



Student Achievement Leadership Team

Resource Kit #16

Grantsmanship

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Grantsmanship

Schools are always looking for new sources of money to fund innovative programs to enhance learning opportunities for their students. Many are turning to grants as revenue streams. So how do you write a successful grant?

During the Ohio School Boards Association Board Leadership Institute, OSBA Education Management Consultant **Cheryl Ryan** offered a presentation full of practical tips related to school grants. The session focused on the different types of funding agencies, practical tips on writing competitive proposals and offered ideas on what board members can do to promote grant writing within their districts.

The presentation is now available online and can be seen at www.osba-ohio.org/salt_grants.

Who funds grants?

Grants can be funded by:

- individuals,
- companies and non-profit organizations,
- government agencies,
- corporations,
- foundations:
 - ▶ private individual,
 - ▶ corporate,
 - ▶ community,
 - ▶ family,
 - ▶ specialized.

How complicated are proposals?

This really depends on the grant proposal — or upon the funding agency. The range can go from two paragraphs submitted on-line to a document that includes hundreds of pages of narrative and attachments. A good rule of thumb? The more the money, the more complicated the proposal package.

For the most part, each proposal will ask for:

- Information about the grantee (who are you?).
- A narrative section (what the project is about, why your district needs their assistance, how you will implement your project, who will be in charge and how the project will be evaluated, etc.).
- A budget. This can be basic or very detailed. Again, it depends on the wishes of the funding organization.
- Attachments. These can include a list of all those who will be involved, a timeline, examples of surveys or evaluation tools the project might use and any marketing materials already created, etc.

What do we need to get started?

The most important thing you need to get a grant moving in the right direction is a great idea.

Then next, your project will need a champion. This might be the person who writes the proposal and who carries out the project. But it might not. The grant writer might not have anything to do with the project once the money arrives. Your champion is the person who will make the project a priority and who will see it through from start to finish.

Your idea will definitely need someone who is willing to put the time into research and contact potential funders, and write the abstract and proposal. Often, a funder will ask for a brief abstract first and, if interested, will then ask for a full proposal. Sometimes a group of people will work on different pieces of this process, depending on its complexity. But one person should lead the group and be the funding agency contact and final editor.

How can board members be helpful?

Board members know people. They work for companies that support schools. They attend Rotary or Kiwanis or are active with other organizations that offer grants ... or that can provide connections to funding agencies.

Board members are happy to support ideas that will create an impact in their districts, generate good community relations, provide new resources (physical or intellectual) to the district, and won't drain the current operating budget of financial resources.

Board members have a broad view of the entire district. They can be helpful in connecting grant resources (champions, writers, etc.) from different buildings because they have a good idea about "who does what best."

Board members know, almost more than anyone else in the district, which big or small ideas would make a significant difference. They can help grant's project teams to settle on the perfect idea, or to refine one already in development.

Here are some good Web sites to get things going!

www.ed.gov, the U.S. Department of Education

www.grants.gov, a great compilation of many funding agencies

www.schoolgrants.org, a good site that provides ideas on specific proposals and also offers links to school-friendly grantor sites

www.foundations.org, a good directory of charitable foundations

www.foundationcenter.org, a good directory source but also a good research site

Several sites, such as **www.ed.gov**, also provide an option for individuals to sign up as subscribers to receive e-mail when grants in certain areas, or requests for proposals in general, are posted. This allows your e-mail to do some of the grant searching for you!

OSBA can help

For other questions about grant writing, or to speak to OSBA about the services it has available in this area, contact **Cheryl Ryan**, OSBA education management consultant, at (614) 540-4000, ext. 289 or **c_ryan@osba-ohio.org**.

OSBA offers a variety of publications on grant writing. For information on these publications, visit www.osba-ohio.org/pubs.htm or contact **Linda Cooper** at (614) 540-4000, ext. 113 or **L_cooper@osba-ohio.org**.