**FY2026**

**FC 0117 – Student Opportunity Act Evidence-Based Practice Grant (competitive)**

**Due Date: 5:00 p.m. June 6, 2025**

**Frequently Asked Questions**

1. **Question:** My district was a FC0117 grant recipient in FY23. Are we eligible to apply?

**Answer:** Massachusetts public school districts awarded the FY23 Student Opportunity Act Evidence Based Practice (EBP) grant to implement ***Early Literacy or Co-Teaching and Inclusion*** practices are eligible to apply (expanded learning time and recruitment and retention are not EBPs that can be supported by this FY26 grant).

The list of eligible districts can be found as part of the RFP.

1. **Question:** How much are we eligible to apply for through this grant program?

**Answer:** Applicants may apply for $100,000 to $150,000 (depending on scale and scope of plan) for implementation of grant activities described in the RFP.

1. **Question:** Where can the actual application, such as the narrative section, for this grant can be found?

**Answer:** As stated in the RFP, the FY26 FC 0117 competitive grant **will be submitted in DESE’s new GEM$ system.** GEM$ is a cloud-based fiscal and program management grant system that will eventually phase out the use of EdGrants. Please see the Submission Instructions section in the RFP for more information. The link is: [Grants for Education Management System (GEM$).](https://mass.egrantsmanagement.com/)

1. **Question:** What data sources should I use to highlight our progress?

**Answer:** It is expected that you have been progress monitoring throughout the grant duration since receiving it in FY23. Metrics that allow you to monitor the progress of each student group, particularly the student group(s) whose disparities you have been using this grant funding since FY23 to close. These metrics may include:

MCAS – [School and District Profiles](https://profiles.doe.mass.edu/) Page

ACCESS – Progress toward proficiency

[EL Data Dashboard](https://app.powerbigov.us/view?r=eyJrIjoiZDcyMjUxYmUtOWFkYS00NWQ2LTllMjItMWE2Yjc4ZDQyYTY2IiwidCI6IjNlODYxZDE2LTQ4YjctNGEwZS05ODA2LThjMDRkODFiN2IyYSJ9)

[Attendance](https://profiles.doe.mass.edu/statereport/attendance.aspx) and [chronic absenteeism](https://educationtocareer.data.mass.gov/Students-and-Teachers/Chart-Chronic-Absenteeism-by-Student-Group/69tk-3m4n) (also found in district and school specific profiles)

Views of Climate and Learning Survey (VOCAL) – Available on the security portal

[Root Cause Analysis](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.doe.mass.edu%2Fresearch%2Fsuccess%2Frootcause-analysis.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK) regarding chronic absenteeism, VOCAL responses, etc.

District Interim Data (e.g. iReady, DIBELS, benchmarks, surveys, attendance, etc.)

1. **Question:** What activities can grant funds support?

**Answer:** Grant funds may be spent on a variety of activities, provided they directly support the EBP you have been implementing and the student group(s) you identified at the onset of the grant in FY23 for whom you are closing disparities. Expenditures may include, but are not limited to:

Stipends

Professional Development (PD) and contracted services to deliver PD and build strong internal capacity;

Instructional materials relevant to supporting your student group(s) and EBP;

Family engagement activities (workshops, etc.) relate to work toward implementing the EBP and closing gaps;

Conference costs (no out-of-state travel)

1. **Question:** We would like to apply for the grant. I did go into GEMS and saw the grant but could not access it. What do I need to do to get into GEMS to access the application?

**Answer:** DESE does not assign user access in GEM$. It is the responsibility of your school/district/collaborative’s **LEA User Access Administrator** (UAA) to set LEA GEM$ user access. Please reference the **GEM$ LEA User Roles - Guidance and Forms** under DESE Resources on the GEM$ main page.

1. **Question:** In what ways is this funding opportunity different from the FY23 grant?

**Answer:** This FY26 grant will support models initiated with the FY23 grant. Funding is designed to allow districts that have seen progress in identified gap closing to continue their focused work and develop exemplary programming that can be disseminated broadly. The grant also places greater focus on only two (as opposed to four) EBPs: Early Literacy and Co-Teaching/Inclusion.