



NORTH CAROLINA
State Board of Education
Department of Public Instruction

Report to the North Carolina General Assembly

Plasma Games JELOC Report

Section 4.2D of S.L. 2020-4

Date Due: June 1, 2022
DPI Chronological Schedule, 2021-2022

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

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NC DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

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JOINT LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE REPORT REQUIREMENTS

The purpose of the Plasma Games Pilot Competitive Grant Program is to promote access to innovative digital and personalized learning solutions for high school students demonstrating proficiency in science and math and to support schools in their efforts to increase the number of students pursuing education and career opportunities in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM). Districts and PSUs participating in the pilot must incorporate the software program developed by Plasma Games, Inc., in select STEM classes, and CTE programs, to encourage student interest and workforce development. A local school administrative unit participating in the pilot shall provide the Department with a plan for the placement of the STEM-focused educational technology developed by Plasma Games, Inc., in its schools and may include a plan from the pilot program established pursuant to Section 4.2D of S.L. 2020-4, as enacted by Section 1.1(e) of S.L. 2020-80, if the unit participated in that pilot.

A qualifying school is eligible as follows:

Any public school unit is eligible to apply to the Department of Public Instruction for a grant to develop or continue a pilot Program with Plasma Games.

Funding:

Session law 2021-180 provides \$2,500,000 to establish the Plasma Games Pilot. Grant applicants will submit a proposed budget that is aligned with all budget requirements listed in the application. Applicants should be mindful of their capacity to spend all requested funds in the time period defined by the grant. All funding disbursements and reporting will be managed by CCIP.

Award and use of funds. – Of the funds appropriated to the Department for the Program by this act, the Department shall award grants to the selected applicants by August 15, 2022. Funds shall be used for the following purposes:

1. Plasma Games' licensing fees and related operating costs
2. Professional development and training for teachers related to the use of Plasma Games' software
3. Implementation costs of the pilot

The proposed budget must clearly align with program activities, must be reasonable and necessary, and must provide a breakdown of costs by category. The district, charter, or lab must verify no supplanting occurs. Requested funds must be submitted, by category, in the 'Proposed Budget' section of the CCIP application. An applicant awarded the Plasma Games Pilot funds for the 2021-2023 funding period that fails to demonstrate compliance may be subject to funds being terminated.

Reporting No later than June 1 of each year of the 2021-2023 fiscal biennium the Department shall report the following information to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee, the Senate Appropriations Committee on Education/Higher Education, the House Appropriations Committee on Education, and the Fiscal Research Division:

1. Number and amounts of grants awarded.
2. Identities of the public school units receiving grants.
3. Identities of public school units that applied for grants but did not receive one.
4. The extent to which students participating in the Plasma Games pilot experienced measurable improvement in academic performance, if any.

NCDPI IMPLEMENTATION

As of May 2022, no funds have been awarded under this program, but progress has been made towards that end. The allotment policy was approved by the North Carolina State Board of Education on February 3, 2022. This action permits the Department to distribute allotted funds (\$2.5 million) to the PSUs upon approval of applications.

The grant application opened in the Comprehensive Continuous Improvement Plan (CCIP) on May 1, 2022 and will close 5:00 PM EDT on July 1, 2022. The allotment application is open to all North Carolina Public School Units that meet the qualifications as outlined in the legislation. The application captures actual costs to be provided to those schools that implement the Plasma Games Pilot. The application collects data from the PSUs that meet the criteria as specified by the legislation including low performing school status; innovative school district status; and at-risk status. The Academic Services division along with the Federal Programs Monitoring and Support division have worked collaboratively to publicize this opportunity. These divisions will continue to work together to award, monitor, and expend funds. PSUs that meet the criteria will be presented to the State Board of Education in August of 2022 with funds distributed by September of 2022.

This report is based on the most current activity and processes for the Plasma Games Pilot. The next report will provide much more granular detail as grant funds will have been expended and implementation for the program will be fully underway.