



STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
LANSING

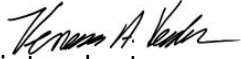
RICK SNYDER
GOVERNOR

BRIAN J. WHISTON
STATE SUPERINTENDENT

MEMORANDUM

DATE: September 21, 2017

TO: Local and Intermediate School District Superintendents
Public School Academy Directors

FROM: Venessa A. Keesler, Ph.D., Deputy Superintendent
Division of Educator, Student, and School Support


SUBJECT: Intent to Apply for Competency-Based Education District Grant

Section 21j of the 2017-2018 State School Aid Act provides \$500,000 to fund grants for the design and implementation of competency-based education programs. Districts will compete for grant funding for the purpose of providing enhanced choice to pupils and parents for the completion of the requirements for kindergarten through a high school diploma, including the Michigan Merit Curriculum. The grant program is designed to be a three-year opportunity for districts to explore, develop, and implement the systems and processes necessary for a quality competency-based education program. Based on current legislation, successful applicants can anticipate that the awarded funds will be replicated for two additional funding cycles for a total of three years.

An informational webinar will be held on October 3, 2017, from 3:00-4:00 p.m. to provide guidance around the grant program, the competitive grant application, and technical assistance that will be available during the grant application period. The webinar will be held via Adobe Connect and can be accessed through this link: <http://remc.adobeconnect.com/cbeintent>.

As a part of the grant application process and, in an effort to gauge interest in the program, the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) is requesting that the district superintendent submit a letter indicating intent to apply to Mary Head, at headm1@michigan.gov by October 12, 2017. The letter need be no more than a paragraph in length indicating interest and very briefly describing the current state of competency-based education in the district – from non-existent to partially implemented to working out the details of an implemented program. Based on that response, the MDE will develop a technical assistance program to provide support during the application period. Should a district not submitting a letter of intent later decide that they would like to apply for the grant, that will be possible but it should be noted that the technical assistance supports may not be as readily available as that technical assistance will have been developed based on the letters of intent.

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Prior to submitting the letter of intent, the district should plan to attend the webinar mentioned above and give consideration to how the district is already meeting or plans to address the components listed below:

- An educational model that allows the use of multiple and innovative methods to determine pupils' achievement of grade-level competencies and credit under the Michigan Merit Curriculum in a subject area or combined subject areas, including, public presentations, submission of research papers, attaining marketable workforce credentials, and mentoring other students. Competency assessments used to determine mastery must be aligned to Michigan's academic standards.
- Curriculum that allows for a majority of instructional time to be spent on student-driven projects, including a capstone project as part of high school graduation requirements, if applicable. These projects will include multiple subject areas and 21st century skills such as leadership, teamwork, problem solving, and communication. Instruction time may be during a nontraditional school calendar.
- A comprehensive formative assessment system to monitor student academic achievement pace and ensure that students receive timely, differentiated academic support based on their individual learning needs in different subject areas.
- An innovative partnership with employers or institutes of higher education, or both, to provide contextualized learning opportunities that emphasize attainment of competencies that include application and creation of knowledge, along with the development of work-ready skills.
- A plan for the transition away from a grade-level system of student promotion to a competency-based system of student promotion. This plan will include messaging to parents describing the benefits of, and steps taken to implement, a competency-based instructional model.
- A plan for a scope and timeline of professional development for school instructional and administrative staff.
- A commitment to maintain participation in statewide assessment and accountability systems for students being served by the competency-based programs.

We look forward to hearing from many of you regarding participation in this opportunity for districts to develop quality competency-based education programs in their districts. If you have questions regarding this exciting opportunity, please contact Gregg Dionne at dionneg@michigan.gov or at 517-241-4285.

cc: Michigan Education Alliance