2027 Spring Grant Program Guidelines

The Hilliard Education Foundation (Foundation) Grant Program provides the opportunity for teachers and staff members of the Hilliard City School District to provide the “extras" that strengthen learning environments and student achievement. The foundation recognizes that traditional sources of school funding often do not allow teachers to initiate new and creative learning experiences for students. All Hilliard City School District teachers and staff members are eligible to apply for a Hilliard Education Foundation grant. Applications and criteria for submission are available on the foundation’s website at hilliardeducationfoundation.org. Grants are awarded each spring for projects that will take place the following school year.

2027 Application Process:

The Hilliard Education Foundation offers technical assistance for completing the grant application and/or information regarding other Foundation programs. Grant applicants may contact the Foundation Grants Committee Chair at grants@hilliardeducationfoundation.org with questions.

A majority of the foundation's grant funds are raised through various fundraising activities held throughout the year. However, individual private donors have also made designated gifts to encourage the development of specific programming. These grants are limited by donor specification to a single school or educational area; however, these special funding categories tend to be less competitive in terms of the number of competing applications. Applicants should review the “Grant Categories” listing below for eligibility.

Background:

The Hilliard Education Foundation is a nonprofit foundation, established in 1989, to impact students’ lives by inspiring and supporting innovative learning experiences that advance student achievement in academics and citizenship. In partnership with the Hilliard City Schools, but separate from the Board of Education, the Foundation works cooperatively with the district to provide students with new and unique learning experiences.

The Hilliard Education Foundation's annual grant program is intended to:

- Support Hilliard City Schools staff in the development of innovative programs that are not supported through traditional funding sources; and
- Ensure that students have opportunities to participate directly in unique learning experiences that advance the tradition of excellence and student achievement in Hilliard City Schools.

Eligible Applicants:

Any educator or staff member employed by Hilliard City Schools may submit a grant application. The appropriate principal or school administrator authorized to approve the proposed program must sign the application (or an e-mail from your principal or school administrator authorization must be sent with your electronic submission). Application materials are available to download from the foundation's website.

Grant Deadlines:

February 28, 2027 – For projects occurring in the following school year. Funds must be expended between May 1, 2027 and May 31, 2028.

Applicants are invited to submit a Letter of Intent (LOI) anytime throughout the school year – but no later than the last Friday of January (January 29, 2027). The LOI isn't a prerequisite to applying for a grant – but is intended to provide helpful feedback on grant ideas and interests without having to complete a full grant application.

Applications will not be accepted past the submission deadline. Applicants will be notified of funding decisions by April 30th. Any funds not expended by May 31, 2028 will be forfeited.

Grant Categories:

Applications may be submitted for the following types of projects:

- ☐ High school performing arts projects
- ☐ Classroom-based programs/projects that directly benefits students, and are innovative in nature
- ☐ Multi-year project – Project takes place in phases or over more than one year
- ☐ Multi-building collaborations – One or more school building working collaboratively
- ☐ STEAM related projects

Funding Priorities:

The Hilliard Education Foundation funds programs that support the long-term development needs of students, and equip them to positively impact their families,

communities and their chosen professions in the years to come. Projects in a variety of areas have been funded, such as: integrating technology in the classroom; English as a second language; leadership and teamwork; diversity; mentorship; career awareness and the arts.

All applications submitted to the Hilliard Education Foundation for consideration of funding must:

- Demonstrate that students will benefit directly from the grant funding.
- Outline clear goals that are well-articulated, attainable and measurable.
- Show clear linkages to the district-approved curriculum or Ohio's Academic Content Standards.

Additional Funding Priorities:

- The project must focus on providing new, innovative or unique learning opportunities for students.
- Clear plans for replicating the project in other buildings or with other teachers must be outlined.
- Provide service for students with different learning styles and/or "non-traditional learners."
- Test new ideas or teaching methods that are "out of the box," with a rationale for testing the ideas and/or methods.
- Plan to implement meaningful parental and community involvement.
- If applicants are seeking to offer professional development for teachers, the proposal must clearly describe how the new knowledge will be put into practice and directly impact students.

In general, the amount of funding requested should not exceed $10,000. Applicants requesting higher grant amounts should demonstrate support from other funding sources (building funds, PTO, other grants, etc.). Program funding priorities for the grant year; however, may focus on awarding a larger number of smaller grant awards.

Funding Limitations:

Hilliard Education Foundation grant funds may not be used to pay for:

- Transportation costs
- Staff salaries, stipends, or substitute costs
- Consumable supplies (non-permanent items or items discarded after use), including purchases like t-shirts, books that students take home to keep, and food.
- Purchase of equipment simply to expand an existing program without the addition of a new program dimension.

- The continuation or repeat of existing programs and/or programs previously funded by the Foundation.
- Building/Facility Construction costs.
- Regulation/Calming/Sensory rooms and equipment.

Conditions of Grant Award:

By accepting a Foundation grant award, grantees agree to comply with the following conditions:

Funding Acknowledgment: All materials developed or distributed under grant activities, including, but not limited to: advertisements, press releases, general news articles must include a printed acknowledgment of Hilliard Education Foundation as the funding source. Verbal or other acknowledgment of the funding source, as appropriate, must be included at all events supported by Foundation funds.

Equipment acquired with Hilliard Education Foundation grant funds must include some form of designation identifying Hilliard Education Foundation as the funding source. And, any new equipment will be included in the inventory of the school district.

Documentation and Presentation of Final Project:

At the completion of the project, each grant recipient is expected to present a summary to the HEF board about the funded project and the impact on students. The presentation can be either in person or video conference. Multi-year programs are required to make a status report to the Grants Committee Chair at the close of each program/school year.

Presentations may include:

- ☐ School Name and Year of Project
- ☐ Information about the pecific Student Population Served and the Total Number of Students Benefiting
- ☐ What activities and events took place – Who?, What?, When?, Where?
- ☐ Benefit and impact of the project for students, teachers, parents, etc.
- ☐ Unexpected challenges and solutions for overcoming those challenges
- ☐ Ways in which the project was personally meaningful to you, as well as, students, teachers, parents
- ☐ Lessons learned and what changes you will make in the future

General Grant Writing Tips:

1. The proposal should be neat and orderly, with no typographical errors.
2. When laying out the proposal, guide the reader's eye to key points by using good spacing, underlining, bold face, or a bulleted format when appropriate.
3. Write your proposal in simple English. Explain all abbreviations and acronyms and avoid jargon.
4. Avoid unsupported assumptions. Common pitfalls include: 1) assuming that your reader is familiar with your school, program, or system; or 2) assuming that your reader knows that you have the knowledge and experience to do this project. Explain everything clearly.
5. Use positive and affirmative language. Avoid phrases like “we might,” “we could,” and “we’re thinking about”.
6. Be as specific as possible. Avoid phrases like: “various evaluation methods will be used.” Explain everything. Remember, “Modest specificity is better than blind ambition.”
7. Arrange for a colleague to read your application for typographical errors, clarity, and presentation. It may also be beneficial to have someone score your application using the Foundation evaluation sheet.

Reasons for Funding A Proposal:

- Application demonstrates that students will benefit directly from the grant funding.
- Clear goals are outlined that are well-articulated, attainable and measurable.
- Clear linkages are made to the district-approved curriculum and State standards.
- Project focuses on providing new, innovative or unique learning opportunities for students.
- Clear plans are outlined for replicating the project in other buildings or with other teachers.
- Project provides service for students with different learning styles and/or “nontraditional learners”.
- Staff members will test new ideas or teaching methods that are “out of the box,” with a rationale for testing the ideas and/or methods.
- Plans are in place to implement meaningful parental and community involvement.
- If applicants are seeking to offer professional development for teachers, the proposal clearly describes how the new knowledge will be put into practice and directly impact students.

Other considerations:

- The proposed project will help make the learning environment more meaningful for Hilliard students.

- A unique learning activity or innovative approach to an educational need is clearly presented.
- Planning appears to be solid and reasonable. It appears that the project will work.
- All details of the project are clearly explained and it is easy to understand exactly how the program will work.
- Commitment and support for the project has been secured from the essential people (e.g., principal, supporting schools' staff, parents, outside partners).
- The proposed timeline appears appropriate for the activities outlined.
- The project clearly supports one of the Hilliard Education Foundation's funding priorities.
- A clear plan is in place for collecting evidence that will demonstrate the effectiveness and overall impact of the project.
- Project cost is reasonable in relation to what will be accomplished and the number of students that will be impacted.

Reasons for Denying a Funding Request:

- Students are not directly benefiting from the proposed activities.
- The request is for a non-allowable expense, i.e. transportation, staff time, consumables, etc.
- A lack of detail makes it unclear how the program will work. Goals are not well articulated, attainable or measurable. Reviewers are unable to gain answers from the application and/or the writer assumes knowledge about the program that reviewers do not possess.
- Proper authorization for the proposed project is not clear; for example, a permanent outdoor exhibit will be erected without evidence of approval from the Building and Grounds Committee.
- The project is proposing to buy equipment without adding a new element to the program; simply expanding a program does not qualify as a new dimension or innovation.
- The budget/student benefit ratio is low. The project does not appear to give as much "bang for the buck" as competing projects. Request appears to be for an item(s) that should be assumed by the school/district, and for which there are designated funds. There is an alternate source of funding known to the reviewers.
- It is unclear how the proposed project is aligned with the district-approved curriculum and State standards.
- The application doesn't follow the required format.
- It does not appear that parents and community members will be involved in meaningful ways with the project.