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**AURORA PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
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**APS Code: DD**

## **FUNDING PROPOSALS, GRANTS AND SPECIAL PROJECTS**

### **Grants and Federal Programs Policy**

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The Grants and Federal Programs Department will seek federal, state and local grants available, which are consistent with the advancement of the educational programs of the District and policies of the Board. The Department will also seek to maximize the utilization of grant funds aligned to APS's strategic objectives and minimize financial risks associated with non-compliance of grant requirements. In addition, the Department shall provide technical assistance and leadership to the appropriate Division in relation to programs and plans funded and/or mandated by governmental agencies in order to accelerate student achievement and ensure compliance with grant requirements and APS policies, regulations and standard operating business procedures. The Department will also seek to coordinate internal efforts and resources to assess the impact of grant-funded and federally-funded programs. The grants are to supplement the educational services provided by the District. Programs found to be impactful are candidates for sustainability. In the event that the district is the recipient of unrestricted, supplementary funding that does not necessitate reporting, the funding will be treated as a donation and accounted for as such.

Grants shall not be considered if they:

- Require a promise, favor or reward by Board Members or employees of APS
- Imply endorsement of any business or product
- Conflict with any provisions of policy, school code or public law
- Are considered a premium in return for school business purchases or other special consideration
- Place restrictions upon a school program or have purpose inconsistent with a school
- Are inappropriate or harmful to the best education of students

If the grant meets the above criteria and is successfully applied for and awarded, the Superintendent or designee will submit the grant request to the Board for fund appropriation.

To ensure coordination and avoid confusion in developing proposals and making application for specifically funded projects, the Superintendent or designee shall establish standard procedures for the preparation of proposals and their review.

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**I. Grants Management Procedures**

The district receives many grants to provide a variety of services not funded through the General Fund. These grants come from local, state and federal agencies. The Aurora Education Foundation may coordinate grants from private sources. Grants given to schools by the Aurora Education Foundation or the district itself are exempt from the following procedures. The agencies are attempting to achieve specific objectives from each grant. With today's demand for effective use of taxpayer dollars, these agencies require accountability for the funds they distribute to their recipients. The grants management procedures are designed to provide that accountability, effectively manage the grant resources available, and provide a common channel for grant funds to flow into the district. The grants management procedures provide a standardized process for assessment, assistance and district approval. The department of grants management will assist staff with needs assessment, proposal development and application support. The district will not support grant initiatives that do not adhere to the procedures outlined and the board will not approve any funding extended.

Before embarking on the grants management process, it is important to consider:

- A. if the goals of the grant are consistent with the goals of the district;
- B. if the grant will establish programs that will require general fund subsidies once grant funds run out;
- C. if district-matching funds will be required under the grant;
- D. if the grant will cause the district to exceed Tabor limitations.

**II. Grant Availability**

Notification of available grants can be received in a number of ways. Most commonly, the granting agencies notify district administrators. The granting agency may provide public notice that grant funds are available for a grant. Newsletters and other government publications may provide the notice. Finally, interested parties may know of a grant and inform the district of that grant.

Once grant availability is established, administrators or employees interested in procuring the funds should meet with their respective supervisor to determine if the grant meets or coincides with

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district objectives.

The administrators or employees can then work to secure the grant, following the steps outlined in the grants application approval form (DD-E), and forward the grant to the department of grants management.

**III. DEPARTMENT OF GRANTS MANAGEMENT**

Once a supervisor has authorized the employee or administrator to apply for the grant, the director of grants management must be contacted so that the proposal can be assigned to a grant coordinator. The staff person pursuing the grant is required to schedule an appointment with the grant coordinator to discuss the proposal and ensure that it complies with district goals and board policy. The grant coordinator will make sure the funding source is appropriate for the need and that the proposal is not in competition within the district for the same grant. If requested, the grant coordinator will provide assistance in developing the proposal and technical assistance with the grant application.

All applications presented to the department of grants management must include a grants management approval form and a grants application checklist (DD-E). The director of grants management will review each grant proposal for the grant's contribution to district objectives; the impact of administrative and indirect cost burden to be absorbed; and other factors deemed appropriate, such as (but not limited to) longevity, public relations impact, and subcontracting.

**IV. GRANTS APPLICATION APPROVAL FORM**

The grants application approval form and the grants application checklist provide a guideline for employees and administrators to follow when applying for a grant (see DD-E). They also provide a procedural series of authorizations to be acquired. The approval form is based on standard district processes when applying for a grant. The checklist is to be used as a tool to monitor the status of the grant's application process. They both must be included with the proposal submitted to the department of grants management.

**Preparing Proposals for the Grant Approval Process**

Several steps must be followed when preparing proposals for district approval. Steps include using the appropriate application form, preparing an executive summary and a financial summary, and other issues.

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**A. Application**

Funding agencies usually require grant applicants to submit an application that is specific to their agency. Applicants should contact the agency to make sure they have the full application package. Common elements in a grant application include a needs assessment, the project design and description, budget and budget narrative, and evaluation method. Some agencies will offer proposal preparation workshops after releasing a Request for Proposals. These workshops can help applicants understand the intent of the RFP and make their proposals competitive.

The department of grants management or the Aurora Education Foundation can provide informative tips on how to write the narrative in a way that directly responds to the agency's objectives. This improves the district's prospects of having the grant approved.

**B. Executive Summary**

An executive summary of the grant proposal (not to exceed one typewritten page) must be presented to all district personnel involved in the approval process. The summary should include, in this order: the purpose and general description of the grant; how it relates to district goals and priorities; time lines for the project; staff required to complete the project (including position categories); where the project will be housed; how the project will be evaluated; and the roles of partners or other agencies in the project. If sustainability is required by the funding source, describe briefly how the initiative will be sustained.

**C. Financial Summary**

A financial summary must accompany the executive summary. A financial summary provides an estimation of each type of expenditure. It must include, in a spreadsheet format, the categories of expenditures for the proposed project, estimated costs for each category, and the total cost of the project. Examples of budget categories include salaries, benefits, supplies and purchased services. Some funding agencies allow the applicant to assess administrative or indirect costs. These costs should be included in the budget. The financial summary must identify funds requested of the funding agency, funds required from the district, in-kind contributions of the district, if applicable, and funds that partners are contributing to the project. A portion of the budget summary may be in a narrative format.

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When preparing the financial estimates, it is important to verify any salary amounts with the Division of Human Resources. Typically, a grant is written with a specific position needed to meet the grant objectives.

Applicants should verify with Human Resources what the current salary is for that position, and if available, any increases that might take place during the fiscal year of the grant. Unless otherwise specified in the grant, consideration must also be given to benefits related to salary amounts. Benefits can be estimated by applying a current rate (available from Human Resources) to the estimated salary amount. Other expenditures (training, supplies, equipment, other) also need to be estimated. It is important to consider administrative or indirect costs as part of the program. Refer to "Indirect Costs" under the subhead "Operating the Program."

**D. Other Issues**

Some funding agencies require assurances from the district as part of the grant application. Often the assurances pertain to federal law or other government ordinances. If assurances are required as part of a grant application, questions concerning them should be directed to the director of grants management. The director of grants management will determine the district source for the assurances and assist the applicant in obtaining them.

Include all parts of the proposal when acquiring authorizations upon the grants application approval form and checklist. Once the original completed grants approval form and checklist and a copy of all parts of the proposal have been sent to the department of grants, the application will be ready for forwarding to the granting agency for its review/approval.

**V. The Approval Process**

After the application has been submitted, the granting agency will review the proposal. If the agency approves the grant, notification of the award will be sent to the district. The director of grants management will provide a standardized board of education agenda item to be presented to the board for its approval. The board is the trustee of all funds that flow into the district; therefore, it must approve the appropriation of funds in order to authorize the expenditures of the program. The district's chief financial officer is to submit the agenda item to the board of education. The agenda item includes a recommendation to

- A. approve the program as proposed;

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- B. authorize the expenditures for this program;
- C. appoint the contact person.

The program must be approved by the board of education prior to implementing program operations, including encumbering or spending funds and hiring personnel.

If the superintendent has approved the proposal, the board will, in most cases, approve the grant. Upon board approval of the grant, the accounting department will set up the account structure according to the proposal. Operating the program may then commence.

If the board rejects the grant, the grant initiator is responsible for notifying the agency.

**VI. Operating the Program**

- A. Financial Transactions  
Refer to the *Standard Operating Business Procedures Manual* for guidelines on initiating the various types of financial transactions. The critical issue with grants is that the grant coordinator or grant contact person must authorize all expenditures. Grant coordinators will monitor their grant expenditures closely. Monthly reports are available on the district's financial system. Notify the director of grants management of any errors or discrepancies.
- B. Cash Flow  
The cash flow for the grant must be discussed with the accounting department prior to beginning the program. Some grants send cash automatically, with no intervention by district personnel. Other grants fund the salaries but require the district to request cash for the remaining nonsalary expenditures. Some federal programs have an automated payment system whereby funds are requested through a payment clearing house and are then transferred directly into the district bank account. The cash flow process should be properly implemented so that when cash is received, the accounting department will identify the proper grant revenue account to credit. All requests for funds must be reconciled by the accounting department prior to submission.

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In certain programs, local tuition is the source of revenue, and those cash collections are to be processed in compliance with the deposit procedures listed in the *Standard Operating Business Procedures Manual*.

**C. Indirect Costs**

Indirect costs are those expenses that do not provide a direct benefit to the program but represent an operating cost to the district. Examples include utility bills, insurance premiums and central administration costs, such as payroll, accounts payable and data processing. Indirect costs will be charged to all grants programs where allowed. The chief financial officer will advise sites, applicants, the grant coordinator and other appropriate persons of the districtwide indirect cost rates. Grant writers (applicants) are responsible for including these costs in the application budgets.

**D. Supplemental Funding**

Some grants may provide supplemental funding. In such cases, additional funds become available to the agency, and they in turn distribute the extra funds to their recipients. If the agency providing the funds does not require a separate proposal to be processed, only board approval is needed to appropriate the use of these supplemental funds. The grant coordinator must know how the granting agency will award supplemental funding and convey that information to the director of grants management

**E. Year-end Activities**

At the end of the grant's fiscal period, an analysis of revenues and expenditures determines how much of the grant award has been utilized. If the entire award has been expended, only the final report needs to be filed. However, if revenues exceed expenditures, the excess revenue may need to be returned to the granting agency. Agency regulations will determine if the excess needs to be returned or if it can be utilized in the upcoming year. Further details are provided in "carry-over from prior years."

Expenditures cannot exceed the amount of the grant award. If such a situation occurs, adjustments to the expenditures should be made in order to match them with the revenues of the grant.

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All fiscal reports submitted to granting agencies must be resolved and consistent with the district accounting system. All questions concerning required financial reports should be directed to the director of grants management.

**VII. Continuing Programs**

Many grants are renewed on a yearly basis. Examples of these ongoing grants that continue to be funded from year to year include Title 1 and PL 94-142.

For ongoing programs, the new year's application should be prepared and submitted to the granting agency. It is necessary to submit applications for ongoing grants to the department of grants management. Further, the board of education must approve the appropriation of funds. Typically, this is accomplished by inclusion of the grant in the district budget. Funds cannot be spent until approved by the board of education and until notification is received from the granting agency that the grant has been awarded. It is important to process these applications in a timely manner to ensure that funding will be available for the program at the beginning of the new year.

**VIII. Carry-Over from Prior Years**

Ongoing programs may have excess revenue at the end of the fiscal period. Agency regulations will determine if the excess revenue needs to be returned or if it can be used as part of the next year's program. If it can, it is called "carry-over." Carry-over is to be used when preparing the new year's proposal. Contact the department of grants management to determine the carry-over to be included in the new year's proposal.

If carry-over is allowed and there is no new award, specific board approval to spend the carry-over is not necessary.

**IX. AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE**

Unless the superintendent or board of education designates otherwise, the superintendent is always the authorized district representative.

**GRANTS AND SPECIAL PROJECTS APPLICATION APPROVAL FORM**

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***I. Initial Contact with the Department of Grants Management and Assignment of the Grant Coordinator:***

The very first step in seeking a grant is to contact the department of grants management and speak with the director of grants management or a grant coordinator.

Name of Grant Coordinator assigned (*print*): \_\_\_\_\_

Director of Grants Management signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

***II. Information Relating to the Grant Application:***

Name of granting agency: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Agency/grant reference number: \_\_\_\_\_

Circle type of revenue: federal; state; local; private/foundation

Are matching or in-kind funds required? \_\_\_\_\_ Amount: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Is there an obligation of the district or site to provide program or funds after the grant funding expires? Yes/No? \_\_\_\_\_ Amount: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Years of obligation: \_\_\_\_\_

***III. Requirement for the Initiation of Department Signature Acquisition:***

A. Obtain a copy of the board of education policy, regulation and exhibit for Funding Proposals, Grants and Special Projects (DD, DD-R, DD-E) from the grants management department.

B. Provide an executive and financial summary document. (two pages total in length)

1. **Executive summary** of the grant proposal should not exceed one typewritten page. The summary should include, in this order: the purpose and general description of the grant, how it relates to district priorities, time lines for grant project, staff to be hired, professional development, where the project will be housed, evaluation requirements and reporting requirements to the granting agency.

2. **Financial summary** should indicate total revenues and major categories of expenses to be associated with the grant. A blank draft budget sample is provided for your use. If there are salaries included, please include a benefits line item. If there is housing needed, please include costs of rent, furniture, remodeling, utilities, etc.

Name of Grant Initiator (*print*): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Grant Initiator: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Principal: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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Signature of Principal's Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**IV. Department Authorizations:**

Grant initiator is required to obtain signatures from all applicable departments in the order presented below.

**Division of Equity in Learning**

This grant aligns with the district goals, and consultant forms have been approved. (Please attach a copy of consultant form.)

Chief Academic Officer: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Division of Human Resources**

Salary schedules are appropriate; benefit amounts are accurate; and staff likely to be available have been discussed and approved.

Chief Personnel Officer: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Transportation**

The availability of buses and drivers, along with transportation costs, have been discussed and approved.

Director of Transportation: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Other Departments**

Other sign-offs required by the Grants Program Coordinator as applicable (e.g. Information Technology, Student Records, Facilities, Organizational Support, Professional Development, Aurora Education Foundation 501(c)(3), etc.)

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Chief Financial Officer**

Indirect costs are budgeted within the grant and are within district and federal/state fiscal requirements.

Applicable indirect costs assigned. Percentage: \_\_\_\_\_ Amount: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Chief Financial Officer: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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**SUBMIT THIS FORM TO THE GRANTS MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT FOR  
REVIEW BY THE DIRECTOR OF GRANTS MANAGEMENT**

**V. *Grants Management Department Review:***

The director of grants management has reviewed the grant proposal for compliance with district goals and management feasibility.

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_ Disapproved: \_\_\_\_\_

Director of Grants Management comments:

Director of Grants Management signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
*(If grant is disapproved at this point, it may not be submitted to granting agency.)*

**VI. *Approved for Superintendent's Signature and Submittal to Granting Agency:***

Superintendent signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Note: The authorized representative of the school district is the superintendent unless otherwise designated by the board of education.**

Once this Grants and Special Programs Application Approval Form is completed and the superintendent has approved (signed) it; the original signature page, the executive summary, the financial summary, and a paper and electronic copy of the grant proposal must be returned to the department of grants management before the grant is submitted to the granting agency. Upon grant funding, the director of grants management will initiate a board of education agenda item accepting the funds, authorizing expenditures, and establishing budget and supervisory authorities. After board approval, the director of grants management will establish account codes and review fiscal processes with the grant initiator. A grant coordinator will continue to monitor progress on the goals of the project, budget compliance and other requirements of the grant.

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**GRANTS AND SPECIAL PROJECT APPLICATION CHECKLIST**

The following checklist is designed to guide you through the process of applying for a grant. The “Funding Proposals, Grants and Special Projects” document found in the “Board Policy and Regulations” is the primary document for the application procedure along with the “Grants and Special Projects Application Approval Form.” The policy and regulation documents must be used in conjunction with the checklist of steps.

**LISTED IN ORDER OF COMPLETION:**

- After finding a grant or special project you are interested in applying for, you will want to first contact the department of grants management and speak with the director of grants management or a grant coordinator.
- Provide an executive and financial summary for review, two pages. (Blank draft budget sheet provided upon request.)
- Collect the indicated signatures from the administrative staff. (See application approval form/grants coordinator.)
- Collect all the information relevant to the grant of interest including the application and requirements page for review with the coordinator.
- Set a meeting with the grant coordinator to discuss the grant application and the procedures required to fulfill the requirements page.
- Cover time lines for completing the application process.
- Needs assessment, goals and objectives will need to be identified and outlined for the grant budget formulation and application submission.
- Provide draft document, resubmit for final document/review, and final preparation for submission.
- Submit all documentation according to the guidelines.
- Follow up with grant coordinator when award notice comes out for post grant award instructions.