**PRISM III FAQ**

**General Questions**

1. **Can consortia apply for PRISM III and II?** 
   1. Yes, consortia can apply for PRISM III and II.
   2. A consortium (plural: consortia) refers to a group of smaller LEAs that come together to apply collectively for funding or participate in a program.
2. **Do the schools in the consortium have to have picked the same HQIM?**
   1. No. Schools participating in a consortium are not required to adopt the same HQIM. Each school may select core curricular materials that best meet the needs of its students and instructional context, provided all selected materials meet the [CURATE](https://www.doe.mass.edu/instruction/curate/) definition of “high quality.”
3. **For the PRISM III application, if a district chooses grades 4-8, does the HQIM need to be the same for all grade levels, or can grades 4-5 have one selected HQIM and grades 6-8 have a different selected HQIM?**
   1. No. Grantees who choose to focus on grades 4-8 are not required to adopt the same HQIM in all grades. Each grade band may select materials that best meet the needs of its students and instructional context, provided all selected materials meet the [CURATE](https://www.doe.mass.edu/instruction/curate/) definition of “high quality.”
4. **Can LEAs apply for PRISM II and PRISM III?**
5. Yes, LEAs can apply for PRISM III and PRISM II.
6. Being awarded one grant does not guarantee being awarded the other grant.
7. PRISM II and PRISM III have different eligibility requirements. Refer to the [RFP](https://www.doe.mass.edu/grants/2026/0594/) and Program Details for more detailed information on eligibility requirements.
8. **Can a PRISM I district apply for PRISM III?** 
   1. Yes, participating in PRISM I does not preclude a district from applying to PRISM III.
9. **I'm wondering if an organization we have been working with is one of “DESE’s-approved and selected PRISM Curriculum and Instruction Coaches”, and would that partnership be honored?**
   1. The PRISM II and III Curriculum and Instruction Coaches have not yet been selected. All PRISM Leadership Curriculum and Instruction providers must be pre-approved to support PRISM II and/or PRISM III by DESE. Though districts are free to continue partnerships with other groups using their own district funds, only DESE-approved providers can serve as PRISM Curriculum and Instruction Coaches. We will work to coordinate and streamline services, so they are supportive for PRISM schools.
10. **Is it possible for us to apply for coaching for grades 4-5 and grades 6-8, even though they are using two separate programs?**
    1. Yes, you may still apply to PRISM III if you are using a different curriculum in grades 4-5 and 6-8.
11. **What is the application deadline?**
12. Applications are due on GEM$ on **Wednesday, May 21** **by 5:00 PM** for PRISM III (4-12). Late submissions, or submissions received via email, will not be reviewed.
13. **Are we able to upload PDFs of documents (e.g., Curriculum Review Process and rubrics used to evaluate curriculum materials)?**
    1. Track 1 and 3 applicants will upload documents, PDF and Word documents, related to their evaluation and selection process under “Related Documents” in GEM$
    2. Track 1 districts can also upload their quote to purchase selected HQIM for ELA/Literacy under “Related Documents” in GEM$.
14. **What are the different tracks available in PRISM III?** 
    1. The PRISM III grant will assist LEAs/ consortia in either preparing for the selection and adoption of high-quality instructional materials (HQIM) or in sustaining their current implementation through three tracks described in the [program details](https://www.doe.mass.edu/grants/2026/0594/program-details.docx):
15. **Track 1:** Purchase, Launch, and Implement – For LEAs/consortia ready to purchase materials in Summer 2025 and implement them in SY25-26.
16. **Track 2**: Evaluate, Select, Purchase, Launch, and Implement – For LEAs/consortia that need to evaluate and select curricular materials before purchasing and implementing them.
17. **Track 3:** Sustain Implementation of High-Quality Instructional Materials – For LEAs/consortia that already have HQIM and need support with implementation and sustainability.
18. **What happens after PRISM III's summer funding period ends on August 31, 2025?** 
    1. Pending appropriation and grant requirements, ONLY awarded grantees who meet additional federal eligibility criteria may qualify for Targeted Continuation grants in Fiscal Years 2026, 2027, and 2028.
    2. To be eligible for the Targeted Continuation, LEAs must have at least one school serving 50% identified low-income students (40% for high schools). For consortia, all LEAs within the consortium must meet this eligibility requirement to apply for continued funding in FY26 and beyond. This is a requirement of the federal funding.
    3. LEAs that do not meet this requirement can only apply for Track 1 for July and August 2025 to receive funding to support materials purchase.
19. **What is the source of funding for Targeted Continuation grants?**
20. These grants are anticipated to be funded by federal Comprehensive Literacy State Development (CLSD) funds.
21. To be eligible for the Targeted Continuation, LEAs must have at least one school serving 50% identified low-income students (40% for high schools). For consortia, all LEAs within the consortium must meet this eligibility requirement to apply for continued funding in FY26 and beyond. This is a requirement of the federal funding.
22. **Can LEAs/consortia use PRISM III funding to buy supplementary materials and get professional learning for products that are standalone or not part of the core HQIM ELA/Literacy curriculum?**
23. Only PRISM III Track 3 LEAs/consortia can use funding to purchase supplementary materials and professional learning to support products that are standalone or not part of the core HQIM ELA/Literacy curriculum, based on pre-approval by DESE.
24. **Is there a suggested number of people that should be on the PRISM III Curriculum Council?**
25. The council should include a diverse group of educators, such as special educators, classroom teachers, ESL teachers, paraprofessionals, instructional coaches, principals, reading specialists, and district leadership. Parents, students, and community members may also be included where appropriate. In addition, educators in subsequent and preceding grade-bands may be included when appropriate. When considering the number of people, we encourage you to consider the stipends available as described in the budgeting guide.
26. **Can the PRISM III Curriculum Council be an existing team?**
27. Yes, the council may overlap with an existing team, such as an Instructional Leadership Team.
28. **When it says a DESE/PRISM "approved coach," do we submit the coach option we want and it gets approved, or are we supplied with a list to choose from? How does that work?**
29. DESE is undergoing a formal procurement process to identify approved coaches to act as PRISM Curriculum and Instruction Coaches. Awarded districts will work directly with one organization approved under that procurement. Districts may not submit their own option for coaching.
30. **Do I upload an HQIM Evaluation/Selection Progress Tracker if I am applying to PRISM III Track 2?**
    1. No, you will only upload an HQIM Evaluation/Selection Progress Tracker if you are applying to Track 1 and you participated in the SY24/25 DESE Evaluation and Selection Network.
31. **Does an LEA have to have gone through the evaluation and selection process with DESE’s HQIM Evaluation and Selection Network in order to apply for Track I?**
    1. No, an LEA does not have to have gone through DESE’s HQIM Evaluation and Selection Network to apply for Track 1. That said, applicants will be asked to speak to their process for evaluating and selecting materials. For more details and guidance, please refer to the HQIM Evaluation and Selection Guidance [One-Pager.](https://www.doe.mass.edu/instruction/prism/evaluating-selecting-hqim.pdf)
32. **Question #A14 in the application questions section says it is for tracks 1 & 3 only, but if I don't select a response, I get an error message. What should I input?**
    1. You should inputN/A or 0
33. **I don't see the grants coming up in GEM$.**
    1. In GEM$, make sure that you are viewing funding applications available in Fiscal Year (FY) 2026. Please also ensure you work with your district’s GEM$ administrator to gain access to this grant.
34. **Does Track 1 of PRISM III only include materials and no other supports related to implementation?**
    1. If eligible for continuation, Track 1 grantees will receive additional support related to implementation beyond August 31, 2025. Please refer to the [PRISM III RFP](https://www.doe.mass.edu/grants/2026/0594/) and [Program Details](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.doe.mass.edu%2Fgrants%2F2026%2F0594%2Fprogram-details.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK) for a thorough explanation of eligibility requirements and a list of grant activities beyond August 31, 2025, that will support implementation. Those Track 1 grantees that do not meet eligibility requirements will not be able to continue their grant past August 31, 2025.
35. **Can only one school in a district be considered rather than the entire district?**
    1. No. In accordance with program requirements, all schools within the district that serve the applicable grade band identified in the application must be included and participate collectively.
36. **If we are accepted to both grants, is it possible to have one coach for all grades for consistency?**
    1. At this time, PRISM Curriculum and Instruction Coaches for PRISM II and PRISM III have not been finalized. While final determinations regarding coach assignments will be contingent upon the specific grantees selected and the availability and qualifications of coaches, it is possible for a grantee awarded both PRISM II and PRISM III to be assigned a single coach. Final decisions will be made in alignment with grant programmatic goals and capacity considerations.
37. **If we are implementing in grades 3-5 next year, which grant would you suggest applying for?**
    1. Applicants are encouraged to review the [PRISM II RFP](https://www.doe.mass.edu/grants/2026/0593/), [PRISM III RFP](https://www.doe.mass.edu/grants/2026/0594/) , [PRISM II Program Details](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.doe.mass.edu%2Fgrants%2F2026%2F0593%2Fprogram-details.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK) , and [PRISM III Program Details](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.doe.mass.edu%2Fgrants%2F2026%2F0594%2Fprogram-details.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK) carefully to determine eligibility and alignment with their implementation plans. Depending on your local context and instructional goals, you may consider applying for PRISM II, PRISM III, or both. Each grant has specific criteria related to grade bands and Tracks that should inform your decision. To determine the most appropriate track for your context-specific needs please reference the following one-pagers
       1. [Is PRISM II Right for you?](https://www.doe.mass.edu/instruction/prism/is-prism-ii-right-for-you.pdf)
       2. [Is PRSIM III Right for you?](https://www.doe.mass.edu/instruction/prism/is-prism-iii-right-for-you.pdf)
38. **How should I fill out the budget portion when I may not have a quote from the company we go with until after the application deadline?**
    1. Applicants should use the best available information based on their local context and publicly available pricing guidelines from the publisher under consideration. Any necessary revisions can be addressed during the grant award finalization or post-award budget process, in accordance with program guidelines.

**Curriculum**

1. **What is the definition of HQIM?**
   1. Curricular materials for K-3 must meet the following [CURATE](https://www.doe.mass.edu/instruction/curate/) definition of “high quality” for a CURATE or EdReports review at the time of application and/or the time of selection, whichever is more current:
      1. CURATE:
         * Standards Alignment: Must meet expectations in all criteria (or N/A for Foundational Skills).
         * Classroom Application: Must meet or partially meet expectations in all criteria.
      2. EdReports: ELA/Literacy, mathematics, and science curricular materials reviewed by EdReports are high quality if they receive a rating of "Green" / "Meets Expectations" in both Gateway 1 and Gateway 2 of Alignment
2. **Does the specific edition of a curriculum program need to match the publication year of the same program on the CURATE report?**
   1. Districts looking to evaluate and consider purchase of newer editions of materials that meet the [definition](https://www.doe.mass.edu/instruction/curate/default.html) of high quality for a CURATE or EdReports review but where the newer edition has not yet been reviewed by CURATE (e.g., CKLA 3rd edition, EL Education 2025) are eligible to apply.
3. **Our selected curriculum is not on CURATE. Are we eligible to apply?**
   1. If no CURATE report is available, the curriculum can meet the [CURATE](https://www.doe.mass.edu/instruction/curate/) definition of “high quality” outlined for an EdReports review:
      1. ELA/Literacy, mathematics, and science curricular materials reviewed by EdReports are high quality if they receive a rating of "Green" / "Meets Expectations" in both Gateway 1 and Gateway 2 of Alignment.
4. **After a process of evaluating materials, our district has selected a curriculum that is not yet rated on CURATE (e.g., Great Minds’ Arts and Letters). Can we still apply for PRISM II or PRISM III to support the purchase and implementation of our selected curriculum?**
   1. The PRISM II and PRISM III grants will only support the purchase and implementation of materials that, at the time of application or selection of the materials, *whichever is more current*, meet the definitions of quality outlined on the [CURATE](https://www.doe.mass.edu/instruction/curate/default.html) website.
5. **Are districts required to already have** [high-quality instructional materials](https://www.doe.mass.edu/instruction/curate/) **(HQIM) in place to apply to PRISM III?**
6. Only districts without high-quality instructional materials in place can apply to PRISM III Track 1 or 2. Only districts with HQIM in place can apply to PRISM III Track 3. To qualify, curriculum must meet the [CURATE](https://www.doe.mass.edu/instruction/curate/) definition of “high quality.”

**Eligibility and Competitive Priorities**

1. **Who is eligible to apply for PRISM III grants?** 
   1. All public-school districts, collaboratives, and charter schools in Massachusetts are eligible to apply for the FY26 (year 1). Only those awarded LEAs/consortia who meet CLSD eligibility criteria may qualify for Targeted Continuation grants in Fiscal Years 2026, 2027, and 2028
2. To be eligible for the Targeted Continuation, LEAs must have at least one school serving 50% identified low-income students (40% for high schools). For consortia, all LEAs within the consortium must meet this eligibility requirement to apply for continued funding in FY26 and beyond. This is a requirement of the federal funding.
3. **What competitive priorities may earn additional points in the FY25 application process? Additional points will be awarded to LEAs/consortia that meet one or more of the following criteria:**
4. Please see the [PRISM III RFP](https://www.doe.mass.edu/grants/2026/0594/) for the competitive priorities. You can also watch the videos on the [PRISM website](https://www.doe.mass.edu/instruction/prism/default.html).
5. **What is the limit on school participation in the PRISM III program?**
6. Up to 15 participating schools per LEAs/consortia can be involved in the program. LEAs/consortia with more than 15 schools must select the 15 schools that will participate.
7. **We are partnering with another LEA as a consortium. Does only one LEA submit an application on behalf of all the LEAs within the consortium.**
8. Yes. There will be fields within the application on GEM$ for the grant contact to enter the information for each school that makes up the consortium. It is important to note that the proposal process should be a collaborative process amongst the consortium to ensure that the proposal is representative of each LEA within the consortium even though only one LEA submits the application.

**Funds Use & Budget**

1. **How much funding is expected to be available for FY26 Summer?**
2. Please refer to the PRISM III ‘[Fund Use’](https://www.doe.mass.edu/grants/2026/0594/) to understand the funding provided for Tracks 1, 2 & 3.
3. **What is the funding period for Year 1 of PRISM III (FY26 Summer)?**
   1. The funding covers the period from July 1, 2025, to August 31, 2025.
4. **Are PRISM III grantees eligible for additional funding in future years?**
   1. Pending appropriation and grant requirements, awarded grantees who meet CLSD eligibility criteria may qualify for Targeted Continuation grants in Fiscal Years 2026, 2027, and 2028.
5. To be eligible for the Targeted Continuation, LEAs must have at least one school serving 50% identified low-income students (40% for high schools). For consortia, all LEAs within the consortium must meet this eligibility requirement to apply for continued funding in FY26 and beyond. This is a requirement of the federal funding.
   1. Applicants that do not meet this eligibility requirement can only apply for Track 1 Year 1, which ends on August 31, 2025, and is intended to support LEAs in purchasing curricular materials.

**Track 1 Budget Guide**

1. **What resources are available to help me determine and calculate my budget?**
2. Please utilize the Track 1 [budgeting guide](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.doe.mass.edu%2Fgrants%2F2026%2F0594%2Ftrack1-budgeting-guide.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK) and the Track 1 [budget calculator](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.doe.mass.edu%2Fgrants%2F2026%2F0594%2Ftrack1-budget-calculator.xlsx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK) to calculate your costs.
3. **Can LEAs/consortia choose between stipends and substitute coverage for educators' participation?**
4. Yes, LEAs/consortia can choose to budget for either stipends or substitute coverage for educators participating in PRISM III activities.
5. **What is the purpose of the itemized quote from the publisher?**
6. The itemized quote provides a detailed breakdown of the costs associated with purchasing selected high-quality instructional materials (HQIM) and is necessary for determining the funding amount eligible for assistance under the grant.
7. **What is the submission process for the itemized quote, and what should it include?**
8. LEAs/consortia are required to upload the itemized quote to GEM$ as a PDF in the “Related Documents” section on GEM$, specifically for the question that asks to 'upload HQIM quote. The quote should include the following:

* descriptions of the curricular materials being purchased.
* Individual prices for each item.
* total cost for the selected materials including taxes and shipping to ensure an accurate representation of total expenses
* any applicable discounts or special offers

1. **Do I need to submit the itemized quote before making a purchase?**
2. Yes, the itemized quote must be submitted and approved before any purchases are made to ensure compliance with funding requirements.
   1. any applicable discounts or special offers
3. **What if I need assistance in preparing the itemized quote?**
4. If you need assistance, consider reaching out to DESE for guidance on how to collect and format the necessary information for the itemized quote.
5. **What happens if the total cost exceeds $400,000?**
6. The grant will cover 50% of the cost up to the $400,000 cap. If the total cost exceeds this amount, LEAs/consortia will be responsible for covering the excess cost beyond the cap.
7. **What is the grant’s funding limit for the curriculum materials?**
8. The total funding cap for curriculum materials is $400,000 per LEA/consortia. The grant will fund 50% of the procurement costs for ELA/Literacy curricular materials.
9. **What professional learning opportunities are funded under this grant?**
10. LEAs/consortia will receive leadership coaching and curriculum-based professional learning to support the implementation of evidence-based and culturally sustaining practices from a DESE-approved PRISM Curriculum and Instruction Coach.
11. **Does the PRISM III grant cover digital materials and if so for how long?**
12. The grant will fund student licenses of digital materials at 50% for a minimum of two years and a maximum of four years.

**Track 2 Budget Guide**

1. **What resources are available to help me determine and calculate my budget?**
2. Please utilize the Track 2 [budgeting guide](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.doe.mass.edu%2Fgrants%2F2026%2F0594%2Ftrack2-budgeting-guide.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK) and the Track 2 [budget calculator](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.doe.mass.edu%2Fgrants%2F2026%2F0594%2Ftrack2-budget-calculator.xlsx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK) to calculate your costs.
3. **What kind of funding is available in Year 1 (FY26)? LEAs participating in Track 2 will receive funding for:**
   1. Evaluating, selecting, and purchasing curricular materials.
   2. Stipends for educators serving on the PRISM III Curriculum Council.
4. **Can LEAs/ consortia use these funds without prior approval?** 
   1. No, all purchases funded by PRISM III must be pre-approved by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) before they are made by the LEA.
5. **What requirements do curricular materials need to meet?** 
   1. The PRISM III grant will only support the purchase and implementation of materials that, at the time of application, meet the definition of “high quality” outlined on the [CURATE](https://www.doe.mass.edu/instruction/curate/default.html) website.
6. **What is the grant’s funding limit for the curriculum materials?**
7. The total funding cap for curriculum materials is $400,000 per LEA/consortium. The grant will fund 50% of the procurement costs for ELA/Literacy curricular materials
8. **Why doesn’t track 2 have allocated funding for professional development services from the PRISM III, Track 2 Curriculum & Instruction Coach?** 
   1. For Track 2, LEAs/consortia will receive a modest amount of funding for summer FY26 (July 1, 2025 to August 31, 2025) to use for building strategy and scheduling. If awarded continuation, Track 2 LEAs/consortia will then receive funds for evaluating, selecting, purchasing and launching materials in FY26 (September 2025 to September 2026) and funds for implementation support in FY27 (October 2026 to September 2027). For Track 2, Please note that it is expected that Track 2 LEAs fully participate in [DESE’s Evaluate and Select HQIM Network](https://www.doe.mass.edu/instruction/impd/implement-ma.html) for the entirety of the 25-26 school year. It is also important to understand that there are technically two FY26 periods: the state-funded summer FY26 (Year 1) and the federally funded school year FY26 and beyond.
9. **How can LEAs/ consortia choose to fund educators’ time for PRISM III Track 2 activities?**
   1. LEAs/consortia can opt for stipends for educators working beyond contracted hours or budget for substitute coverage, allowing grant-participating staff to have release time from other responsibilities. For detailed guidance on budgeting and requirements, LEAs should refer to the complete [PRISM III Budget Guide](https://www.doe.mass.edu/grants/2026/0594/track3-budgeting-guide.docx).
10. **How can we budget for Leadership Coaching and Professional Development?**
11. For coaching and professional learning, LEAs/consortia must budget appropriately within GEM$, utilizing the provided calculator.

**Track 3 Budget Guide**

1. **What resources are available to help me determine and calculate my budget?**
2. Please utilize the Track 3 [budgeting guide](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.doe.mass.edu%2Fgrants%2F2026%2F0594%2Ftrack3-budgeting-guide.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK) and the Track 3 [budget calculator](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.doe.mass.edu%2Fgrants%2F2026%2F0594%2Ftrack3-budget-calculator.xlsx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK) to calculate your costs.
3. **Is funding available for curriculum-based professional learning?**
   1. Yes. PRISM III Curriculum & Instruction Coaches provide curriculum-based professional learning. Use the PRISM III Track 3 Calculator to generate the amount for Curriculum-based Professional Learning. In B3 of the budget calculator, please enter the number of schools in your LEA and the number of PD days (not to exceed 2) you intend to utilize in July – August 2025. That will automatically calculate the amount available for curriculum-based professional learning in year 1. Please see [Track 3 Budget Calculator](https://www.doe.mass.edu/grants/2026/0594/track3-budget-calculator.xlsx).

**Leadership Coaching**

1. **What is the role of the PRISM III Curriculum & Instruction Coach?**
   1. The PRISM III Curriculum & Instruction Coach serves as both a leadership consultant and instructional guide, ensuring strong, equitable implementation of the selected curricular materials from planning through daily use. The PRISM III Curriculum & Instruction Coach will be a partner to district leaders and educators, helping to establish the Curriculum Council, co-develop the PRISM Literacy Plan, and guide planning and implementation of new curricular materials. The coach will provide leadership coaching, facilitate professional learning, support progress monitoring, and ensure inclusive, culturally sustaining instruction throughout the initiative.
2. **How many PRISM III Curriculum & Instruction Coaches will there be, and will they be paid for by DESE?**
   1. Currently, there is not a set number of coaches. However, each awardee will have at least one PRISM Curriculum & Instruction Coach. PRISM Curriculum & Instruction Coaches will be DESE-approved and selected vendors that will be hired within the next few months. LEAs will be responsible for contracting directly with the DESE-approved coach.
3. **Are all organizations included on the DESE's PD Provider Register Search consider "approved vendors" for the purposes of the PRISM III grant?**
   1. Organizations interested in serving as a PRISM III Curriculum & Instruction Coaches must apply to PRISM specific bids posted on COMMBUYS and then be approved by DESE, through a formal procurement process, to work with PRISM III LEAs as PRISM III Curriculum & Instruction Coaches.