Grant Application Tutorial

Applicant Information

Please supply contact information so that we can reach you should we have any questions about your application. Should you be awarded a grant, we will need to be in touch with you about procedures, progress and final reports.

Grant Project Information
Brief Summary

This should be just a couple of sentences that get at the heart of your project. Make it descriptive enough so that reviewers and supporters can understand broad outlines of what the project entails.

For example:
Planting For Transition is a multidisciplinary project for students with moderate and severe special needs preparing for transition to life after high school. Students are able to gain authentic work skills through cultivating seedlings and transplanting plants as part of a small organic plant service. The activities surrounding the project enable students to gain skills in writing, time management, math, science, social skills and problem solving.

Project description for all grant applicants

Describe in detail what the project entails. How will this enhance learning opportunities for your students? How will the objectives of the project continue to be met after initial funding? Use your own words to describe what needs and objectives are being met and how the project will meet them.

For example:
This project will supply the seed money for a permanent, student-driven game club. Many students have the opportunity to participate in extracurricular activities around athletics or clubs such as Destination Imagination, or Mock Trial. These activities are very exciting, but require significant commitments in terms of time, and often leave out students who are not naturally assertive. The goal of this grant is to create a more casual meeting space for students to interact socially and make friends around a common activity: playing games.

Games teach important academic skills, ranging from number sense and critical thinking, to abstract strategy and planning. Playing games also helps build social skills. The context of playing a game can take some of the stress out of meeting new people, and bring together groups of students who would otherwise not normally interact.

Many students have already shown a strong enthusiasm for playing games after school in the communal spaces we have available. The lone, aging copy of Monopoly is frequently in use, as

is the set of Apples-to-Apples cards someone donated several years ago. The current most popular game (and winner of the "Game of the Century" award) is Settlers of Catan. Our school does not currently have its own copy, but a staff member loans out their copy to students once or twice a week. Students currently compete to arrive first to get a seat to play this game, and often ask to borrow it after the normal meeting times have ended. More copies of this game would immediately be used.

While the academic aspects of this project are real and documented (see studies such as "The Settlers of Catan: Using Settlement Placement Strategies in the Probability Classroom" by Jathan Austin and Susanna Molitoris-Miller) the main goal of this is to help nurture an atmosphere of enjoyment for these students within the walls of the school. Because it is neither focused on traditional academics nor athletic competition, this can provide a more inclusive environment for students to interact who might not otherwise travel in the same social circles. It also gives students who feel left out of these kind of activities a way to feel connected to each other, and the school. Helping students build a place that they feel they belong to will help foster an overall sense of community, even during non-gaming hours, as students feel they are part of a bigger community, instead of feeling isolated. School should be a place that students are excited to come to, and while academics are the purpose of school, a sense of community and joy help students feel like school is a place they want to be, and ultimately a place they can be successful.

We currently have eight students who regularly attend (with three games in our supply), but six or so other students who come in when they have the opportunity, or when game resources are free. With more resources, I believe we could easily double student involvement, with a long term goal of reaching 35 regular attendees. Because of the largely self-directed nature of games, the level of supervision for this activity to be successful remains low, and much of the ownership over the distribution and maintenance of the resources can be delegated to responsible students.

The current after school game club already builds excitement and community among its members. With an increase in size, we will also will be able to use these resources to form similar connections between student groups during the school day by creating a choice block/elective course that would include instruction in strategy, game theory, and game design.

With the growth of the membership of our Game Club, it will open up opportunities for us to work with organizations such as Emerson's Engagement Lab, which designs and researches games to achieve social change and build activism. Eventually, we would like to provide the materials to help students create their own board games as a creative outlet.

Additional project description for collaborative grants applicants only

Describe the benefits of having more than one school participate in the project. How will schools work together? How will work and resources be shared? How will this collaboration benefit students?

For example:
The MCBA wiki will allow students from several Salem schools to discuss and debate ideas and opinions about the MCBA books. Students will be inspired to tackle books others have enjoyed, and they will be excited to see how intelligent discussion connects human beings to one another.

Timeline

Please provide a general timeline for completion. For collaborative grants, please articulate the role of each participating school. When will the project start? What steps will happen when?

For example:
Completion will be achieved in two phases. First, with the addition of new games, the Game Club can be expanded immediately. Second, as a way to celebrate the excitement around these games, we will hold a "Settlers of Catan" tournament near the end of the 2015-2016 school year. If the Game Club has over twenty regular members by the end of the year, we will plan to work with a consultant from the Engagement Lab in 2016-2017.

Project success

Project success is measured through evaluation, how will you evaluate this project and report its success? For Collaborative grants, please include how you plan to share your findings with your colleagues, parents, SEF and the broader community.

For example:
Project success will largely be evaluated through student engagement. For some select students, tracking academic and behavioral data will also help determine if increased engagement in school activities transfers to increased attendance, a decline in discipline events, or increased academic success.

Results will be shared through the standard daily announcements/newsletter, but if results are dramatic for certain groups of students, publishing through other means, such as the Salem News, might also be warranted.

Attendance of student participants will be monitored each week to monitor growth, popularity, and percentage of recurring students. A survey will be designed and provided to both students and their teachers in order to document their current academic participation and feelings toward school as a whole. This survey will both be geared toward measuring academic standings as well as their feelings about the school in general.

Lifelong learning

Keeping in mind the mission of the Salem Education Foundation and our goal to foster creativity, tell us how your project will help to promote the concept of lifelong learning and

citizenship for participants. Later in life, how will students use what they learned from this project? How will it affect their interactions with the broader community as they go through life?

For example:
By getting students interested in complex problem solving games now, we are also encouraging them to continue to foster forms of entertainment beyond just electronic amusements. As the 21st century progresses, face to face interaction should be encouraged even as we take advantages of our new electronic social networks.

Games with rich themes also help engage students in subjects like engineering, electronics and politics. By learning concepts through games, they are often more prepared to have a rich conversation about these topics. Critical thinking skills developed through games can also be transferred to other areas of life.

Proposed Grant Budget Information

Ideally, the Salem Education Foundation would like to provide funds for programs that can continue beyond the initial year, or "seed money".

Transportation costs are not covered. Food is not covered unless it is an integral part of the project. For example, snacks for an after-school board game club are not covered, but food to be used to teach healthy eating could be covered. The Salem Education Foundation does pay for the services of outside professionals to teach students, but we do not pay wages or stipends for school employees.

If you wish, you may describe these expenses in the box below the budget section, with an indication of how they will be paid.