

# Vermont School Improvement Grant Application

Spring, 2010

Supervisory Union/ District Name: Southwest Vermont

Contact Person: Catherine McClure

Role: Superintendent

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Phone: 447-7501

This grant application must be submitted with:

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

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

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

## LEA APPLICATION

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



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

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

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

| SCHOOL NAME                  | NCES ID # | TIER I                   | TIER II                  | TIER III                            | INTERVENTION (TIER I AND II ONLY) |                          |                          |                          |
|------------------------------|-----------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
|                              |           |                          |                          |                                     | turnaround                        | restart                  | closure                  | transformation           |
| <b>Molly Stark</b>           | 00031     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>          | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>Bennington Elementary</b> | 00028     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>          | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>Pownal</b>                | 00246     | <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"/> | <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:*

- 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:*

- 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:*

- 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:*

- 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.*

- 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:*

**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*

- 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.

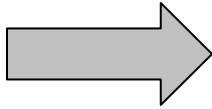
*Directions: Insert end of year report here:*

- 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.)
  - 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.)
  - 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)
  - iv. Current evaluation practices (e.g., outline of current evaluation system for principals and teachers, including model, frequency of evaluation, etc.)
  - 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.)
  - vi. Statewide and regional partnerships (e.g., agreements with ESAs, local agencies, and/or institutes of higher ed.)
  - vii. Allocation of adequate time for teacher collaboration, job embedded professional development (i.e., as described in the LEA's application)
  - 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.)

- 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.)
  
- 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.)

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:*



***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:*

The Southwest Vermont Supervisory Union consists of seven elementary schools and a unified middle and high school enrolling students from five towns. All schools are concerned about the rising truancy rate and high absenteeism. The school district is working in collaboration with the local juvenile justice roundtable and social service agencies to address the attendance issue. The poverty rate in Bennington County has increased by 50% over the last ten years. There is a large body of research to substantiate the belief that students who are eligible for free and reduced lunch are at a higher risk for school failure and a high concentration of low-income students in a school appears to have negative effects on students, teachers, and the school. The good news is that NECAP scores in reading and math showed substantial improvement last year at Molly Stark (58% proficient or above in reading in 08, 69% in 09; 44% proficient or above in math in 08, 55% in 09). Improvements at Bennington Elementary School were only slight in reading (from 53% proficient or above to 58%) and no improvement in math (47% both years). Pownal School scores went down in reading, from 60% proficient or above to 56% and the increase in math was only slight - 54% to 56%.

As a result of the self-assessment, we recognize the number one need at Pownal is to provide assistance for the principal so that she can increase her capacity as an instructional leader and identify teachers who are and or not providing adequate instruction in their classroom with timely remediation efforts. There is no assistant principal in Pownal to help with discipline, parent issues, and paperwork requirements. Another priority is to align and focus the reading curriculum across the grades and identify research based standards of practice for teaching literacy. Teachers need time and training on formative assessment, analyzing data and knowing how to change instruction based on what needs are identified through the data.

At Bennington Elementary, the self-assessment shows that many of the factors for improving school capacity are emerging. We have identified that the teacher evaluation system SVSU wide is an area to be worked on to improve teaching and learning. Molly Stark 's self-assessment showed similar results to those discussed above. School schedules in all schools do not allow for sufficient common planning time, time for collaboration, or time to develop formative assessments.

- 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:*

**Pownal School:** As a result of a survey of the staff, the number one need identified was that the principal was not in classrooms often and was not recognized as an instructional leader. The principal herself had identified this need; much of her time is spent communicating with parents regarding the social, emotional, behavioral and health needs of the students. A parent perception survey showed that of the 20% of parents who responded, 98% reported that they feel comfortable talking to the administrator at the school. This presents a dilemma as communication with parents is critical, yet the principal needs to be supervising and coaching teachers as part of her role of instructional leader. The percent of students chronically tardy has decreased over the past few years (currently 8.5% of the students), partly due to the efforts of the principal and her work with parents. There is a strong need to work with and support families while at the same time the staff has a need for leadership and supervision. As a result, Pownal School is requesting a home school liaison to develop stronger partnerships to engage parents in their child's learning, develop strategies to address chronic absenteeism (15% of students) and chronic tardiness and provide support to parents. The number one concern identified through a parent survey was that 52% of the parents do not like/understand the school's report card. The home-school liaison will also be able to assist the parents to understand the report card, test scores, and other measures of progress and strengthen home-school communication.

The teachers at Bennington Elem state that they could improve the climate of open communication by visiting one another's classes and sharing lessons and other materials. They feel that their principal is emerging as an instructional leader, that the curriculum is on its way to being aligned and focused across and within grades and that they need more time for the data team to meet and review student outcomes. Bennington Elementary teachers identified a need for more social and emotional support systems for students. 20% of parents from Bennington Elementary who responded to a survey mention that they would like to see the students show more respect for each other and 25% say that the school could do a better job of managing bullying. Tier III PBS training will be offered next year. Parents also report that they want a safer way to drop off and pick up their students in front of the school; the school board and principal are working with the town to address this problem.

Molly Stark teachers identified collaboration time as the number one need for professional development; they also stated the need for more social and emotional supports for students. The school does not have a well defined system or framework for discipline. They have partially implemented PBS. 20% of parents surveyed stated that the school could do a better job of managing bullying and 26% stated that students need to show better respect for each other. 30% of parents at Molly Stark wish their school had a better public image.

- 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:*

Schools within the SVSU use MAP assessments at the beginning and end of the school year, and the assessments can be administered in January for those students who need more frequent monitoring. There is a large correlation between MAP and NECAP scores for individual students so only NECAP scores are reported here.

**Pownal School:** 55.8% of students are eligible for free and reduced lunch. 43% of students in grades 3-6 were below proficiency in reading on the fall 09 NECAP and 44% were below proficiency in math. In the free and reduced subgroup, 59% were below proficiency in reading and 58% in math. In the students with disabilities subgroup, 90% of the students were below proficiency in reading and 85% in math.

**Bennington Elementary:** 68.6% of students are eligible for free and reduced lunch. 42% of students were below proficiency in reading and 53% in math. In the free and reduced subcategory, 49% of the group was below proficiency in reading and 58% in math. In the students with disabilities subgroup, 69% of the students were below proficiency in reading and 79% in math.

**Molly Stark:** 68% of students are eligible for free and reduced lunch. 31% of students were below proficiency in reading and 45% in math. In the free and reduced subcategory, 37% of students were below proficiency in reading and 51% in math. In the students with disabilities subgroup, 70% of the students were below proficiency in reading and 85% in math.

- 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:*

**Pownal School:** Pownal is in year two of implementation of Positive Behavior Supports. There has been a reduction in the number of behavior referrals; data shows that 90% of the students in the school had 0 or 1 major behavior referrals from Aug 09 - May 1, 10; 8% of the students had 2-5, and only 2% of the students had more than 6 referrals for major behaviors. Physical interventions with students increased significantly this year but the number of children involved was only five. There is a small percentage of children with very challenging behavior needs. The supervisory union will be offering Tier III PBS training next year. Pownal is projecting 47 students entering K in the fall and 44 students entering 1<sup>st</sup> grade. Title IIA money is

being allocated to a class size reduction teacher to offer a K-1 combination class to provide small group instruction to address the emotional/behavior /academic needs of the students and to offer social skills instruction in the classroom. Pownal has 56 students eligible for special education. 2 of those students are in special day placements for students with emotional/behavioral disabilities; the other 54 are in the general education classroom more than 80% of the time. There are two ELL students. All teachers and paraprofessionals are highly qualified in their teaching assignments. 55.77% of students are eligible for free and reduced lunch.

Bennington Elementary is also in year two of implementation of PBS. They have implemented the program with gusto and show significant decreases in behavior referrals. 95% of students in the school had 0-1 incidents of major behavior referrals and only 2% of the students had more than 6 referrals. The number of physical interventions was reduced this past year. Benn. El. has 43 students eligible for special education plus they house a district wide program of 6 students with autism. One student is in a special day program; all of the remaining special education students except the students with autism are in regular education more than 80% of the day. 68.6% of students are eligible for free and reduced lunch. One special education teacher is working under a provisional license; the rest of the teachers are highly qualified for their teaching assignment.

88% of students at Molly Stark had zero or 1 major behavior referral , 7% had 2-5 referrals and 5% had more than 6. The number of physical interventions at Molly increased by 100% during the 09-10 school year; there were 225 physical interventions from Aug - May 15 involving 17 students. Molly Stark has 71 students in special education; 1 is in a residential placement, 1 is in a special day program and 7 are in a special education class more than 60% of the day. All teachers are highly qualified for their job. 68% of students are eligible for free and reduced lunch. Molly Stark has 4 ELL students.

**Summary of conclusions - Systems are in place to place to address behavior issues in the school and for at least 88% of the students these systems are working. The percent of students in special education has remained above the state average for a number of years (20% SVSU wide). Efforts are being made to have special education students in the regular classroom for more than 80% of the time and to improve the instruction at this level to meet the needs of all students. Special education teachers need to increase their collaboration time with regular education teachers to design accommodations and modifications for special education students. The increase in poverty in Bennington and Pownal continues to impact the schools as seen in student achievement, attendance, behavior and family engagement. The students for whom English is a Second Language have very little to no impact on the school; services are provided to these students through ELL instructors when needed.**

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

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

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

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

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

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

*Pownal, Bennington Elementary and Molly Stark school considered ALL of the strategies and activities in the Transformational models and chose the applicable ones as described in 1h below.*

- 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

*This application addresses the following strategies: Pownal School: 1B. Use rigorous, transparent, and equitable evaluation systems for teachers that take into account data on student growth; 2A. Use data to identify and implement an instructional program that is research based and vertically aligned from one grade to the next. 1D. Provide staff with ongoing, high-quality, job-embedded professional development that is aligned with the school's comprehensive instructional program*

*Bennington Elementary: 2A. Use data to identify and implement an instructional program that is research based and vertically aligned from one grade to the next 2B. Promote the continuous use of student data to inform instruction*

*Molly Stark: 2A. Use data to identify and implement an instructional and behavioral program that is research based and vertically aligned from one grade to the next 2B. Promote the continuous use of student data to inform instruction*

- 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:

At Pownal the number one need identified was that the principal was not in classrooms often and was not recognized as an instructional leader. The principal herself had identified this need; much of her time is spent communicating with parents regarding the social, emotional, behavioral and health needs of the students. The teachers at Bennington Elem state that they could improve the climate of open communication by visiting one another's classes and sharing lessons and other materials. They feel that their principal is emerging as an instructional leader, that the curriculum is on its way to being aligned and focused across and within grades and that they need more time for the data team to meet to review student outcomes. Bennington Elementary teachers also identified a need for more social and emotional support systems for students. Molly Stark teachers identified collaboration and common planning time as a need; they also stated the need for more social and emotional supports for students. They feel that their curriculum is emerging in its alignment and focus across and within grades. They responded only emerging to the question "resources are equitably distributed across classes and support systems"; the principal is doing further inquiry as to what the teachers meant by their response to this question.

## 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:***

- 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 teacher supervision and evaluation procedures are being reviewed supervisory union wide. Principals will monitor fidelity of implementation of strategies in the school improvement plan through classroom observations, walk throughs, conferences with teachers, and the supervision and evaluation process.**

- The application includes a commitment to provide the following required data elements annually:
  - 1.) Number of minutes within the school year
  - 2.) Student participation rate on State assessments in reading/language arts and in mathematics, by student subgroup
  - 3.) Dropout rate
  - 4.) Student attendance rate
  - 5.) Number and percentage of students completing advanced coursework (i.e. AP/IB), early college high schools, or dual enrollment classes
  - 6.) Discipline incidents
  - 7.) Truants

- 8.) Distribution of teachers by performance level on an LEA's teacher evaluation system (once that system is up and running)
- 9.) Teacher attendance rate

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

- 1. Pownal - 72,000 minutes in a school year. Molly Stark and Bennington Elementary - 75,600 minutes in a school year.**
- 5. All of the schools are elementary schools and do not offer advanced coursework.**
- 6. Pownal -90% of the students in the school have 0 or 1 major behavior referrals; 8% of the students have 2-5, and only 2% of the students have more than 6 referrals for major behaviors. Bennington Elementary - 95% of students in the school have 0-1 incidents of major behavior referrals, 3% have 1-6 referrals and only 2% of the students have more than 6 referrals. Molly Stark - 88% of students had 0-1 major behavior referrals, 7% had 1-6 referrals, and 5% had more than 6major behavior referrals.**
- 7. In Pownal, 8.5% of students were chronically tardy during the 08-09 school year. (Chronic is defined as more than 10% of the time). Bennington Elementary 18.6% of students are chronically tardy and at Molly Stark the number is 11.7%.**
- 8. All teachers have been deemed proficient as a result of the teacher evaluation system.**
- 9. Teacher attendance rate; Pownal average number of days missed is 10.8 with the range between 0 and 35.5. Bennington Elementary average days missed is 8.6 with range between 0 - 19.5. Molly Stark average number of days missed 12.4 with range between 1 - 62.**

**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.*

**Pownal School:** An external provider is being hired to mentor the principal to improve her capacity as an instructional leader. Several people within SVSU have taken the Supervision and Evaluation course at Castleton College with Peter Mello and feel that the information presented in the class is a match for the skills that the principal wishes to improve. Mr. Mello was a school principal prior to his tenure at Castleton and so can also speak from experience as well as theory. Pownal will contract with Dave and Kathryn Larsen for formative assessment training. The Larsens have been recommended by the VT. DOE in previous corrective action plans. The Larsens train from the Keeping on Track Formative Assessment Project. They have worked with three other schools within SVSU, and their work is now being sustained successfully by trained leaders in each building. Pownal will also contract with Dr. Sue Biggam who is a literacy consultant for the VT Reads Institute through UVM. Sue has also worked with schools within the SVSU through the Bridging Project. Sue is familiar with the literacy curriculum of SVSU and has worked with some of the Title funded teachers at Pownal through the Literacy Leadership Institute.

**Bennington Elementary:** An external provider, Beth Cobb, is being hired to provide formative assessment training. Beth has been recommended by Donna Cauley, a fellow VT School Leadership/Snelling Institute cohort. Beth is a certified trainer and was initially recommended by Pat Johnson, the School Support Coordinator from the DOE. Pat states, "Beth has experience as a trainer and a coach and has provided on-going support to teams in St. Johnsbury. Her background is in math which can be a bonus. I would definitely schedule with her."

The school will also contract with John Camelio, a certified Crisis Prevention and Intervention Trainer. John has trained the staff in SVSU in correct techniques for physical restraint and is very knowledgeable of deescalation techniques to prevent students from needing to be restrained. Because John is familiar with the procedures in place in SVSU and knows many of the children and their families, he is the best person to provide consultation to the discipline committee and the student support center staff at Bennington Elementary School.

**Molly Stark:** This past year the school contracted with MaryAnn Brittingham to provide consultation to the discipline committee. One of Ms. Brittingham's greatest strengths is her ability to create a trusting relationship with teaching staff. Through observation, consultation and written feedback, Ms. Brittingham has provided constructive suggestions with a high degree of credibility. Her training model employs classroom teachers to improve their instructional performance. The teachers at Molly Stark respect Mary Ann's work, and MaryAnn has a good understanding of the needs of the school and has already made recommendations for work to be done during the coming year. MaryAnn is the author of four books, is an adjunct professor at SUNY New Paltz, is a former special education teacher of students with emotional disabilities and has a master's degree in Child and Family Counseling. MaryAnn's knowledge and training helps schools use the concepts from Respectful Discipline to implement PBIS successfully

Molly Stark would also like to continue their work with MaryBeth Monahan, a literacy consultant for the VT Reads Institute through UVM. Mary Beth has been working with the staff at Molly Stark for the past three years. For the coming year her time will be used to provide consultation to collaborative teams to analyze data and identify instructional strategies to respond to what the data shows.

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 an II can reference Requirement 1 I) c. i-ix)*

Bennington and Pownal School District boards approved the school improvement grants as submitted in this application on June 7<sup>th</sup> and June 8<sup>th</sup> respectively. They asked for updates through the coming year on progress toward the measurable objectives. No current agreements, practices or procedures stand in the way of fully and effectively implementing the school improvement plans as written.

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.*

**see attached plans**

- 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 attached plans**

- 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.*

**see attached plans**

- Plan for induction and mentoring of new staff.

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

**All new staff are assigned a mentor for their first year of employment. A description of the mentoring program is attached in Appendix A.**

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

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

**The SU/District School Support team, specifically the Director of Curriculum, Assessment and Instruction, communicates local and state assessment results to teachers, staff, family and community members through the annual state of the district report. Data specific to school and individual students is available and communicated to teachers and principals on an ongoing basis; data teams can access this information at any time. MAP and NECAP scores for students are recorded on Infinite Campus, the supervisory union's data management system.**

**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.*

**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 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 attached plans*

## 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.*

**The superintendent will designate an administrator from Central Office to oversee implementation of the grant. Measurable objectives are included in each school improvement plan. The designee will meet with the principals and school based teams at the beginning of the year to set up record keeping systems to report progress on the objectives. Progress will be reported to central office 3 times a year, at the end of each trimester. The designee will visit schools at least once each trimester to observe progress by attending collaborative team meetings, talking to those who are implementing strategies (ex - consultants doing training, home/school liaison, etc.) and reviewing logs and other written records.**

## REQUIREMENT 8

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

### TO MEET REQUIREMENT (8) ABOVE -

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The LEA must assure that it will—

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

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

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

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

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