FREE GUIDE

Education Grant Planning Guide for Schools (Free PDF)

A planning guide for classroom, school, district and education nonprofit applicants, with a one-page project planner, a simple budget table and a checklist.

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> This guide helps teachers, schools, districts and education nonprofits plan a grant request before writing it. It covers three sizes of ask, the approvals to get first, a project planner, a budget table and a checklist. The funder's instructions and your district's policies always come first.

Three levels of ask

Pick the level that matches your project. Requirements grow with the size of the request.

Level	Typical applicant	Typical funders, as categories	What it usually needs
Classroom project	A teacher or a small team	Local education foundations, parent groups, businesses, professional associations, small foundation programs	A short description, what students will do, a list of items with costs, principal approval
School or district program	A school, a district office or a nonprofit partner	Community and private foundations, corporate giving programs, state agency programs	A documented need, measurable objectives, a staffing plan, an evaluation plan, a full budget, district sign-off, letters from partners
Larger government program	A district, a consortium, a college or a large nonprofit	State and federal agency programs	Everything above, plus registration in the government systems, detailed compliance and reporting, an authorized official to sign, and weeks of preparation

Federal opportunities are posted on Grants.gov. Federal education programs each have their own eligibility rules and funding notice, so read the current notice on the official site before planning around one. Many federal education funds reach schools through the state, so also ask your state education agency what is open.

Our level:

Get approval first

A grant awarded to a school usually belongs to the school or district, not to the person who wrote it. Ask before you apply.

- [ ] Principal knows about the request and supports it
- [ ] We checked whether the district has a grants office or an approval form
- [ ] We know who is allowed to sign and submit for the school or district
- [ ] We know who will receive and account for the money

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- [ ] Any technology, curriculum or facility purchase has been cleared with the right department
- [ ] We asked whether another school or office in the district is applying to the same funder
- [ ] If a nonprofit is the applicant, the school partner has agreed to its role in writing

Name and role of the person who approved:

Date approved:

Student data privacy

Applications and reports often ask for information about students. Schools have legal and policy duties to protect it.

- Follow your district's policy on student data, photos and student work. If you do not know it, ask before you write
- Use grouped numbers, such as grade-level or school-level figures, not information about a named student
- Be careful with small groups. A figure about a handful of students can identify them
- Do not include student names, photos or work samples without the consent your district requires
- If the project involves surveys, new software or sharing data with a partner or evaluator, get district approval first

- [ ] Our data and any student stories follow district policy

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One-page project planner

Project title:

Applicant (teacher, school, district or nonprofit):

Funder and program:

Deadline:

Amount requested:

Students served (grades, number, school):

The need, with evidence and its source:

What students or teachers will do:

How it fits school or district goals:

Objective 1 (who will change, by how much, by when, measured how):

Objective 2:

How we will measure results:

Who will run it, and their role:

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Partners and what each has agreed to do:

Start and end dates:

What happens when the grant ends:

Timeline

Activity	Who	Start	Finish

Simple budget

Use the funder's form if it gives one. Ask your school or district business office about purchasing rules and any costs the funder will not pay.

Item	How it was calculated	Amount requested	Other sources	Total
Staff time or stipends				
Substitute coverage				
Training or professional development				
Books, materials and supplies				
Technology or equipment				
Transportation or field trips				
Evaluation				
Other				
Total				

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Worked example

This example is fictional. It shows the level of detail for a classroom request.

Planner line	Example entry
Project title	Grade 4 Family Science Nights
Applicant	A grade 4 teaching team at Example Elementary School
The need	Teachers report few chances for hands-on science, and families have asked for ways to help at home
What students will do	Four evening sessions where students and families complete a simple experiment together
Objective	By May, 60 of 80 grade 4 students will attend at least two sessions, measured by sign-in sheets
Budget	Experiment kits for four sessions, printing and light refreshments, each with a unit cost and quantity

Checklist before you submit

- [ ] The project matches what the funder says it funds
- [ ] We are an eligible applicant for this funder
- [ ] Approval is on record from the principal, and the district where required
- [ ] The need is backed by evidence with a source and year
- [ ] Each objective can be measured
- [ ] Every budget line ties to an activity and has a calculation
- [ ] The business office has reviewed the budget
- [ ] No student can be identified without the consent the district requires
- [ ] Limits on length, format and attachments are met
- [ ] We know who will submit, and they have access to the system
- [ ] We know what reports the funder expects and who will write them
- [ ] A person who did not write it has read it start to finish

Want help with this? The Complete Grant Architect is a free 16-week grant writing course, and you can hire a grant writer for your next proposal. Both are at subthesis.com.

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