



MASTERY-BASED LEARNING *Collaborative*



INVITATION TO APPLY FOR MASTERY-BASED LEARNING COLLABORATIVE (MBLC) GRANT: Cohort 2

Overview of Mastery-based Learning (MBL) Grant Opportunity

The Washington State Mastery-based Learning Collaborative (MBLC) will identify best practices for implementing Culturally Responsive–Sustaining Mastery-based Learning* (CRS MBL), identify sample tools for educators using a CRS MBL approach, and offer professional learning to in-service educators, including teachers, principals, and counselors. The project’s overarching goal is to inform future policy by helping decision makers better understand what quality CRS MBL looks like, how long it takes to implement, and what resources are necessary. Educational equity is a guiding value of this initiative.

At the local level, this project is helping participating schools not only respond to the lasting effects of the pandemic but also to transform education into a more relevant and equitable learning experience for each and every student by implementing mastery-based learning in a culturally responsive–sustaining way.

Please review this grant invitation document in full, as well as additional pertinent details on our CRS MBL Collaborative webpage, before responding to the school invitation application questions at the end of this document. The webpage is also where you should go to look for any updates, revisions, and responses to questions and answers we receive about the process that we will post publicly.

Public schools, public charter schools, and tribal compact schools are eligible to apply for MBLC program membership (including grant funding) in response to this invitation.

Schools applying for membership in the Mastery-based Learning Collaborative (MBLC) program:

Hello! We’re happy that you’re considering applying to join the MBLC community we are building. We are excited about the transformative work this community will engage in together. Please read this full overview. Then follow the process below to apply by Wednesday, **November 1, 2023**.

Process for Applying Schools:

1. Review this information packet and form a team to develop a responsive application. Inform the application with input from **key members of your school community**, including students and families, administration (including district board of directors), and teachers. Your application should be a true collaboration from a diverse team that represents your school community.
2. Complete the notice of intent. Schools intending to submit an application must provide a notice of Intent to apply no later than 5:00 PDT on September 29, 2023. The notice must be submitted via email to the Director of the Mastery-based Learning Collaborative (alissa.muller@k12.wa.us). The notice may be an email or 1-page attachment indicating:
 - a. School name
 - b. District where school is located
 - c. Statement of intent expressing why the school wishes to shift to or enhance CRS MBL and be part of the Mastery-based Learning Collaborative (MBLC)
 - d. Contact person name, title, email address, and phone number
 - e. Please use this subject line for your notice of intent: **Notice of intent to apply for MBLC**

For more information about the MBLC, visit https://www.sbe.wa.gov/faqs/mastery_based_learning or reach us at Alissa.Muller@k12.wa.us.

3. Once you submit your Notice of Intent, please schedule an interview [meeting](#) with the State Board of Education to discuss your interest and learn more about MBL Collaborative program expectations.
4. Complete the application.
 Note: as part of the application, please submit either:
 - a. evidence, such as a resolution or statement of support, demonstrating that the school district’s board of directors is committed to supporting this work; and/or
 - b. evidence, such as letters of support, demonstrating that community-based organizations recognized and valued by underserved communities are committed to supporting this work.

If you apply by the deadline, you can expect to hear from the MBLC program team in December. Here is the estimated schedule for processing applications:

Estimated MBLC Application Schedule

Item	Action	Date
1.	Invitation issued	8/10/23
2.	Question and answer period	8/10/23–10/20/23
3.	Online informational meeting (Attending one is required.)	8/10/23 or 9/13/23
4.	Interview with SBE (Required)	8/10/23–10/30/23 (can be scheduled once Notice of Intent is submitted)
5.	Notice of intent due (Required)	9/29/23
6.	Last date for invitation addenda	10/25/21
7.	School application due	11/1/23
8.	Evaluation of applications	11/2/23–11/30/23
9.	Evaluation results announced (decisions on whether or not to fund are final)	12/1/23
10.	Application revision negotiations	12/1/23–12/30/23 (allowing for school holidays)
11.	Awardees begin work	1/1/24

Administrative Notes:

- a. Any questions or communications concerning this invitation must be directed only to the Director of the Mastery-based Learning Collaborative, Alissa Muller via email to Alissa.Muller@k12.wa.us. Applicants may rely only on written answers issued by the Director. Communications directed to other parties will be considered unofficial and non-binding. A compilation of generalized questions and answers will be posted on the State Board of Education (SBE) [website](#).
- b. If it becomes necessary to revise any part of this invitation, an addendum or an amendment will be published on the SBE website. For this purpose, the published questions and answers shall be considered an addendum to the invitation. It is the responsibility of interested applicants to check the website periodically for addenda and amendments to the invitation.
- c. SBE reserves the right at its sole discretion to waive minor administrative irregularities.
- d. SBE complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Applicants may contact the Director of

the Mastery-based Learning Collaborative, Alissa Muller (Alissa.Muller@k12.wa.us) to receive application materials in an alternative format.

This application information packet contains the following sections:

[Definitions](#)

[Background and Purpose of the Mastery-based Learning Collaborative](#)

[Program Summary and Framework](#)

[Membership Support](#)

[Membership Expectations](#)

[Application: School and District Information](#)

[Program Inspiration and Sample Resources from the New York City Competency Collaborative](#)

Definitions:

Several terms are used in this document or the application rubric that we want to define for Washington's context.

- Anti-racist: A person who identifies and challenges the values, structures and behaviors that perpetuate systemic racism.¹
- Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Education (CRSE): Culturally responsive-sustaining education is grounded in a cultural view of learning and human development in which multiple expressions of diversity (e.g., race, social class, gender, language, sexual orientation, nationality, religion, ability) are recognized and regarded as assets for teaching and learning. CRSE explores the relationship between historical and contemporary conditions of inequality and ideas that shape access, participation, and outcomes for learners.²
- Culturally Responsive-Sustaining (CRS) Mastery-based Learning (MBL): CRS MBL means MBL implemented in a CRS way.
- Liberatory Education: Positioning students to be the leaders of their own learning by helping them increase their ability to actively improve their cognition.³
- Mastery-based Learning: The state defined mastery-based learning (MBL) in 2019 E2SHB 1599:
 - Students advance upon demonstrated mastery of content;
 - Competencies include explicit, measurable, transferable learning objectives that empower students;
 - Assessments are meaningful and a positive learning experience for students;
 - Students receive rapid, differentiated support based on their individual learning needs; and
 - Learning outcomes emphasize competencies that include application and creation of knowledge along with the development of important skills and dispositions.

Background and Purpose of the Mastery-based Learning Collaborative

The Washington State Mastery-based Learning Collaborative was created as a result of the [Mastery-based Learning Work Group](#) recommendations, particularly around the need to develop supports for mastery-based learning implementation.

“Washington State faces both an opportunity and a moral imperative to respond to the dual pandemic of COVID-19 and social, economic, and institutional racism that has been ignored for too long in our education system. Our collective “why” calls for a transformation of our education system to close both the opportunity

¹ From the University of Washington Glossary:

https://epi.washington.edu/sites/default/files/website_documents/DEI%20Glossary_Formatted_20190711.pdf

² NYS Framework for Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Education <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1TzrmKWAsgoKm4wbMZrnAKNYM4LafxToK/view>

³ Zaretta Hammond's definition, per her article retrieved from: <https://www.aft.org/ae/summer2021/hammond>

gap and resulting achievement gap. When we recognize that a student's learning happens differently for each subject and that learning does not just happen in a classroom, then the focus shifts to meeting the needs of each individual student. Through a mastery-based learning (MBL) approach, the education system values the knowledge and skills students already have and engages students through their diverse cultures and communities; students are also supported through authentic relationships with educators to experience rigorous and personally relevant coursework." - [Mastery-based Learning Work Group 2020 Report](#)

Washington's 2025 biennial budget for the State Board of Education (SBE) includes funding for "implementation of mastery-based learning in school district demonstration sites." This work involves deepening state and regional support structures for Mastery-based Learning (MBL). Federal Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief funding will pay for projects through June 30, 2024, and state funds will pay for projects between July 1, 2024 and June 30, 2025. SBE intends to request additional state funding at least through June 30, 2027.

Under the leadership of the Washington State Board of Education, and with executive sponsorship from Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) and the Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB), the MBL Collaborative will involve a statewide effort, including personnel at state agencies, educational service districts, community-based partners, educator preparation programs, and participating districts and schools. Project objectives include:

- Establish a statewide infrastructure to provide needed professional development, policy, and communications support to enable schools to implement MBL.
- Demonstrate that schools can successfully implement MBL with student learning and assessment that are more authentic, engaging, and culturally connected and sustaining.
- Document the key steps that states, districts, and schools must take to transition to MBL successfully.
- Positively impact student engagement and progress toward learning goals.

We are looking for a wide range of school types: small and large schools, from small and large districts, rural and urban, charter, and tribal compact. We are relying on our participating schools to help us build an MBL Collaborative support structure to help you serve students in your unique local context. We are looking forward to learning together as we work to advance mastery-based learning in Washington!

The first cohort of MBL Collaborative Schools launched in 2022. This invitation is for schools interested in applying to be part of a second cohort that will launch in 2024.

Questions? Please reach out to Alissa.Muller@k12.wa.us as needed. We are here to support you.

Program Summary and Framework

SBE will administer a statewide MBL demonstration project, to identify best practices for implementing CRS MBL, identify sample tools for educators using a CRS MBL approach, and offer professional learning to in-service educators, including teachers, principals, counselors, and paraeducators. The project's overarching goal is to inform future policy by helping decision makers better understand what quality CRS MBL looks like, how long it takes to implement, and what resources are necessary.

Fiscal year 2024 (7/1/23-6/30/24) will be a planning and learning year, and fiscal year 2025 (7/1/24-6/30/25) will include more extensive professional learning and the beginning of implementation. We intend to supplement state funding with private grant funding, including funding to support and possibly scale up project implementation during subsequent years.

At the local level, this project would help participating school districts address learning recovery and other educational issues related to the impact of COVID-19. This work will not return education to business as usual. Instead, it has the capacity to transform the Washington K-12 educational system. The project will engage a coalition of the willing, whose work will not only respond to the pandemic's lasting impact, but also jump start a longer-term shift to CRS MBL to transform education into a more relevant and equitable learning experience for each and every student. The project will result in the creation of numerous tools such as professional learning modules, identification of policy supports necessary to implement CRS MBL, and other work products necessary to help promote this transformation.

At the state level, this project will inform policy-related work that supports schools and districts transitioning towards CRS MBL. SBE proposed the project in order to help determine what policy supports would facilitate such a shift. Some of this policy-related work falls within SBE's scope, and some falls within the scope of other agencies, such as the Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB) and Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI). To maximize the project's potential, SBE is working in consultation with other agencies and stakeholders such as school districts, educational service districts, educator preparation programs, and community-based organizations.

Membership Supports

Member schools receive support that will include: a professional learning coach dedicated to supporting your school change process, a Professional Learning Community (PLC) designed to build capacity with implementing Culturally-Responsive Sustaining Education (CRSE), mastery, and youth-centered practices; access to a range of professional learning and knowledge-sharing opportunities including virtual site visits; in-person and virtual community gatherings; online sessions; summer institutes; and eventually a digital library of shared community resources.

The core professional learning will be provided by the state, and exact funding for participating schools will depend on the number of schools accepted into the MBLC, the nature of the work to be done, and availability of funding. For planning purposes, we estimate⁴ that a participating school would receive:

- Funding is to be determined for 2023-2024 planning year^{5*}
- Up to \$100,000 per year for 2024-2025*
- All funding is subject to availability

⁴ Estimates may change, depending on the number and quality of applications.

⁵ Fiscal year is July 1 – June 30. Funding amount is unknown while OSPI determines exact ESSER III funding availability. Once SBE is notified of funding amount, the Q&A document posted on the MBLC webpage will be updated with relevant numbers per school for the 2023-2024 year.

* Some portion of this money may be restricted for certain uses (such as staffing for schools or release time for attending MBLC professional learning events).

- Multiple schools from the same district may receive less per school.
- Schools may be public schools, public charter schools, or tribal compact schools
- We intend to seek additional state funding sufficient for up to \$100,000 per year for 2025–2026 and up to \$40,000 per year for 2026–2027 (grant phaseout year)
- We are seeking private funding to possibly scale up project implementation
- To receive funding for 2024–2025, schools will submit plans for SBE approval
- To continue funding for subsequent years, schools will submit continuation documents, which may include revised plans and budgets, for SBE approval.

Budgets should be developed in coordination with your MBLC coach. Allowable uses of funds include:

- Expenditures for activities or materials necessary for culturally responsive mastery based-learning development and implementation, such as technology solutions to track student mastery
- Expenditures for professional learning activities and materials, such as staff compensation for meetings or other work done outside of regular work hours, instructional supports related to professional learning, supplies, and interpreter services.
- Other expenditures to be mutually agreed on in advance by the school and SBE.

Note: The Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB) has developed the [Cultural Competency, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion \(CCDEI\)](#) standards under [Senate Bill 5044](#). These standards apply to professional learning in Washington state. As much of this CRS Mastery-based Learning initiative involves professional learning, it will be important for grantees to be aware and open to these standards as they are rolled out.

Membership Expectations: within Your School and with the MBLC Community

Program membership involves working within your school and participating in the wider MBLC community in the following ways:

Within your school, each school’s MBLC team leads work in their school in these ways:

- ❑ **Convene your MBLC school team** of staff with multiple perspectives, roles, and backgrounds that includes 3–6 teachers, and 1 or more school leaders* who:
 - * *MBLC teams may also include MBLC Youth Advisors focused on giving input into the team’s work.*
 - meet biweekly, including with their professional learning providers once each month or more frequently, to lead work on planning and implementing your school’s MBLC outcomes
 - communicate promptly and consistently, as needed, with professional learning providers, SBE, the evaluator, and other MBLC stakeholders
 - appoint one person on the team to be the MBLC communications point person, who will oversee two-way communication between the school and various MBLC stakeholders, such as MBLC member schools, MBLC personnel, students, families, and the community
 - if your school works with MBLC youth advisors, appoint one person on the team to be the youth advisor ally, who will attend 3 youth sessions with your youth advisors, and work with your youth advisors to prepare for participating at MBLC community events.
- ❑ **cooperate with the independent evaluator (determining project evaluation and data collection methods, allowing observation visits, participating in pre and post assessments, etc.) hired by the MBLC**
- ❑ **lead the school’s efforts on community engagement around your MBLC work. In order to assist schools in doing authentic community engagement to better serve and connect with students and families our school system has historically underserved, schools can work with a SBE- identified community**

engagement expert or with their own expert. A plan for community engagement can be developed as part of the larger work plan described in the box below.

- oversee reporting and data collection as requested by SBE.**
- Accepted schools will be working with their professional learning coach in Spring 2024 to create a work plan that includes 4 outcomes (1-4 below) that build on existing strengths at your school, and that address current needs and priorities at your school. A strong applicant school is ready and energized to take on this work, whether or not the work is yet underway. As a preview of the areas in which you will create outcomes with your coach if your application is accepted:**
 - **Outcome 1: Mastery-based Learning.** Develop outcomes around when you would like to have culturally responsive-sustaining mastery-based learning fully implemented in your school, including any interim steps leading up to full implementation (e.g., local community and family engagement process).
 - **As a component of your CRS MBL work, please describe how your participation in the MBLC would improve Cultural Competence and/or Critical Consciousness.** This outcome should name race and culture.
 - **Outcome 2: Coronavirus recovery.** Participating in this program should help schools with their coronavirus recovery efforts. Please indicate how your CRS MBL work will directly address the coronavirus recovery efforts in your school.
 - **Outcome 3: Schoolwide professional learning plan,** designed in collaboration with each school's MBLC coach, that gets the full school community involved in work led by your MBLC team. This plan must incorporate professional learning opportunities provided by the state, supplemented by local activities to get everyone in the school involved in the conversation about this work.
 - **Outcome 4: Meaningful ongoing youth input** that informs your MBLC team's work on CRSE/SEL. Youth input can mean: Adding Youth Advisors to your MBLC team, panels/focus groups, surveys and/or other forms of input.

Project Plans: By 6/21/24, participating schools will need to submit a work plan that describes:

1. Commitment to culturally responsive-sustaining MBL
2. Commitment to working with SBE and its contractors to provide and implement professional learning and evaluate the project
3. Capacity to implement culturally responsive-sustaining MBL (staff effort, staff expertise, community involvement)
4. Desired outcomes within categories 1-4 below
5. Approach for achieving desired outcomes with the assistance of state-provided professional learning support
6. Budget for fiscal year 2024-2025 (and subsequent years if SBE provides notice of additional funding availability).
7. Approach for sustainability after grant funding ends.

Schools' plans need to be detailed enough to give a reader generally familiar with culturally responsive-sustaining MBL but not familiar with the school a good picture of the school's commitment and capacity and how it intends to use these strengths, coupled with professional learning, to implement CRS MBL during and after the grant period. SBE may request clarifications or modifications as a condition of funding all or part of the plan.

In the wider MBLC Community, each school's MBLC team participates in these ways:

- Prioritize active participation as a team in collaborative learning sessions (such as community gatherings,

professional learning communities, leaders community of practice) with other member school teams to build capacity for implementation and to build community with other schools engaged in this work. Note that many Professional Learning (PL) sessions are offered virtually and some are offered in person—member schools are asked to use their grant funding for the project to maintain a high level of active participation in both online and in person PL offerings during the grant period.

- ❑ Be aware of the various state-provided professional learning required events for the [2023-2024 school year](#) (subject to additions/changes). As stated in the previous bullet, prioritize sending more team members to events that require more collaboration (community gatherings, PLCs, etc.). We ask that at least one member of your team watch webinars live (others can watch asynchronously).

Friends of MBLC Interest Group

Friends of Mastery-based Learning Collaborative are not members, and have a 100% opt-in connection to the MBLC community.

Friends of MBLC is a low-stakes way to stay connected and have access to MBLC offerings. This may be a good fit for schools that want to explore mastery and CRSE shifts informally or exploratorily. [Join our interest group](#).

Friends of MBLC stay connected with the MBLC community in these ways:

- Receive the bimonthly MBLC newsletter
- Opt in for PL opportunities such as visits to schools, online sessions, MBLC Summer Institute

Friends of MBLC do not attend Quarterly Meetings (gatherings of practitioners in member schools), and receive no grant funding from the MBLC Program, unless notified by SBE that funding has become available.

Application: School and District Information

Please submit your application in a Word document or PDF by emailing your responses to these questions to Alissa.Muller@k12.wa.us by November 1.

1. Name of district in which school is located
2. School Name (each school applies separately, whether only one or several schools from a district are participating):

Note: The MBL Collaborative would prefer full school buildings to commit to participating in the Collaborative and transitioning to MBL as a school. However, if several departments/programs of the school will work together through an interdisciplinary approach to implement MBL at a programmatic level, the Collaborative is willing to consider this for well-thought proposals, as a first step toward transitioning the full school building.

- a. If not the full building, what grade levels will participate?
 - b. If not the full building, what departments will participate?
 - c. If not the full building, what assurances can you provide that the building leadership is supportive and a leadership change won't impede progress?
3. Are you planning to partner with any other organizations (other schools, community-based-organizations, higher education institutions, educational service districts, etc.) for this project?

4. Please describe any local resources you will contribute toward this effort (encouraged but not required).
5. Name(s)/role(s) of the person(s) completing this application.
6. Amount of money requested for the planning year:
7. Has your district adopted a mastery-based crediting policy? Yes/No/I don't know
8. What evidence can you provide demonstrating that your district leadership is supportive? (10 points)
 - a. What evidence can you provide demonstrating that your superintendent and local board of directors are committed to supporting this work (e.g., district level executive sponsor of the work, school board policies, etc.), or
 - b. How will your participation in the Collaborative help move your local board of directors to be supportive? How will you communicate with your local board of directors throughout this process?
9. **Educational equity is a guiding value for this project. Please share evidence of your work on educational equity, or please share a statement of commitment to educational equity. (12 points)**
10. Consider the elements of CRS MBL as defined at the beginning of this information packet. Can you share two specific ways that implementing CRS MBL stands to benefit students that your school serves? (12 points)
11. **Please describe: (16 points)**
 - a. **any practices/policies at your school that currently relate to MBL/CRSE**
 - b. **strengths you will build on in your MBLC work, and needs and priorities you want to address with your MBLC work.**
 - c. **areas of practice/policy you may be seeking to shift at your school during the grant period.**
 - d. **any evidence you can share of readiness to engage in this work.**
12. What are 3 questions you have about the MBLC? (12 points)
13. Please let us know what other initiatives/priorities your school is or will be involved in during the grant period. (For instance, district priorities, significant partnerships, other grant programs, etc.) How will these efforts work alongside participation in the MBLC initiative? Note: Please refer to page 6 in the Information Packet above to review the MBLC community expectations. (10 points)
14. To what extent do you disaggregate demographic student data and how do you use this disaggregated data to inform decision-making? (If different from what you currently collect) what future plans do you have for additional disaggregation? (8 points)
15. Please share an example from your school's recent past that reflects your approach to community and family engagement. (12 points)
16. What relationships do you have as a school with community-based organizations (CBOs) that represent your underserved communities (e.g., cultural centers, education-related organizations, etc.)? Do the CBOs you have relationships with mirror your student demographics? Please provide a name and contact information for each CBO you describe. *Note: You are not expected to have already*

developed relationships with CBOs that represent underserved communities before joining the MBLC, but authentic community engagement around this work is a key part of the overall grant project goals. We are looking for answers that demonstrate thoughtful reflection and openness to developing these relationships with CBOs. The MBLC project will support you in developing these relationships as needed. (8 points)

Program Inspiration and Sample Resources New York City Competency Collaborative

The [New York City Competency Collaborative](#) (among other state and local MBL efforts) has informed our thinking about Washington’s MBL Collaborative (MBLC). The NYC Competency Collaborative has a number of materials that you might find helpful for your own self-reflection and learning as you consider applying to participating in Washington’s MBL Collaborative (e.g., NYC MC [brief program overview](#), the [Competency Collaborative Implementation Framework](#), [CC Outcomes Examples](#), [CC Growth Plan](#), and [application rubric](#) for new member schools that looks at capacity, purpose, and prioritization of this work.) The primary reason that NYC Competency Collaborative is serving as our model is that their “why” for doing this work is specifically to advance equity in the education system. (For greater detail on NYC’s culturally responsive-sustaining education efforts, please see their [NYS Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Education Framework](#).)