**DRIPPING SPRINGS EDUCATION FOUNDATION**

**FAQs about the Innovative Teaching Grants Program – Updated 11/2016.**

1. **What types of projects will the Foundation fund through this program?**

The purpose of this program is to fund innovative and creative educational approaches designed to enhance the classroom learning experience. The Foundation is especially interested in funding grants that enable teachers to incorporate instructional tools and methods into their classrooms that could benefit learning in new ways.

1. **What types of expenses will the Foundation not fund?**

The Foundation does not fund stipends, salaries or travel expenses. However, the Foundation does fund conference or workshop registration. (See number 10.)

1. **Will those who review my application know where I teach?**

All applications are evaluated through a blind-review process. The objective of the Foundation’s Grant Review Committee is to review every application on the merits of the proposed project alone. To this end, we ask all applicants to refrain from identifying themselves or their school except on page one of the application, the *Signature Page.* The *Signature Page* will not be included in the package that is delivered to the Foundation Grant Committee.That said, feel free to describe any campus-specific issues that relate to your project needs.

1. **Can I request technology that is not currently approved by our school district?**

In support of innovation and creativity, we encourage teachers to propose the use of new technology that is deemed likely to have a beneficial impact on student achievement. We recognize that if the technology is new, it may not yet be on DSISD’s approved list. You may still request this new technology in your grant application. Please know though that funding of a new technology grant will require it to be approved by the District prior to purchase. Therefore, we encourage you to begin the technology review and adoption process with the District before you submit your grant application. The District’s IT Department can tell you whether the technology is utilized in the district already and if not, whether it can be successfully integrated. Further, if you are awarded grant funds for technology that the District does not approve, the funds will be returned to the Foundation.

1. **I see that a *Work Plan* is called for in the application. What exactly is a *Work Plan*?**

The Work Plan outlines the step-by-step process you would take to implement your proposal. For example, if you are applying for a grant to host a student art exhibition at Barton Creek Mall, your Work Plan might detail meeting with the Mall manager to agree on an exhibition time frame, purchasing supplies for the student art project, detailing a multi-week instructional unit on watercolor painting, and taking a field trip to the Blanton Museum to see an art exhibition. The Work Plan is intended to demonstrate to the Foundation’s Grant Review Committee that you have both a well-defined project idea and implementation process.

1. **I would like to purchase some books for my classroom library. Do I have to list every title that I want to purchase?**

Yes. With each submission, it is important to outline exactly how you intend to spend the grant money. In the case of library acquisitions, listing the individual titles helps the Foundation’s Grant Review Committee understand your overall objective. The Committee also recognizes that there may be minor title changes at the time of purchase.

1. **Oops, I forgot to include shipping and handling in my application budget and now I need another $200 to complete my order! May I ask the Foundation for more money after the fact?**

On an annual basis, the Foundation awards all of the money it allocates for the Innovative Teaching Grant program that year. Typically, we do not have residual funds to cover later budget amendments. Please include shipping and handling and all costs related to your grant proposal in your initial budget.

1. **Can I use the STAAR test as a measure of success for my project?**

We do not encourage applicants to use standardized tests as a measure of success, as there are numerous factors measured in standardized testing. Instead, we encourage applicants to identify alternative means of measurement such as pre- and post-project measurements, rubrics, student surveys, and peer evaluations.

1. **How can I recognize DSEF as the financial supporter of my project?**

We are glad you asked! There are several things you can do to announce your award and help us build awareness about the Foundation’s role within our community. (1) Send a letter home to parents announcing your grant award and how it will benefit their children. (2) Submit an article and progress updates to your campus newsletter. (3) Tell your friends and neighbors – and direct them to the Foundation’s website to learn more about what we do at [www.dseducationfoundation.org](http://www.dseducationfoundation.org). (4) Place stickers on supplies purchased with grant funds that say “Purchased by the Dripping Springs Education Foundation, dseducationfoundation.org”. For promotional information about the Foundation, contact Amy Embry in the Foundation office at (512) 858-3063. In addition, DSEF will issue a press release to local media outlets announcing the grant recipients.

1. **Does the Foundation support staff development projects?**

The Foundation will consider requests for staff development activities (attending workshops, trainings, conferences, bringing in a consultant) when these activities represent one component of a well-planned project and are integrated with other activities that more directly impact students. The Foundation will not fund travel-related costs such as lodging, per diem, airfare or mileage reimbursement.

**11. How much money is allocated to fund Innovative Teaching Grants?**

Funding from the Foundation is distributed annually through three DSEF grant programs.  **Innovative Teaching Grants** fund teacher-generated ideas that do not have an obvious funding source through the District. **Student Leadership Grants** fund projects that are designed by students with the support of a mentor teacher. The **DSISD Grant** helps fund programs that prepare our children for the demands of a modern world, such as the District’s 21st Century Learning Initiatives. While last year the Foundation awarded $80,500 in Innovative Teaching Grants, the amount awarded each year is contingent on the Foundation meeting its fundraising goals.

**12.  Will grants for existing programs at the same school be considered?**

Yes.  However, in determining recipients, priority will be given to categories of grants in the following order:  (1) new pioneering/pilot program grant requests; (2) extension of projects to other campuses; (3)   expansion of projects within a campus; and (4) re-funding previous grants for continuance.

**13.  When do I need to measure outcomes?**

Teachers with grants awarded in January 2017 are required to submit a Mid-Year Progress Report in December 2017. This is also a requirement for recipients to apply for another grant in the subsequent grant cycle. An End of Year Report is due in May 2018.

**14.  Can I request assistance from DSEF in framing my grant application?**

Yes! We are here to help you, so please contact the Foundation office at (512) 858-3063 or email teachergrants@dseducationfoundation.org. We also encourage teachers to reach out to the Facilitator of Learning & Innovation at your campus, as each one is a proficient grant writer.