



Welcome to the Teacher Impact Grants program, where innovative ideas meet real opportunities.

Every day, classroom educators across Orange County Public Schools create meaningful learning experiences that inspire curiosity, creativity, and student success. Sometimes, however, the biggest barrier to implementing those ideas is access to funding.

Through Teacher Impact Grants, classroom educators can apply for funding to support innovative STEM, Visual & Performing Arts, sustainability, and hands-on learning experiences that enrich student learning and expand opportunities beyond what traditional resources may provide.

Thanks to the generous support of community partners including Lockheed Martin, Duke Energy, The Phoenix Foundation of Central Florida, and License4Learning, educators have access to funding that can help transform a simple idea into a powerful classroom experience.

Today's session is designed to do two things: introduce you to the Teacher Impact Grants program and provide practical strategies for developing a

strong, student-centered grant application.

We'll walk through how to identify a compelling need, create measurable outcomes, build a realistic budget, and present your ideas in a way that clearly demonstrates student impact.

Most importantly, we want you to leave this session feeling confident and inspired to apply.

Because every great classroom innovation starts with a simple question:

What if?

And the next great idea may already be sitting in your classroom.

A banner for Teacher Impact Grants. The background is a light blue gradient with abstract wavy lines and glowing particles. On the right, there are three inset photos of students: a girl working on a robot, a girl painting a landscape, and a boy in a lab coat working with glass beakers. On the left, there are several icons: an atom, a lightbulb, musical notes, and gears. The text is centered and reads: "Funding Innovative Ideas. Expanding Student Opportunities." followed by a bulleted list of details.

 **TEACHER IMPACT**
GRANTS

Funding Innovative Ideas. Expanding Student Opportunities.

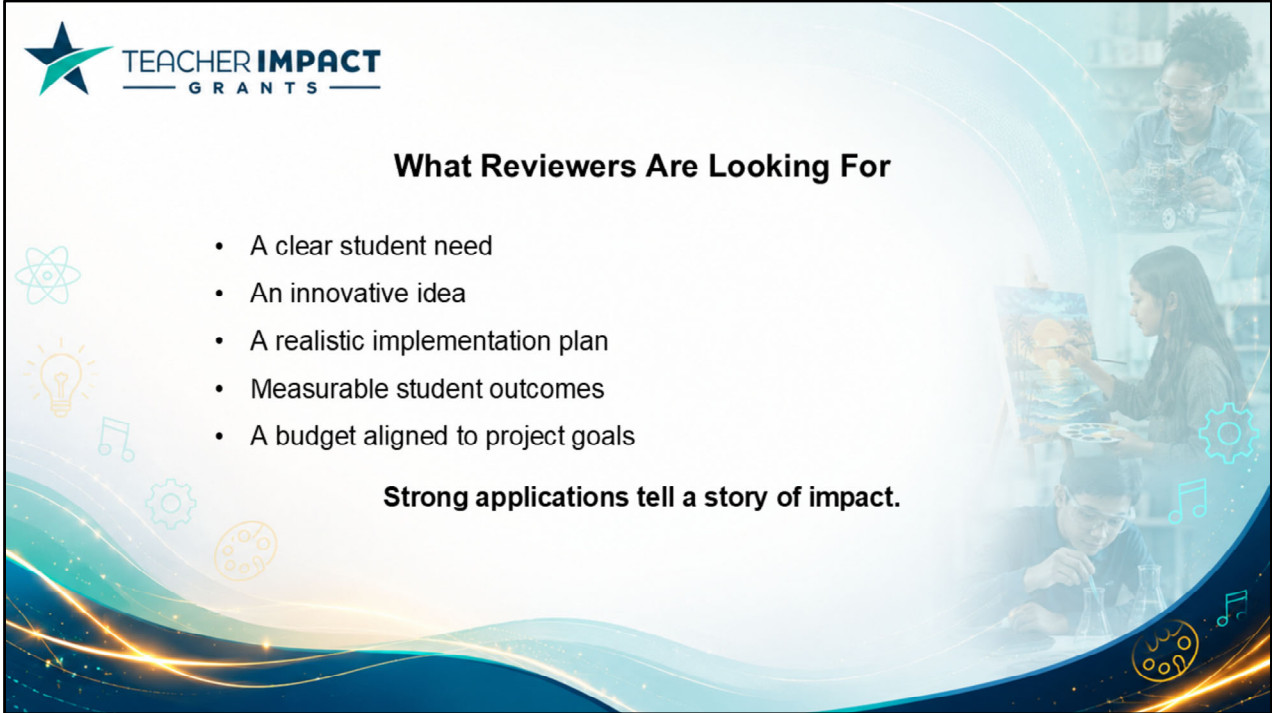
- Open to OCPS classroom educators
- Funding available for:
 - STEM Teacher Impact Grants
 - Visual & Performing Arts Teacher Impact Grants
- Awards support innovative, student-centered learning experiences
- Applications now open through September 6
- Resources and support available throughout the application process

Before we discuss how to write a strong grant application, let's briefly review the opportunities available through Teacher Impact Grants.

These grants support innovative STEM, Visual & Performing Arts, sustainability, and hands-on learning experiences that expand opportunities for students.

Through the support of our community partners, educators can access funding to bring creative ideas to life and create meaningful student impact.

Now let's talk about what makes an application stand out.



Now that we've explored the Teacher Impact Grants opportunities available to classroom educators, let's talk about what separates a good application from a great one.

Many educators believe reviewers are looking for the biggest project or the most expensive idea. That's not the case.

Strong applications focus on **student impact**.

They clearly identify a need, present a thoughtful solution, define measurable outcomes, and demonstrate how students will benefit from the experience.

The strongest applications don't focus on what you want to purchase. Instead, they focus on what students will learn, create, experience, and achieve as a result of the project.

Throughout the rest of this presentation, we'll focus on the core components that help applications stand out and increase their likelihood of funding.

Let's begin with the most important question in grant writing: **Why does this project**

matter?



Strong applications begin with a clear need.

Ask yourself:

- ☒ What challenge are my students facing?
- ☒ Why does this matter right now?
- ☒ How will this project improve student learning?
- ☒ What evidence supports the need?

Example:

Weak:
Students need technology.

Strong:
Our students have limited access to hands-on STEM experiences that build problem-solving and workforce readiness skills.

Key Takeaway

Identify the Need → Support with Evidence → Connect to Student Success

The strongest Teacher Impact Grant applications don't start with a shopping list.

They start with a compelling need.

One of the biggest mistakes applicants make is focusing immediately on what they want to purchase.

Instead, start by explaining the challenge your students are facing.

Ask yourself:

- What opportunity is missing?
- What barrier exists?
- What student need are you trying to address?

Maybe students need more access to hands-on STEM experiences.

Maybe they're missing opportunities for creative expression through music, art, or theater.

Maybe you're hoping to introduce sustainability initiatives, environmental

stewardship projects, or school gardens that connect learning to the real world.

Whatever your project, the need should be clear and student-centered.

Once you've identified the need, support it with evidence.

Evidence doesn't need to be complicated. It can come from student performance data, classroom observations, survey results, participation trends, or even challenges you've consistently observed in your classroom.

Finally, connect the need to student outcomes.

Help reviewers understand how meeting this need will improve learning, engagement, confidence, problem-solving skills, creativity, or academic achievement.

Remember: **Reviewers fund impact, not purchases.**

A strong application clearly demonstrates how the project will create meaningful opportunities for students.

Start with the why, and the rest of the application becomes much easier to write.

A Great Idea Needs a Great Plan

- What activities will students participate in?
- When will the project occur?
- Who will be involved?
- How will success be measured?
- Keep your plan realistic and achievable

Example:

Instead of: Students will use robotics kits.

Try: Students will participate in weekly robotics design challenges that develop coding, engineering, and problem-solving skills throughout the semester.

Key Takeaway

Activities + Timeline + Student Experience = Strong Implementation Plan

Once you've established the need, it's time to explain how your project will come to life.

Think of this section as the roadmap for your idea.

Reviewers should be able to clearly understand what students will do, when they will do it, and how the project will be implemented.

Strong applications walk reviewers through the student experience.

Will students be designing and testing robots?

Creating a school garden and collecting data on plant growth?

Producing a theatrical performance?

Composing music?

Designing a mural that reflects the culture of their community?

Whatever your project may be, help reviewers visualize the experience.

The more clearly you explain your activities, the easier it becomes for reviewers to understand the value of your project.

It is also important to be realistic.

Your plan should match the amount of funding requested, your timeline, and what can reasonably be accomplished during the grant period.

Remember, reviewers are looking for projects that are both innovative and achievable.

By the end of this section, reviewers should feel confident that you have a clear plan for implementation and that your project is positioned for success.

Once you've explained the need and the plan, the next step is to define what success will look like for students.

What Will Students Gain?

- Focus on student outcomes, not activities
- Define measurable results
- Connect goals to student learning
- Think beyond participation
- Use the S.M.A.R.T. framework

Example:

Activity: Students will participate in a school garden project.

Impact: 80% of participating students will demonstrate increased knowledge of environmental sustainability through pre- and post-project assessments.

Key Takeaway

Activities tell us what students will do. Outcomes tell us what students will learn.

Once you've explained the need and outlined your plan, it's time to define the impact.

This is where many applications fall short.

Teachers are often excellent at describing activities, but reviewers want to know what students will gain as a result of those activities.

In other words, don't stop at what students will do. Explain what students will learn, achieve, create, or understand.

Think about the difference between an activity and an outcome.

An activity is participating in a robotics club.

An outcome is students developing coding, engineering, and problem-solving skills.

An activity is creating a mural.

An outcome is students demonstrating increased understanding of artistic techniques and community engagement.

Strong applications clearly define success.

One of the best ways to do that is by using the SMART framework:

- **Specific:** What skill or knowledge will improve?
- **Measurable:** How will you know it happened?
- **Attainable:** Is the goal realistic?
- **Relevant:** Does it align with the project?
- **Time-Bound:** When will it be measured?

Reviewers are looking for projects that create meaningful student impact.

The more clearly you define success, the easier it is for reviewers to understand the value of your project.

Remember, funding follows impact.

When reviewers can clearly see how students will benefit, your application becomes much more compelling.



Writing Tips That Make Applications Stand Out

- Be specific
- Focus on students, not supplies
- Use active verbs
- Avoid educational jargon
- Tell a story of impact

Example:

Weak: Students will engage in STEM learning activities.

Strong: Students will design, build, and test solar-powered vehicles while exploring renewable energy concepts and engineering design principles.

Key Takeaway

Clear. Specific. Student-Centered.

By this point, you have identified the need, outlined your plan, and defined the impact your project will have on students.

Now let's talk about how to communicate all of that effectively.

Great ideas can sometimes get lost in unclear writing.

Reviewers may read dozens of applications, so clarity matters.

One of the easiest ways to strengthen your application is to be as specific as possible.

Instead of saying students will participate in activities, tell us exactly what they will do.

- Will they design and test robots?
- Create original works of art?
- Build a school garden?
- Conduct environmental investigations?
- Perform on stage?

The more vividly you describe the experience, the easier it is for reviewers to

understand your vision.

Another important tip is to focus on students rather than supplies.

Reviewers don't fund Chromebooks, robotics kits, art supplies, or hydroponic systems.

They fund the student experiences those tools make possible.

Rather than focusing on what you're buying, focus on what students will learn, create, explore, and achieve.

Use active verbs like design, build, create, analyze, perform, investigate, develop, and demonstrate.

These words create a much stronger picture of student engagement and learning.

Finally, remember that the best applications tell a story.

They clearly explain a need, provide a solution, and demonstrate the impact the project will have on students.

When reviewers can envision the experience and understand the benefit to students, your application becomes much more compelling.

Remember: **Clear. Specific. Student-Centered.**

That's the formula for strong grant writing.



Make Every Dollar Tell a Story

- Align every expense to student outcomes
- Request only what you truly need
- Be specific with quantities and costs
- Demonstrate value and impact
- Use the budget template provided

Example:

Instead of: STEM Supplies - \$500

Try: Robotics Kits @ \$125 x 4 kits = \$500
Supporting 100 students in hands-on engineering and coding experiences.

Key Takeaway

Reviewers don't fund purchases. They fund student experiences.

A strong budget is more than a list of items.

It's an extension of your story.

Every item included in your budget should directly connect to the need you've identified, the activities you've planned, and the outcomes you expect students to achieve.

Reviewers want to understand not only what you're requesting, but why it matters.

Ask yourself:

- How will this purchase improve student learning?
- How many students will benefit?
- How does this item support my project goals?

The strongest budgets are clear, detailed, and easy to understand.

Rather than requesting a broad category like "technology supplies" or "art materials," provide specific details whenever possible.

Show reviewers exactly what you're purchasing and how those resources will be used.

Remember, your budget should match the scope of your project.

If you're requesting funding for a classroom garden, reviewers should see budget items that support that experience.

If you're proposing a theater production, your budget should align with the activities and outcomes you've described.

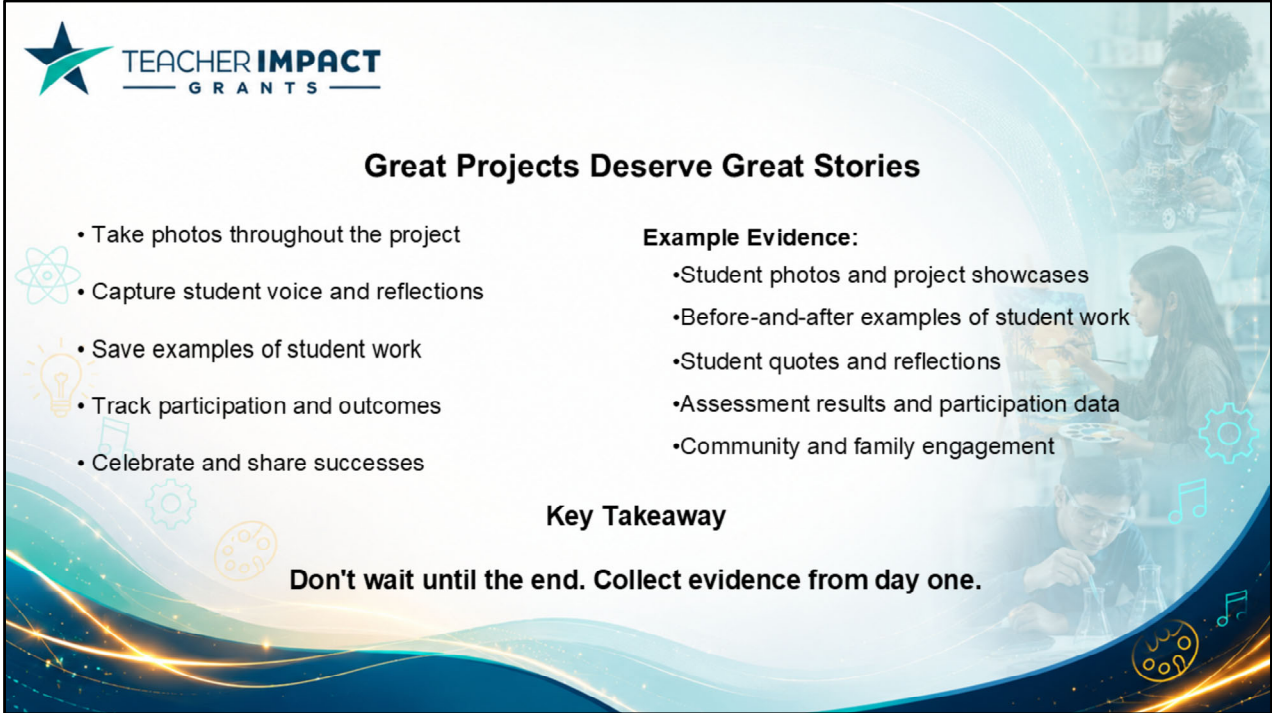
Every item should have a purpose.

And every purpose should connect back to student impact.

The easier it is for reviewers to understand how your budget supports learning, the stronger your proposal becomes.

Think of your budget as evidence that you've planned thoughtfully and are prepared to successfully implement your project.

When your narrative and budget work together, your application becomes much more compelling.



One of the most important parts of a successful Teacher Impact Grant happens after the award is received.

The key is to start documenting your success from day one.

Take photos, collect student reflections, save examples of student work, and track participation throughout the project.

As your project unfolds, make it a habit to capture moments along the way.

Sometimes the most powerful evidence isn't a test score.

It's a student saying:

"I didn't know I could do this."

"This was my favorite project of the year."

"Now I know what I want to do in the future."

Those stories help bring your impact to life.



We've covered the key components of a strong Teacher Impact Grant application:

- Identifying a meaningful student need
- Developing a thoughtful implementation plan
- Defining measurable student outcomes
- Building a budget that supports your goals
- Documenting and sharing your impact

Now it's time to put those ideas into action.

Teacher Impact Grants are designed to help classroom educators transform innovative ideas into meaningful learning experiences for students.

Whether your vision involves STEM, sustainability, school gardens, robotics, coding, visual arts, music, theater, digital media, or another creative learning opportunity, we encourage you to apply.

Don't wait for the perfect idea. Start with the idea that excites you most and focus on the impact it can have on students.

Remember, reviewers aren't looking for the biggest project or the most expensive idea. They're looking for thoughtful projects that address a student need and create meaningful learning experiences.

Applications are open through September 6.



We hope this session has provided you with practical strategies for developing a strong Teacher Impact Grants application.

If you have questions throughout the application process, we're here to help.

Additional resources, application materials, and funding opportunity information can be found on the Teacher Impact Grants website.

We look forward to seeing your innovative ideas and celebrating the impact they have on students across Orange County Public Schools.

Thank you, and good luck.

A promotional banner for Teacher Impact Grants. The background features a light blue and white gradient with abstract wavy lines at the bottom. On the right, there is a faded image of three students working on projects. Various icons are scattered throughout: a star, an atom, a lightbulb, musical notes, gears, and a brain. The text is centered and includes contact information, a QR code, and a call to action.

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Ready to Bring Your Idea to Life?

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 **FOUNDATION**
FOR ORANGE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Investing in Success




APPLY NOW!

REAL FUNDS. REAL CLASSROOMS. REAL RESULTS.

Questions...Need Help?

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