

# Vermont School Improvement Grant Application

Spring, 2010

Supervisory Union/ District Name: Rutland City Public Schools

Contact Person: Robert Bliss

Role: Assistant Superintendent

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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: see attachment: "RCPS Cover Page for SIG"

Date: June 15, 2010

## 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>Rutland High School</b>	PS253	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Rutland Middle School</b>	PS 365	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Rutland Intermediate School</b>	PS 382	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Northwest Primary School</b>	PS 256	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<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"/>	<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"/>	<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"/>	<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:*

**Formatting issues. See attchemet "RHS ATTAHCMENT B"**

- 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:*

**Input from public and private partners, parents and community members:**

**The process of collecting this information included discussions with Stafford Technical Center, College of St. Joseph's Rutland, Castleton State College, Castleton Center for Schools, and the Rutland Workforce Investment Board (WIB). The most helpful input arrived from the director of Stafford Technical Center Director, Lyle Jepson. On an ongoing basis we also receive quality input from the community via the Rutland Workforce Investment Board, of which Lyle Jepson and Assistant Superintendent Rob Bliss are members. The faculty and staff of Rutland High School are consistently working within the**

**school's professional learning communities, on the "Vision Quest" teams, and with the school's plan of improvement. The results of the gathering of information and data analysis are not surprising.**

**Lyle Jepson Wrote: Stafford Technical Center is physically and programmatically connected to Rutland High School on the Stratton Road Campus. While simultaneously serving seven other Rutland County high schools, Stafford supplements Rutland High School's programming with 16 all-day technical programs. Currently, Stafford Technical Center serves 230 students of which 68 (30%) are from Rutland High School.**

**Co-location of technical programming and academic coursework is a clear benefit to students. Stafford students from out of district sending schools benefit from the option of enrolling in academic classes at Rutland High School. Many of these classes they might not have access to in their sending schools. In turn, Rutland High School students benefit from technical programming that allows them to conveniently access academic classes that meet their needs.**

**An area that deserves review in the future is collaborative professional development between Stafford and RHS staff. There is very little formal interaction or planning between the two. The potential for interdisciplinary work, which would create high interest and meaningful learning opportunities for students, could have a significant impact on student success rates as measured by grades, standardized testing and graduation rates.**

**Stafford Technical Center is eager to participate in programming that will integrate rigorous academic programming while at the same time broadening the technical offerings of the center to more Rutland High School students. We stand ready to assist in any manner that supports the county-wide nature of the programming that we provide.**

**Mr. Jepson's presence on campus and knowledge of the region's educational organizations allows him to offer a thoughtful view.**

**The Rutland WIB does not keep data or specific information, but as it looks to help provide the region with a ready and able workforce, the insight is valuable. The WIB looks to create pathways for young adults and career changing adults to evolve into new employment opportunities. In connection with local businesses and community organization they guide potential workers to skill based learning. The input from the Rutland WIB confirms that the opportunities for students at Stafford Tech, Rutland High School's Howe Center Campus, and apprenticeships are a valuable pathway to continue in connection with the solid learning from the region's high schools.**

**Our higher education partners at Castleton and the College of St. Joseph's in Rutland confirm that the RHS graduates are well prepared for their college career. Rutland City Public Schools has a long and solid, mutually beneficial, relationship with the schools of education at each institution.**

**Castleton's Center for Schools remains closely associated with Rutland City Public Schools and the schools of the region via the Southwest Vermont Curriculum Coordinators Collaborative (SWVTCCC). The Center for Schools is instrumental to**

our school district in arranging responsive and needs based, high quality professional development opportunities. They will continue to support the efforts at RHS.

Input from students staff and parents via surveys conducted at RHS reveal that recent intervention system updates in the 2009-2010 school year had a very positive impact on student achievement and should continue.

**Alternative Routes for Graduation from Rutland High School:**

- **Early Graduation**
- **Additional Semester(s)**
- **High School Completion Program via adult basic Ed (act 176)**
- **GED**
- **Stafford Technical Center**
- **Dual enrollment in CCV or CSC**
- **Alternative Education Program at the Howe Center (RHS satellite)**
- **SUCCESS**
  
- **Adult Diploma Program**
- **Community High School of Vermont**
- **Smokey House**
- **Vermont Academy of Science and Technology (VAST) @ VTC**
- **Individual tutoring at Longfellow (typically the result of disciplinary issues)**

- 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:*

**Requirement 1**

**Section 1; Question C            NECAP Analysis (page 3)**

**The following is an analysis of NECAP state assessment results from the 2007, 2008, and 2009 administration. The analysis is based on the scaled score, the more accurate measure of student progress.**

In Reading for “all students,” the RHS score stayed at 42 during '07 and '08. That was below the state average for those years ('07 = 44; '08 = 46). In '09, RHS saw significant progress, rising seven scaled score points to 49, exceeding the state average for that year (state '09 = 46).

In Math for “all students,” RHS scores at the state average in 2007 (34). RHS math scores dropped slightly in 2008, down one scaled score point (33), while the state average rose one point (35). In 2009, RHS math scores rose significantly, up four points to 37, ahead of the state average of 36.

In Writing for ‘all students,” RHS scores (5.3) were below the state average (5.8). Over the course of two years, RHS saw a steady and significant increase in scores, raising 1.3 points to 6.6, surpassing the state average (6.5) and growth rate (+ 0.7).

The Economically Disadvantaged Subgroup is the only subgroup at RHS with significant numbers (+40). The summary of NECAP scores for this subgroup is as follows:

In Reading FRL, this group (37) started below state averages (39) in 2007. It matched the rate of growth with the state in 2008 (+1), then exceeded the state average with a significant growth in 2009 (RHS: +4 to 42; State +1 to 41).

In Math FRL, this group (30) started above state averages (29) in 2007. While the state grew 2 points in 2008, RHS declined 4 points the same year. However, RHS made significant growth (+6) in 2009 while the state made no growth. RHS (32) finished that year above the state average (31).

In Writing FRL, this group (4.4) started below the state average (4.9). While the state rose 0.9 points over two years, finishing at 5.8 in 2009, RHS showed a steeper rate of growth, rising 1.4 points to finish matching the state average at 5.8.

As mentioned, our English Language Learners (1 in 2009) and our Students with Disabilities (19 in 2009) are too low in number to be classified as a significant subgroup.

- 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:*

**(SEE ALSO ATTACHMENT , " RHS Requirement 1, Section 1, Question D")**

**Requirement 1**

**Section 1; Question D**

**School Name: Rutland High School (PS253)**

**SU: Rutland City SD**

**This data is referenced under item 1 on page 13 of the SIG application**

**2007-2008      2008-2009      2009-2010**

**Graduation Rate**

**(if elementary school, list rate for the high school in the SU)**

**89.27%**

**82.03% School to provide this data for current year**

**Drop-out Rate**

**(if elementary school, list rate for the high school in the SU)**

**3.83%**

**3.12% School to provide this data for current year**

**Discipline Referrals                      37      87      School provides data for this column for current year (new CIRS data not due until 7-15-10)**

**School Action Plan priorities See Below**

**Highly Qualified Teacher data Data housed at school/SU**

**100%**

**Child count by disability category:**

<b>Developmental Delay</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	
<b>Learning Impairment</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>22</b>	
<b>Specific Learning Disability</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>15</b>	
<b>Visual Impairment</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	
<b>Deafness/Hard of Hearing</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	
<b>Speech or Language Impairment</b>		<b>7</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Orthopedic Impairment</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	

**8**

Other Health Impairment	19	22	22
Emotional Disturbance	9	18	17
Autism Spectrum Disorder	2	3	5
Traumatic Brain Injury	0	0	0
Deaf-Blindness	0	0	
Multiple Disabilities	2	1	1

**Percent of students with disabilities in the general education classroom more than 80% of the time**

47.8 69.5 48.4

Number of students in out of district placements	7*	9*	8*
Number of students in "alternative" day placements	15*	22*	24*
Number of ELL students	9	8	6
Number of students eligible for free and reduced lunch		287	296 355
Most recent Youth Risk Behavior Survey	2009:		

<http://healthvermont.gov/pubs/yrbs2009/2009YRBSResultsbyLEA.aspx>

\*Includes all students in SU in grade levels covered by school.

**Requirement 1**

**Section 1; Question D, iv: Action Plan Priorities**

**Goal:**

**2009 Results:**

Increase the percent of students meeting the standard on the NECAP Reading assessment from 62% to 72%.

74% Proficient

Increase % of free and reduced lunch students meeting the standard on the NECAP Reading assessment from 41% to 51%.

37% Proficient

Increase the percent of students meeting the standard on the NECAP Math assessment from 29% to 44%.

34% Proficient

Increase % of free and reduced lunch students meeting the standard on the NECAP Math assessment from 10% to 25%

15% Proficient

Increase the percent of students meeting the standard on the NECAP Writing assessment from 42% to 52%.

48% Proficient

Increase % of free and reduced lunch students meeting the standard on the NECAP Writing assessment from 17% to 27%.

28% Proficient

**Summary of Conclusions:**

When reviewing the data above, it was noted that although most categories were relatively stagnant, both the number of students eligible for free and reduced lunch and the number of students with emotional disturbance showed an above average rate of growth. Questions were also raised as to the decrease in the graduation rate from 2007-08 to 2008-09, while at the same time the drop-out rate for that time period showed a slight decrease.

Although we did not meet our stated goals for our free and reduced lunch population, these students did show growth in all areas as compared to state average scaled scores as mentioned in Question C above.

- 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.*

**Please see attachment: " RHS Requirement 1, section 1, e, attachment B"**

- 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:  
See attachment "RHS Selection of intervention model"*

**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*

#### **Requirement 1**

#### **Section 2**

**a) Demonstration of actions already taken under required intervention model**

**Transformation Model - the LEA must implement each of the required activities:**

**1. Developing and increasing teacher and school leader effectiveness**

**Required activities - The LEA must complete the following actions:**

- **Replace the principal who led the school prior to commencement of the transformation model.**

**A new principal began on July 1, 2009. This principal was not employed at Rutland High School during the administration of the state assessments of 2007, 2008 – the assessments that were used in determining RHS qualification for the School Improvement Grant.**

- **Use rigorous, transparent, and equitable evaluation systems for teachers and principals that:**
  - o **Take into account data on student growth (as defined in the final regulations-see definition below) as a significant factor as well as other factors such as multiple observation-based assessments of performance and ongoing collections of professional practice reflective of student achievement and increased high school graduations rates, and**
  - o **Are designed and developed with teacher and principal involvement.**

**The district currently has an evaluation system developed jointly by a committee of teachers and administrators. It is based on a researched-based program, combining the elements and principles of the Research for Better Teaching/Skillful Teacher model and Charlotte Danielson. It is based in multiple observations and plans for teacher professional development and focused growth. One of the underlying principles is the necessity of demonstrating teacher growth and progress based on student outcomes.**

- **Identify and reward school leaders, teachers, and other staff who, in implementing this model, have increased student achievement and high school graduation rates and identify and remove those who, after ample opportunities have been provided for them to improve their professional practice, have not done so.**

**RCPS recognizes teacher leaders with additional stipends and conference attendance for their efforts and skills and leaders and outstanding teachers.**

- **Provide staff ongoing, high-quality, job-embedded professional development (e.g., regarding subject-specific pedagogy, instruction that reflects a deeper understanding of the community served by the school, or differentiated instruction) that is aligned with the school's comprehensive instructional program and designed with school staff to ensure they are equipped to facilitate effective teaching and learning and have the capacity to successfully implement school reform strategies.**

**Training that occurred this year (2009-2010)**

- **Critical Friends Training to lead group facilitation (20 teachers).**
  - **Common Assessment Training (DuFours, Boston: 8 teachers)**
  - **Technology Use (Whole staff/ indistrict inservice)**
- PD Plan for upcoming year in place:**
- **PLC Training (July, 2010, DuFours – Boston: 8 teachers; 1 administrator)**

- **Brain Research Conference – Dr. Christian Jernstedt, (June, 2010, VTHEC, Stowe, VT: 7 teachers; 1 administrator)**

**Tentative Plans for:**

- **Differentiated Instruction Training (tentatively through TASS)**

**Possible Plans being considered:**

- **Grading Philosophy**
- **Aligning curriculum, interdisciplinary opportunities, collaborative opportunities, technology integration**

- **Implement such strategies as financial incentives, increased opportunities for promotion and career growth, and more flexible work conditions that are designed to recruit, place, and retain staff with the skills necessary to meet the needs of the students in a transformation school.**

**Currently the district supports accessing higher degrees in the field. There has been a special emphasis and partnership with the Woodruff School for Educational Leadership. This program, as well as other like it, have created at least a dozen teacher/ school leaders within the district and the high school. The school's has leadership opportunities in the form of department leadership and leadership on special projects (literacy resource teachers) and leadership through projects on the school's transformation team. Some of these opportunities come with stipends.**

**Permissible activities - An LEA may also implement other strategies to develop teachers' and school leaders' effectiveness:**

- **Provide additional compensation to attract and retain staff with the skills necessary to meet the needs of the students in a transformation school.**

**The superintendent of schools may, by contract, offer additional salary advancement to prospective employees who would fill highly specialized and in demand vacancies within our district.**

- **Institute a system for measuring changes in instructional practices resulting from professional development.**

**The Utland City Public School District will be creating a digital format of the Research for Better Teaching common language and framework for evaluation.**

- **Ensure that the school is not required to accept a teacher without the mutual consent of the teacher and principal, regardless of the teacher's seniority.**

Rutland City Public Schools has the right to assign faculty and staff to the areas most needed by the schools. There are some seniority aspects to the master agreement. We can not assure that a teacher will not be assigned to a location or school they would not favor, especially in this time of decreasing budgets and reforming districts.

## **2. Comprehensive instructional reform strategies**

**Required activities - The LEA must complete the following actions:**

- **Use data to identify and implement an instructional program that is research-based and vertically aligned from one grade to the next as well as aligned with State academic standards.**

The curriculum is currently aligned to state standards and grade expectations. It is also aligned vertically. This work has happened over the past years through content-area departments. It also continues on teacher grade-level course-level teams. This work happens monthly as teams refine the curriculum, matching instruction to the standards.

To be even more specific with our tested areas, the English and Math Departments have been working diligently on this. The English Department refined their sequencing, curriculum and assessments two years prior in reading. They worked this year to do the same for writing. The Math Department also spent many years rebuilding how they sequence instruction to meet standards. They did this two years prior for Geometry. They continued this work, redefining the content of courses at the 9th and 10 grade level so that all students would get instruction on the standards necessary to be successful on the state assessment by 11th grade. The restructured course and content further this year, with more changes to take effect as of the start of the 2010-2011 school year.

In addition, the whole school went through a process this year (with the guidance of a consultant) to implement reading instruction and assessment into all subject areas. The whole school will do this again next year in writing, with the assistance of the work already done by the English Department.

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

The school has been in the process of creating assessments to measure student performance. The first major milestone in the process was reached in December of 2009 when all departments completed agreed-upon common assessments. We also developed common assessments in the spring to measure school-wide progress toward reading skills. This process is currently being supplemented with significant professional development on common assessments, recently completed by a core group of teachers in May of 2010.

**Our PLC structure requires teams to evaluate student data. We have used these structures at various team levels (content-area, department-wide, school-wide) in order to measure progress and inform instruction. We have PLC professional development training in place for July, 2010. Nine staff members will take part. We intend to train more staff through the use of this grant.**

**Our new school information system (Infinite Campus) has facilitated more comprehensive reporting of student progress. We experimented with this this year, as this system is new to us as of this current school year. We have also accessed the states data resources to better measure student progress. For instance, we have run comparisons between our school and its significant student subgroups against other like schools to gauge progress. We also compared our 11th grade results against the same cohort group's results in 8th grade three years ago.**

**We plan on using the grant to continue with this professional development for other untrained teachers. We want to now begin summer work further developing common assessments based on the principles of this new learning. We intend to expand the use of our software systems so that we can better measure group and individual progress.**

**Permissible activities - An LEA may also implement comprehensive instructional reform strategies:**

- **Conduct 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.**

**Currently this review process is conducted through the department PLC procedures. Departments and subject-level teams review parts of the curriculum, or the curriculum as a whole to see if students are meeting those goals, if instruction needs to be adjusted, or if elements of the curriculum need to be included or disposed.**

- **Implement a school-wide “response-to-intervention” model.**

**Our Pyramid of Interventions focuses teacher attention on students who begin to slip. There are a series of progressive interventions that teachers use to support a student, to the point of placement of a student in a formal small group tutorial in which the student can get remedial instruction. This is the first year of this process, and early results are showing a high degree of success. Students are placed in these interventions even from the beginning of their first day in 9th grade. We continue to refine and improve the system.**

- **Provide 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.**

Teachers receive information about students who are on plans (IEP,504, 157) which includes a description of the disability, how it adversely impacts a student's ability to learn and what are the appropriate accommodations to use with a student in the classroom or least restrictive environment. Case managers for students with a disability consult with classroom teachers about students' progress and teachers attend team meetings to discuss the development of goals and objectives for the student's plan. Professional development opportunities are provided for teachers and administrators during school district in service days, after school meeting time and during the summer.

Students with limited English proficiency are supported by an ELL teacher who works with the students during the school day to assist with the development of language skills, class assignments and the overall acclimation to the school learning culture and social environment. Formal and informal assessment is conducted by the ELL teacher to determine strengths and needs, and ELL plans are developed for teachers to provide the appropriate accommodations for these students in the classroom.

- Use and integrate technology-based supports and interventions as part of the instructional program.

Currently, we use some technology supports in the classroom. We have SMARTBoards in two of our World Language Classrooms. We have four more in some of our math classrooms. We have two mobile boards to which other teachers have access. We have two mobile labs with laptops that can serve a classroom. We also have three computer labs, though these three labs are dedicated to library use and the Information Technology Department. We also have some scattered use of other technology in some classrooms. For instance, our Physics teacher makes use of computerized probes. All of this relatively new and recent, and teachers are still in the process of learning how to use these tools best.

We have a new school information system that we have begun using to better track student progress. We also have begun using statewide data systems to do the same. Again, this is all new, and we are still learning how to use this most effectively.

Our intention is to continue learning how best to use these tools, and well as exploring the options for others like them. We believe that making this technology more widely available (SMARTBoards in more rooms, increasing our mobile laptop labs by four more sets, Senteo clicker systems, etc.) will greatly increase the benefits our students receive from these new tools.

In secondary schools (schools in Vermont with a 9-12 grade span)

- Increase rigor by offering opportunities for students to enroll in advanced coursework (such as Advanced Placement; International Baccalaureate; or science, technology, engineering, and mathematics courses, especially those that incorporate rigorous and relevant project, inquiry or design-based contextual learning opportunities), early-college high schools, dual enrollment programs or thematic learning academies that prepare students for college and careers,

**including by providing appropriate supports designed to ensure that low-achieving students may take advantage of these programs and coursework.**

**Currently, we have 16 options for students to take Advanced Placement courses. Over the past three years, between 24% and 29% of our juniors/ seniors have taken advantage of this opportunity.**

**We have also studied and looked to develop interdisciplinary courses within the building. We ran a new class this year for juniors, American Voices, which combined social studies and English for a full year course in heterogeneous setting. We are taking that to the next level in 2010 – 2011. We have a pilot program for a group of about 65 freshmen. Three teachers (English, math and science) will be working together with these students through the semester. They will be aligning curriculum, instruction, and assessment, as well as aligning these courses to the school's six academic expectations. The intention is for this to be the model, with development of other partnerships to follow.**

**In order to meet the needs of these two projects, we had to make some structural changes to the building. We tore down a stationary wall and replaced it with a folding partition, allowing us to use a two room space as a one room setting for these larger groups. We will need to continue these structural adjustments if we are going to expand these opportunities.**

**Over the past six years we have also studied the feasibility of academy-style structures. We are very interested in continuing this research, especially in the area of STEM models and through International Studies Schools Network of the Asia Society, through which we have had discussions over the past two years. We are also in the process (June, 2010) of making a stronger inter-school connection with a school in Germany. We have made a stronger connection this year with a school in Kenya, hosting a week of professional development training for those teachers in our building in April, 2010.**

- Improve student transition from middle to high school through summer transition programs or freshman academies.**

**Currently we have a transition program in place that exposes all students in 8th grade to the expectations and structure that they will be facing the following year in high school. We have high school students come to the middle school on multiple occasions to speak about their experiences. We have days in which all students in 8th grade travel to the high school and shadow an upperclassman. We start school with an orientation that is geared specifically for the freshmen, followed by a weekly mentor check-in over the first quarter.**

**We also have a 6-week summer program for students in 8th grade who are achieving below the standard. We started this year in identifying new freshmen who are achieving below the standard, giving them a tutorial/ study assistance slot immediately upon entering high school.**

**We also are instituting a new pilot program this year for a group of 60 freshmen. There will encounter an interdisciplinary approach from three subject area teachers (math, English, science) with a curriculum tied to the school's six academic expectation. The team will also be exploring supports tied to improving relationships and connections for students to school.**

- **Increase graduation rates through research based initiatives (e.g., credit-recovery programs, re-engagement strategies, smaller learning communities, competency-based instruction and performance-based assessments, and acceleration of basic reading and mathematics skills).**

**We have the following alternative routes to graduation for students from Rutland High School:**

- **Early Graduation**
- **Additional Semester(s)**
- **High School Completion Program via adult basic Ed (act 176)**
- **GED**
- **Stafford Technical Center**
- **Dual enrollment in CCV or CSC**
- **Alternative Education Program at the Howe Center (RHS satellite)**
- **SUCCESS**
- **Adult Diploma Program**
- **Community High School of Vermont**
- **Smokey House**
- **Vermont Academy of Science and Technology (VAST) @ VTC**
- **Individual tutoring at Longfellow**

- **Establish early-warning systems to identify students who may be at risk of failing to achieve to high standards or graduate.**

**This year we improved our system for identifying students who are at risk of failing. We created a “Pyramid of Interventions” system that works toward that end. Students get a progressive series of interventions that work to make certain that students are not falling behind on graduation requirements. These range from simply contacting parents to required tutorials to the facilitation of some of the options for alternation education mentioned above.**

### **3. Increasing learning time and creating community-oriented schools**

**Required activities - The LEA must complete the following actions:**

- **Establish schedules and strategies that provide increased learning time (as defined below).**

**As mentioned, we established a Tutorial/ Study Assistance system this year. This gives students at least another 75 minutes per day of instruction or extra help in a small group setting. It is open to any student who desires help, and it is required on any student whom a teacher believes is at risk of not meeting standards.**

**Our end-of-the-year program, the YES plan, offers opportunities for remedial instruction to avoid semester failures.**

**We are interested in exploring and funding more opportunities for this kind of work, considering such tutorial help on Saturdays or during detention times.**

- **Provide ongoing mechanisms for family and community engagement.**

**We have an established series of open house opportunities. We have a large number of nights to bring the community in to see students' performances and work, such as a Science Fair, numerous artistic performances and exhibitions, etc. Our athletic program draws parents and community members to our buildings and in support of our students. Our Guidance Department offers a series of nights and email notification of learning for parents and students on information regarding colleges and afterschool decisions. We have a regular local cable access program. We have a relationship with the local newspaper that allows us to spread the word on components of the school's offerings, as well as serving as a forum for issues facing the school. We are also beginning to develop a similar relationship with a local (Burlington) television station. We use an automated phone service to remind families of significant events and news. We use the mail to keep parents current with important events and academic news. This year we concentrated on improving the quality and quantity of information available through our school's website. We have an improved parent portal component of our school's new student information system (Infinite Campus).**

**Permissible activities – An LEA may also implement other strategies that extend learning time and create community-oriented schools:**

- **Partner with parents and parent organizations, faith- and community-based organizations, health clinics, other State or local agencies, and others to create safe school environments that meet students' social, emotional, and health needs.**

**Rutland High School works collaboratively with the Vermont Family Network, the Community Action Program, Rutland Mental Health and Vocational Rehabilitation to meet students' social, emotional, health and education/transition needs. Parents are invited to team meetings to discuss needs and services that support the student and the family.**

- **Extend or restructure the school day so as to add time for such strategies as advisory periods that build relationships between students, faculty, and other school staff.**

**Our recent intervention system has created unintended consequence or allowing for better opportunities for student/ staff relationship building. This was finding in a survey of the program in January.**

**We also have a standing program that matches staff members to high risk students, making sure that there is a staff member in the building that keeps contact with such students, looking out for their welfare.**

**We also started a mentoring system for our incoming freshmen. Its purpose was to make certain that there was an adult in the building that could serve to make certain these students got off to a good start.**

**We have a pilot program for 65 freshmen, beginning next school year. Part of the purpose will be to create a sense of relationships with three core teachers. These teachers will also be exploring a structure that will allow further opportunities for relationship building.**

**Our two week end-of-the-year program, the YES Plan, serves as another opportunity for students and teachers to connect outside of a traditional classroom setting. Classes are almost doubled in length. The focus is on experiential learning. Students chose course based on personal interest. This allows for greater opportunities for students and adult connections.**

**We also have an extensive system of clubs, athletics, and other co-curriculars that serve to engage our students in the school, giving them yet another reason to commit to school.**

**Next year a staff member enrolled and a school administration course at Castleton State College will be studying and researching systems of teacher advisories. We plan to see how this might be appropriate for Rutland High School, and if so, how we can structure this with the schedule and connect it to curricular goals.**

- **Implement approaches to improve school climate and discipline, such as implementing a system of positive behavioral supports or taking steps to eliminate bullying and student harassment.**

**The school has a number of components of managing and directing student behaviors to best access learning. At the far end of the spectrum, the SUCCESS school, a branch of Rutland High School, helps students with serious emotional and behavioral needs. Students there are supported by educators and staff members from Rutland Mental Health. Another support for our students comes from another branch of our high school, The Alternative Education Program (AEP) located at the Howe Center Campus. This structure allows for a small group setting in a flexible schedule, helping students meet academic expectations while gearing them to enter the work force.**

**Within the main building, we have six school counselors to serve our 1,040 students. One of these counselors deals specifically with students who are identified as having unique emotional needs.**

**One of our school administrators deals directly with student behavioral concerns. He works in collaboration with another school administrator who covers all special education concerns. These administrators garner collaboration through the counseling, teaching, and special education staff as they work to support our students.**

- **Expand the school program to offer full-day kindergarten or pre-kindergarten.**

**The district has a full-day kindergarten program in place. We also have a required EEE program in partnership with Rutland Country Head Start.**

#### **4. Providing operational flexibility and sustained support**

**Required activities - The LEA must complete the following actions:**

- **Give the school sufficient operational flexibility (such as staffing, calendars/time, and budgeting) to implement fully a comprehensive approach to substantially improve student achievement outcomes and increase high school graduation rates.**

**The district offers the school operational flexibility in regard to improving student outcomes. The district negotiated a contract the set four hours per month for use as meeting time. This allows the teams in the building to meet together to carry out Professional Learning Community-style work. Currently that work takes place at least two hours per month, and more often this year three or four hours per month as the school moves its meeting agendas away from administrative agendas and more toward analyzing and improving student results.**

**In addition, the district has five inservice days per year. The majority of that time is spent on new learning and professional development. The school used that time this year to improve teacher knowledge of new technologies available to teachers, as well as to work in departments and whole faculty sessions analyzing student results and gaining a comprehension of the requirements needed to improve learning.**

**Class size is currently at about 19 students per class, a reasonable amount to ensure students get adult attention. The tutorial/ study assistance system allows for extra attention in smaller group settings for a significant portion of the day (every day for 75 minutes).**

**This year the school's transformation team (Vision Quest) also started an exploration of web-based coursework. We continue to keep that option in mind, though we await the outcome of the pilot that the state is currently implementing. We this in mind, we are considering the possibility of coursework outside the traditional schedule, something our school's alternative division already offers its students.**

- **Ensure that the school receives ongoing, intensive technical assistance and related support from the LEA, the SEA, or a designated external lead partner organization (such as a school turnaround organization or an EMO).**

**We used a Vermont-based consulting group Teaching All Secondary Students (TASS) this year to consider plans for improving student learning. The led to a concrete partnership between the school's leadership and one TASS consultant who advised RHS on the direction of implementing the model for the school's reading expectation.**

**Our School Support Coordinator served as an outside consultant with our group of twenty teachers who went through group facilitation training using the Critical Friends model. She also brought in a second consultant to take the lead on that training by the end of the school year.**

**The School Support Coordinator held quarterly "Principal Learning Communities" that the RHS principal attended regularly. This offered new learning and sharing on strategies to measure and improve instruction.**

**The principal met at least twice this year with the local SEA to discuss options to move forward. Our SEA, leader as well of the local state college's Castleton Center for Schools, continues to offer advice direction for outside help and assistance.**

**We intend to continue making use of these resources. We have a tentative plan in place for an outside consultant to lead a group of eleven teachers through a study of differentiated instruction and how it might be applied in their classrooms. We are also considering how we might use consultants to guide us through the study and implementation in some form a STEM model and the model offered by the International Studies School Network.**

**Permissible activities - The LEA may also implement other strategies for providing operational flexibility and intensive support:**

- **Allow the school to be run under a new governance arrangement, such as a turnaround division within the LEA or SEA.**

**This school does not see as necessary a new governance arrangement.**

- **Implement a per-pupil school-based budget formula that is weighted based on student needs.**

**Our goal is to help all our students. We currently have a significant portion of our budget geared toward students with special needs. We also have our intervention system in place, requiring students to get more access to help and teachers if teachers find that students need it. However, we allow that intervention system to be open to all students if they feel they want that help. Our overarching goal is to move the whole school forward: to improve achievement for all students at every level. We want our students who currently struggle to move up to the standard. But we also want our students who meet the standard to move even further forward to meet higher expectations.**

- 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:*

**Requirement 1**

**Section 2**

**b.**

- 1) **What are some of the successes you have had with respect to implementing your plan?**

**The school created a system of intervention, the Pyramid of Interventions. This system was developed by the school's transformation team, the Vision Quest team. Within this system of checks and supports, the major component was two opportunities for assistance directly from our teachers: the Tutorial Program and the Study Assistance program. Through careful scheduling, the school made sure teachers would be available to help students during any period of the school day.**

**In the Tutorial Program, teachers from the four core areas (English, Math, Science and Social Studies) operate separate rooms every block of the day. Prior to the start of the year, students were identified who needed this intervention, even students coming into the school from the 8th grade. During the semester, students who progressed through the Pyramid and who still needed interventions were placed in tutorials when it was determined that prior interventions were not having the desired effect, and when students needed help understanding and mastering material. Over the course of the first semester, there were 270 student spots assigned to tutorial while 236 spots were assigned during the second semester. That means that students were required to attend tutorial as part of their schedule. Some students were assigned to more than one tutorial, depending upon their needs. In addition, we opened tutorial to any student who wanted to drop in for extra help. We did not keep a count of students who used tutorial by choice, but anecdotal evidence tells that this option became more popular as the semester progressed.**

**In the study assistance program, all non-core teachers were assigned to cover every period of the day. Students were placed in study assistance when they were capable of mastering the material, but they were either unwilling to perform the work or perhaps did not have a home setting that allowed or encouraged good study habits and work performance. During the first semester, we had 27 enrolled spots for students in study assistance and this number increased to 41 spots for the second semester. We also opened the doors so that any student could drop in for a quiet place to do work.**

**We surveyed both students and teachers to get a sense of how successful these two interventions were. Teachers spoke about student grades improving; about an increase in relationship-building with students; and of the opportunity for collegiality and interdisciplinary sharing as two teachers normally take care of each room, “Yes, we are able to get to know students other than those in our classes, which is a very positive thing. Also, the message seems to be received that school work and grades are important.... I built positive relationships with the students in my tutorial. I found myself rooting for them on tests and being a mentor to some of them for things other than science work.... Most improved their grades, and some were no longer required to be in tutorial. My best one was one of my own practical students who passed 1st quarter with a 60 (a gift) and then was in tutorial 2nd quarter and earned an 84!.... There was a huge jump in confidence on the part of the students..... I think that the tutorials were a huge success. Freshman who struggled in the beginning were already in tutorials, which helped them transition into the high school. It was also another adult that connected with these high-need students.”**

**Student made similar comments. They spoke about having a place to go to get work done; having someone to help them and to ask questions; and simply being required to attend and get work completed, “Tutorial was the extra time I needed to do my work, and if I needed help the teachers were there to help.... I think it improved because I was taking the time to actually do my homework; with all the stressors I have at home I was just leaving my homework out. I think that tutorial has helped me a lot by giving me the chance to better my education. ... I was able to ask my teacher questions about my homework that we didn't get to cover in class. I was also given extra time to work on a multitude of problems so I could rehearse the course materials.... I actually did my work.”**

**As of the time of this writing, results are not yet available for the second semester. However, the results of the work of tutorial and study assistance during the first semester – the hard numbers – were quite positive. Out of the combined tutorial spots (270) and study assistance spots (27) – a total of 297 student assignments – only 29 students went on to fail their sending class. Thus, these interventions resulted in a 90% success rate.**

**Another area of focus during the early fall, and one in which we believe we achieved success, was the development of a more comprehensive approach to the implementation of the October NECAP tests. We changed the schedule for testing from previous years, where the test was given to juniors in a concentrated and demanding two-day timetable. In this previous scenario, only our juniors attended school during these two days. This year we changed that schedule. We spread the test over two weeks, testing only one session per day. For freshmen and sophomores, our math and English departments developed a curriculum that helped provide test-taking strategies for this specific test, as well as to begin a multiyear process of measuring student progress from 8th**

**grade toward eleventh grade Grade Expectations. This then allowed us to provide our seniors with time to meet with counselors and prepare for life-after-high-school plans.**

**Additionally, our Faculty Cabinet developed plans to find ways to motivate students to commit themselves to doing well on the NECAP. As students get older, it is increasingly difficult to encourage them to apply themselves on this strenuous academic exercise when their results are not in any way tied to any future plans. We looked to develop a sense of motivation to do well. We avoided being punitive, and instead looked toward interests that students had. We offered a menu of rewards that provided something of substance (a parking pass) to the reward of time (senior privileges). It did appear during the testing that students generally were more committed and took the test seriously. Our fall NECAP results demonstrated a very positive improvement in most areas. Not only have the 2009 results increased greatly from 2008, but this cohort group demonstrated growth as compared to state average over their results from 8th grade.**

**We have done a great deal of work within our departments and our Professional Learning Communities. The English Department worked to make certain that the course objectives and the course sequence in all English classes matched the state's Grade Expectations and Standards. The resulting expectation is that every class teaches to and completes the appropriate grade-level GEs.**

**In the same fashion, the Math Department readjusted its course offerings and sequencing in order to meet the same goals. We eliminated the "Prep for Algebra" class. All students now work under the expectation that they will complete 9th grade Algebra GEs and 10th grade Geometry GEs prior to the end of their sophomore year. We redesigned the course offerings further for next year, eliminating two courses, thus consolidating and streamlining our entry points. Our overriding goal is that all students meet state Grade Expectations.**

**Currently we are solidifying plans to get training and further education on the benefits and techniques of differentiated instruction. We have a summer course planned. We also are talking about how we might get a group to continue work on the topic through the next school year.**

**Within our Professional Learning Community Model, we have structured teams in various formations to serve multiple purposes. To facilitate the process, we use Critical Friends protocols where appropriate. We used whole-school faculty meetings to get clarity on the PLC purpose and procedure using the DuFour model (December). We have also used this particular time to break into small cross-team, cross-subject area groups to do further learning (examining the concept of Expectations - September) and to gather feedback and input for our school transformation work (November). We have a team of teachers who will be attending a Dufour model PLC training in Boston in July to further advance our work in this area.**

**At the department level, we met as 7-12 groups in part to cover some of our procedural issues. But the emphasis this year has been on developing our PLC procedures, developing new learning, solving problems through Critical Friends facilitation, and examining student results while adjusting instruction. This occurred in every department, and we organized our administrator**

staff to meet with, assist, and participate in all department meetings. Examples of such work include the English Department analyzing NECAP writing scores; the Social Studies Department clarifying and planning how, when, and for what purpose they would use common assessments; and the Science Department working through a protocol to solve the problem of developing student engagement in the NECAP exam.

Our PLCs that are grade level/ subject-area specific focused on continuing the development of the DuFour approach in clarifying curricular goals, assessments, and the response to results. We did have some difficulty meshing the DuFour model that we had been working to establish in previous years with the Critical Friends training that we received last summer. That issue will be covered below. However, in mentioning successes of this process, we established a regular meeting time for these groups (two meetings per month), and we clarified the purpose and procedures of the system. Teams have met to get clarity on course curricular objectives. They all have established four common assessments by this mid-year. Some teams were ahead of others in this respect, and those that were have met to look at student results and the consequent adjustment in instruction.

Additionally, we have used CFG protocols to facilitate this process, and when teams “get stuck,” we used protocols to help remedy obstacles. For example, our 9th grade science team ran into some difficulty as team members could not come to agreement about which curricular elements of a unit to include, as well as the corresponding assessment. School administration and other CFG facilitators got together to make a plan on how to help this PLC group. Subsequently, the entire Science Department ran a protocol that examined and offered suggestions for the difficulties that this grade-level group encountered.

This entire process, from the implementation of tutorials to the strategy for attacking the NECAP test to the refinement of the PLC process, has been examined continuously throughout this year by the school’s various leadership teams. In particular, the Faculty Cabinet and the school’s administrative team have been conscientious in establishing procedures and parameters and then refining and streamlining the objectives and the process by which we get there. These two groups are using the data of results gathered to determine progress. For instance, we surveyed students and teachers on the benefits and hoped for adjustments to the tutorial and study assistance program. We met regularly to review progress and refine the process. We used the data to plan professional development for the end of this school year and into next year, both through our association with TASS and through our school-based plan to further strengthen our commitment to the DuFour PLC model. Effectively, these two groups are functioning as another level of a Professional Learning Community.

Another aspect of our school’s action plan was to develop a team that would look at and research grading practices within our school and outside our school as per best practice. The Grading Committee met throughout the year. They have advanced three proposals that will be implemented during 2010-11. In an effort to minimize the number of assignments not completed teachers will be allowed, and encouraged, to give grades of “Incomplete” instead. A number of teachers will also begin setting grade books up to accurately reflect student learning in specific areas (standards) as opposed to by type of assignment. Most importantly, they have created a plan to move the grading discussion school-wide next year for more comprehensive changes in 2011-12.

**In another major task for the entire school community, we implemented a new school information system, Infinite Campus, to help us keep better track of student progress. During the second semester we opened the “parent portal” portion of this system to help facilitate communication between school and home, thus aiding in our efforts to engage parent support of our educational objectives. The entire implementation of this new school information system required a great deal of attention and planning, as well as professional development and effort to learn the system on the part of our teachers. We believe the payoff will be better data and better communication between home and school.**

**We trained a teacher in SMART technology, and our Math Department implemented the use of for SMARTboards and laptops to help facilitate department goals. The World Language Department is currently doing the same, having written for and earned a grant that will purchase SMARTboards and laptops for their department. Additionally, the Physical Education Department applied for and earned a grant that allowed them to purchase a heart rate monitor system. This will facilitate the individualization of formative assessment, allowing reporting directly back to students so that they can monitor and measure their progress as they move through Physical Education objectives.**

**We added a second mobile laptop lab, giving us five labs in this building. We have poured significant resources into our school’s website, training teachers to use the site to communicate better to students, to home, and to the world. We are currently learning how to use the Data Warehouse to allow us better manipulation of the information available on student progress. We have introduced the use of Skype, Wikis, and the Vermont Interactive Learning Network to assist instruction. This all falls under our Technology Plan, the overriding goal being to create a technology-rich environment for 21st century skills.**

**The administrative team and the Vision Quest Team Chair met with TASS in order to develop a plan for further professional development and a means by which TASS can act as a consultancy for school leadership. Currently, TASS is helping our administrative team align DOE and NEASC objectives. Specifically, we have developed a plan through which we will integrate the NEASC-developed academic expectations into the everyday instruction and assessment system. The plan is to use the PLC system to make this a reality.**

**The Vision Quest team, a group of teachers and administrators who are leading the school in the transformation process, has continued its work through our first semester. This team developed and implemented the Pyramid of Interventions, which became the process through which we determined whether a student would encounter the major intervention of getting help through a tutorial or a study assistance room. Additionally, this team has researched how we might best use technology to facilitate student learning. A subgroup researched and brought in a representative of a web-based classroom cooperative. We are interested in finding ways in which we can help students with all range of needs; from those who have difficulty in the traditional classroom, to those who are so far advanced that they could benefit from outside challenges that a traditional curricular structure could not provide. This team is now looking at the system that the state is developing to see how we could potentially use it next year.**

**In addition, the Vision Quest team developed a plan to facilitate interdisciplinary collaboration, experiments in student grouping, examination of novel approaches to scheduling, and the means by which we can improve teacher/student relationship-building. We have created a freshmen “Pilot” team for next year that will consist of math, science and English.**

**Finally, this school has benefited from the tremendous support and guidance that our district’s Administrative Cabinet provides. Last year, the Administrative Cabinet studied the system of the DuFour PLC model and using assessment to better student learning. District administration continues to hold the expectation that our school implement and refine this model. It is devoting resources toward the furtherance of this model with a plan for professional development early this summer. It allowed for and expected that we meet regularly through the month at a school level to practice within our multilevel PLC’s. It helped facilitate a district-wide meeting time and made clear the expectation that the middle school and high school would meet and collaborate together. It is the clear expectation from district administration that we use student data in order to assess and improve our instructional delivery. As a district leadership group, we work together to develop new learning. For instance, in the second half of 2009, we studied the book Outliers with an eye for applying its concepts to what we do in our schools. The school board is currently reading that text and examining it as a group as they help formulate the direction for the district. This research-based approach and application has become a regular practice in our district. Finally, our Administrative Cabinet group places a special emphasis on looking at the way we assess teacher development and growth. In past years and this year we have spent time looking at our written evaluation work, clarifying our objectives for what it means to be a skilled teacher, and conferring together on how to improve our teachers’ ability levels.**

**2) What challenges have you encountered with respect to implementing your restructuring plan? You may want to refer to the barriers you identified last year as part of the data retreat process. How well are the action steps addressing and /or overcoming these barriers?**

**One great challenge that we had to overcome as a school was finding time in the schedule to implement the major structural changes that made up the substance of our action plan. Previously, the school temporarily scheduled a minimal amount of early release time twice a month in order to complete work necessary for NEASC accreditation. We determined at the beginning of this year that this would not continue; the reason being that release time took away from student time in the classroom. We then configured the system so that teachers would meet four times a month at the end of the school day to carry out the work of PLC groups, department groups, and the whole faculty group. In addition, prior to this year, teachers in effect had four blocks available to their discretion over a two day period. In order to create a schedule that would allow for the tutorial/study assistance intervention to take place during the school day, we assigned teachers an intervention during one of these four blocks.**

**With these changes in mind, it was conceivable that this could have become a very difficult transition for the staff. However, our staff is to be complimented highly for the professional approach it took toward both a change in schedule and its willingness to commit to improving student outcomes. In our tutorial staff survey, only one teacher noted a loss of time as a problem. Most**

negative outcomes of the current system spoke about the large number of students in tutorial as opposed to the number in study assistance. That is something we already are working to address. Thus, it was clear that Rutland High School's faculty is dedicated, as evidenced in the structures that the school developed collaboratively and the inspiring commitment that teachers took in helping students be successful.

Another challenge that we are continuing to work on, albeit with success so far, is changing the perception of how we approach our use of the resource of meeting time. We are seeking to unite our efforts between the middle school and high school by requiring both staffs to meet together. This can be a challenge due to the lack of familiarity of the two teacher groups with each other, as well as the differing challenges each group faces with the age level they teach. Additionally, we're trying to move away from department and faculty meetings that focus on nuts-and-bolts issues. This is a challenge, as there are always systems issues that need to be addressed. In some cases there are topics (budget, community concerns, etc.) that need a time and a place to be addressed. Likewise, there are state mandates (Suicide Prevention Training) that require our attention during some of our meeting time. All of these are not directly connected to our primary objective of improving student learning. However, both at the department level and at the whole school level, we are making a commitment to keep that goal as our focus during these meeting times.

The start of the year brought with it what perhaps one might call a test of whether there was a commitment to using our meeting time to its fullest capability. As a building, we have tried to establish the concept that these meeting times are very important to our progress. Thus, it has become clear that these four Wednesdays per month are a time to which we must practice fidelity.

A major issue that occurred during the semester was the alignment between the Critical Friends training and the previously established DuFour model of how a PLC is practiced. We had confusion among our teachers who attended the Critical Friends training, as they perceived that Critical Friends protocols should be used in our PLCs to address new learning from research or to solve general education or school issues. As a building, we want PLCs to follow the DuFour model precisely. Specifically, we want the focus of PLCs to be on examining the student results of teacher collaboration in instruction and assessment. This confusion in purpose was an issue for some PLC groups through November. At that point, we restated our objectives to the faculty for the entire PLC process. Currently, we feel we have established that clarity of purpose, although there continues to be a desire among some groups not to be as focused on directly examining student learning as the DuFour process requires. We will continue to push to refine this process within all our PLC groups. Thus, we intend further training within the context of the DuFour model this coming summer.

We have reviewed our progress with our tutorial and study assistance rooms. Our teacher survey produced similarity in the following comments, as teachers mentioned tutorial numbers, student progress, and communication being issues, "Sometimes I believe that a student is in tutorial longer than he/she needs to be because there is confusion as to when the student has met the requirements of the teacher.... The communication between teachers can be good and can be bad. It depends on who the teacher is. Though we are in the same department, it does not mean everyone is a good communicator." Thus, one area that we would like to work on for next year is improving the communication between tutorials/ study assistance and the sending teacher. We want to

**find the most efficient way to make sure that the teacher who is working with a student in remediation is clear and informed about the work that the student is doing in his classroom. As mentioned above, we are also trying to balance our student numbers in the tutorial rooms and the study assistance rooms. Currently, tutorial is attracting far more students than study assistance. We moved teachers from study assistance into tutorials in order to improve the student/ teacher ratio. Finally, as we iron out this process, we will need to pay even more attention to the small minority of students (10% of tutorial placements) who were not successful in responding to this intervention.**

**3) The Effective Schools Study emphasizes the importance of an interdependent and collaborative culture to support achievement at high levels for all students. What progress do you see in the development of this kind of culture in your school? The information you obtained from the PULSE survey should help you reflect on the status of various aspects of your school culture. Describe the successes of your most highly functioning teams (TLC). Describe the challenges of your least successful teams.**

**Our Effective Schools Study reported a very positive outlook on the collaborative nature of our faculty and the culture of our school. We had a 99% participation rate in this survey. The following is a summary of our results**

- At least 75% of the staff felt that we have a common mission and set of values that is focused on teaching and student learning.**
- Again, at least 75% of the staff believed we have a culture that is built on interdependent trust.**
- A very uniform majority (75% +) believed that our school demonstrates the qualities necessary for collaborative teaming. The one sub-topic that produced a wide range of responses, from negative to positive, was the question of whether our teams meet during the contacted school day. This is a question that some might have, as we meet after school four times per month. However, this meeting time is covered in the contract. However, as mentioned above, this was not a structure that was in place last year.**
- 96% of the staff responding said that their instructional team meets at least every other week to collaborate on improving teaching and learning. 50% of those responding said they meet weekly to do the same.**
- At least 75% of staff responding said that the school has systems of intervention and prevention in place that assure the academic success of all students.**
- The least 75% of staff responding said the school uses data-based decision making using continuous assessment.**
- At least 75% of staff responding said that professional development is embedded in daily work. In one subtopic of contention, there was a wide range of answers, both negative and positive, that conflicted over whether teachers are involved in designing professional development.**
- At least 75% of the staff believed that Principal Leadership is focused on student learning.**

- **And at least 75% of the staff believed that the school possesses the quality of participative leadership that is focused on teaching and learning. Again however, there was a wide range of responses, both negative and positive, to the subtopic of whether teachers could make good decisions regarding teaching and learning without being inhibited by layers of bureaucracy.**

**The survey confirms the positive, constructive, and professional approach that the staff takes toward teaching and learning. At the very least, the development of these new systems of support this year, as well as the continued proactive approach toward refining the PLC process is a testament to the professionalism that this staff possesses. We hope to see even greater realization and recognition of these attributes of effective teaching when the survey is completed a second time and we can then view growth over time.**

**These positive perceptions are evident in the reality of the various PLCs that meet at every level in the building (grade-level/subject area; department; whole faculty; Faculty Cabinet; Vision Quest; Administrative Cabinet). Some of these successes were mentioned above. The school has as a very high priority the objective of institutionalizing into the culture these very same practices of effective schools.**

**Certainly, the progress toward this objective is not without bumps or detours in. Again, some of those difficulties were mentioned above. But at every event in which specific teams ran into difficulties, the school and its teams are using a collaborative approach in order to help each other solve the problems and obstacles that we encounter. We are committed to building a school climate and culture that works together in furthering the academic achievement of all our students.**

**4) What support might you need to complete the implementation of this plan and to develop year two of your restructuring plan for 2010-11?**

**Since our PLC work is the centerpiece of our school improvement plan, we believe it is extremely important for us to be able to have the money and the time to devote to improving how we conduct PLCs. This means that summer professional development will be integral in moving the process forward. The support we need therefore, is approval both of the concept and the use of funds for this purpose.**

**We also want to continue to gain a better understanding of how students learn best. This is been one of the strands we are following with our work with TASS. We have a number of teachers who will be participating in some professional development through TASS with Dartmouth professor Dr. Christian Jernstedt. We are also considering how we might access Dr. Jernstedt during the school year, at least for a short time for the whole staff. Also, we are looking to find ways to work off of this**

professional development in cognitive science in order to apply it directly to a better understanding of differentiated instruction in the classroom. Again, the support we need is the financial resources and the approval of our efforts in this regard.

Now that our common assessments are complete and in place, we eventually need to focus on refining the quality of those assessments. This will take time and, we believe more professional development. We recently sent a team of teachers to a “Common Assessment” training through Solution Tree. However, we will have to assess our progress there, and perhaps hone in even further in order to make certain we are assessing fairly, with validity, and with reliability.

We need to continue to look at how we grade or measure the success of our students. This is work that we’re starting this year. The implications of considering change in our current system are great. Thus, we will need time to research these practices, as well as reeducating our staff and our community and then implementing any changes that we deem necessary. Again, financial resources will probably be required in the future as we go through the process.

Our Vision Quest team has made plans to study collaborative teaching opportunities, using an interdisciplinary curriculum, using a flexible schedule, and developing structures that help provide better teacher/student relationships. Again, we appreciate support for these plans that allow us to study what works best for Rutland High Schools students as we look toward transforming the school’s systems to meet all our students’ needs.

That being said, we believe that the work in school improvement that has been done at RHS in the recent past, as well as the planning that we are making currently, has led to very positive results in student achievement and the development of a collaborative culture of learning. We hope that we can continue to receive a supportive approach from the Department of Education for our efforts. We are using what is considered best practices in the field, combined with an examination of data from the structures we have instituted. In other words, Rutland High School and the district that supports it is a practicing Professional Learning Community. The Department’s supportive and collaborative assistance in helping us grow will be imperative to our success.**RCPS SIG WORK**

- 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.)  
**May 11, 2010 Minuts of the meeting of the RCPS Board of School Commissioners. Attached.**
  - 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.)

**June 14 letter of support from REA President, Ellen Greene, attached**

- 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)

**Financial Capacity Beyond SIG/Sustainability:**

**Rutland City Public Schools has been able to support content level coaches in Math and Literacy in grades K-8 for the past 5 years. Those positions are supported within our School-wide plan via the the Consolidated Federal Programs grants. Any investment made in school improvement needs to be of the kind that will be sustainable in and of itself, with the possible exception of technological structure and data use. The district, and we are certain, the state will see an ongoing restriction of funds flowing to schools.**

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

**See "Evaluation handbook 2009" and "Admdin Eval Survey." Note: the admin eval survey is done on a yearly basis for each leader in the district. In each case, all of the faculty and staff who work "under" that leader are asked to complete and sign the survey. The superintendent of schools is presented with the data and a summary done by the leader. That information is used to inform the evaluation of the leader. In addition, the leader comiles all the information and turns in back to their "subordinates" within a discussion of professional, personal, and organizational improvement and goal setting. The most valuable input for the leaders arrives in the comment sections.**

- 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.)

**The staff on average is relatively experienced. There are about 86 professional staff members. About four teachers have two years or less experience. In recent years there was some turnover as a very mature staff moved into retirement. Those teachers were mainly replaced by teachers in the mid-range for experience, many as transfers from other schools. Thus, the general experience level of the staff is good.**

**In addition, since there are a significant number of staff members new to the building, there has been opportunity for renewal and looking creatively at instruction. This is true even for the mature teachers who have been in the building for an extended period of time. The school has a transformation team that has been in existence for the past three years. A wide selection of staff members belong to it. This group of about twenty teachers has helped develop a "grass roots approach" – or faculty inspired approach to change in the school. They created a new intervention system, looked again at curriculum alignment, and developed a pilot program for next year that explores teaming and interdisciplinary work.**

The school is led by the Faculty Cabinet, a twelve member team made up of department heads, district leaders, and school administration. This year that group took on the responsibility of furthering the progress toward the Commissioner's Required Actions. They implemented, reviewed and adjusted new components of the support structure that helped improve the school. This group helps evaluate and determine the future course of action for the school.

In addition, the school has seven teacher leaders who have recently completed administrative certification. There are two more teachers who begin this process this summer. These teachers have been instrumental in carrying out the transformation process.

Finally, the school is led by a four-person administrative team. The principal is completing his first year as the building leader. He has five years administrative experience, teaching in this building for six year prior to becoming an administrator. The other three associate principals have longer tenures as administrators. One is leaving her position at the end of the school year, soon to be replace by a district-level administrator moving back to this building-based position.

In summary, there is a significant number of staff members who have the interest, the skills, the experience, and the inclination to keep moving transformation forward. In fact, this staff has already made significant strides in this direction. The School Improvement Grant would allow this staff to continue the good work it has already started.

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

**Rutland City Public Schools has partnerships with the following institutions and collaboratives:**

- Southwest Vermont Curriculum Coordinator's Collaborative ~ Regional ESA
- o Assistant Superintendent Rob Bliss is the Chair
- o Rutland City Public Schools is the fiscal agent
- Southwest Vermont Superintendent's Association
- o Superintendent Mary Moran is the Treasurer
- Castleton State College ~ Professional Development School relationship and longstanding community

partner in a mutually beneficial relationship.

- College of St. Joseph

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

*Currently, Rutland High School has established four hours per month to allow for teacher collaboration. This means that once per week, teachers meet in a variety of group settings to collaborate and work on furthering department and building objectives. Specifically, teachers meet at grade-level, content-focused teams two hours per month in Professional*

*Learning Communities. Departments meet one hour per month in a grade 7-12 structure, bringing together the district's middle school and high school. The school uses the last hour to work on school-wide initiatives, this past year working in mixed groups (grade/ content area) or departments on new learning and on implementing stronger instruction and assessment of the school's Reading expectation.*

*Thus, the opportunity is available for teams to collaborate and to conduct job-embedded professional development.*

*The school currently is continuing the process of offering professional development opportunities. A significantly-sized group of staff members (about 20) are taking part in professional development in the late spring/ early summer. Already one group of eight traveled to Boston to participate in a two-day DuFour training on common assessments. Another group of nine will continue with this thrust, traveling again to Boston for a three-day DuFour training on Professional Learning Communities. A third group of eight is going to a two-day training in Stowe, VT, the focus on Brain Research and the implications for learning. This is a conference presented by Dartmouth professor Chris Jernstedt, held by the Vermont Higher Education Collaborative.*

*We have tentative plans for next year on how to continue this professional development work. We will be working on improving writing instruction and assessment next year, the guidance coming from the English department. The groups that do the above-described professional development this summer will be bringing their new learning back to their departments and their PLC groups. We have tentative plans for a group of eleven teachers to do professional development on differentiated instruction, this under the guidance of an outside consultant. We also have a pilot project of three teachers working collaboratively in developing a unified, interdisciplinary curriculum. They will be under the guidance of a fourth teacher who will be on sabbatical this year for this sole purpose. We have built into their schedule some collaborative time, more than other teachers have, in order to facilitate the implementation of their work.*

*We have needs to keep this moving forward. We will need a significant amount of money to train the great majority (if not all) staff in the professional development mentioned above (common assessments, PLC process, brain research, differentiated instruction). There will be a need to fund the pilot project so that these four teachers can have time to coordinate and collaborate beyond the time allowed during the school day. They would benefit greatly by having extended time for summer work in 2010.*

*We also have a variety of projects that we would like to fund with the School Improvement Grant. We intend to expand the interdisciplinary pilot project to the whole school. We need funding for teachers to get professional development and do that work in the summer of 2011. We want to use funds to have the English, Math, and Science Departments do a great deal of summer work in developing and implementing a NECAP preparation program for our 9th and 10th grade students. We strongly believe our students would benefit from time for our teachers to work this summer and the summers of 2011/ 2012 in improving the common assessments that we have in place, refining them based on the new learning that they did or that they will receive over the next three years.*

*We have a long-standing interest in looking for structures to improve relationships that support students. We would like to fund the time needed to research teacher advisories, and then the time to develop a program of implementation that would tie into and support the whole school system and curriculum.*

*We have begun the process this year of rethinking how we grade through the work of a small grading committee. We would like to add professional development and time to that process so that we can bring it to the whole faculty in 2010-2011.*

*We would like to bring in the use of more new technology to the building, increasing what we have built already this year. In order to get technology access for all of our students, especially those in poverty, we need to continue to increase our inventory of laptop computers. Currently we have three lab rooms, two of which are devoted to information technology classes, and thus not accessible to outside classrooms. The other is in the library and can be accessed by all classes, but demand is high. We have invested over the last few years in two mobile labs. We need to have more of these types of labs in order to serve a student population of 1,000. More mobile labs would allow teachers to bring technology and software directly to some of our students most in need; it would facilitate some of the interdisciplinary curriculum we intend to establish over the next three years; and it would allow our teachers and students to engage in new methods of instruction not previously feasible.*

*We would like to explore software tools like Read 180 that could also help create a stronger support for students who are not up to grade level. We need funded time to do this exploration and planning.*

*Finally, we are very interested in exploring opportunities to increase relevance and rigor, moving toward world-based learning that is interdisciplinary and is based on core-concepts and higher level/ experiential learning. Specifically, we want to research, explore and understand the options that academy style structures could offer Rutland High School. STEM schools, the International Studies Schools Network, and the possibility of an Arts Academy with a connection to our district's technical education center are all areas that we have discussed. We need to be able to fund the research and make plans on how this might fit within our structure.*

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.)

**Rutland High School currently uses common content and core subject assessments to monitor student progress. In addition, NECAP data is considered as well as Rutland Middle School grades of incoming freshmen. The Rutland City Public Schools Special Education teachers use Aimsweb as a progress monitoring tool K-12. The use of Aimsweb for all**

students will be expanded from the primary grades to grades 3-8 in the 2010-2011 school year. Rutland High School will continue to use Aimsweb for monitoring the progress of special education students.

Teachers have worked to develop common assessments over the past two years. Several teams have made very good progress in this area; however others continue to struggle with coming to common expectations for their courses. In an effort to facilitate this process a team of teachers was sent in May to a Solution Tree seminar on developing common assessments. It is our intention to continue to train teams of teachers in this model over the coming few years. An overarching barrier that we continue to strive to overcome, is that of creating time for teams of teachers to work together to come to agreement on expectations and assessments. Our use of PLC, Department and Faculty meeting time this year for this purpose has helped greatly. A contributing factor to time being an issue is that many of our teachers serve on multiple course-level teams making it difficult for them to meet together more than one time per month. Another challenge that we have been addressing is that of helping teachers learn how to best use their assessment data; whether common local assessments or state-level assessments. This is an area that will require further professional development time for the staff.

We also are in need of a “data expert” to help manage the data in a way that is meaningful for teachers. The new student information system (Infinite Campus) has a very effective data warehouse tool that will provide this meaningful information. However it will still require that the data is imported in a way that allows teachers to use it effectively and that teachers and administrators are provided with training on its use.

Beginning the 2009-10 school year, Rutland High School utilized NECAP and grade data from the previous year to identify students who would benefit from additional time and support in specific courses. Incoming freshmen who were identified as being below proficient on their Grade 8 NECAP and any returning student in grades 10-12 who earned less than a 70 in a subject the previous school year were scheduled into “Tutorial” for that subject area.

- 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.)

Rutland High School, and Rutland City Public Schools engages parents and the community in our decision making processes in a number of ways and levels. At Rutland High School parents are informed and a part of each child’s educational career via our parent information system(s). Each parent is given access to the “parent portal” that includes real time information on the standing of the student. The school’s web site is updated frequently to include information regarding academics and school programs. The Parent partners program allows for adults to engage in the decision making process for their children. Each semester RHS conducts an open house that allows for dialogue between parents and their child’s teacher.

Parents and community partners are involved in committee work at RHS that lends to the decision making process for the school. Parents, school board members and community partners are key variables in the process equation. The

**school's action planning team, booster organizations (music and activities), project graduation, and community relations are all influenced by parent involvement.**

**At the district level, particularly in the past year parents, board members, and community partners have been an active part in action planning, special education focused monitoring, policy committee, building and infrastructure, Stafford Technical Center's regional advisory, and the ten year review of the SUCCESS program. In addition to the parent and Board partners, Rutland County Mental Health and the regional business community comes to the table to give input.**

**Whereas Rutland City Public Schools desired to review the SUCCESS school, an alternative placement for students with therapeutic needs created in partnership with Rutland Mental Health, the district undertook a "community process" of review, analyze, and evolve. The process included meetings with each developmental school level, parents, home school, and Mental Health Partners over the course of a calendar year. The end result was the restructuring of the district's contract with Rutland Mental Health, a plan to move the younger students out of the center based school and back into their "home schools," and refocusing the program in grades 7-12 on high expectations and positive supports.**

**As stated in other sections, the school and district interact with the Rutland Workforce Investment Board, The Rutland Community Care Network, and our alumni to inform our work.**

- 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.)

**See attachment "RCPS copy of sig investment strategies"**

**At this point we are at the planning stage of how we would implement supports and changes that address further improvement in the school's offerings. We believe we need to fund time to research and plan over 2010-2011. We would use 2011-2012 to begin implementation, followed by further implementation and assessment of progress in 2012-2013.**

### **Human Resources**

**We intend to have a point person outside of the supervision of the principal who will act as the main driver of this project, working throughout the life of this grant. This person would also work over the three years of the grant acting as a manager of the data we are**

**collecting. In the process, this person will be developing systems that will institute regular procedures for collection so that his/ her facilitation of the process is no longer necessary.**

**In order to research opportunities for change during 2010-2011, we intend to have at least two staff members doing significant summer work to view options for improving the level of rigor and relevance within current offerings. We would propose having at least one staff member researching opportunities for and structures of existing STEM schools. We propose at least another staff member doing the same for a humanities academy or elements thereof, especially through the International Studies Schools Network. They would be then spending time in the fall and spring exploring the feasibility of implementation at RHS, followed by planning for that implementation. These staff members would be working on these plans outside of the contracted day.**

**In this process, we will then have teachers working next summer on developing collaborative learning opportunities, at the very least looking for partnerships in which teachers can align curriculum to standards/ core academic expectations and interdisciplinary opportunities that would coordinate instruction and assessment while increasing rigor. This will be significant work. It will require teams of teachers to work outside the contracted day to prepare this. It will also require our main point person to help coordinate the efforts, again during non-school hours.**

**We want to continue developing and refining a bank of common assessments. We can advance that much more quickly if we use staff to continue this work even beyond the contracted school year. We propose using people during the summer and non-contract time of 2010-2012. This would require teams of teachers doing this work, all based on the DuFour Common Assessment/ Professional Learning Community training that we are in the midst of implementing.**

**We intend to continue in our efforts this year matching our grading practices/ policies to standards-based instruction and our common assessment work. Continuing this work with a small group of teachers paid outside of school hours would facilitate and hasten its implementation. This would be at least a two year process, starting in the summer/ fall of 2010.**

**We intend to continue in our efforts this year in integrating our Six Academic Expectations into the general whole-school program. Again, continuing this work with a small group of teachers paid outside of school hours would facilitate and hasten its implementation.**

**We need a small group to research the possibility of software systems (possibly Read 180, Read and Write Gold, etc.) that can facilitate both remedial opportunities and formative assessment in math, reading and writing. Their research could then inform the implementation of a structure to support those tools.**

**We plan to change the way we do detention and Saturday In-School Suspension. Rather than it being a punitive removal of time from a student, we would like to have our teachers man these structures so that students can get tutoring and maintain their coursework. This will require at least one staff member a day to receive funding for that work after school hours.**

**We will be in need of outside consultants to help us continue with professional development. We will need a person to coordinate our differentiated instruction group. We expect that we will need funding for consultant work with STEM research and ISSN research and implementation over the next three years. We are considering the effectiveness of a person from Solution Tree to give our staff PLC Training and Common Assessment training, or perhaps instead, some follow-up to sending those our teachers away to those trainings. There is a likelihood that we will need constant assistance with implementing the remainder of the RHS Academic Expectations. We had in-house support for our Reading expectations. The other five expectations could require outside assistance. As we bring in new learning on grading and what changes we intend to make, we may need the use of a consultant there as well.**

**We intend to fund groups of math/ English/ science teachers to prepare lessons/ strategies/ assessments for 9th and 10th grade students as we prepare them for the yearly state assessment and measure their progress and readiness for that assessment as they get closer to 11th grade. Our goal would be to use these products in the weeks prior to the yearly assessment.**

**In addition, we would need to fund an increase in secretarial support to have facilitate progress monitoring. We believe that by increasing a current part time secretary to a full time position, the data can be well-organized.**

**We will fund a staff member to research and plan implementation of the most appropriate software for reading and math support and progress monitoring.**

#### **Fiscal Resources**

**The work we intend to do is largely focused on professional development, planning, and instruction. We do not anticipate an increase in staffing over the long term. We are interested in purchasing some tools to facilitate this work (technology tools, software), but again, long-term sustainability would not be an issue once these tools are in place.**

### **Time and Schedule**

**The current schedule allows for teacher collaboration and student accessibility to the concepts we want to implement in the short term. Over the life of the three-year SIG grant, we will have to reconsider how new structures (academies or variations thereof) will fit within the existing structure/ schedule.**

**The real difficulty in the short term is having time to do the research, the planning for implementation, and the subsequent assessment of progress. This is why we intend numerous opportunities for teachers to do this work outside of the regular contract year, greatly increasing our speed in moving our plans forward.**

### **Existing Initiatives**

**We have a number of initiatives in place, all of which we intend to continue to refine and improve with the SIG grant.**

**We have a system of common assessments in place, completed by December of 2009. That system needs to be expanded and improved. We want to continue to train teachers to better use the results of these common assessments. Professional development toward that end (begun late spring of 2010) and teacher teams' work will facilitate that.**

**We have professional learning communities currently structured and built into the school day. We had 20 staff members trained on the concepts of group facilitation. That professional development began last summer and continued through the school year. Our departments are operating on the principles of PLCs. Our whole school faculty meetings are geared toward these principles as well. In total, these grouping meet a total of between three and four times per month. We are beginning professional development this summer to help staff members get a better grasp of how these teams are supposed to work best, and for what purpose. We intend to keep that training going, spreading to the rest of the staff over the next three years.**

**We have more professional development training taking place at the end of June, 2010. The focus is on brain research and how students learn best in a variety of ways. This will tie into our planned work on differentiated instruction. Our intention is to have a group work with a consultant on the topic over the course of next year. We also want to train more teachers on this new learning.**

**We have begun a process of implementing our school's six core academic expectations into the whole school's instruction. We completed one this year (reading), planning instruction and assessment. We intend to complete the other five over the life of the grant. We used the assistance of an outside consultant for this work. Continuing with that assistance would be beneficial. Funding teachers to do this work beyond the scope of the school day would hasten final implementation.**

**We started a committee of teachers/ administrator that reviewed grading philosophies, how we grade here, and how we might change in order to better report progress toward meeting standards. We intend to bring this work to the whole faculty next year. We will need time for this group to continue to research, plan, and implement changes. It may be possible that we need consultant assistance with this as we move forward.**

**We began a system of interventions (the Pyramid of Interventions) in order to get students help when they begin to slip. We have tutorial/ study assistance available every period of the day in math, science, social studies, and English. We will continue to refine how teachers approach the task, as well as systems issues like numbers, movement in and out, etc. We also are interested in developing a better system of tracking interventions in order to better monitor student progress. As mentioned above, it will be necessary to fund the work of a staff member to improve and refine our system and develop a component of self-sufficiency for it.**

**The principal participated quarterly with a regional Principal Learning Community. This collaboration allowed for better understanding of programs and approaches other schools were taking in tackling similar issues. It also allowed for new learning based on materials that the state Department of Education brought to the table.**

**We have a progress monitoring system in place. We will continue to improve upon that system, intending to better identify students who slip, and well as better address the needs of larger groups through our PLC process and adjustments to instruction. As mentioned above, it will be necessary to fund the work of a staff member to improve and refine our system and develop a component of self-sufficiency for it.**

**We have a transformation team in place (the Vision Quest team). They have been in existence for the past three years. They are made up of a mix of administrators (including the principal) and teachers from all areas of the curriculum. They have developed tangible**

**products, including the Pyramid of Intervention system. They currently have a pilot program in place for 2010-2011, in which three teachers will collaborate on curriculum, instruction and assessment, using an interdisciplinary approach while linking all instruction to the core academic standards of the building. Helping to fund this work will allow them to move faster and implement a more comprehensive program.**

**This interdisciplinary approach tied to core standards has been the focus of much thought over the last six years, going back to the RHS High Schools on the Move group. That group did a lot of preliminary research on this topic, looking at academy models and considering how they might fit at RHS. In addition, this year another team of teachers created and implemented an interdisciplinary, team taught class on American Studies. As mentioned, our intention is to continue exploring and developing these opportunities, though now we want to go beyond a small scale pilot approach and try to formulate a comprehensive strategy and implementation for a large-scale structure. We plan on continuing to develop these opportunities with appropriate teacher teams, thus requiring funding for this extensive work.**

**We have a well-developed program of transitioning students from 8th grade into the high school at 9th grade. We placed identified 9th grade students in these interventions right from the start of the year. Part of the program works to establish relationships and connections between students and adults. We also have another program in place that identifies students in need and then matches them to teachers who act to look out for and connect with those students. We would use a very small amount of funding to help defray the associated costs of a good program. Incidentals like incentives for students (slice of pizza, t-shirt prize, etc.) would be appealing to the teenage imagination.**

**We intend to improve upon this general principal by having staff look at existing teacher advisory systems in other schools and then try to match their goals with our curricular and social objectives. We will need funding for a staff member(s) to research and plan this implementation.**

**We applied a comprehensive approach this year to preparing and motivating students to take on the year state assessment in math/ reading/ writing/ and science. We prepared not only those taking the test, but those freshmen and sophomores who will take it in succeeding years. We intend to develop this first year approach even further this summer and next. We need funding for staff to do the work on making NECAP preparation lessons and assessments for our 9th and 10 grade students. This would allow us to make the NECAP more than just a once-in-four-years event, allowing us to progressively prepare and then to measure student progress.**

**We focused our school’s teacher/ administrator leadership group, the Faculty Cabinet, on new learning, on data analysis, and on revision and implementation of these new systems. This group acted this year as the guardian of progress toward school objectives.**

**We realigned curriculum and course sequencing in math and English classes so that all students would face the same expectations for achievement necessary to succeed on the state assessment by 11th grade. We will consider further supports for those students not making targets in math and reading objectives.**

**We have an established mentoring program (Pathwise Mentoring) in place for our new teachers.**

**We have an evaluation system in place based on the Danielson and Research for Better Teaching model.**

**We have begun a system of technology integration. We are completing our first year using a new student information system (Infinite Campus). This year we brought six new SMARTboards into the building, two in World Languages and four in math. A small group of our teachers have received training for this technology. Our Physical Education teachers wrote a grant for the use of heart rate monitors. They have just begun learning how to use this technology. We have a handful of other teachers somewhat versed in SMARTBoards or other technologies (science probes, etc). We have built upon our capacity for student access to technology, expanding beyond our three stationary computer labs (used for the library and three Information Technology teachers) to the purchase of a second set of laptop mobile labs to be used by any of our students in the content-area classrooms.**

**Our intention is to expand access of these technologies to all of our students. We want to increase laptop access to more of our students, especially those who are struggling academically. We intend to purchase mobile labs to make this feasible and accessible to a larger number of our classrooms.**

**In order to improve student achievement at the subgroup level, RHS will provide a literacy solution that allows struggling students to access any curriculum and complete reading, writing and research assignments as well as take tests independently. By increasing access to the number of laptops installed with Read and Write Gold (or a comparable product) we can provide differentiated instruction across the curriculum at the subgroup level. This approach to instruction will improve content area fluency and comprehension, provide tools for all RTI tiers, and support the principles of UDL. The software includes text-to-speech for digital textbooks, web browsers, eBooks, .pdf, flash, and text embedded in images. Additional functionality includes a screenshot reader, phonetic spell checker, homophone checker, word prediction, talking dictionary, daisy reader (eReader), Lexiflow eBooks generator, and other tools that support reading, writing, and research.**

**Teacher professional development will occur multiple times throughout the course of the school year and during summer. Data can be collected through a teacher resource toolkit which allows educators to monitor student usage patterns for progress monitoring groups of students or individuals.**

**Through the grant we will purchase four mobile laptop labs, eBooks for the library, and Read and Write Gold software (or a comparable product). With this purchase we can support the development of 21st Century skills for all students, including those at the subgroup level. The software license is a onetime payment and provides access to the software at school and home for our students. This software can also be installed on every machine within the building. Distribution of eBooks allows students to access text digitally and harness the power of text to speech and other Read and Write Gold tools (or a comparable product) so that grade level text is attainable. Laptops are a great investment since the school has fiber, integrated wireless, and internet access throughout in the building. This purchase of laptop equipment is a sustainable investment in the grant, since we have a dependable laptop replacement cycle for our student computers.**

**In addition, we intend to update the curriculum in our Information Technology offerings. We will apply funding for this work to this group of teachers, allowing them to better match their curriculum to current information technology expectations, as well as aiming for ways to integrate their curriculum with the curriculum of other departments.**

**We have increased the school’s presence on the Internet this year, greatly improving the quality and quantity of content on the school’s site. We are also using our phone call system that keeps the community informed of key events. And we are using our local cable channel to get the news out about what is happening at the high school. We will continue with these efforts. We intend especially to improve the level of website information and cable TV programming that we currently offer.**

**We are interested in extending our research on software programs like Tableau that will allow us to better manage and interpret student results and data. We also want to fund access to the state’s Data Warehouse consortium.**

**If we decide that internet coursework is appropriate, we will fund the fees involved for student access, using the next three years to determine how best to use this tool and measure its effectiveness.**

**Alignment of Professional Development Activities**

**We have professional development already scheduled for common assessment work, professional learning community improvement, and the beginnings of differentiated instruction (brain research).**

**We plan on extending that over the next three years:**

- **•□□□□□ Training on differentiated instruction through a consultant working with teachers who teach heterogeneous groups and through increased teacher access to brain research training.**
- **•□□□□□ Professional development on grading philosophy and systems.**
- **•□□□□□ Professional development, training, ISSN or a consultant to help explore and implement aspects of STEM school practices/ academy structures, where appropriate.**
- **•□□□□□ Professional development, training, or a consultant to help explore and implement aspects of our six academic core expectations (reading, writing, critical thinking, etc.)**

**We intend to continue new learning for all staff over the three years. This will require the purchase of trade literature, allowing us to read together what is most current in terms of the elements of transformation.**

**We need to apply some of this funding for travel-related expenses. We intend to conduct some travel to model schools (STEM, ISSN), programs, and agencies (Asia Society) that can provide us with best practices information.**

- 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:*

**Survey Data Attached for each school regarding Attachment E. The survey was distributed via surevy monkey and received a solid response. The responses were weighted (Not Evident = 0, Emerging = 1, Stornng = 2) so that we could get a numeric value to help prioritize effort.**

**Attachment E**

**Rutland High School**

**Areas for improvement:** All staff understand a system of continuous improvement, the curriculum is aligned, all students are expected to master the curriculum, all teachers review their data regularly, the schedule supports common planning, professional development is provided in class and focused on need, the principal is frequently in class and evaluation is effective, Teachers visit one another's classrooms, in class sped – formative assessment – and RTI work together, resources are equitable,

**Rutland Middle School**

**Areas for improvement:** The principal is recognized at the instructional leader, all teachers review their data regularly, there is a welcoming climate, sped-RTI-formative assessment work together.

**Rutland Intermediate School**

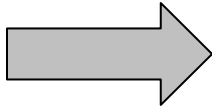
**Areas for improvement:** All staff understand system of continuous improvement, teachers visit one another's classrooms, sped-RTI-formative assessment work together, social and emotional supports are adequate, professional development is in class and focused on need.

**Rutland Northwest Primary School**

**Areas for improvement:** All staff understand a system of continuous improvement, paras have passed profficiency requirements (it is accurate to note that all the paras have passed such requirements, but the teachers would not have need to know that.), Professional development is provided in classrooms and focused on need, the principal is frequently in class and the evaluation is effective, Teachers visit one another's classrooms, Social and emotional support systems are adequate, business and community support, and collage readiness at RMS and RHS.

**Rutland Northeast Primary School**

**Areas for improvement:** All staff understand a system of continuous improvement, Profesisonal development is provided in classrooms and is focused on need, and Teachers visit one another's classrooms.



***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:*

**See: "NW attachment B," "RIS attachment B," and "RMS attachment B."**

- 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:*

**All RCPS schools include community membership on their action planing team. Each schol also operates a Parent Teacher Collaborative organization. (Please see attachments: "nw ac plan," "RIS action plan," and "RMS action plan (x4)."**

- 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:*

**See attachemnts "NECAP Board Memo 2 10 10," "AYP Long Index Data 09," "Data table to Board AYP data 06 - 10," and "AYP Memo may 2010."**

**Each year all schools in Rutland City Public Schools achieve AYP for "all students." We are "checkmarked" in categories for students with dsibilities and students in free and reduced lunch in those schools which have the N needed for that group. The exception this past year was that Rutland Middle School achieved AYP in Reading all around. Abnalysis of trends over the life of the NECAP dsiplays growth in nearly all areas and schools, with the exception of Northeast School. Northeast is our only "school in good standing," but it is the school with the most obvious negative trends.**

- 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:

**See attachemnts: "Northwest," " Rutland Middle School," and "Rutland Intermediate School"**

**RCPS is seeing a slight up trend in ELL students. We are also seeing an upward trend in the preK-2 grades of students on the autism spectrum. Due to the economy and the centralization of services, all schools have seen an increase in the percentage of students on free and reduced lunch. The Youth Risk Behavior Survey indicates that students are being exposed to second hand smoke at a reasonably high rate and that we have a high obesity rate in Rutland County when compared to the rest of the state.**

- 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.

**Please see attachments: "Northwest atachment B," "RIS attachment B," and "RMS attachment B."**

**The Rutland City Public Schools leadership reviewed the input from the building leadres and the faculty and staff.**

**The folowing observations, noted above, were pulled from the iput of the faculty:**

**Rutland Middle School**

**Areas for improvement:** The principal is recognized at the instructional leader, all teachers review their data regularly, there is a welcoming climate, sped-RTI-formative assessment work together.

**Rutland Intermediate School**

**Areas for improvement:** All staff understand system of continuous improvement, teachers visit one another's classrooms, sped-RTI-formative assessment work together, social and emotional supports are adequate, professional development is in class and focused on need.

**Rutland Northwest Primary School**

**Areas for improvement:** All staff understand a system of continuous improvement, paras have passed profficeincy requirements (it is accurate to note that all the paras have passed such requirements, but the teachers would not have need to know that.), Professional development is provided in classrooms and focused on need, the principal is frequently in class and the evaluation is effective, Teachers visit one another's classrooms, Social and emotional support systems are adequate, business and community support, and collage readiness at RMS and RHS.

**Rutland Northeast Primary School**

**Areas for improvement:** All staff understand a system of continuous imporvement, Profesisonal development is provided in classrooms and is focused on need, and Teachers visit one another's classrooms.

- 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:

- Promote the continuous use of student data (such as from formative, interim, and summative assessments) to inform and differentiate instruction in order to meet the academic needs of individual students.
  - Establish schedules and strategies that provide increased learning time (as defined below).
- Use data to identify and implement an instructional program that is research-based and vertically aligned from one grade to the next as well as aligned with State academic standards.

- *Provide staff ongoing, high-quality, job-embedded professional development (e.g., regarding subject-specific pedagogy, instruction that reflects a deeper understanding of the community served by the school, or differentiated instruction) that is aligned with the school's comprehensive instructional program and designed with school staff to ensure they are equipped to facilitate effective teaching and learning and have the capacity to successfully implement school reform strategies. !*

*\*Give the school sufficient operational flexibility (such as staffing, calendars/time, and budgeting) to implement fully a comprehensive approach to substantially improve student achievement outcomes and increase high school graduation rates.*

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*

*RCPS has three Tier III schools with similarities and differences. Given the information gathered via this process and ongoing improvement planning it is clear that the two strategies below most represent our desired path of improvement. All schools seek to use a data driven decision making model that will help target instruction and interventions for students. Ongoing professional development is a focused and job embedded model is always a positive endeavor. The support of RTI, PBS, and data driven decision making will be a k-12 focus.*

- *Promote the continuous use of student data (such as from formative, interim, and summative assessments) to inform and differentiate instruction in order to meet the academic needs of individual students.*
- *Provide staff ongoing, high-quality, job-embedded professional development (e.g., regarding subject-specific pedagogy, instruction that reflects a deeper understanding of the community served by the school, or differentiated instruction) that is aligned with the school's comprehensive instructional program and designed with school staff to ensure they are equipped to facilitate effective teaching and learning and have the capacity to successfully implement school reform strategies. !*

- 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:

(see attachments: NE SIG survey attachment E, NW Sig Survey Attachment E, TIS Sig Survey Attachemnt E, RMS Sig Survey Attachemnt E, RHS Sig Survey Attachment E) RCPS conducted a Survey Monkey survey using attachment E of each school in the district. NE was surveyed so we could get a look across the entire district and we anticipate NE receiving a check mark following the 2010 administration of NECAP due to the trends and the increase in the AMO. The response was strong. The analysis has been noted above and shall be pasted here:

#### **Rutland Middle School**

**Areas for improvement:** The principal is recognized as the instructional leader, all teachers review their data regularly, there is a welcoming climate, sped-RTI-formative assessment work together.

#### **Rutland Intermediate School**

**Areas for improvement:** All staff understand system of continuous improvement, teachers visit one another's classrooms, sped-RTI-formative assessment work together, social and emotional supports are adequate, professional development is in class and focused on need.

#### **Rutland Northwest Primary School**

**Areas for improvement:** All staff understand a system of continuous improvement, paras have passed proficiency requirements (it is accurate to note that all the paras have passed such requirements, but the teachers would not have need to know that.), Professional development is provided in classrooms and focused on need, the principal is frequently in class and the evaluation is effective, Teachers visit one another's classrooms, Social and emotional support systems are adequate, business and community support, and collage readiness at RMS and RHS.

#### **Rutland Northeast Primary School**

**Areas for improvement:** All staff understand a system of continuous improvement, Professional development is provided in classrooms and is focused on need, and Teachers visit one another's classrooms.

**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:***

**The Rutland City Public School district intends to seek the services of an outside consultant to serve in this capacity. We have had workings with the TASS group and would very much like to contract with one of the consultants with whom we worked or secure an equally talented person. In addition, RHS will be working via Solution Tree trainings on**

## Professional Learning Communities, Assessment, and data driven decision making.

In a recent meeting with our DOE school improvement team we discussed the logistics of such an arrangement.

- 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.*

**The Rutland City Public School District and its schools will be implementing RTI, PBS, and progress monitoring across the district. Each school and the district will maintain a system of intervention. The RCPS literacy plan is to be reviewed and updated this summer with the help of our K-6 literacy coaches. The RCPS math instruction, assessment, and coaching plans will be re-evaluated and updated as well.**

- 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.*

**Requirement 3**

<b>Number of Minutes in School Year</b>	<b>76,540</b>
<b>Participation Rate on State Assessments</b>	<b>99%</b>
<b>Drop-out Rate (2008-09)</b>	<b>3.12%</b>
<b>Student Attendance Rate</b>	<b>93.09%</b>
<b>Number of Students taking AP Classes</b>	<b>145</b>
<b>Percent Taking AP Classes</b>	<b>13.8%</b>
<b>Discipline Incidents</b>	<b>538 Separate Incidents</b>
<b>Truants</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Distribution of Teachers by Performance Level</b>	
<b>Probationary</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Continuing</b>	<b>70</b>
<b>Teacher Attendance Rate (as of 3/31/10)</b>	
<b>Sick</b>	<b>2.8%</b>
<b>Personal</b>	<b>1.1%</b>
<b>Professional</b>	<b>.1%</b>
<b>Approved Conference</b>	<b>.4%</b>

**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.*

1. **It has been made clear to us through the application process that contracting with a provider to be the school improvement coach in Rutland High School (Tier II) is a must. Therefore we shall seek a consultant/coach who we believe will facilitate the process of ongoing and systemic improvement at RHS and the district's three Tier III schools (Rutland Middle School, Rutland Intermediate School, and Rutland High School). Specific to Rutland Middle School, we will seek a separate school improvement coach who can help guide the school along its journey toward being more focused on student needs within a middle school framework. This consultant will need to be an experienced middle school professional and coach.**
2. **The stakeholders to be engaged will be the school community (teachers, admin, staff, and parents).**
3. **Goals for the external provider will be specific to the needs of the school based on student achievement and needs identified via the ATTACHMENT E survey completed in each building..**
4. **The budget for the support of the external coach will be implemented using SIG and Title I and IID ARRA funds. The funds at hand will allow for an 18 month to 2 year relationship.**
5. **The process for selecting external providers will be**
  - i. **Create a selection team comprised of: the superintendent, assistant superintendent, director of student services, school administration, and teacher leaders at the building leader's discretion.**
  - ii. **Identify the need and target focus via student result data and adult survey**
  - iii. **List the desirable characteristics and qualifications of the provider**
  - iv. **Seek names of possible providers with those characteristics and qualifications via connection with our higher ed partners and the State DOE school improvement coordinator.**
  - v. **Actively recruit and seek discussion with key providers**
  - vi. **Select the provider based on his/her ability to meet the specific need**
  - vii. **Negotiate a suitable amount of time in days**
  - viii. **Contract.**
6. **The contract negotiation phase will include the superintendent, assistant superintendent (grant manager), and principal's input.**
7. **Support for an external provider will be offered as needs arise.**
8. **Evaluation of progress toward goals will be done collaboratively using a project management model, taking into account benchmark completion of tasks and student achievement data.**

9. Consequences of failure shall be appropriate. In honesty, if the provider is not producing along the targeted benchmarks of the project design, adjustments will be made. This is provided the district is allowed to do so.

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 I) c. i-ix)*

**See attachments: "May 11, 2010 School Board Minutes" and "REA support of RCPS SIG APP."**

**Whereas Rutland High School (and the Tier III schools) are schools within a K-12 district and not a free standing district in an SU, it does not have specific and individual oversight over policies, negotiated agreements, and district administrative procedure, it does not make sense to commit to flexibility that RHS and our Tier III schools cannot access. However, the district stands to prepared to support scheduling, staffing, and internal procedure decisions that the RHS and tier III school teams will need to make. In the event that a policy, procedure, or other district level adjustment is needed, RCPS stands prepared to act in timely and supportive manner.**

**Scheduling and staff assignment decisions are the purview of the school leadership team. The Rutland Education Association stands in support of the SIG application, as does the Board of School Commissioners. As of the application date, it is unknown what waivers RCPS may need from the Vermont State Board of Education. In the event that we require a waiver we will make that application.**

**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.*

**The Rutland City Public School System and its schools will seek to create sustainable improvements by investing in professional development, systems structures, materials and resources, and personell whose contribution and use will outlast the**

life of the grant. As an example, we will attempt to create local experts and trainers who can continue the initiative after the significant funds are depleted.

## **RHS**

### **1) Professional Development**

- **Common Assessment Training**
- **PLC Training**
- **Brain Research Training (Differentiated Instruction)**
- **Best Grading Practices**
- **ISSE/ STEM Training**
- **PD necessary for RHS Academic Expectation Implementation**

### **2) Collaborative Staff Work**

- **Differentiated Instruction**
- **Pilot Projects on creating interdisciplinary teams of teachers/ match to RHS expectations.**
- **NECAP Prep assessments 9th and 10th, and NECAP prep instruction**
- **Common assessment development/ refinement in every department**
- **RHS Six Academic Expectations: C/I/CA development**
- **Teacher Advisories: Research and plan for implementation**
- **Grading Committee: Research and plan for implementation**
- **STEM Research and plan for implementation**
- **ISSE Research and plan for implementation**
- **Intervention Software (Read 180, etc.) review and plan for implementation**

### **3) Consultants**

- **Overarching Consultant**
- **Differentiated Instruction Person**
- **STEM consultant**
- **International Studies Schools Network**
- **RHS Academic Expectations Consultant**

### **4) Materials and Equipment**

- **Mobile computer labs**
- **Laptop Cart**
- **Laser Printers**
- **Literature for staff for new learning and collaborative discussions**

- □□□□□ Travel money to view best practice schools (STEM, ISSN)
- □□□□□ Travel money for partnership schools
- □□□□□ Ebooks
- □□□□□ Read and Write Gold Software/ or comparable product for struggling readers
- □□□□□ Saturday and after school tutorial support
- □□□□□ Part-time secretarial support to facilitate data processing and other elements of the SIG transformation model.
- □□□□□ Small amount of funding to support 9th grade mentoring program and NECAP fun prizes
- □□□□□ Data Warehouse fees
- □□□□□ Tableau Data Analysis

**Rutland Middle School**

**1. Professional Development**

- Middle School Best Practices
- Response to Intervention
- PBS
- Progress monitoring
- Data driven decision making
- Planning for instruction based on student needs

**2. Collaborative staff work**

- Reorganization of schedule and intervention System
- RTI
- PBS

**3. Consultants**

- Middle School focused consult with a systemic view
- Assessment data structure

**4. Materials and equipment**

- As needed

**Rutland Intermediate School**

**1. Professional Development**

- RTI
- PBS
- Interventions

**PLC and CFG**

**2. Collaborative staff work**

**RTI**

**PBS**

**Interventions**

**PLC**

**3. Consultants**

**As needed**

**Assessment data structure**

**4. Materials and equipment**

**Rutland Northwest School**

**1. Professional Development**

**Use of data**

**RTI**

**PBS**

**2. Collaborative staff work**

**RTI**

**PBS**

**Use of data**

**3. Consultants**

**Assessment data structure**

**4. Materials and equipment**

**As needed**

- 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.*

See notes above. Also, it is accurate to say that any additional budgetary expenditures will increase the school and district tax payers' burden. Only cost neutral and cost ending investments will be completely sustainable.

- 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.*

**Consolidated federal program and ARRA funds. Additional competitive grant sources will be used where appropriate and feasible. It is clear that, without the support of competitive and formula grants, we will not be able to sustain costly improvements.**

- Plan for induction and mentoring of new staff.

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

**Currently RCPS has a multipronged mentoring approach. New teachers to the district receive the following supports:**

**All teachers receive and assigned "buddy mentor" to help with logistics, routines, and organizational knowledge.**

**New teachers are assigned a 2 year relationship with a stipended and trained "Pathwise Mentor."**

**Teachers new to the district with less than 5 years experience are assigned a 1 year "Pathwise Mentor."**

**All teachers new to the district in grades PreK-6 go through our math and literacy coaching protocols.**

**All teachers new to the district take "Skillful Teacher" through Research for Better Teaching.**

**All K-8 Teachers new to the district take "Responsive Classroom I."**

**All new teachers are offered our summer literacy course**

**All new K-6 teachers receive training in Everyday Math and Four Blocks Framework.**

**All special educators take SPED 101 and are assigned a "coach" for their first year.**

**All beginning teachers are assigned two years at the "Comprehensive Evaluation" level of our system of evaluation.**

**All teachers new to the district with less than 5 years of experience receive the same assignment.**

- 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*

**Suggested Team Members:**

**Assistant Superintendent (1)**

**Director of Student Services (1)**

**RAT TEAM (Research Assessment Team) (4)**

**K-6 Content Coaches (4)**  
**7-12 Core Department Heads (4-8)**

**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.*

See attchement "RCPS Requirment 4"

RCPS Requirement 4

**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.**

Professional Development	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013			
Common Assessment Training	X	X	X			
PLC Training	X	X				
Brain Research Training (Differentiated Instruction)		X		X		
Best Grading Practices	X	X	X			
ISSE/ STEM Training	X					
New Technology						
PD necessary for RHS Academic Expectation Implementation						
<b>Consultancy</b>						
External Coach (50 days/yr x 1000)						
School-based point Person(s)	X	X	X			
School-based Data Coordinator						
Differentiated Instruction Consultant	X	X	X			
School-based STEM point person	X	X	X			
School-based International Studies Schools Network Point Person				X	X	X
PLC/ CA consultant (if need be)						

**RHS Academic Expectations Outside Consultancy** X X  
**Grading Philosophy Consultancy (if need be)**

**Collaborative Staff Work**      **2010-2011**      **2011-2012**      **2012-2013**

**Differentiated Instruction work for teachers** X X X  
**Pilot Projects on creating interdisciplinary teams of teachers** X X X  
**Info Tech Course Modernization**  
**NECAP Prep assess. 9th and 10th, and NECAP prep instruction** X X n/a  
**Common assessment development/ refinement in every department** X X X  
**RHS Six Academic Expectations: C/I/CA development** X X X  
**Teacher Advisories: Research and plan for implementation** X X  
**YES Plan Review and revision**  
**Grading Committee: Research and plan for implementation** X X  
**Credit Recovery: Review and plan for implementation**  
**Internet-based coursework: review and plan for implementation**  
**Flexible Schedule: Research/ Decide if Warranted/ Plan for implement.**  
**STEM Research and plan for implementation** X X X  
**ISSE Research and plan for implementation** X X X  
**Time to develop a plan for partnership schools (Germany, Kenya, etc)**  
**Intervention Software (Read 180, etc.) review and plan for implementation** X

**Physical Resources**      **2010-2011**      **2011-2012**      **2012-2013**

**COWs (Mobile Laptop Set) (4) \$67,200** X n/a n/a  
**Laptop Cart (\$6,000)** X n/a n/a  
**Laser Printer (\$2,800)** X n/a n/a

**Literature for staff for new learning (\$18,000)** X X  
**Travel money to view best practice schools (STEM, ISSE)** X X X  
**Travel money for partnership schools** X X X  
**Remedial Software (Aimsweb; Read 180, etc)** X  
**Ebooks** X

Read and Write Gold Software/ or comparable product	X			
Saturday detention/ After School Detention: tutorial support	X	X		
Part-time secretarial support to facilitate data processing, etc	X	X		
Funding 9th grade mentoring program and NECAP fun prizes	X	X	X	
Physical Education at the Howe Center				
Data Warehouse fees (VDC)	X	X	X	
Tableau Data Analysis	X	X		

**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*

**Requirement 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 measure student progress, we will use the more accurate “mean scaled score” (MSS) of the state’s assessment, the New England Common Assessment Program. Rutland High School was identified as being in need of School Improvement based on its results from the October 2007 and October 2008 administration. These scores will serve as our baseline from which we will measure progress.**

**We intend to measure progress in three ways:**

- 1) Comparing mean scaled scores (MSS) at each year’s administration; in other words, comparing different yearly cohort groups to each other.
- 2) Comparing MSS of different yearly cohort groups to the same yearly cohort at the state (Vermont) level.
- 3) Comparing MSS of the RHS test year cohort (11th grade) against the scores of their prior tested year (8th grade), and then showing how those differences compare again against the same measure for the cohort group in the entire state.

In addition, we intend to measure the same three categories above in two distinct groups: the whole group (“all students”) and students classified as meeting Free and Reduced Lunch (FRL) status (“economically disadvantaged”). The FRL group is the only subgroup for which we are measured.

Our overarching goal is to bring scores from the baseline years upon which we were measured (2007/2008) to climb above state averages. In addition, as the state demonstrates growth, we intend to do the same.

In other words, we want our scores in the measures listed above to climb above the state average and then to subsequently match the rate of progress that the state demonstrates. This is our goal over the three years of the School Improvement Grant.

To be specific with numbers, our baseline scores in 2007 and 2008 are as follows:

**Reading: All Students (MSS) 11th Grade NECAP Test**

	<b>RHS</b>	<b>State</b>
<b>2007</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>2008</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>46</b>

**Reading: FRL (MSS) 11th Grade NECAP Test**

	<b>RHS</b>	<b>State</b>
<b>2007</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>2008</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>40</b>

**Math: All Students (MSS) 11th Grade NECAP Test**

	<b>RHS</b>	<b>State</b>
<b>2007</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>2008</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>35</b>

**Math: FRL (MSS) 11th Grade NECAP Test**

	<b>RHS</b>	<b>State</b>
<b>2007</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>2008</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>31</b>

**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*

**(See also attachment "RCPS Requirement 6")**

**RCPS REQUIREMENT 6, TIER III**

**Northwest Primary School Requirement 6 –  
Services/Activities:**

- 1. Assessment personnel – NW school will employ a part-time (District level) certified teacher to build a progress monitoring protocol and implement monthly school-wide assessments. This individual will join the “data team” or SST to review grade level data and formulate next-steps for instruction.**
- 2. Responsiveness to Intervention – NW school will enter year 2 of RTI implementation. The focus for the year will include building a bank of Tier 1 interventions and strategies to be accessed by all classroom teachers and special educators. The SST will build RTI binders for all professional staff that will house all referral documents, assessment timelines, and processes for accessing Tier 1, 2, and 3 supports.**
- 3. Professional Development throughout the year to support the RTI model – release time will need to exist for grade level teams to review data each month, and formulate next steps for intervention, remediation, and also enrichment. Grade level teams will meet with math and reading coaches, administration, and RTI consultants to plan next steps for curriculum, assessment and instruction.**
- 4. Positive Behavioral Supports (PBS) – NW School will enter into the first phase of researching and implementing (preparing for) PBS. During the summer a team of school personnel (the SST team) will begin looking at PBS and designing a “Star Student” social curriculum and school discipline philosophy to celebrate positive behaviors each week at school. Students will be methodically taught about what each of the 4 rules mean, and celebrated throughout the year for achieving success. Full implementation of PBS will occur in the Fall of 2011.**
- 5. Ongoing support of co-teaching.**
- 6. Instructional tutor to assist with Tier II and III of RTI as we move to the full co-teaching model.**

**Rutland Intermediate School –**

- 1. Assessment Personnel – as above, RIS will employ a part time teacher to assist in implementing progress monitoring to assist with the RIS system of interventions**
- 2. Professional development in and implementation of a formal RTI structure and sytem of intervention.**
- 3. Professional development in and implementation of PBS.**
- 4. Ongoing literacy and math PD.**
- 5. Ongoing PD and support of integration of technology into instruction and support of 21st century skills for students and teachers.**
- 6. Aimsweb PD and implementation**
- 7. Ongoing support of Co-teaching**

**Rutland Middle School Requirement 6 - The new RMS student schedule provides Tier 2 interventions (within the RTI model) for students identified with ongoing academic difficulties who have not responded to the varied teaching strategies provided in the mainstream Tier 1 classroom environment. A critical piece of the Tier 2 intervention is the ability to monitor progress in the deficient skill on a periodic basis to ensure adequate progress and learning. The Rutland Middle School plans on utilizing AIMSWEB software for this purpose.**

The service that the middle school intends to purchase with this grant is a consultant trained in the implementation and analysis of the AIMSweb software. Such a person should also be knowledgeable of and have the capacity to teach the general expectations and goals of the RTI model. Such expertise will help our teaching staff learn how to gather and analyze data that can measure the academic, social and/or behavioral performance of students.

#### 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.  
(See also attachment "RCPS Requirement 7")*

#### RCPS Requirement 7:

##### Northwest School Requirement 7- Indicators:

1. RTI – referrals to the Student Support Team (SST) will be based upon AIMSweb progress monitoring data and local common assessments (F & P, EDM probes). For intervention and potential Tier 2 referrals, teaching teams will need to provide a minimum of 6 points of data, along with general scores for the entire class. An SST binder will be kept by all SST members, and will include referral packets and assessment data on each child referred.
2. RTI – Intervention room will be established which will house a “bank” of Tier 1 and Tier 2 supports and tools. Check in and out procedures will be maintained which will document which teachers are using the resources and with what level of frequency. This information will be shared with the SST team and the general faculty.
3. RTI & AIMSweb – All K-2 students will be benchmarked 3 times a year by using AIMSweb probes in October, January, and May. Students will be tracked according to their AIMSweb scores, and progress monitoring charts will be maintained at each grade level documenting which students do/do not meet the standards. AIMSweb scores will help formulate the discussion and next steps regarding the need for either remediation or enrichment.
4. PBS – With the implementation of the PBS model for behaviors and social/emotional growth, planning room referrals from the classroom will decrease by 5% on Year 1 (2010-2011) and another 5% on Year 2 (2011-2012).

Rutland Intermediate School Requirement 7 -For the 2010-2011 school year, Rutland Intermediate School will be implementing Response to Intervention (RTI) across all four grade levels. We have a four day work session set up on June 21-24, 2010 with an RTI trainer and a small group of staff. This group will become our Data Team. The Data Team will oversee RTI within the building. This Three Tier approach to student support starts with Tier I in the classroom with differentiation of instruction and then also in our E-Block time (which is four days per week/small group instruction). During E-block the teachers will use data

collected from Common Grade Level Assessments and AIMSWEB to target specific deficits while focusing their instruction. Students will not be able to go to enrichment classes if they are not meeting the standards. If students are still struggling after working in their E-block group, students will then go to the Tier II intervention. In Tier II, students will work for 6 weeks in small groups with an interventionist such as our Math Coach or Literacy Coach. We will focus our attention on these non-identified students (not on a 504 or IEP) using data driven, research based interventions. We are currently looking into what specific programs we would like to purchase. After the 6 week period, students will be assessed individually to see if progress was made by the Data Team. The Data Team will also be the same group to do the three times per year AIMSWEB assessment and make referrals for Special Education evaluations.

At RIS, we will continue with the full building Co-Teaching model for the fall of 2010. We have already hired three additional Special Educators to expand co-teaching to all classrooms.

During the 2008-2009 school year; the Data Team identified Function and Algebra and in Language Arts, Word Identification and Vocabulary are priorities. Throughout this year, all of our assessments have focused on these finite goals.

For next year we aim for a 3% increase in Functions and Algebra and 3% increase in Word Identification and Vocab. These are to be measured by NECAP results comparing 2009 to 2010 results.

As a school we are looking to hire an individual with RTI and AIMSWEB experience to help facilitate this undertaking. This person will be an initial member of the Data Team, help with AIMSWEB assessments, tracking of data and working with teachers on becoming familiar with AIMSWEB.

Rutland Middle School Requirement 7 - Requirement 7 - This past year the Rutland Middle School entered its second year in corrective action. As a result the middle school was required to create a Restructuring Plan which could address the academic deficiencies of our middle school students. After considerable analysis of a variety of academic, behavioral and attendance data and discussion among a newly-created school data team and, more generally, with the faculty and staff the school came up with a number of goals that will be implemented in the 2010-11 school year. Two of these goals (and action plans to respond to these goals) are listed below:

**Goal #1 - To create a program of school support to ensure our students are receiving the best instruction, based on a common curriculum;**

**Action Plan follow-up for 2010-11: - The Rutland Middle School created a new rotating schedule for all students. This schedule lengthens class time, moves core classes to different points in the day and creates time for Tier Two and Three interventions for those students who have not displayed adequate mastery of concepts or skills within the regular classroom environment. The school has also moved to an all-looping model. This means that each of the two seventh grade core teams will work with a common group of students throughout their two years at the Rutland Middle School. Other advantages of the new schedule include the following:**

- **Opens more opportunities for students on plans to be enrolled in mainstream unified arts classes;**
- **Reduces the number of transitions that students make during the course of the day;**
- **Retains all of the present programs.**

**Goal #2 - To gain a better understanding of the academic strengths and deficiencies of our students and tailor our teaching to help students gain mastery of those areas where there are academic deficiencies.**

**Action Plan follow-up for 2010-11: – As noted in Requirement 6 the Rutland Middle School plans to use the AIMSWEB assessment software to evaluate student progress in academic areas. Such universal screening will occur for all students in Mathematics and Language Arts periodically throughout the year. This will enable teachers to analyze data, identify the problem in measurable terms and create an individualized accountability plan for each student. Other mechanisms to measure student progress are already in place and will be heavily utilized for the same purpose. For example, the Rutland Middle School has a series of formative and summative assessment devices in each of the five major curriculum areas that help teachers decipher student knowledge and make corrections to their teaching strategies to address gaps that are identified in the resulting data analysis of these assessments. Secondly, this past May the middle school introduced a seventh grade ‘May Assessment’ which measured overall student progress on seventh grade equivalency standards in Language Arts and Mathematics. Results on these assessments will determine placement of all students (as defined by the NECAP) into tutorial programs during the first quarter of the 2010 school year that can address the Language Arts and Mathematics subcategories that, based on the results of this assessment and teacher recommendation (based on students’ body of work throughout their seventh grade year) continue to be the most difficult for students to master.**

#### **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)*

**See Attachments:**

**"Board Memo re Tiers 3 9 10"**

**"Board 3 18 10 Sig Status"**

**"Final Minutes of March 9 School Board Meeting"**

**"RCPS Board 03 23 10"**

Please note that by discussing the SIG in open session we reached out to our Board and to our tax payers. All meetings are broadcast on public television (PEG TV) and streamed on the Web. In addition, the Rutland Herald covers each meeting of the Board of School Commissioners.

**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.*

**See attachment: "RCPS Copy of SIG Investment Strategies"**

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.