Grants Guidelines

What is a Grant

The Rockdale County Public Schools Foundation has developed a program offering Grants for up to $1,000 to Rockdale County teachers and staff who have ideas for creative, innovative educational projects for which funding is not available through regular school sources. Grant monies may be used to purchase materials, supplies, equipment, etc., necessary for the successful completion of the project that enhance student learning. The Foundation encourages creativity and innovation for these projects.

**Important Notes as you consider your projects:**

* If you apply for funding for a software program, you must have prior approval from the school system before the Foundation will consider awarding a software grant.
* If you are requesting funding using a kit, please note that creativity is a key factor in the grant selection process. As most “kits” are pre-designed, a successful grant involving a kit would need to demonstrate a creative use of the kit itself.
* Educational trips will be considered only if they are an integral part of the proposed project.
* Grant funds may not be used as personal honorariums for the applicant, other teachers, or other school personnel.

Who is Eligible?

Any individual or group of Rockdale County Public Schools such as teachers, counselors, media specialists, resource teachers, administrators, or educational support staff members (i.e. lunchroom personnel, bus drivers, etc.) are eligible to apply.

How to Prepare Your Proposal

The following guidelines must be followed when submitting a grant proposal. Many proposals are submitted for consideration; therefore, proposals not meeting the criteria will be disqualified.

1. All proposals must be submitted electronically.
2. All proposals must be clear and easy to understand.
3. Follow the sample outline provided and respond to every item in detail.
4. The proposal should not exceed four pages.
5. **Do not identify your school in the grant narrative.** Any proposal that contains information that allows a grant to be identified with a school will be disqualified.  Be cautious NOT to mention names in the context of the proposal that would identify the applicant, the school, the principal or the class involved. We do this to keep our judging process impartial.

Project Evaluation

During the project the Foundation Grant Review Committee will review the progress of the program and may conduct at least one on-site review. Participants will be contacted via email and asked to complete an online self-evaluation of their grant.

To ensure accountability, schools will be required to provide the foundation with records (receipts) proving the funds were used for the grant. Teachers are accountable for expenditure of funds received from the Foundation. All monies must be spent by April 30, of the same year during which the grant was awarded.  Funds not spent must be returned to the Foundation.

How Grants are Awarded

Grant proposals are reviewed by the Grant Review Committee of the Rockdale County Public Schools Foundation. The grant award process is designed to provide funds for special programs/activities that support classroom instructional needs not funded through the general budget.

The Foundation solicits proposals from teachers and others who wish to initiate learning experiences and or purchase tools that require up to $1000 funding for which other funding sources are not available. Applicants may apply for a maximum of two grants using one application for each proposal. All grant projects must comply with existing school system policies and align with current learning standards.

Grant applications are reviewed to ensure that they meet the eligibility requirements. All proposals meeting the eligibility requirements will be scored by the Review Committee using a rubric. To celebrate and honor our grantees, the Foundation will host a reception for all grant recipients in August of the grant year. Winners and their respective principals are expected to attend.

The Review Committee

The Review Committee, like the Foundation’s Board of Directors, includes representatives from the business, civic, parent, faith-based, and educational sectors of the community.

Distribution of Funds

Upon approval of a grant proposal. the Foundation will notify grant applicants of their funding status. The Foundation will work with the Central Office Business Services Department to assure that grant funds are assigned to their appropriate schools. Grant funds will be available in the school’s account by July 1 of each grant year. Teachers should contact their school bookkeepers for use of the grant funds. The recipient will be required to maintain records of all expenditures. Upon completing the project, these records and the project evaluation form must be submitted to the Foundation. Teachers are accountable for the expenditure of funds received from the Foundation.

## icon-rankingSelection Process

Your proposal will be assigned an identification number. Your file will be renamed with that identification number. Judges will only see the identification number. Your proposal will then be forwarded to a subcommittee for review. Each subcommittee will rank the applications according to the extent to which each project:

1. Challenges students at different ability levels
2. Enriches the educational experience for students
3. Is creative
4. Has realistic goals
5. Is cost effective

The subcommittees will submit their preliminary selections to the total Review Committee, which in turn will make the final selections. Funds will be awarded according to the yearly grant budget.

Ownership of Materials

Equipment and materials purchased through the grant program will remain the property of the Rockdale County School System. The person receiving the grant will have exclusive use of the equipment and materials for as long as the project continues. Any unexpended grant funds are to be returned to the Foundation.

If a grant is awarded to a teacher who transfers to another school in the Rockdale district, the grant will remain with the teacher provided the project/activity for which the funds were awarded can be replicated exactly as described in the grant proposal. If this is not possible, the grant may remain with the school that received the funds provided the project/activity will be completed exactly as described in the grant proposal when the grant was awarded. If these conditions are not met, the funds must be returned to the Foundation.