Guidelines for AEF Innovative Teaching Grants

PLEASE **READ THIS ENTIRE PACKET AND THE FULL APPLICATION** BEFORE BEGINNING YOUR APPLICATION.

MISSION

The mission of Aldine Education Foundation is to provide community-based support to the Aldine Independent School District in pursuit of excellence in teaching, innovation in the classroom, and superior learning opportunities for all students.

AEF's Innovative Teaching Grants help us reach these goals by directing resources to:
- enhance and enrich educational opportunities for students;
- support campus principals and district administrative staff as they strengthen instructional strategies and classroom learning; and
- engage parents and the community in supporting quality public education.

PURPOSE

Innovative Teaching Grants are designed to encourage and facilitate unique and creative instructional approaches to accomplish Aldine ISD strategic priorities or goals identified on Campus Improvement Plans and to meet academic and instructional needs. Aldine Education Foundation offers teachers the opportunity to apply for grants to support innovative projects that encourage higher levels of student learning.

The grants must focus on the instructional and academic needs of the campus ~~or district~~ and support the mission, goals, and objectives of the campus and the school district. Grant awards are intended to be used as seed money to fund new programs or expand pilot programs which have demonstrated success.

ELIGIBILITY TO APPLY FOR AEF GRANTS

Innovative Teaching Grants: A campus teacher is eligible to apply for a grant of up to $1,000. These projects should demonstrate a positive impact on student learning in a classroom or subject area, to focus on and strengthen instructional and academic needs

As with any Aldine ISD grant application, District administrative approval is required on the Permission to Apply Form and the Grant Summary Form. Please follow all Aldine ISD grant application procedures as available through the Aldine ISD Business and Finance web page through the Grants Department.

Additionally, grant workshops are available and applicants are **required to attend one**. See the AEF web page for date. Workshop registration is through Aldine ISD Power School.

SCOPE AND REQUIREMENTS

Projects should be designed for delivery during the full academic year (Fall and Spring). Grants may fund instructional and classroom materials, teacher training, parent involvement programs, or any activity or materials which support the instructional needs of the campus or district and enhance higher levels of student academic achievement.

Grants must comply Aldine ISD strategic priorities or goals identified on Campus Improvement Plans and follow all district policies and procedures for grant applications. Alignment with district strategic priorities and/or Campus Improvement Plans will be confirmed by Principal/School Assistant Superintendent/ Superintendent review through approval of all submitted requests. Materials purchased with AEF grant funds are to remain the property of Aldine ISD and should remain at the campus(es)/department(s) to which the grant is awarded.

Grant awards are based on the demonstrated needs for the project and the funds available. An award may cover only a portion of the entire project cost requested. A detailed budget is essential for thorough assessment of projected costs and must describe how the entire budget will be spent.

All expenditures for equipment or supplies must be consistent with the description outlined in the application. Changes following any awarded grant funds must be approved by AEF before expenses will be allowed. All materials purchased with AEF grant funds become the property of Aldine ISD and must be identified accordingly.

Grants **are not intended to pay for**:
- Programs for which other funds are available;
- College or graduate school courses;
- Out of town travel for district staff or students;
- Educator stipends; or
- Materials such as core curriculum texts, standard school supplies or furniture, and daily food needs that should be covered in the schools or departments operational budget.

Awarded grant funds will be held in a designated Aldine ISD account to be drawn down by the grant recipient for the needs of the project. Funds are not given directly to the grant recipient. It is expected that grant funding will be used by the end of the school year for which the funds are awarded. Expenditure of funds must follow Aldine ISD purchasing guidelines and technology standards. Grant fund balances will be monitored throughout the year to ensure they are being expended in a timely manner. All unexpended grant funds at the end of the project period must be returned to AEF.

Grant recipients are expected to attend a grants management session conducted by Aldine Education Foundation and Aldine ISD's Grants department. This session will provide detailed information on the grant delivery process and spending procedures. A bookkeeper from Grants Department will be assigned to each grant recipient to ensure compliance with district policies.

All AEF grant applications MUST be submitted online. No paper applications will be accepted

AWARD LEVELS
The number of awards will depend on funds available from AEF and the quality of applications received and selected by its Grant Review Committee then approved by AEF's Board of Directors. Partial awards may be made at the discretion of the Committee.

Innovative Teaching Grants: A campus teacher is eligible to apply for a grant for up to $1,000.

CRITERIA
The following criteria will be used to review grant applications:
- Applicant followed instructions
- Applicant attended grant training workshop offered through the Grants Department with AEF (sign up through Power School)
- Originality of the project, demonstrating educational innovation and academic or instructional needs will be met
- Evidence that students will benefit from the grant funding
- Alignment with Aldine ISD strategic priorities or goals identified on the Campus Improvement Plan to focus on and strengthen instructional and academic needs
- Clear objectives that are well articulated, attainable, and measurable
- Appropriateness of funds as detailed in budget request; budget is complete and realistic
- Evaluation plan, including measurable indicators of success
- Timeline fits award period and is adequate to deliver project
- Sustainability or potential for future impact
- Inclusion of project partners
- Applicants must agree to and demonstrate how they will utilize social media throughout the project delivery period to publicize their funding efforts as well as to share their final results at the conclusion of the project, always tagging AEF.

APPLICATION PROCESS
- All applications must be submitted through an online application system. Links are available on Aldine Education Foundation's website as well as through the Aldine ISD Grants Department link: http://grants.aldineisd.org for permission to apply.
- The applicant must register in the online system for the AEF application. They will create a profile with their Aldine ISD email address as the username and a password. Keep this information secure as it will allow the user to begin the application, save, and return to it to complete in future sessions. Do not share with project team members.
- Read these guidelines and the full application in their entirety prior to beginning the application. This provides detailed information for project planning and what information is requested.
- BE FOREWARNED: AEF has a grant application deadline BUT ALDINE ISD APPLICANTS MUST ALSO FOLLOW ALDINE ISD requirements which include two earlier submissions related to any grant request. Please work closely with the Director of Special Programs in FSSP to ensure you follow all Aldine ISD policies.
- AEF will confirm with Aldine ISD's Grants Department that all grant submission requirements have been followed.
- Applications must be finalized and submitted online by the posted deadline. **No late applications will be accepted**. All Aldine ISD requirements must be met before submitting to AEF.

SELECTION PROCESS

AEF's Grant Review Committee is comprised of Aldine Education Foundation board members, district staff, and community representatives. The application, review, and award processes are coordinated by AEF staff in conjunction with Aldine ISD's Director of Special Programs.

All applications will be subject to review. Applications that meet the stated criteria and are received on time are shared with AEF's Grant Review Committee. Each application is independently read by at least three Committee members and scored according to the Reviewer Score Sheet as provided on AEF's website.

The Committee will meet to review the cumulative score of each application and to determine funding recommendations to propose to AEF's Board of Directors for final approval based on monies available. Grant applicants will be notified of awards.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF GRANT RECIPIENTS

- Use the awarded funds for the purposes stated.
- Spend the funds within the grant project period (July – May).
- Implement all project activities prior to the end of the school year.
- Document project activities and outcomes. Photos, journals, data, and implementation timeline evaluations will tell your story.
- Track progress toward stated goal and objectives.
- Submit a mid-year assessment (online) by December 31.
- Fully implement project between July and May and submit a final evaluation to Aldine Education Foundation (online) by June 30.
- Share successful procedures (or difficulties others can avoid) in staff development sessions, on the campus, and at the District level (via meetings). Social media postings should appropriately tag Aldine Education Foundation.

TIPS FOR COMPLETING A SUCCESSFUL APPLICATION

You can begin your online application once you register and you may return to it as many times as necessary to review and complete it before the deadline. It saves automatically. Do not share your login information to the system with your project team members. **Only the lead partner will enter grant details to the system**.

To fully explain your proposed project, your application should be written with as much description and detail as possible, but be succinct as there are character count limitations within the online system for each question. Avoid jargon and acronyms as many of our reviewers are not educators.

Project Description
- This provides a brief overview of your proposed project. Be clear, concise, and specific. Make sure someone who reads ONLY this section will have an understanding what you hope to accomplish and why.
- Be sure to show how your project strengthens instructional strategies and classroom learning.
- Consider completing this section last, once you have finalized your entire project.

Need for Project
- Describe the problem or issue your project will address in terms of your project's audience.
- Describe the area of student achievement you wish to address and give any data that supports this as a need. Be clear, concise, and specific.
- Include how your proposal addresses Aldine ISD goals or goals identified on your Campus Improvement Plan.
- Keep your information simple and straightforward. Do not use jargon or acronyms. Many on our Grant Review Committee do not work in education.
- "*It's not about what is bought, but about what is taught*." So, keep your focus on what you will do, not what you will buy.

Objectives
- You must provide three Objectives; you have the option of adding two more.
- Relate your project objectives to the need stated.
- Your objectives must be measurable so that you can evaluate if you reached them at the end of the project.
- Objectives should be **SMART**: s̲pecific, m̲easurable, a̲ttainable, r̲elevant, t̲ime bound.
- These should indicate WHAT is changing, for WHOM, in what TIME period, and from what amount to what amount (baseline to endpoint).

Proposed Project Activities
- Show how the project supports the problem/need identified.
- Relate activities to a stated objective.
- List steps/activities to be followed as you implement your project. Include details, not generalities.
- Include mid-way evaluation points as you will need to submit a report at that time.
- Be specific.

Timeline of Activities
- Provide a list (quarterly) of all project activities that will help you meet your objectives.
- Be sure your activities relate to the need and the objectives you have listed in your application. They must connect.
- Include mid-way evaluation points to help evaluate progress at that time.
- If an activity is longer than a quarter, you can list it in each period that it occurs.
- Funded projects must take place fully within July – May.
- You will be asked to estimate budget expenditures by quarter.

Partners
- Are there others who will be involved in this project? (Parent groups, business partners, CIS, Rotary, PTO, Lion's Club, College/University, non-profit)
- What are their roles?
- Detail what contributions (cash or in-kind gifts or just time) they will make toward this project. Attendance at an event is NOT project participation.

Sustainability
- Will benefits continue beyond project period?
- Demonstrate if there is potential for project continuation beyond the funding period.
- If project continuation is planned, how will you secure funding for any recurring costs?
- Is the project replicable in other settings?

Marketing Plan
- Provide details of how you will let your community and peers learn about your efforts throughout the project period.
- Describe what social media resources (platforms) you will utilize and how you will be sharing project progress.
- All social media posts must tag Aldine Education Foundation.
- If you have successes (or failures), how will lessons learned be shared beyond your Grant Evaluation Forms or project team?

Evaluation Strategy
- This should relate to your measurable objectives.
- Identify what data will be collected and how it will show objectives have been met.
- Include progress measures that detail pre- and post-project data.
- Indicate how you will know whether the project was successful at the end of the project period.
- Be sure to include all related costs into your budget. Once an award is made, no additional funds are available.
- NOTE: A mid-project evaluation (due December 31) and final evaluation (due June 30) will be required for all funded projects.

Budget
To complete this section, you will have to download an Excel spreadsheet, complete the required information, save the document, and upload it to the online application system.
- Plan ahead!
- Please be aware that once funds are awarded, no additional AEF funds are available.
- Research costs thoroughly as budget changes are not always allowed.
- Purchase of technology or construction/maintenance require additional written Aldine ISD approvals.
- Service agreements or contracts may delay project implementation up to four weeks.
- Be sure to include shipping/handling costs.
- Aldine ISD-approved vendors must be utilized (check with your bookkeeper).
- Plan accordingly to ensure all necessary items are documented and accounted here.

REMEMBER
- Aldine Education Foundation seeks to fund innovative Teaching Grants projects through these grants. A unique approach to an existing problem strengthens the proposal's chances for funding.
- Grants are used to fund projects that are not funded through the school or District budgets. Grants cannot fund educator travel or stipends.
- Objectives and outcomes should be consistent with Aldine ISD strategic priorities or goals identified on your Campus Improvement Plan.
- Everything in your proposal must be related to and connected to the identified need for the project, the objectives you have identified for the project, the activities you plan to accomplish, and the timeline for completion.
- When creating your budget, research carefully and be realistic. Small grants are just as likely to be awarded as large grants. Partial funding will be considered. Funds will not be awarded for budgeted items available from District resources.
- Projects awarded must be fully implemented and evaluated by the end of the school year in which the award was received. The mid-project assessment and the final evaluation should include objective data.

- Be aware of Aldine ISD's policies regarding grant requests and their deadline requirements in seeking approvals prior to grant submission deadlines.
- Read through the Reviewer Score Sheet and Project Evaluation Forms as you're planning and writing your proposal.
- All grant recipients will be required to report on their project twice. Make sure to plan for that in your winter break and end-of-year preparations.
- ATTEND AN ALDINE ISD GRANTS DEPARTMENT TRAINING WORKSHOP – **it is required**!

NOTE: A team of Aldine Education Foundation representatives will randomly select funded projects to visit throughout the year. They will be reviewing the progress of the grant to ensure goals and objectives proposed are being addressed and the timeline is being followed.