

THE ASSOCIATION FOR EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION

GRANT GUIDELINES

For the 2023 – 2024 School Year

The Association for Excellence in Education (AEE) funds grants for innovative programs in the Tupelo Public Schools that promote quality education for our children.

TIME LINE

Teachers submit Letters of Intent to the Principals by December 2, 2022.

Teachers submit Grant Applications to the Principals by February 3, 2023.

Principals provided Grant feedback to Teachers by February 17, 2023.

Teachers submit final Grant Applications to the TPSD Central Office by February 24, 2023.

Grants are awarded in September, 2023 at the AEE luncheon.

Grants are implemented during the 2023-2024 school year. Funds are available from September 18, 2023, through May 24, 2023.

EVALUATING CRITERIA

The criteria for grants are included in these guidelines.

Rubrics will be used to score the grants. Completed rubrics will be sent to the applicants upon request after grants are awarded.

EVALUATORS

Evaluators are AEE board members and individuals in our community who are interested in seeing our schools implement innovative ideas.

PROJECT APPRAISAL

Recipients are asked to invite their AEE liaisons to their schools to see their projects in action.

SPECIAL NOTES

Sometimes grants are awarded for less than the requested amount. Materials or equipment funded by AEE become the property of TPSD. Such items are the responsibility of the grant recipient's school principal. Some allowances may be made when the recipient transfers at the same grade level to another school within the district.

QUESTIONS/ COMMENTS

AEE officers are available to answer any questions by email.

AEE President: **Stewart McMillan** stewart@createfoundation.com

AEE Grants Chairs: **Leah Herndon** lshale3@yahoo.com
 Courtney Finley courtneyfinley@gmail.com

DOCUMENTS ACCOMPANYING THESE GUIDELINES

- Grant application cover pages
- Grant Scoring Rubric
- General Budget Spreadsheet
- Speaker Budget Spreadsheet
- AEE Grant Assessment Form for any resubmitted grants from last year asking for additional funds.
- Founders' Award Grant 2022 - 2023 (example of a well written grant)

GRANT REVIEW PROCESS

1. Letters of intent describing the overview, need and purpose of the project are submitted to the principals to determine if some ideas are similar.
2. Principals need to endorse the grant applications before final submission to AEE
3. Proposals are scored with a rubric by AEE Board members and community members selected by AEE's Grants Chair and Co-chair.
4. Grants are then ranked by scores; the Tietjen-Moore test with two outliers is used. Top grants are awarded funding or partial funding based on these rankings.
5. The AEE Grant Committee makes recommendations for grant awards to the AEE President and the Grant Chairs.
6. Grant awards are approved by the AEE Board of Directors followed by acceptance of the TPSD Superintendent.
7. Final acceptance rests with the TPSD School Board.

CRITERIA FOR GRANT PROPOSALS

Basic criteria which determine the projects AEE will fund:

1. All AEE funds must be invested so that there is maximum educational impact on the students for the amount of dollars spent.
2. Proposals for grants may be initiated by teachers or administrators. School personnel may submit more than one proposal.
3. Grants can be used to compensate experts who work with students but not to pay teachers, staff, or other salaried school personnel.
4. Funds can be used to purchase equipment and supplies or to provide field trip transportation but not when equipment/supplies and trips are ends in themselves.
5. Proposals exceeding \$10,000 will be considered if they involve multiple schools.
6. Complete a detailed budget using the spreadsheet included in this packet.
7. Projects are expected to be carried out within a year of the grant award date. If more time (up to six months) is needed to successfully complete the project, the time frame should be clearly stated within the proposal. The district finance office must be notified of the time extension if the grant is awarded.

TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL GRANT WRITING

1. Writing Style

- Allow your personality to show through your writing.
- Be passionate about your project and give the reviewers a good reason to reach for their checkbooks to fund your idea.

2. Winning Grant Proposals Demonstrate

- creativity in meeting a specific curriculum challenge in the classroom.
- clearly defined project ideas that contribute to best practices.
- direct benefit to the students and the school which can be measured and replicated for the benefit of others.

3. Know Your Audience

- Explain educational language and technical terms unfamiliar to lay people.
- The submitted document is a reflection of the applicant's professionalism.
- Make every effort to create a positive impression in the minds of community members who review your proposal.

4. A Catchy Title - three to four words that capture the essence of the idea.

5. The Overview

- simple, direct, concise
- no more than three to four sentences
- establish the student population

6. The Rationale or Needs Assessment

- a compelling statement explaining the reason for the project
- After establishing an idea, research programs within the school system or other systems throughout the country. When relevant, cite statistics to reinforce the need for the project. For example, instead of stating "the number of 'at-risk' students in Tupelo is increasing," define "at-risk" and provide statistics.

7. The Purpose/Objectives

- the purpose or goal is broad in scope
- objectives are measurable skills

8. The Implementation Plan

- a logical, step-by-step plan for making the project a reality
- a sequential list of learning activities
- long term support of the project - Is a procedure identified for maintaining or updating equipment?

9. The Evaluation Plan

- set of strategies used to measure the success of the grant
- different types of assessment instruments selected for specific objectives

10. The Budget

- Be explicit.
Instead of listing "books", identify each by title and price on a separate line.
Instead of "ant farm", enter "Ant Hill Living Habitat 4B".
- Enter budget items on one of two excel spreadsheets provided – one is for general use and one is for speakers.
- Each spreadsheet formula provides a running total of the items' prices.
- If items are entered on the second and third pages of the general budget spreadsheet, the amounts are automatically added to the total on the first page.
- Refer to the directions at the bottom of each excel document.

11. Proofreading

- by two teachers, preferably one certified in English
- by a layperson

12. Re-submissions

- A fresh approach needs to be used when writing a previously funded grant. For example, "Music Around the World" might feature Eastern songs and dances one year and a Spanish theme the next year.

- Be sure to use the current application form and budget spreadsheet.
- Quantitative data that expresses the success of the initial proposal is required in the resubmitted document. Some examples are: comparing scores before and after the project showing the increased performance of students, stating the number of students who participated in the project or the number of people who attended an event, summarizing results of student and faculty/community surveys.

SUCCESSFUL GRANT CHARACTERISTICS

In the past, grants that have received funding have displayed many of the following characteristics. Although it is **NOT** expected that any single proposal include ALL of these, proposals that display a large number of these qualities have received funding priority.

1. demonstrates innovative, imaginative teaching and/or use of materials
2. shows evidence of enthusiasm and commitment by the teacher
3. expresses the specific purpose of the project and plan of implementation
4. clearly states defined objectives
5. offers "hands-on" application for students
6. provides practical experience for students in areas related to business, industry, government, community or everyday living
7. includes a plan for sharing materials with other teachers
8. demonstrates interdisciplinary integration of subject areas
9. includes a detailed budget on the budget spreadsheet
10. is written clearly and concisely
11. adheres to grant guidelines, professionally presented, free from grammatical and typographical errors
12. enhances learning for a large portion of the student population
13. implements ideas or strategies learned by the applicant as a result of a teacher sabbatical, a visit to another school district or participation in a workshop

14. expresses potential for district-wide impact within the TPSD

15. contributes to Excellence in Education

Note: **DO NOT** copy someone else's grant; rewrite it in your own words and explain why you want to use the same project and how it will be advantageous to your students. It is imperative that you indicate you are resubmitting a previously funded grant and that you cite the name of the original grant writer. Your proposal will not be funded unless this guideline is followed.