safety belts, bicycle helmets), vehicle safety, and suicide. Fighting was primarily a male gender issue although the female population was still represented. All incidents of bullying between 2007 and 2009 decreased across all grade levels (8-12). Many more students identified the “always” category for wearing a bicycle helmet in 2009 compared to 2007 and 58% of the respondents stated that they “always” wear safety belts when in a vehicle while 7% less students injured in a car crash were not wearing a safety belt. One concerning statistic identified 18% of seniors who, during the past 30 days, reported having driven a vehicle when they had been drinking in 2009, an increase of 2% from the previous assessment (2007). However, a decrease was seen in all grade levels across both genders on the percent of students who reported as having ridden in a car driven by someone who was drinking. Decreases or constant status was also noted in students who felt sad, hopeless, purposely hurt themselves, made a plan for suicide, or attempted suicide. Females made up between 60 and 75% of these student numbers in all but suicide attempts and suicide attempts requiring medical treatment. Although there was a slight increase in the percentage of 9th and 10th grade students consuming at least one drink during a 30 day period, the overall numbers for the district were reduced in gender and in the overall population, with 28% reporting as having had a drink in 2009 and 34% reporting as having had a drink in 2007. Decreases were also reported in the percentage of students who smoked from 2007 to 2009. However, an increase in the percent of students who have tried marijuana was seen from 38% of 12th graders in 2007 to 52% in 2009. Finally, less than 26% of students in grades 8-12 reported participating in at least 60 minutes of physical activity every day (per the US Department of Health and Human Services guidelines).

- e) Inclusion of a guided self assessment, conducted by the SU School Support team and for each school, on *Major Factors for Rapid Change in School Improvement* (See Attachment B – *Major Factors for Rapid Change Self Assessment Tool*, and Attachment C – *A Theory of Action*, Richardson, 2009). For schools that have been in Corrective Action under the state accountability system for 4 years or more, this includes an agreement to participate in an assessment conducted by an external evaluator of the VT DOE’s choosing. If such an assessment has already been conducted, the School Improvement Support team will assess the scope of that assessment to determine if additional evaluation is warranted.

**Directions:** Attach self-assessment (Attachment B) signed by the Superintendent and include any accompanying narrative here. Please note we have included a rubric you may choose to use to inform your responses on the self-assessment.

- f) If a school has an existing school improvement plan and/or plan for restructuring under the Vermont State Accountability System and the related Commissioner's Required Actions, the School Improvement Support team will review this plan with the SU School Support team and school leadership team to assist them in incorporating any new strategies established by this application, into their plan.

**This item is addressed in h) ii) below.**

- g) The application reflects consideration of the required and permissible elements as outlined in the Transformation model and addresses which of those strategies it is committed to pursuing with these funds.

**Directions:** Indicate the required and permissible activities considered:

*Vergennes Union Elementary School will consider Strategy 2 of the Transformational Model. The following is a listing of the required activities and permissible activities followed by commentary on each as to how Vergennes Union Elementary School plans to address those activities moving forward through the use of this school improvement grant.*

*(2)Comprehensive instructional reform strategies*

*Required activities – The LEA must -(A)Use data to identify and implement and instructional program that is research-based and “vertically aligned” from one grade to the next as well as aligned with the State academic standards*

*Monthly data analysis meetings occurred throughout the 2009-2010 school year in which data collected were used not only to determine the extent to which students were responding to various instructional strategies and interventions but to determine the overall effectiveness of the instructional programs being implemented. Analysis of the instructional programs moving forward will occur utilizing strategies found on the What Works Clearinghouse, a central and trusted source of scientific evidence for what works in education (<http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/>). Teachers in the RtI data analysis teams are always cognizant of the importance of revisiting the Vermont Framework of Standards and Learning Opportunities as they work to improve student learning. The standards will be used to provide the structure from which standards-based classroom curriculum will be developed, organized, implemented, and assessed and to assure that the grade level expectations in math, reading and writing required for state assessment are effectively addressed.*

*The district-level staff at ANSU has committed to utilize data to:*

- 1. identify schools in need of additional resources (personnel, materials, instructional techniques)*
- 2. compare student outcomes across grade levels where resources are the same and different*
- 3. enhance professional development opportunities targeting student outcomes and student needs*

*The following strategies will be implemented by staff of the VUES as a component of in-class instruction, administrative capacity, and monthly data analysis meetings:*

*1. Make data part of an ongoing cycle of instructional improvement- Teachers at VUES will continue to utilize a systematic process for using data in order to bring evidence to bear on their instructional decisions and improve their ability to meet students' learning needs. The process of using data to improve instruction at VUES includes the collecting and preparing of data about student learning from a variety of relevant sources, including annual, interim, and classroom assessment data. After preparing data for examination, teachers will interpret the data and develop hypotheses about factors contributing to students' performance and the specific actions they can take to meet students' needs. Teachers then will test these hypotheses by implementing changes to their instructional practice. Finally, they will restart this cycle by collecting and interpreting new student performance data to evaluate their own instructional changes.*

*2. Examine data and set learning goals-VUES teachers will provide students with explicit instruction on using achievement data regularly to monitor their own performance and establish their own goals for learning. This data analysis process can motivate VUES students by mapping out accomplishments that are attainable, revealing actual achievement gains and providing students with a sense of control over their own outcomes. Teachers will then use these goals to better understand factors that may motivate student performance and adjust their instructional practices accordingly. Students are best prepared to learn from their own achievement data when they understand the learning objectives and when they receive data in a user-friendly format. Tools such as rubrics will continue to provide VUES students with a clear sense of learning objectives, and data presented in an accessible and descriptive format will illuminate students' strengths and weaknesses.*

*3. Establish a clear vision for schoolwide data use- VUES will establish a strong culture of data use to ensure that data-based decisions are made frequently, consistently, and appropriately. This data culture will emphasize collaboration across and within grade levels and subject area to diagnose problems and refine educational practices. VUES will consider such things as planning, leadership, implementation, and attitude and their affect on the success they will have with developing and maintaining a data culture. A clear plan for schoolwide data use will be essential to developing such a culture. VUES will continue to utilize a representative data team to help ensure that data activities are shaped by the teachers. This team will continue to develop a written data-use plan that is consistent with broader school and district goals, supports a common language related to data use and teaching and learning concepts, and establishes data use as one of the key responsibilities of an education professional.*

*4. Provide supports that foster a data-driven culture within the school- Both VUES and the ANSU will make changes within the system that encourage data use. These changes will ensure that teachers, the principal, and school and district staff have a thorough understanding of their roles in using data, and that they possess the knowledge and skills to use data appropriately. ANSU will invest in leadership, professional development, and support the use of structured time for collaboration through funds generated from this grant.*

*B) Promote the continuous use of student data (such as formative, interim, and summative assessments to inform and differentiate instruction in order to meet the academic needs of individual students.*

*VUES teachers will continue to utilize scheduled data meetings to analyze data collected and to inform practice in the classroom. During the past year, each VUES teacher collected student achievement data through ongoing progress monitoring and each month dedicated time after school to analyze the data to determine the extent to which each student was responding to the interventions occurring in the classrooms. The crucial issue for this screening assessment is predictive validity – determining which children are likely to experience difficulty. In thier*

*classrooms, teachers at VUES will continue to utilize screening assessment to assist them in predicting the children who are likely to experience difficulty, to identify those students who need additional instruction, and to help form groups for differentiated instruction. Additionally, the ongoing progress monitoring done in each classroom at VUES will keep the teachers informed about the progress of every student, determine if each student is making adequate progress toward grade level ability, and ensure that students in intensive interventions are on target to meet established goals. Children respond differently to instruction, even if it is research based and delivered systematically and explicitly. Progress monitoring will continue to assist VUES teachers to identify when students begin to get off track so that they can adjust instruction or provide additional instructional intervention to keep them on track toward expected grade level outcomes.*

*Permissible Activities - An LEA may also implement comprehensive instructional reform strategies, such as -  
(A) Conducting periodic reviews to ensure that the curriculum is being implemented with fidelity, is having the intended impact on student achievement, and is modified if ineffective.*

*These periodic reviews will occur during both the data analysis meetings that are an integral part of the ongoing intervention plan at VUES and through the strategies identified in the "fidelity of implementation" section of this grant application. Because the data teams meet regularly, the teachers have the opportunity to examine the outcome data at each grade level to determine whether the curriculum is being implemented with fidelity, is having the intended impact on student achievement, and is adjusted if ineffective.*

*(B) Implementing a school wide "response to intervention" model;*

*VUES has spent the past year implementing a Response to Intervention model that has specifically addressed literacy and math. In addition, initial training has occurred through the Vermont Department of Education and the BEST initiative that will culminate in the implementation of the Positive Behavior Supports model across the school campus. A team of educators from VUES has been identified to attend the BEST Summer Institute as the next step in the process to add a behavior management data analysis team to the existing literacy and math intervention teams already in place.*

*The Response to Intervention model in place is three-tiered and is monitored by the principal, a math and reading consultant, and Dr. Ric Reardon from Castleton State College, who was involved initially in training the principal in the use of the model, in training the VUES staff in the process, and in making monthly site visits to the school to consult with data analysis teams as they examined and analyzed data collected through screenings and progress monitoring.*

*(C) Providing additional supports and professional development to teachers and principals in order to implement effective strategies to support students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment and to ensure that limited English proficient students acquire language skills to master academic content;*

*Additional trainings and workshops are in the planning stages for teachers, paraprofessionals, and the principal in order to implement effective strategies to support students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment and to ensure that limited English proficient students acquire language skills to master academic content. Dr. Ric Reardon has a vast amount of experience in all of these areas as he served for 9 years as a District Inclusion Coordinator in a school district that included 21 schools and 17,000 students, with over 3,000 students identified as having a disability. In that capacity, he monitored each school to assure that the staff were utilizing best practices to provide the supports and services needed for students who were identified as at-risk within the least restrictive environment. That monitoring*

often led to the provision of technical assistance in areas such as accommodations (for students with mild disabilities), modified outcomes (for students with more significant disabilities), differentiated instruction, co-teaching, and other strategies that assure that the playing field was leveled for those students who are at-risk, assuring that they had access to the curriculum and standards being addressed in regular classrooms across the district. Training and technical assistance in these areas is planned for VUES as well throughout the next three years of the grant cycle.

(D) Using and integrating technology-based supports and interventions as part of the instructional program – NCLB requires states to demonstrate that "every student is technologically literate by the time the student finishes the eighth grade, regardless of the student's race, ethnicity, gender, family income, geographic location, or disability" (U.S. Department of Education, 2001). Staff at VUES believe that students can learn "from" computers—where technology is used essentially as tutors and serves to increase students basic skills and knowledge; and students can learn "with" computers—where technology is used as a tool that can be applied to a variety of goals in the learning process and can serve as a resource to help develop higher order thinking, creativity and research skills. The effectiveness of educational technology on student learning depends not only on what outcomes are targeted and how the technology is integrated into instruction, but also on how teachers assess student performance in classrooms and adjust instruction accordingly. Technology offers teachers a broad range of tools to collect and analyze data, and richer sets of student data to guide instructional decisions. VUES plans to continue offering opportunities for its students to interact with computer technology, both in the classrooms and in the technology lab. The school's technology teacher has a background in special education and has demonstrated the capacity to adjust and accommodate both instruction and assessment within the technological environment to assure that all students have access to technology and instruction leading to improved performance in the basic skill areas. Some of the supports being considered include word prediction software, cognitive organizers, interactive learning environments, effective reading software, and continued internet access.

h) The initial school improvement plan is provided with the application and includes at minimum:

- Plan is attached
- i)  Establishment of self-defined annual achievement goals tied to state accountability measures and achievement for all students and relevant student subgroups.
- ii)  Those strategies defined as required actions through the state accountability system.
- iii)  One of the required elements of the SIG Transformation Model (See Attachment F – SIG Transformation Model Required and Permissible Strategies) as it related to the data analysis and school improvement plan.

**Directions:** Indicate which required element of the Transformation Model is included in the Improvement plan

*The school has chosen #2 of the Transformation Model where comprehensive instructional reform strategies will be implemented. The school will "Use data to identify and implement and instructional program that is research-based" and "vertically aligned" from one grade to the next as well as aligned with the State academic standards" and "promote the continuous use of student data to inform and differentiate instruction in order to meet the academic needs of individual students (see specifics above)*

- iv)  Other strategies designed to assist in achieving school improvement targets.

## REQUIREMENT 1 (Continued)

2) The LEA has demonstrated that it has the capacity to use school improvement funds to provide adequate resources and related support to each **Tier I, Tier II and Tier III** school identified in the LEA's application in order to implement fully and effectively the selected intervention in each of those schools.

*Direction:* Review your budget and school improvement plan(s) to assure adequate resources have been allocated to effectively implement each plan.

### **Tier III Only**

3) The school will conduct a guided self-assessment of each school using the rubric provided (See Attachment E) to determine capacity and readiness for implementing the school improvement plan.

*Directions:* Attachment E to be completed by school staff. A compilation of the data on Attachment E with the Superintendent's signature should be attached and a summary of findings included here:

A total of 41 surveys (Attachment E) were completed by the teachers and support staff (including paraprofessionals) at VUES and the results were both encouraging and informative. The staff members did not identify themselves by name but noted their job title when completing the survey. In examining the 41 surveys, a vast majority of the teachers feel "strongly" that the school has made significant inroads on building the capacity and infrastructure to move forward with school improvement strategies. The principal has strong backing and support from a large majority of the faculty. Some would like to see him out in the classrooms more often and others would like to see more open communication within classrooms and among teachers. Thirty-three (33) of the surveys were completed by classroom teachers, special educators, related service providers, and special area teachers such as the technology teacher, the media center specialist, and teachers of art and PE . On average, this group was very supportive of the school's capacity to move forward with systemic reform efforts. With the few exceptions mentioned previously, the teachers and support staff scored each item in the survey either "emerging" or "strong". Some respondents put question marks next to statements like "paraprofessionals have passed proficiency requirements" as they were not sure of that status, but, overall, the respondents were clear about their answer choices. Interesting information, however, came from the eight (8) paraprofessionals who filled out the survey. It is not clear whether their responses were a result of feeling "left out of the mix" (they have not been involved in as much of the awareness and procedural training as the teachers) or simply a result of an ignorance of the process. In either case, they scored most of the indicators much lower than the teachers- 2 surveys were scored with all 18 indicators checked as "not evident". Regardless of the reasons for the lower response scores, it is clear that efforts must be made to involve the paraprofessionals more directly in the reform efforts proposed for the school. They are often on the front line of support in the classrooms and it is imperative that they be acutely aware of their role in the intervention process and how that role fits with the bigger picture of school reform and improvement.

Other surveys have been done recently to assess readiness levels of the school for the various initiatives that were being proposed. Readiness surveys for PBS and RtI facilitated by PBS and RtI content presenters, as well as a staff survey for literacy using the

**Bridges curriculum provide an overview and assessment of school and community assets. The PBS and RtI readiness surveys demonstrated that VUES has much of what is needed in place for an infrastructure to move forward with both of those initiatives. In particular, the staff survey on readiness for RtI found that the school faculty was solid in their belief that the principal supported their efforts toward the implementation of the RtI process. In addition, the faculty believed they were ready and willing to give the model a try and see the benefits for themselves and their students. The faculty also believed strongly that they had the ability and credibility to facilitate such a model and they were likely to identify the “root cause” of a student’s academic or behavioral struggles. The respondents also indicated a relatively high degree of comfort in both administering and scoring some curriculum based measurements and using the information collected to determine the magnitude of student delays. The areas scoring lower in the RtI readiness survey were the lack of inventoried and tiered teacher-friendly resources and interventions, the ability to use specific CBM tools, and whether the interventions currently being used were facilitated with fidelity. Overall, the staff felt supported by a passionate administrator, was buying into the model, and felt strongly that they had the ability to implement the process. They recognized the importance of inventorying the interventions and resources available to them and saw the need for additional training on the use of progress monitoring tools such as Curriculum-Based Measurements, DIBELS, and others and on how to document their findings in a visual way that demonstrates either that the interventions were being successful or that they needed to be changed.**

## **REQUIREMENT 2**

**(2)** If the LEA is not applying to serve each Tier I school, the LEA must explain why it lacks capacity to serve each Tier I school.

TO MEET REQUIREMENT 2 ABOVE:

Vermont has no LEA with more than one Tier I school therefore this is not applicable.

### REQUIREMENT 3

**(3) The LEA must describe actions it has taken, or will take, to—**

- **Design and implement interventions consistent with the final requirements;**
- **Recruit, screen, and select external providers, if applicable, to ensure their quality;**
- **Align other resources with the interventions;**
- **Modify its practices or policies, if necessary, to enable its schools to implement the interventions fully and effectively; and**
- **Sustain the reforms after the funding period ends.**

### TO MEET REQUIREMENT 3 ABOVE:

The LEA must describe actions it has taken, or will take, to—

- Design and implement interventions consistent with the final requirements;
- Recruit, screen, and select external providers, if applicable, to ensure their quality;
- Align other resources with the interventions;
- Modify its practices or policies, if necessary, to enable its schools to implement the interventions fully and effectively; and
- Sustain the reforms after the funding period ends.

**1) The LEA must describe actions it has taken, or will take, to design and implement interventions consistent with the final requirements.**

- **For Tier I and II schools:**

- One of four interventions has been identified and a rationale for their selection has been adequately described and documented.
- The application includes the use of a guided self assessment to inform school improvement action planning and plans to complete a comprehensive assessment conducted by an external evaluator to inform continued school improvement plan implementation.
- All required elements of the selected intervention have been addressed so as to fully and effectively implement the selected model within the three year timeline of the grant.

*These items have been previously addressed*

- **For Tier I and Tier II schools,** external coaching capacity (someone not under the supervision of the principal) has been identified to provide intensive technical assistance and guide the implementation process.

*Directions: Describe how the LEA will address this requirement:*

**NA**

- For Tier I, II, and III schools:

- The application includes the use of a guided self assessment to inform school improvement action planning.

*This item has been previously addressed.*

- The application includes a commitment to work with the state School Improvement Support team in the development and execution of a school improvement implementation plan that assesses and incorporates effective school improvement strategies already under way and includes required (for Tier I and II) and permissible strategies
- The application includes a commitment to designate local leadership team (SU School Support team) responsible for directing and reporting on the progress of implementing defined elements. This team must include the superintendent, the principal of the school(s), the curriculum coordinator and the special education coordinator.

*These items are addressed in the “Statement of Agreement”*

- Application reflects school improvement strategies already in progress.

*This item has been previously addressed.*

- Evidence-based practices are selected and plans to implement consider measures necessary to ensure fidelity of implementation. (e.g., the application includes approaches that have a research base reflecting effectiveness in improving instruction in the areas of concern such as mathematics or literacy; the application also includes approaches that provide a systemic model for improving instruction and learning and reflects the preparative and evaluative components of sustainable implementation such as achieving readiness to implement, communicating progress, evaluating outcomes, and providing supervisory union/district support through funding, allocation of personnel, and time for professional development, collaboration and planning.)

*Directions: Describe any measures taken to insure fidelity of implementation of strategies in the plan or refer to the appropriate section of the improvement plan where this is addressed.*

**In VUES' RtI model, fidelity is important at both the school level (implementation of the process) and the teacher level (implementation of instruction and progress monitoring). Implementation of RtI and other proposed initiatives at VUES must meet the same standard. When researching the effectiveness of an intervention, it is critical to be able to report the fidelity with which it was implemented so that any resulting gains in student achievement can be accurately attributed to the intervention under scrutiny and so that the intervention may be replicated. When implementing an intervention, it is critical to know whether it is being implemented as designed, so that if the intervention is initially unsuccessful, VUES can take appropriate measures to remedy the deficiency rather than abandoning the entire reform.**

To keep fidelity manageable, VUES will incorporate an approach based on the following three dimensions:

**Dimension One: Method**

**Checking the implementation of a process for fidelity can be an extremely complex and resource-intensive process. Some of the proposed strategies identified to address the fidelity of implementation for VUES include:**

**1. Direct assessment.** The components of the intervention will be clearly specified in operational terms within a checklist based on the task analysis of the major intervention components. A qualified staff member at each grade level will observe the intervention to determine the extent to which the strategies are being implemented and will identify those teachers needing retraining.

**2. Indirect assessment.** Included in this type of assessment will be self-reports, rating scales, interviews, and permanent products. Of the indirect methods, permanent product assessment is thought to be the most reliable and accurate. Permanent products might include samples of student work or student performance on assessments and videotapes of instructional sessions.

Many of the tools to begin a process of fidelity checks already exist within VUES's EST structure or are "built in" within the RtI process.

#### **Dimension Two: Frequency**

The frequency with which teachers at VUES are observed to ensure fidelity of implementation will vary depending upon several factors. These factors include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Teacher experience level
- Teacher requests for support
- Overall class performance

It is important that VUES and its principal, Sanford Bassett, set up a timeline for conducting teacher evaluations at the beginning of the school year. This will allow VUES teachers to see that fidelity of implementation is important to the principal, school, and district and that regular observations of teachers' implementation is a typical course of action. The principal would ensure that all teachers at VUES are on the schedule for at least one observation.

It is also important that new staff be evaluated during the first month of the school year and then further observations can be set up throughout the year depending on need. The dates for the screenings can be included on the timeline so that teachers at VUES are aware of when student progress data will be collected. Throughout the year, it is also important for VUES teachers to be able to submit comments regarding the evaluation process or the curriculum as well as requests for support in the implementation process.

#### **Dimension Three: Support Systems**

As applied at VUES, fidelity of implementation serves the purpose of identifying areas of deficiency that need to be remedied. For example, a newly hired teacher at VUES may not be familiar with the school's reading curriculum. This teacher might require professional development opportunities to become acquainted with the principles and procedures of the curriculum. Or, a particular classroom may not have sufficient resources to implement and sustain a system of progress monitoring. This deficiency would require the subsequent attainment or redistribution of resources within VUES. The kinds of support systems that are required to correct areas of deficiency at VUES likely will fall into one of two categories:

**1. Professional development.** This may include formal opportunities for workshops and in-service professional development as well as partnership with mentor teachers or coaches.

**2. Resource allocation. If teachers do not have the proper resources to implement the intervention, it is incumbent upon the school leadership to obtain or redistribute resources.**

- The application includes a commitment to provide the following required data elements annually:
  - 1.) Number of minutes within the school year
  - 2.) Student participation rate on State assessments in reading/language arts and in mathematics, by student subgroup
  - 3.) Dropout rate
  - 4.) Student attendance rate
  - 5.) Number and percentage of students completing advanced coursework (i.e. AP/IB), early college high schools, or dual enrollment classes
  - 6.) Discipline incidents
  - 7.) Truants
  - 8.) Distribution of teachers by performance level on an LEA's teacher evaluation system (once that system is up and running)
  - 9.) Teacher attendance rate

*Directions: Please provide data for items 1 and 5-9 above to be used as baseline measures.*

**1. Number of instructional minutes within the school year- 6 hours per day; 6 X 60 minutes = 360 minutes per day. 360 X 175 student days = 63,000 minutes**

**2. Student participation rate on NECAP = 100% in all subgroups**

**3. Drop-out rate- Not applicable in the elementary school but 1.2% at the high school in 2008-2009**

**4. Student Attendance Rate, 2009-2010; ranged from 90.1% in October to 96.3% in December with an overall daily attendance average through June 1, 2010 of 94.5%**

**5. Advanced Coursework- Not applicable**

**Discipline incidents-** The number of overall discipline referrals have been reported at 76 (with another 6 weeks of school remaining) for the 2009-2010 school year compared to 113 in the 2008-2009 school year and 104 in the 2007-2008 school year. Of those 76 referrals, 2 students were responsible for 28% of those referrals (21). Given that 91% of those referrals were for aggressive behaviors (25), inability to follow directions (31), and disturbing class (14), the initial groundwork already in place to implement the Positive Behavior Supports model with staff participation planned for the upcoming Summer BEST Institute should act to reduce this number even more significantly.

**Truants-** a difficult number to calculate in the elementary school. Using the number of 20 days missed , 6 students (2% of the school population) would, at face value, meet this criteria. However, 2 of the 6 students contracted the H1N1 virus and it would appear that their prolonged absences were justified. 1 student is in Kindergarten, which is actually not

mandated in Vermont. Therefore, it appears that 3 students actually meet the criteria for being truant during the 2009-2010 school year, or 1% of the school population.

Distribution of teacher performance levels on teacher evaluations- currently, there is a 4-level system in place to determine teacher performance and status. Level I includes all first and second year teachers and teachers new to the district. Level II includes all experienced teachers who have accumulated two or more years of experience in the ANSWU. Level II teachers write a three year Professional Growth Plan (PGP) that they review annually with the principal. Level III teachers are those designated in need of assistance, having not effectively demonstrated competence in one or more of the performance categories in the evaluation instrument. At this level, additional supervision and evaluation occurs and a Professional Improvement Plan (PIP) is written and monitored. Teacher placement at Level IV indicates that efforts toward remediation and improvement have not been successful and serious performance deficiencies continue. At this level, the teacher is notified of the intent to dismiss. Currently, there are 35 licensed professionals in the building. Four (4) of those professionals are at Level 1, 30 are at Level 2, 1 is currently at Level 3, and no licensed professionals are at Level 4.

Teacher attendance rates- From August 27, 2009 through June 2, 2010, the teacher attendance rate at VUES has been 90.8% for 175 of the 185 school days calculated.

For Tier I, II, and III schools:

- 2) The LEA must describe actions it has taken, or will take, to Outline the need for recruitment of external providers in effectively implementing the defined school improvement plans and parameters which will be considered in ensuring quality and fit. Some recommendations from the *Handbook on Effective Implementation of School Improvement Grants* (Perlman and Redding, eds.; 2010) follow:
- a. Identify unambiguous reasons for hiring an external provider.
  - b. Engage stakeholders about the need to hire external providers.
  - c. Articulate specific goals for the relationship with the external provider.
  - d. Budget adequate funding to support relationship with external provider for duration of contract;
  - e. Develop a process for selecting external providers whose experience and qualifications match the specified goals.
  - f. Negotiate a contract outlining roles and responsibilities of the external provider as well as the district and relevant schools.
  - g. Provide support as needed and appropriate.
  - h. Evaluate external provider's progress toward goals.
  - i. Define consequences for failure (e.g., termination or modification of contract).

*Directions: Summarize your reasons for contracting with an external provider (this includes school coach and any content providers) giving consideration to items a) through i) as applicable.*

The school has contracted the services of Dr. Ric Reardon, an assistant professor at Castleton State College, for continued support through the grant cycle. Ric worked for 9 years as an administrator providing technical assistance and support in the areas of differentiated instruction, accommodations, classroom management, and curriculum development. In the past 3 years as a college professor, Ric has focused his efforts on the implementation of best practices that contribute to the success of all students, including

the provision of training in the "Response to Intervention" (RtI) process, a strategy that provides high-quality research-based instruction and interventions matched to a student's needs incorporating data to examine the student's learning rate over time to make appropriate educational and instructional decisions regarding assistance to at-risk students. In the Fall of 2009, the principal of VUES, Sanford Bassett, completed a 2-credit course on the Response to Intervention process at Castleton State taught by Dr. Reardon. Dr. Reardon's vast experience in district systemic reform efforts make him a natural fit for the specific needs of the Vergennes Union Elementary School. The proposed trainings, workshops, and book studies proposed for the staff at VUES in the next few years (Positive Behavior Supports, a deeper look at the RtI process, a study of poverty and best practices in teaching and managing students from low socio-economic backgrounds, and Cognitive Coaching) are all areas in which Dr. Reardon has vast experience.

Throughout the 2009-2010 school year, Dr. Reardon provided an overview of the Response to Intervention process for the entire VUES faculty and followed that training up with the provision of technical assistance in the development of Response to Intervention data teams for both literacy and math. He made monthly visits to the school to consult with data teams and make suggestions for continued progress monitoring. He also provided the entire staff with a day-long training on differentiated instruction and followed up on that training with visits to the school and held meetings with the teachers to discuss fidelity of implementation. As the school moves toward more systemic reforms of its educational delivery system, Dr. Reardon appears to have the skills and dispositions to guide the VUES staff through the process of systemic reform that will make a lasting impact on the proficiency rates for all children at VUES. Although Dr. Reardon's roles and responsibilities may shift depending on the evolving needs of the school, he would be primarily responsible for the provision of technical assistance and training and the integration of professional wisdom with the best available empirical evidence in assisting the VUES staff in making decisions about how to deliver instruction to the students at VUES. He has the ongoing support of the other educational consultants in the district and from both supervisory union administrators and the staff at VUES. Ric would meet periodically with the administrative support team to evaluate his progress toward the overall goals that have been set by VUES.

For Tier I, II, and III schools:

- 3) LEA agrees to collaborate and cooperate with state organized trainings for Supervisory Union administrators, principals, teachers and paraprofessionals, informational meetings, and trainings provided through the state.  
*This item is addressed in the "Statement of Agreement"*

For Tier I, II, and III schools:

- 4) The LEA must describe actions it has taken, or will take, to Align other resources with the interventions.
  - The LEA plan must be comprehensive and systemic in its approach. Reviewers will look to the budget and school improvement plan to assess the alignment and allocation of resources (e.g., personnel, percent of time committed, recognition of and/or effort to assess and realign existing initiatives and funds from other sources to support school improvement goals, refocusing existing professional development and in-service days to support training needs related to improvement, etc.) :

**Directions:** Please review budget and school improvement plan to assure items below are addressed and check appropriate boxes

- Human resources
- Fiscal resources
- Time and schedule
- Existing Initiatives
- Related activities
- Partnerships
- Alignment of PD activities

For Tier I, II, and III schools

5) **The LEA must describe actions it has taken, or will take, to Modify its practices or policies, if necessary, to enable it to implement the interventions fully and effectively.**

- The LEA agrees to use an external evaluation (Tier I and II ONLY) and internal review process to identify any current practices or policies that are barriers to a full and effective implementation of the selected intervention and commit to eliminating barriers through the implementation process. This process will also identify areas where a consolidation of focus would benefit the school improvement process (such as multiple committees focusing on similar outcomes – or with no defined outcomes) and work to converge efforts on common goals and outcomes.
- Inclusion of actions to address those barriers in the plan, utilizing the following, as applicable:
  - Board and Union letters of recognition or memorandum of understanding that document commitment to modify or amend current agreements, practices, and procedures to allow full and effective implementation of the transformation model.
  - Agreements for operational flexibility to implement reform at the school level.
  - Evidence of need for waivers to State Board of Education rules, when appropriate.

**Directions:** Identify barriers and any actions you have taken or will take to address these barriers. (Tier I and II can reference Requirement 1 1) c. i-ix)

**No barriers have come to the forefront at this time other than the need for financial assistance in order to carry out what the VUES staff believes is a solid plan of intervention backed by research and supported by district staff. The money provided through this grant will allow the school to move forward with these interventions with full confidence that they will positively impact the proficiency rates of ALL of the students at VUES.**

For Tier I, II, and III schools

6) **The LEA must describe actions it has taken, or will take, to Sustain the reforms after the funding period ends.**

**For each item below describe how it will be addressed over the funding period**

**The LEA must:**

- Include strategies that build local capacity and methodologies that ensure interventions are integrated into the culture and routine practice of the school. (e.g., if student discipline and behavior is a significant factor to consider in working to raise achievement levels for students, the plan goes beyond providing individualized interventions and reflects a systemic approach to improving levels of student time on task and participation in the classroom by implementing or reconstituting an evidence based model to address school climate and culture such as Positive Behavioral Supports or Responsive Classroom. These models build local capacity to intervene early and support students within the school community with the least amount of intervention to achieve the greatest result and create sustainability by involving the whole school community in the implementation process.)

*Directions: Describe here or refer to appropriate section of your plan or budget.*

**Once training has been provided in the areas of RtI, PBS, Understanding Poverty, and Cognitive Coaching, the sustainability of these initiatives becomes a maintenance issue with an insistence that the interventions are being implemented with fidelity. The budget has accounted for this by continuing to involve Dr. Ric Reardon in the maintenance component of the reform efforts. The emphasis in the initial training and implementation of these strategies is that they become very much a part of the culture and routine practice of the school. The interventions chosen by the school team look to build the local capacity to intervene early and provide needed supports to students identified as at-risk.**

- Identify local fiscal and structural support for the interventions where applicable beyond the life of the grant.

*Directions: Describe how the budget will support on-going activities beyond the grant funding period.*

**Besides the money anticipated from this grant, VUES can identify additional sources of funding and structural supports beyond the life of the SIG. The principal plans to add 2 line items to the 2011-2013 budget, one to further address Tier 2 intervention strategies and one to address the support needed to continue facilitating the PBS initiatives at the school. In addition, the BEST grant will pick up some of the additional costs associated with the PBS program initiatives.**

- Identify other funding sources that will be used to complement SIG funds received in supporting the implementation of defined strategies. These could include other federal programs, as well as state and local funds and should also highlight funds that will be used to sustain the intervention beyond three-year grant period.

*Ensure that all funding sources are identified in the plan.*

**There are a number of other funding sources that can be used to complement SIG funding to assist VUES in implementing the interventions proposed. Title 1 funds can be utilized to support some of the initiatives. According to the U.S. Department of Education the purpose of Title 1 funding, “is to ensure that all children have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high quality education and reach, at minimum, proficiency on challenging state academic achievement standards and state academic assessments.” Title 1 funds can be used to improve curriculum, instructional activities, counseling, parental involvement, increase staff and program improvement. The funding assists schools in meeting the educational goals of low-income students. According to the U.S. Department of Education, Title 1 funds typically support supplemental instruction in reading and math, which is where the majority of interventions are focused at VUES. Title 2 funding is also available to assist with the school's**

**interventions. The purpose of the Title 2 program is to increase academic achievement by improving teacher and principal quality. This program is carried out by increasing the number of highly qualified teachers in classrooms, increasing the number of highly qualified principals and assistant principals in schools, and increasing the effectiveness of teachers and principals by holding LEAs and schools accountable for improvements in student academic achievement. At VUES, Title 2 funds would be used to increase the effectiveness of teachers, the principal, and related services providers by providing technical assistance leading to increased improvement in student academic and behavioral achievement. School administrators have been informed that there will be an increase in the BEST allocation to the school, allowing for further financial support for the PBS initiative. Finally, there is a line item in the ANSU budget for "Professional Development Funding" and the initiatives identified for improving student outcomes at VUES would be prioritized for this funding.**

- Plan for induction and mentoring of new staff.

*Directions: Describe plans for induction and mentoring of new staff.*

**Using the existing teacher mentor program in place at VUES, teachers will be assigned to any and all new teachers entering VUES during the implementation of this next phase of the intervention plan. Professional development time will be set aside prior to the school year commencing for each new staff member to meet with both the principal and the external consultant to examine the initiatives already in place and those proposed for the upcoming school year. Those new teachers will utilize their assigned mentor teacher and the other support personnel to identify and set up their progress monitoring activities, implement those strategies in their classrooms, and analyze data as a part of the data analysis team responsibilities with grade-level peers. In addition, the implementation of the Cognitive Coaching model in the second year of the grant cycle will further serve to support induction and mentoring activities at the school.**

- Create a district level team that examines and reports on achievement levels for all students and subgroups for all schools in the supervisory union on a bi-annual basis. State assessment results are communicated annually to teachers, staff, family and community members and school boards. Appropriate response strategies are incorporated into school action plans.

***Include these activities as responsibilities of the SU/District School Support Team***

**The district level team examining and reporting on achievement levels for all students in VUES will be comprised of:**

**Superintendent- Thomas O'Brien**

**Director of Curriculum/Staff Development- Dr. Carol Spencer**

**Director of Support Services- Betty Lewis**

**VUES Principal- Sanford Bassett**

**Mathematics Specialist- Susan Dula**

**Literacy Specialist, UVM/VRI- Susan Biggam**

**External Consultant- Dr. Ric Reardon, Castleton State College**

**Critical members of the team will meet regularly to examine formative data summaries on the achievement levels for all students. Within those data examinations, data will be disaggregated to determine the proficiency rates for the various sub-groups that make-up the VUES school population, with specific attention paid to those students from low socio-economic backgrounds. In addition, the state assessment results (NECAP) will be reviewed as soon as they are available and those results, along with district team comments and suggestions, will be communicated annually to the teachers, staff, family and community members, and the school board at a time designated. The district level team will also incorporate the results of both formative assessment and state assessments into the VUES action plan when that plan is evaluated and re-written.**

**REQUIREMENT 4**

**(4) The LEA must include a timeline delineating the steps it will take to implement the selected intervention in each Tier I and Tier II school identified in the LEA’s application.**

**TO MEET REQUIREMENTS (4) ABOVE –**

The LEA must include a timeline delineating the steps it will take to implement the selected intervention in each Tier I and Tier II school identified in the LEA’s application.

*Required items have been covered in Requirements 1 and/or 3 above.*

NA

**REQUIREMENT 5**

**(5) The LEA must describe the annual goals for student achievement on the State’s assessments in both reading/language arts and mathematics that it has established in order to monitor its Tier I and Tier II schools that receive school improvement funds.**

**TO MEET REQUIREMENT (5) ABOVE –**

In its application and school improvement implementation plan, the LEA must articulate annual goals (subject to the approval of the SEA) for 2010-2013 for student achievement on the State’s assessments in both reading/language arts and mathematics that it has established in order to monitor its Tier I and Tier II schools that receive school improvement funds.

*Directions: Discuss reading and math goals here*

NA

**REQUIREMENT 6**

**(6) For each Tier III school the LEA commits to serve, the LEA must identify the services the school will receive or the activities the school will implement.**

**TO MEET REQUIREMENT (6) ABOVE -**

For each Tier III school the LEA commits to serve, the LEA must identify the services the school will receive or the activities the school will implement as defined in the design section above.

*Directions: Identify services Tier III schools will receive and/or activities schools will implement or reference appropriate sections of improvement plan*

The first major activity proposed for the staff at VUES relates to a book study examining the concept of poverty. Given the fact that students from the low-socioeconomic subgroup at VUES continue to struggle with proficiency rates in literacy and math and the significant increase of this population in the school in the past 3 years (19% increase) it would be prudent to dedicate both time and funding to address this critical issue. The district support team is proposing a book study that will utilize two resources, "Teaching with Poverty in Mind" (Eric Jensen) and the "Roots of Success" document recently presented to educational personnel across the state of Vermont.

The Jensen book focuses on the relationship between academic achievement and low socioeconomic status. The main emphasis of the book stipulates that:

- chronic exposure to poverty causes the brain to physically change in a detrimental manner.
- because the brain is designed to adapt from experience, it can also change for the better; poor children can experience emotional, social, and academic success.
- although many factors affect academic success, certain key ones are especially effective in turning around students raised in poverty.

The book offers a three-pronged approach to addressing poverty in the schools. First, it provides a better understanding of what poverty is and how it affects the students identified as low socio-economic. VUES teachers will learn more about the social, cognitive, health-related, and stress-related challenges that economically disadvantaged students face every day. Second, it demonstrates what actually drives change, both at the macro level (within a school) and at the micro level (inside a student's brain). Teachers will learn about turnaround schools as well as schools that have a history of high performance among students raised in poverty. The more thoroughly VUES teachers understand how to bring about change, the better they can engage the resources necessary to make it happen. Finally, the book addresses teacher's needs. VUES teachers will learn from those who have succeeded in addressing the challenges of students identified as low socio-economic and will examine practices that are replicable. The book provides a framework as well as theory, research, and strategies to ensure success.

In addition, the school will be utilizing information gleaned from the "Roots of Success" document, which reports findings from an extensive review of best practices from a large-scale survey of more than 2000 Vermont teachers in 87 schools across the state as well as intensive site visits to three schools that are "beating the odds". The "Roots" report examines the eight characteristics of effective schools and proposes that effective systems believe that all students can learn and those systems take responsibility for students' achievement and therefore work to continually improve their own practice. Additionally, effective systems are guided by strong leadership, use data in an ongoing way to provide feedback to staff as well as monitor and support students, and establish a professional teaching culture that supports high-quality instruction. Finally, the "Roots" document proposes that effective systems have a comprehensive and highly functioning support system in place to address students' academic, emotional, behavioral, and social needs, create a supportive climate that makes all students, as well as adults, feel valued and safe, and build constructive relationships with families and involve them in their child's learning, all very much in line with the priorities of the VUES staff.

Another study in which the teachers will engage will involve work around a textbook titled "Enhancing RTI: How to Ensure Success with Effective Classroom Instruction and Intervention " (Fisher and Frey, 2010). Although the Response to Intervention (RtI) process has made a positive impact on the proficiency rates of many of the students at VUES, supplemental instruction can never compensate for inadequate core instruction. This book examines a strengthened model of RtI that emphasizes formative assessment and refining core instruction rather than relying on multiple layers of intervention. The components for this strengthened model consist of:

- using core instruction that is responsive, standards-based, and data-driven.
- building Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions that ensure continuity and alignment among all levels of instruction.
- developing a three-way feedback loop that uses formative assessment results to inform the learner, establish progress benchmarks, and improve curriculum and instruction for all students.
- establishing a way for educators and families to work together effectively.

The book outlines the steps needed to create and implement this improved approach and the proposed book study will allow teachers to increase their knowledge of the principles of high-quality RtI, including:

- Which factors undermine most approaches to RtI.
- How the intensity of supplemental instruction should increase along with group size, time, and expertise.
- Which types of assessments are included in an effective RtI model.
- How to better analyze assessment data and ensure that it's used to improve curriculum and instruction.

The staff at VUES will have had an entire year to implement strategies that support a tiered intervention model utilizing a problem-solving process to identify students who are at-risk for school failure and match successful interventions to learning styles in order to assure ultimate success for each child. This book study will allow the teachers to look deeper into the RtI process at strengthening the core instruction along with providing supplemental instruction for the diverse group of learners found in each of their classrooms.

The VUES staff have also initiated the process that will move them to becoming a Positive Behavior Support school. Initial awareness training has occurred and representative staff members are currently registered to participate in the BEST Summer Institute in June, 2010. VUES staff members will attend this institute as part of a team that will examine the issues related to student behavior. Institute strands will focus on prevention and intervention strategies for creating safe and supportive school learning environments for all students. Some of the presentations include adventure based learning, crisis prevention, diversity awareness, social curricula, violence prevention curricula, and bullying prevention programs. In addition, there will be additional strands addressing such topics as educational support systems, planning rooms, social and emotional learning, crisis planning in schools, preventing violence, and student self advocacy. A VUES team represented by administration, general education and special education teachers, and other support staff will have an opportunity to meet during a scheduled "team time" to create an action plan that addresses an identified school need at VUES. Typically, these plans address school and classroom discipline, curriculum and instruction, school climate and environment, and social/emotional learning needs of students. Following the summer training, the staff will systematically implement the PBS model throughout the 2010-2011 school year. The staff at VUES look forward to the process of organizing the PBS Team, reviewing data, analyzing, describing, and prioritizing a problem within the context, identifying specific measurable outcomes, selecting evidence based practice, providing supports for accurate sustained

**adoption and implementation, and monitoring practice implementation and progress toward increased behavioral outcomes for the students at VUES.**

**An activity that the school will initiate toward the end of the 2010-2011 school year and address more thoroughly during the second year of the three year grant cycle will be an examination and eventual implementation of a process known as Cognitive Coaching. Cognitive Coaching is a peer coaching model that capitalizes upon and enhances cognitive processes. It is a set of strategies, a way of thinking and a way of working that invites self and others to shape and reshape their thinking and problem solving capacities. The training will be facilitated and supported, in part, by the Lamoille Area Professional Development Academy, a regional collaborative that provides professional development for educators. LAPDA serves as the Education Service Agency (ESA) for the Winooski Valley Region. Their primary function is to enhance organizational capacity to provide training opportunities that provide professionals like those at VUES with the skills necessary to improve outcomes for their students. Cognitive Coaching training is results driven, high quality, needs based, research based, job embedded, and easily accessible. The process enables people to modify their capacity to modify themselves and is based on the following four major propositions:**

- 1. Thought and perception produce all behavior.**
- 2. Teaching is constant decision-making.**
- 3. To learn something new requires engagement and alteration in thought.**
- 4. Humans continue to grow cognitively.**

**VUES teachers will have opportunities to build trust by developing physical and verbal rapport, facilitate thinking through questioning and developing greater precision in language, and develop autonomy and sense of community by increasing their sense of efficacy and self-awareness. In addition, the training planned for the 2011-2012 school year will allow teachers to distinguish between coaching and evaluation, rehearse coaching interactions that are congruent with a variety of styles, and apply coaching skills which enhance the intellectual processes of performance. Some of the benefits that can be derived from this work over time for VUES are:**

**Improving Student Outcomes- there is a direct link between the types and qualities of teacher thinking and student outcomes. Traditional models of supervision and coaching have focused on installing and extinguishing certain teacher behaviors. These approaches have had limited success and, over time, have narrowed teachers' conceptual frameworks. Cognitive Coaching focuses on the internal thinking and decision-making capabilities of the teacher, sometimes referred to as the "invisible skills" of teaching. A focus on these skills helps teachers to generate new possibilities, increase instructional flexibility, and focus on outcomes, not problems.**

**Supporting Instructional Change- conventional approaches to staff development workshops, lectures, demonstrations, etc., show little evidence of transfer into ongoing daily instructional practice. Some studies have actually documented the level of classroom application after even high quality training hovered around 5%. When they added peer coaching to the training designs the level of application increased to 90%, and with periodic review of both the teaching models and coaching skills, classroom application remained at the 90% level.**

**Enhancing Student Thinking-** there is a direct link between the language that teachers use and the quality of their thinking. Precision in language leads to precision in thinking. Cognitive Coaching leads to greater language precision for all involved. This linkage extends to the quality of student thinking in the classrooms of those same teachers. Further, Cognitive Coaching includes skill development in questioning and response behaviors appropriate to adult interaction and teacher/student interaction as well. Teacher question and response behaviors and language patterns cue student thinking, mediate student responses, focus student attention on details and essential processes, and convey caring and expectations.

**Appreciating and Celebrating Diversity-** human beings operate with a rich variety of cultural, personal, and cognitive style differences. These differences are resources for learning. Appreciating and working with style differences requires awareness, knowledge, skills, and positive attitudes for all involved. Key strands in the Cognitive Coaching training provide frameworks and tools for coaches to work with other adults and with students in open and resourceful ways.

**Promoting Collegiality-** problem solving, creativity, and faculty collaboration are powerful sources of teacher renewal. Collegiality is not the same as conviviality. True professional collegiality is built upon shared norms of interaction that focus on the many roles of teachers as they share materials and ideas and seek and offer assistance to one another. The Cognitive Coaching model provides a comfortable format for professional dialogue and develops the skills for deep instructional planning, reflection on practice, and problem solving.

**Developing Teacher Conceptual Development-** Cognitive Coaching enhances and stretches the conceptual frameworks of teachers. Teachers with higher conceptual levels are more adaptive and flexible in their teaching style, approaches to students, and classroom designs. They employ a broader repertoire of teaching strategies and a wider range of coping behaviors. High concept teachers are more effective with a wider range of students, including students from diverse cultural backgrounds. Additionally, they are more stress tolerant and able to deal with ambiguity.

**Building School Culture-** good instruction does not exist in a vacuum. Effective teachers working in isolation cannot create cohesive instructional patterns that serve students in a cumulative fashion. The culture of the school--the pattern of adult interaction, the traditions, rituals, and shared norms--has a strong influence on the instructional outcomes for students. Cognitive Coaching promotes cohesive school cultures where norms of experimentation and open and honest communication enable everyone in the school to interact in healthy and respectful ways.

In order to assure that each of these interventions is helping students to respond positively to instruction, a timeline of events and intermittent checks along the way for fidelity of implementation must occur (see attached). The RtI process has had a year to grow and flourish at VUES and part of the reason for that has been the ongoing checks on fidelity of implementation that have occurred by the principal, the reading and math consultants, and the external consultant working with the school. The monthly meetings held to analyze data gathered from screenings and progress monitoring were attended by teachers, administration, literacy and math consultants, and the external consultant. During those meetings, data were analyzed and teachers' instructional strategies were examined.

#### **REQUIREMENT 7**

**(7) The LEA must describe the goals it has established (subject to approval by the SEA) in order to hold accountable its Tier III schools that receive school improvement funds.**

#### **TO MEET REQUIREMENT (7) ABOVE –**

The LEA must describe the goals it has established (subject to approval by the SEA) in order to hold accountable its Tier III schools that receive school improvement funds.

*Directions: Describe indicators the LEA will use to assess progress towards implementation of the improvement plan for Tier III schools.*

#### **REQUIREMENT 8**

**(8) As appropriate, the LEA must consult with relevant stakeholders regarding the LEA’s application and implementation of school improvement models in its Tier I and Tier II schools.**

#### **TO MEET REQUIREMENT (8) ABOVE -**

As appropriate, the LEA must consult with relevant stakeholders regarding the LEA’s application and implementation of school improvement models in its Tier I and Tier II schools.

*Directions: Please include evidence of stakeholder engagement as well as a plan for on-going stakeholder engagement. (e.g. board minutes, correspondence, newsletters, community meetings, etc)*

**C. BUDGET: An LEA must include a budget that indicates the amount of school improvement funds the LEA will use each year in each Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III school it commits to serve.**

The LEA must provide a budget that indicates the amount of school improvement funds the LEA will use each year to—

- Implement the selected model in each Tier I and Tier II school it commits to serve;
- Conduct LEA-level activities designed to support implementation of the selected school intervention models in the LEA's Tier I and Tier II schools; and
- Support school improvement activities, at the school or LEA level, for each Tier III school identified in the LEA's application.

**Directions:** An LEA must include a budget that indicates the amount of school improvement funds the LEA will use each year in each Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III school it commits to serve. Attach budget.

Note: An LEA's budget must cover the period of availability, including any extension granted through a waiver, and be of sufficient size and scope to implement the selected school intervention model in each Tier I and Tier II school the LEA commits to serve.

An LEA's budget for each year may not exceed the number of Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III schools it commits to serve multiplied by \$2,000,000.

**D. ASSURANCES: An LEA must include the following assurances in its application for a School Improvement Grant.**

The LEA must assure that it will—

- (1) Use its School Improvement Grant to implement fully and effectively an intervention in each Tier I and Tier II school that the LEA commits to serve consistent with the final requirements;

- (2) Establish annual goals for student achievement on the State's assessments in both reading/language arts and mathematics and measure progress on the leading indicators in section III of the final requirements in order to monitor each Tier I and Tier II school that it serves with school improvement funds, and establish goals (approved by the SEA) to hold accountable its Tier III schools that receive school improvement funds;
- (3) If it implements a restart model in a Tier I or Tier II school, include in its contract or agreement terms and provisions to hold the charter operator, charter management organization, or education management organization accountable for complying with the final requirements; and
- (4) Report to the SEA the school-level data required under section III of the final requirements.

**These assurances and others are addressed in the Statement of Agreement. A copy of the State of Agreement signed by the Superintendent must be submitted with this application**

**E. WAIVERS: If the SEA has requested any waivers of requirements applicable to the LEA's School Improvement Grant, an LEA must indicate which of those waivers it intends to implement.**

**Directions:** The LEA must check each waiver that the LEA will implement. If the LEA does not intend to implement the waiver with respect to each applicable school, the LEA must indicate for which schools it will implement the waiver.

- Extending the period of availability of school improvement funds.
  
- “Starting over” in the school improvement timeline for Tier I and Tier II Title I participating schools implementing a turnaround or restart model.
  
- Implementing a school wide program in a Tier I or Tier II Title I participating school that does not meet the 40 percent poverty eligibility threshold.