

MEMORANDUM

TO: Dan French/Heather Bouchey
FROM: Anne Bordonaro/Patrick Halladay
SUBJECT: State-Level Professional Development Plan
DATE: Plan [Approved 12/21/20](#)

Purpose

The Agency has considerable funding available through state-level set asides for state-level activities conducted through contracting (IIA and IVA) and sub-granting (IVA only), as well as state-level purchases, on behalf of the intents of the two Titles. The CFP Team administers these funds, determining elements such as allowability. However, it is not the Team's role to determine the best uses of these funds nor to vet competing proposals for their use. At least in recent years, without a state plan that identifies Agency priorities for use of these funds, they have gone largely unspent. This memo explains proposed Agency priorities for use of state level Title IIA and Title IVA funds for the next three years. The expectation is that this plan would be updated on a 3-year basis. It also proposes a process for reviewing applications for use of these funds across the Agency.

Proposed Professional Development Priorities for 3-Year Period

With an understanding that new legislative and gubernatorial priorities may require reexamination of Agency priorities at any time, the following priorities for state-level professional development activities and purchases are proposed for the 20-21, 21-22, and 22-23 school years

1. Activities related to assisting LEAs effectively to meet Covid-19 impacted academic and social-emotional-behavioral learning needs including:
 - a. accurately determining way how much learning loss has occurred due to Covid-19 educational disruptions, where those losses have occurred, and who has been affected, including which sub-groups may have been disproportionately impacted,
 - b. determining data-based strategies for remediating those losses, and
 - c. evaluating the impacts of interventions to ameliorate learning loss, including impacts on equity gaps.

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2. Activities related to assisting LEAs to realize the four goals outlined in Act 173 – coordinated curriculum, comprehensive systems of aligned assessments, effective educational support teams, and needs-based professional development. Tying our professional development goals to these educational goals provides guardrails for the work of the Agency, helping to ensure that funds are spent on activities that align with larger AOE goals.
3. Pressing needs identified by Agency leadership that are not directly related to either Covid-19 response or implementation of Act 173, such as needs driven by new legislative priorities or identified as important enablers to meeting Act 173 requirements. For example, regarding the latter, there is consensus among Division Directors that LEAs need assistance with how to effectively use data to drive their needs assessment and comprehensive school improvement planning processes, in order to drive better use of their federal, state, and local funds to meet students’ needs and address equity gaps. There also is a need for better understanding of how to do such data-driven work among many AOE staff across divisions whose role it is to assist LEAs with needs assessment and comprehensive improvement planning.

Proposed Application Process for Use of IIA and/or IVA Funds to Meet State-Level Priorities

1. An online application form for use of IIA and/or IVA funds shall be completed by the respective individuals/teams and submitted, with the signature of the appropriate Division Director, to a cross-division review team, which shall meet twice a year in June and December to review proposals.
2. The cross-division review team shall be composed of one member from each program division (SSS, SP, EQ, DMAD) as well as the Deputy Secretary. Program division members may be the Division Directors themselves or may be appointed by their respective Division Director. In addition, the following FESP members shall be standing members of the review committee: FESP Division Director, FESP Assistant Division Director, and the Title IIA Coordinator or Title IVA Coordinator, depending on the funds under consideration. When a proposal comes before the committee from a specific division, that division’s representative shall recuse him/herself from its review.
3. The cross-division review team shall review proposals according to scoring rubrics (see Appendix A), which include both relation to state level priorities, as well as grant-specific criteria, including allowability, allocability, and reasonableness. (See Appendix B for detailed descriptions of Title II Part A and Title IV Part A allowable activities). The FESP members shall provide lead expertise to the committee regarding such grant-specific criteria. The committee shall provide feedback to the applicants on ways they might restructure their application if it is not sufficiently detailed to enable review. The team shall strive to complete all reviews within four weeks of the submission deadline.

4. Following final review, the team shall prepare a list of recommended activities/purchases for full or partial funding, in order of priority, for final review and approval/denial by the Secretary. The scoring rubrics underlying this list shall be attached to the recommendation.
5. Applications that are not selected for funding may be resubmitted in a subsequent application window. Applicants may ask the committee to provide them the scoring rubrics to guide future revisions to their application.
6. Separately, members of FESP and EQ shall meet twice a year in May and November with members of the Finance Division to get updated forecasts of available IIA and IVA state level funds.

Link to Application

<https://www.cognitofrms.com/VermontAgencyOfEducation/StateLevelFundsApplication>

Appendix B: Allowable Activities

Allowable Title II Part A State Level Activities

When completing an application for Title II Part A State Level funds, Agency applicants should reference the allowable fund uses described below and ensure that proposed strategies directly support one of the purposes described:

(a) Reforming teacher, principal, or other school leader certification, recertification, licensing, or tenure systems or preparation program standards and approval processes to ensure that—

(I) teachers have the necessary subject-matter knowledge and teaching skills, as demonstrated through measures determined by the State, which may include teacher performance assessments, in the academic subjects that the teachers teach to help students meet challenging State academic standards;

(II) principals or other school leaders have the instructional leadership skills to help teachers teach and to help students meet such challenging State academic standards; and

(III) teacher certification or licensing requirements are aligned with such challenging State academic standards.

(b) Developing, improving, or providing assistance to Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) to support the design and implementation of teacher, principal, or other school leader evaluation and support systems that are based in part on evidence of student academic achievement, which may include student growth, and shall include multiple measures of educator performance and provide clear, timely, and useful feedback to teachers, principals, or other school leaders, such as by—

(I) developing and disseminating high-quality evaluation tools, such as classroom observation rubrics, and methods, including training and auditing, for ensuring inter-rater reliability of evaluation results;

(II) developing and providing training to principals, other school leaders, coaches, mentors, and evaluators on how to accurately differentiate performance, provide useful and timely feedback, and use evaluation results to inform decision making about professional development, improvement strategies, and personnel decisions; and

(III) developing a system for auditing the quality of evaluation and support systems.

(c) Improving equitable access to effective teachers.

(d) Carrying out programs that establish, expand, or improve alternative routes for State certification of teachers (especially for teachers of children with disabilities, English learners, science, technology, engineering, mathematics, or other areas where the State experiences a shortage of educators), principals, or other school leaders, for— (I) individuals with a

baccalaureate or master's degree, or other advanced degree; (II) mid-career professionals from other occupations; (III) paraprofessionals; (IV) former military personnel; and (V) recent graduates of institutions of higher education with records of academic distinction who demonstrate the potential to become effective teachers, principals, or other school leaders.

(e) Developing, improving, and implementing mechanisms to assist Local Educational Agencies and schools in effectively recruiting and retaining teachers, principals, or other school leaders who are effective in improving student academic achievement, including effective teachers from underrepresented minority groups and teachers with disabilities, such as through—

(I) opportunities for effective teachers to lead evidence-based (to the extent the State determines that such evidence is reasonably available) professional development for the peers of such effective teachers; and

(II) providing training and support for teacher leaders and principals or other school leaders who are recruited as part of instructional leadership teams.

(f) Fulfilling the State Educational Agency's (SEA's) responsibilities concerning proper and efficient administration and monitoring of the programs carried out under this part, including provision of technical assistance to Local Educational Agencies.

(g) Developing, or assisting Local Educational Agencies in developing—

(I) career opportunities and advancement initiatives that promote professional growth and emphasize multiple career paths, such as instructional coaching and mentoring (including hybrid roles that allow instructional coaching and mentoring while remaining in the classroom), school leadership, and involvement with school improvement and support;

(II) strategies that provide differential pay, or other incentives, to recruit and retain teachers in high-need academic subjects and teachers, principals, or other school leaders, in low-income schools and school districts, which may include performance-based pay systems; and

(III) new teacher, principal, or other school leader induction and mentoring programs that are, to the extent the State determines that such evidence is reasonably available, evidence-based, and designed to—

(aa) improve classroom instruction and student learning and achievement, including through improving school leadership programs; and

(bb) increase the retention of effective teachers, principals, or other school leaders.

(h) Providing assistance to Local Educational Agencies for the development and implementation of high-quality professional development programs for principals that enable the principals to be effective and prepare all students to meet the challenging State academic standards.

(i) Supporting efforts to train teachers, principals, or other school leaders to effectively integrate technology into curricula and instruction, which may include training to assist teachers in implementing blended learning (as defined in section 4102(1) of the ESEA) projects.

(j) Providing training, technical assistance, and capacity-building to Local Educational Agencies that receive a subgrant under Title II, Part A.

(k) Reforming or improving teacher, principal, or other school leader preparation programs, such as through establishing teacher residency programs and school leader residency programs.

(l) Establishing or expanding teacher, principal, or other school leader preparation academies, with an amount of the funds reserved for State activities that is not more than 2 percent of the State's allotment, if— (I) allowable under State law; (II) the State enables candidates attending a teacher, principal, or other school leader preparation academy to be eligible for State financial aid to the same extent as participants in other State approved teacher or principal preparation programs, including alternative certification, licensure, or credential programs; and (III) the State enables teachers, principals, or other school leaders who are teaching or working while on alternative certificates, licenses, or credentials to teach or work in the State while enrolled in a teacher, principal, or other school leader preparation academy.

(m) Supporting the instructional services provided by effective school library programs.

(n) Developing, or assisting Local Educational Agencies in developing, strategies that provide teachers, principals, or other school leaders with the skills, credentials, or certifications needed to educate all students in postsecondary education coursework through early college high school or dual or concurrent enrollment programs.

(o) Providing training for all school personnel, including teachers, principals, other school leaders, specialized instructional support personnel, and paraprofessionals, regarding how to prevent and recognize child sexual abuse.

(p) Supporting opportunities for principals, other school leaders, teachers, paraprofessionals, early childhood education program directors, and other early childhood education program providers to participate in joint efforts to address the transition to elementary school, including issues related to school readiness.

(q) Developing and providing professional development and other comprehensive systems of support for teachers, principals, or other school leaders to promote high-quality instruction and instructional leadership in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics subjects, including computer science.

(r) Supporting the professional development and improving the instructional strategies of teachers, principals, or other school leaders to integrate career and technical education content into academic instructional practices, which may include training on best practices to understand State and regional workforce needs and transitions to postsecondary education and the workforce.

(s) Working with other States, as a consortium, to voluntarily develop a process that allows teachers who are licensed or certified in a participating State to teach in other participating States without completing additional licensure or certification requirements.

(t) Supporting and developing efforts to train teachers on the appropriate use of student data to ensure that individual student privacy is protected as required by section 444 of the General Education Provisions Act (commonly known as the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974) (20 U.S.C. 1232g) and in accordance with State student privacy laws and Local Educational Agency student privacy and technology use policies.

(u) Supporting other activities identified by the State that are, to the extent the State determines that such evidence is reasonably available, evidence-based and that meet the purpose of Title II of the ESEA.

Allowable Title IV Part A State Level Activities

When completing an application for Title IV Part A State Level funds, Agency applicants should reference the examples of allowable fund uses described below to help in ensuring that proposed strategies directly support one of the purposes described:

Overview of Allowable SSAE Program Activities		
Well-Rounded Educational Opportunities (ESEA section 4107)	Safe and Healthy Students (ESEA section 4108)	Effective Use of Technology (ESEA section 4109)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving access to foreign language instruction, arts, and music education • Supporting college and career counseling, including providing information on opportunities for financial aid through the early FAFSA • Providing programming to improve instruction and student engagement in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), including computer science, and increasing access to these subjects for underrepresented groups • Promoting access to accelerated learning opportunities including Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) programs, dual or concurrent enrollment programs and early college high schools • Strengthening instruction in American history, civics, economics, geography, government education, and environmental education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting community and parent involvement in schools • Providing school-based mental health services and counseling • Promoting supportive school climates to reduce the use of exclusionary discipline and promoting supportive school discipline • Establishing or improving dropout prevention • Supporting re-entry programs and transition services for justice-involved youth • Implementing programs that support a healthy, active lifestyle (nutritional and physical education) • Implementing systems and practices to prevent bullying and harassment • Developing relationship building skills to help improve safety through the recognition and prevention of coercion, violence or abuse • Establishing community partnerships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting high-quality professional development for educators, school leaders and administrators to personalize learning and improve academic achievement • Building technological capacity and infrastructure • Carrying out innovative blended learning projects • Providing students in rural, remote and underserved areas with the resources to benefit from high-quality digital learning opportunities • Delivering specialized or rigorous academic courses and curricula using technology, including digital learning technologies and assistive technology