

Effective 5/5/2021

Part 5
Personalized, Competency-based Learning Grants Program

53F-5-501 Definitions.

As used in this part:

- (1) "Blended learning" means a formal education program in which a student learns:
 - (a) at least in part, through online learning with some element of student control over time, place, path, and pace;
 - (b) at least in part, in a supervised brick-and-mortar location away from home; and
 - (c) in a program in which the modalities along each student's learning path within a course or subject are connected to provide an integrated learning experience.
- (2) "Extended learning" means learning opportunities outside of a traditional school structure, including:
 - (a) online learning available anywhere, anytime;
 - (b) career-based experiences, including internships and job shadowing;
 - (c) community-based projects; and
 - (d) off-site postsecondary learning.
- (3) "Grant program" means the Personalized, Competency-Based Learning Grants Program created in this part.
- (4) "Institution of higher education" means an institution listed in Section 53H-1-102.
- (5) "Personalized, competency-based learning" means a system of learning in which the following principles influence the daily actions of the educational community:
 - (a) students are empowered daily to make important decisions about the students' learning experiences, how the students will create and apply knowledge, and how students will demonstrate the students' learning;
 - (b) assessment is a meaningful, positive, and empowering learning experience for students that yields timely, relevant, and actionable evidence;
 - (c) students receive timely, differentiated support based on the students' individual learning needs;
 - (d) students progress based on evidence of mastery rather than by hours of attendance;
 - (e) students learn actively using different pathways and varied pacing;
 - (f) strategies to ensure equity for all students are embedded in the culture, structure, and pedagogy of schools and education systems; and
 - (g) rigorous, common expectations for learning, including knowledge, skills, and dispositions, are explicit, transparent, measurable, and transferable.
- (6) "Review committee" means the committee established under Section 53F-5-502.
- (7) "STEM" means science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

Amended by Chapter 9, 2025 Special Session 1

53F-5-502 Personalized Competency-Based Learning Grants Program -- State board duties -- Review committee -- Technical assistance training.

- (1) There is created the Personalized Competency-Based Learning Grants Program consisting of the grants created in this part to improve educational outcomes in public schools through personalized, competency-based learning.

- (2) The grant program shall incentivize an LEA to establish personalized, competency-based learning within the LEA through the use of:
 - (a) personalized learning;
 - (b) blended learning;
 - (c) extended learning;
 - (d) educator professional learning in personalized, competency-based learning; or
 - (e) any other method that emphasizes personalized, competency-based learning.
- (3) The state board shall:
 - (a) in accordance with Title 63G, Chapter 3, Utah Administrative Rulemaking Act, adopt rules:
 - (i) for the administration of the grant program and awarding of grants; and
 - (ii) to define outcome-based measures appropriate to the type of grant for an LEA that is awarded a grant under this part to use to measure the performance of the LEA's plan or program;
 - (b) establish a grant application process;
 - (c) in accordance with Subsection (4), establish a review committee to make recommendations to the state board for:
 - (i) metrics to analyze the quality of a grant application; and
 - (ii) approval of a grant application; and
 - (d) with input from the review committee, adopt metrics to analyze the quality of a grant application.
- (4)
 - (a) The review committee shall consist of STEM and blended learning experts, current and former school administrators, current and former teachers, and at least one former school district superintendent, in addition to other staff designated by the state board.
 - (b) The review committee shall:
 - (i) review a grant application submitted by an LEA;
 - (ii) make recommendations to the LEA to modify the application, if necessary; and
 - (iii) make recommendations to the state board regarding the final disposition of an application.
- (5)
 - (a) The state board shall provide technical assistance training to assist an LEA with a grant application under this part.
 - (b) An LEA may not apply for a grant under this part unless:
 - (i) a representative of the LEA attends the technical assistance training before the LEA submits a grant application; and
 - (ii) the representative is a superintendent, principal, or a person in a leadership position within the LEA.
 - (c) The technical assistance training shall include:
 - (i) instructions on completing a grant application, including grant application requirements;
 - (ii) information on the scoring metrics used to review a grant application; and
 - (iii) information on personalized, competency-based learning.
- (6) The state board may use up to 5% of an appropriation provided to fund this part for administration of the grant program.

Amended by Chapter 129, 2021 General Session

53F-5-503 Planning grants -- Requirements.

- (1)
 - (a) The state board shall, subject to legislative appropriations, award a planning grant to an LEA:

- (i) that submits a planning grant application that meets the requirements established by the state board, subject to Subsection (2);
 - (ii) if an LEA designee has attended the technical assistance training described in Section 53F-5-502; and
 - (iii) if the LEA planning grant application has been recommended by the review committee.
 - (b) An LEA that receives a grant under Subsection (1)(a) shall expend the grant funds no later than one calendar year after receiving the funds.
- (2)
- (a) A planning grant application shall include evidence that the LEA:
 - (i) can provide a general description of the program the LEA would like to plan;
 - (ii) is intending to plan for:
 - (A) schoolwide implementation; or
 - (B) if the LEA intends to implement initially with a population smaller than schoolwide, phasing the plan in schoolwide or districtwide over a specified period of time;
 - (iii) can describe the types of partners that will help with the plan and, eventually, implement the program;
 - (iv) planning activities and program will focus on:
 - (A) implementation of the core principles described in Section 53F-5-502;
 - (B) use of the methods, as applicable, described in Section 53F-5-502; and
 - (C) the outcome-based measures adopted by the state board under Section 53F-5-502;
 - (v) has:
 - (A) the capacity, qualifications, local governing body support, and time to successfully plan the program; and
 - (B) an intentional and feasible planning process;
 - (vi) will align the LEA's budget as necessary with the planning process; and
 - (vii) will communicate and promote the plan with parents, teachers, and members of the community.
 - (b) The state board may adopt other requirements in addition to the requirements in Subsection (2)(a).

Amended by Chapter 186, 2019 General Session

53F-5-504 Implementation grants -- Requirements.

- (1)
- (a) The state board shall, subject to legislative appropriations, award an implementation grant to, subject to Subsection (1)(c), an LEA:
 - (i) that submits an implementation grant application that meets the requirements established by the state board, subject to Subsection (2);
 - (ii) if an LEA designee has attended the technical assistance training described in Section 53F-5-502; and
 - (iii) if the LEA implementation grant application has been recommended by the review committee.
 - (b) An LEA that receives a grant under Subsection (1)(a) shall expend the grant funds no later than two calendar years after receiving the funds.
 - (c) An LEA is not eligible to receive an implementation grant under this section unless the state board has previously awarded the LEA a planning grant under Section 53F-5-503.
- (2)
- (a) An implementation grant application shall include evidence that the LEA:

- (i) can logically articulate the proposed program's mission, theory of change, and the program's intended goals and outcomes;
- (ii)
 - (A) program will have schoolwide implementation; or
 - (B) if the LEA intends to implement initially with a population smaller than schoolwide, program includes steps to phase the program in schoolwide or districtwide over a specified period of time;
- (iii) has an understanding of similar programs and can use this knowledge to strengthen the LEA's program implementation;
- (iv) program will focus on:
 - (A) direct alignment with the core principles described in Section 53F-5-502;
 - (B) use of the methods, as applicable, described in Section 53F-5-502; and
 - (C) the outcome based measures adopted by the state board under Section 53F-5-502;
- (v) program will address a need, determined by data, in the LEA or community;
- (vi) has a strong evaluation plan that will clearly measure the success of the LEA's program against the stated goals and objectives;
- (vii) has a list of signatures of key stakeholders and partners who are committed to implementing the program;
- (viii) has the capacity, qualifications, local governing body support, and time to successfully implement this program;
- (ix) has an intentional and feasible scope of work to implement the program;
- (x) will align the LEA's budget as necessary with the planning process; and
- (xi) will communicate and promote the plan with parents, teachers, and members of the community.
- (b) The state board may adopt other requirements in addition to the requirements in Subsection (2)(a).
- (3) A program under this section may include:
 - (a) a waiver, subject to Section 53F-5-506, of required school hours attended or traditional school calendar scheduling; and
 - (b) an adjustment of educator compensation to reflect the implementation of a waiver under Subsection (3)(a).

Amended by Chapter 186, 2019 General Session

53F-5-505 Expansion grants -- Requirements.

- (1)
 - (a) The state board shall, subject to legislative appropriations and to expand an existing LEA program schoolwide or districtwide, award a grant to, subject to Subsection (1)(c), an LEA:
 - (i) that submits an expansion grant application that meets the requirements established by the state board, subject to Subsection (2);
 - (ii) if an LEA designee has attended the technical assistance training described in Section 53F-5-502; and
 - (iii) if the LEA expansion grant application has been recommended by the review committee.
 - (b) An LEA that receives a grant under Subsection (1)(a) shall expend the grant funds no later than two calendar years after receiving the funds.
 - (c) An LEA is not eligible to receive an expansion grant under this section unless the state board has previously awarded the LEA an implementation grant under Section 53F-5-504.
- (2)

- (a) An expansion grant application shall include evidence that the LEA:
 - (i) has an established program that:
 - (A) has successfully met previous goals;
 - (B) has shown outcomes that are in alignment with the core principles described in Section 53F-5-502 and used methods, as applicable, described in Section 53F-5-502;
 - (C) is supported by LEA management and leadership;
 - (D) is suitable for expansion schoolwide or districtwide; and
 - (E) is the program, with any necessary modifications, that the LEA plans to expand if awarded the expansion grant;
 - (ii) can logically articulate the LEA's program mission, theory of change, and the program's intended goals and outcomes;
 - (iii) program as proposed for expansion is focused on:
 - (A) direct alignment with the core principles identified in Section 53F-5-502;
 - (B) use of the methods, as applicable, described in Section 53F-5-502; and
 - (C) the outcome based measures adopted by the state board under Section 53F-5-502;
 - (iv) that the program will directly address a need, determined by data, in the LEA or community;
 - (v) has clearly articulated core components that ensure, when expanded, the program will yield positive outcomes;
 - (vi) has a strong evaluation plan that will clearly measure the success of the LEA's program against the stated goals and objectives;
 - (vii) has a list of signatures of key stakeholders and partners who are committed to expanding the program;
 - (viii) has the capacity, qualifications, local governing body support, and time to successfully expand the program;
 - (ix) has an intentional and feasible scope of work to expand the program;
 - (x) has a strategic budget that is aligned with the LEA's scope of work; and
 - (xi) will communicate and promote the plan with parents, teachers, and members of the community.
- (b) The state board may adopt other requirements in addition to the requirements in Subsection (2)(a).
- (3) A program under this section may include:
 - (a) a waiver, subject to Section 53F-5-506, of required school hours attended or traditional school calendar scheduling; and
 - (b) an adjustment of educator compensation to reflect the implementation of a waiver under Subsection (3)(a).

Amended by Chapter 186, 2019 General Session

53F-5-506 Waiver from state board rule -- State board recommended statutory changes.

- (1) An LEA may apply to the state board in a grant application submitted under this part for a waiver of a state board rule made in accordance with Title 63G, Chapter 3, Utah Administrative Rulemaking Act, that inhibits or hinders the LEA from accomplishing its goals set out in its grant application.
- (2) The state board may grant the waiver, unless:
 - (a) the waiver would cause the LEA to be in violation of state or federal law; or
 - (b) the waiver would threaten the health, safety, or welfare of students in the LEA.
- (3) If the state board denies the waiver, the state board shall provide in writing the reason for the denial to the waiver applicant.

- (4)
 - (a) The state board shall request from each LEA that receives a grant under this part for each year the LEA receives funds:
 - (i) information on a state statute that hinders an LEA from fully implementing the LEA's program; and
 - (ii) suggested changes to the statute.
 - (b) The state board shall report any information received from an LEA under Subsection (4)(a) and the state board's recommendations in accordance with Section 53E-1-203.

Amended by Chapter 408, 2020 General Session

53F-5-507 Cooperation of institutions of higher education -- Transferring students not to be penalized.

- (1) An institution of higher education:
 - (a) shall, for purposes of admission, scholarships, and other financial aid consideration, recognize and accept on equal footing as a traditional high school diploma a high school diploma awarded to a student who successfully completes an educational program that uses, in whole or in part, personalized, competency-based learning; and
 - (b) cooperate with an LEA:
 - (i) as applicable, to facilitate the advancement of a student who attends a personalized, competency-based learning program; and
 - (ii) as requested, in the development of an LEA plan or program under this part.
- (2) If a student attending an LEA that establishes personalized, competency-based learning within the LEA transfers to another school within the LEA or to another LEA entirely that does not have a personalized, competency-based learning program, the student may not be penalized by being required to repeat course work that the student has successfully completed, changing the student's grade, or receive any other penalty related to the student's previous attendance in the personalized, competency-based learning program.

Amended by Chapter 129, 2021 General Session