

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
REPORT TO COUNCIL**

SUBJECT: ACE GRANT PROPOSALS - 2012

BACKGROUND: The Advisory Committee on Education recently solicited grant proposals for the 2011-2012 school year.

ACE solicited grant proposals for up to \$500 each from the six ACE core schools: Greenbelt Elementary, Springhill Lake Elementary, Magnolia Elementary, Turning Point Academy, Greenbelt Middle and Eleanor Roosevelt High School. Proposals were welcome either from the school itself or from the school's parent-teacher organization. There was no limit to the number of proposals that could be submitted from each school. The proposals were due on November 1, 2011. The proposals were for activities which will take place between February 15, 2012 and the end of the 2012-2013 school year.

The ACE Grants Program will support activities which enhance or enrich school-based activities. Some examples include supporting field trips, bringing an activity into the school, or purchasing equipment and materials for a special project. The grants are NOT intended to underwrite items that are normally supplied by the school system such as copier paper, etc.

FINDING: ACE received a total of 19 proposals from 4 schools for a total request of \$8655.00. Proposals were submitted from Greenbelt Elementary, Springhill Lake Elementary, Greenbelt Middle and Eleanor Roosevelt High School. ACE did not receive any proposals from Magnolia Elementary or Turning Point Academy.

In addition, ACE received a proposal from the Greenbelt Nursery School. ACE determined that the Greenbelt Nursery School is not eligible for ACE grants as it is not one of the ACE core schools as defined by the ACE charter. In addition, the call for proposals clearly lists which schools are eligible for ACE grants. ACE has notified the Greenbelt Nursery School that it is not eligible for ACE grants.

Selection of the proposals for funding is made by the Greenbelt City Council based on the input from ACE.

This table is a summary of ACE recommendations. The proposals are listed in priority order. The details are below.

#	School	Title	Request	Recommendation	Total
Proposals recommended for funding					
1	GES	Microscopes: Enriching Science and Exploratory Learning	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00	\$ 7190
2	GES	School Play	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00	
3	GES	Lively Tales w/Chesapeake Children's Museum	\$ 250.00	\$ 250.00	
4	GMS	Music Composition Camp	\$ 450.00	\$ 450.00	
5	ERHS	Special Education Agenda Books, 2012 – 2013	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00	
6	GMS	Greenbelt Middle School Novels	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00	
7	GMS	Robotics Team	\$ 290.00	\$ 290.00	
8	GES	Reading & Writing Non-Fiction Text Project	\$ 520.00	\$ 500.00	
9	GMS	Day of Dance	\$ 200.00	\$ 200.00	
10	GES	Character Development through Drawing & Illustration	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00	
11	GMS	Field Trip to the National Museum of Natural History	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00	
12	SHLES	Garden Club	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00	
13	SHLES	Cooking Class	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00	
14	GES	1XL Math	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00	
15	GMS	Graphic Design Creative Suite Software	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00	
16	SHLES	Exercise Instructors	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00	
Proposals not recommended for funding					
17	GES	PBIS School Store	\$ 500.00	\$ 0.00	\$0
18	ERHS	ERHS Literary Magazine	\$ 500.00	\$ 0.00	
19	ERHS	Holocaust Survivor 2012-2013	\$ 445.00	\$ 0.00	

Proposal Review

ACE met on Tuesday, November 29, 2011, to consider the proposals. For each proposal, the committee listed the strengths and weaknesses and assigned a numerical score on a 100-point scale. The points were assigned according to the following scale:

- Intrinsic merit (40%) – Will the proposed project enhance or enrich school-based activities? Does it meet the criteria listed in the ACE grants call?
- Budget (30%) – Is the proposed budget realistic? Is the budget well justified?
- Benefit to students (20%) – Will the program provide wide benefit to the students in the school, or will it just benefit a few students?
- Proposal format (10%) – Did the proposal follow the proposal rules, including proposal length, project schedule, requisite signatures, etc.? (Note: severe violation of the proposal rules could result in rejection.)

On the basis of this careful consideration, the committee makes the following recommendations:

Proposals Recommended for Funding:

- 1 **Microscopes: Enriching Science and Exploratory Learning; GES.**
Recommended funding: \$500 (full funding.)

Summary: The purchase of four versatile, student-friendly microscopes.

Strengths: These microscopes will provide hands-on learning for 4th, 5th and 6th graders for many years to come.

Weaknesses: None

- 2 **School Play; Greenbelt Elementary School PTA.**
Recommended funding: \$500 (full funding.)

Summary: Funding will be used for supplies to create backdrops for a play, which will help provide hands-on and kinesthetic learning for the students. These opportunities supplement the in-class instruction by infusing arts and movement into the total student experience and also supplement the reduced level of funding by the county school system.

Strengths: Participation in the play will be open to all students. Individual students from the upper grades will audition for speaking parts and entire class groups will sing a song during the play. Additional money needed for the production will be provided by the PTA.

Weaknesses: None

3 Lively Tales w/ Chesapeake Children's Museum; GES.

Recommended funding: \$250 (full funding).

Summary: Greenbelt Elementary School partnered with the Chesapeake Museum to present its Lively Tales workshop for the pre-kindergarten students. The students are able to participate in interactive storytelling in their own classroom and they will get to use themselves as the actors/actresses. The students will also create their own puppets out of craft materials which will help to develop their concentration, vocabulary, social skills, fine motor skills, creative problem solving and multi-cultural appreciation. The grant would fund this workshop activity with a contribution to supplement the costs from the Chesapeake Museum. The entire cost is \$280.

Strengths: This is an excellent proposal. This workshop helps to support the learning and creativity of the pre-kindergarten students.

Weaknesses: The impact is only 37 children.

4 Music Composition Camp; Greenbelt Middle School.

Recommended funding: \$450 (full funding.)

Summary: The Greenbelt Middle School Music Department would like to host a composition camp for all students and teachers during spring break in 2012. Participants will learn about the basics of music theory as well as computer based composition. The end project will be a recording of the compositions by the participants. The grant would fund purchasing the necessary software/site license and compensate the facilitator who is a certified music teacher in Maryland. The entire cost is \$450.

Strengths: The composition camp will help to foster musical creativity and is an extension of the creation station project which was also funded through ACE grants. This allowed students to create music with computers.

Weaknesses: The project is only one week, but the students will be offered the opportunity to participate in afterschool sessions to finish their compositions that were started during spring break.

5 Special Education Agenda Books; ERHS.

Recommended funding: \$500 (full funding.)

Summary: Provide agenda books to 201 Special Education students at Eleanor Roosevelt High School for the 2012 – 2013 academic year (ordered in the spring of 2012). The remaining \$207.52 of the expense will be covered by the Special Education Department. The agenda books will assist the Special Education students with development of self-management and organization skills.

Strengths: Affects the entire estimated Special Education population at the school. Cost-effective and well planned.

Weaknesses: At the time of proposal evaluation, ERHS had two grant reports that were overdue, despite multiple reminders. According to the terms of the ACE grants, schools with overdue grant reports are not eligible for additional grants. ACE has decided to make an exception to the rule in the case of this grant.

**6 Greenbelt Middle School Novels; Greenbelt Middle School PTA.
Recommended Funding: \$500 (full funding)**

Summary: Purchase 60 copies of the novel, *A Green Glass Sea*, for use by 7th and 8th grade honors English classes. The book is available from multiple sources, and prices are given for a total of 60 books ranging from \$432 to \$472 plus shipping and handling.

Strengths: The book is set in Los Alamos during World War II, and will enhance the current curriculum which includes *The Diary of Anne Frank* in the study of World War II. Students will use sticky notes to mark important passages in the book, thus advancing their critical reading and thinking skills. The books will be used in subsequent years as well as this year.

Weaknesses: None

**7 Robotics Team; Greenbelt Middle School.
Recommended funding: \$290 (full funding.)**

Summary: Greenbelt Middle School is in its first year implementing a Robotics Team. The purpose of the team is to introduce students to basic engineering concepts associated with designing, building and programming robots. The members of the Robotics Team will be introduced to role models in the engineering world as well as learn about educational opportunities in technology and areas of engineering. The grant would fund a field set up kit and team registration fee for the First Lego League. The school has already purchased the Lego NXT education kits the students will be using.

Strengths: The Robotics Team will support the STEM Club which is already in place and also works with technology. The program will serve as a bridge to the Robotics Team at Eleanor Roosevelt High School.

Weaknesses: The Robotics Team only involves about 10-15 students, but the opportunity has been extended to all interested students at Greenbelt Middle.

**8 Reading and Writing Non-Fiction Text Project; Greenbelt Elementary School.
Recommended Funding: \$500 (requested funding is \$520)**

Summary: Purchase 60 copies of the non-fiction book *Bugs and Bugscicles* for use by class levels Pre-K through 6th grade to initiate a transdisciplinary unit combining reading, writing, illustration, and science.

Strengths: The books will be used at all class levels and in all classrooms throughout the school, and will be available in future years. The book is written by a local author, who is able to

provide the books at cost and will speak at the school to introduce her work to the students. The book has been cited as a model for teaching children to read and write. The unit will be taught during wintertime and so the topic of the book, which examines what different insects do to survive through the winter, can be matched to science observations the students can make.

Weaknesses: The grant proposal requests \$520, which is \$20 greater than the maximum set for ACE grants. It is presumed that the school can obtain the additional \$20 required through alternate means.

9 Day of Dance: Greenbelt Middle School PTA.

Recommended funding: \$200 (full funding.)

Summary: Professional dance instructors will lead workshops throughout the day, the school's Salsa Club will perform and teach participants some dances, and parent volunteers will also lead some dancing. The event will be free and open to the public.

Strengths: Participation in the event will be open to all students and staff as well as the general public. The aim of the event is to build community within the school and help the general public have more ownership of their middle school. The expense for the event is also reasonable.

Weaknesses: None.

10 Character Development Through Drawing and Illustration; GES.

Recommended Funding: \$500 (full funding)

Summary: Local artist Mr. George Kochell (known as Mr. Geo) will work with fifth and sixth grade students to teach them to draw characters from their reading/writing assignments. Mr. Kochell charges \$125 per session and will teach 4 sessions, 2 per grade, for a total cost of \$500.

Strengths: All students in 5th and 6th grades will work with Mr. Kochell. Fifth graders will draw heroes from their tall tales stories. Sixth graders will draw characters from their creative writing assignments. The artistic element adds a new dimension to the Reading, English, and Language Arts curriculum; encourages students to think about the attributes of the character they are drawing; and provides a creative outlet that is also in line with the county curriculum. Mr. Kochell has worked with students in the past and the response from students and teachers has been very positive.

Weaknesses: None

11 Field Trip to the National Museum of Natural History, Greenbelt Middle School.

Recommended funding: \$500 (full funding.)

Summary: Thirty five (35) (of the total 60) students in the GMS English Language Learners (ELL) program will take a field trip to the National Museum of Natural History and the Smithsonian

IMAX Theater. The requested \$500 funding will cover the rental bus transportation to the museum and \$4 of each child's \$7 IMAX ticket cost. The remaining \$3 of the IMAX attendance cost per child will be covered by each child.

Strengths: The experience of attending the Museum of Natural History is valuable for all children, but especially so for children who are recent immigrants to the US and are learning English and adjusting to the US culture. The project is carefully planned and budgeted.

Weaknesses: Only 35 of the 60 students are benefitting.

12 Garden Club: Springhill Lake Elementary School.

Recommended funding: \$500 (full funding.)

Summary: Students from across the school (5-12 years old) will learn hands-on knowledge on how to grow fruits and vegetables in the school courtyard and classrooms. They will receive materials to create their own garden. The grant will help fund seeds, raised garden beds, aero beds (classroom projects), soil and delivery, shovels, rain barrel materials and watering cans. During the summer months, they will work alongside Greenbelt Recreation Department who will help maintain and harvest the summer crops. The project will be year round and will need daily maintenance from students, staff, and community partners.

Strengths: Students will learn gardening and use in their personal life when needed. This is some knowledge that are not available in regular school classes.

Weaknesses: If not continued next year then all equipment will lie idle.

13 Cooking Class: Springhill Lake Elementary School.

Recommended funding: \$500 (full funding.)

Summary: Springhill Lake Elementary school has an annual cooking class that meets for 6 weeks every spring that is highlight of every third-fifth graders (8-12 year old) who receive training. Due to budget constraints, they have to limit only 24 students with a priority to those who are under risk health category (obese, severely underweight, homeless, etc.). Students will learn preparing food, wash, cut, measure, bake, sauté, serve and even create their own recipe.

Strengths: This learning will benefit the students in using the skills in their personal life and they can help their parents too.

Weaknesses: Only two burners are working. They should try to fix the other burners so that more students can be benefitted.

14 Graphic Design Creative Suite Software: Greenbelt Middle School.

Recommended funding: \$500 (full funding.)

Summary: Students will study composition and the principles of design, observe and discuss successful design and analyze the principles that underlie them. Students will apply these lessons in original, hands-on, projects with an emphasis on creative application of design

elements and visual communication. Students will employ both analog media (drawing with pencil and paper etc.) and digital media - using latest computer tools (graphic hardware and software for drawing, painting, layout, topography, scanning, and photography). At the end of the course, students will create digital portfolios. Each student will burn CDs and maintain a jewel case storing their digital portfolios.

Strengths: This learning will give students a basic design foundation that can be applied to any visual presentation they might encounter in or outside school.

Weaknesses: The proposal budget was confusing. The total project is expensive, although some equipment already exists. This grant will fund the software only.

15 IXL Math: Greenbelt Elementary School.

Recommended funding: \$500 (full funding.)

Summary: IXL Math is a website aligned to the state education standards and covers nearly all math skills taught during the school year and even more. The website provides an extensive reporting system that includes grade-level proficiency, overall class and individual student strengths, and also areas needing improvement. Answers to problems and questions may be reviewed by teachers and the program encourages student goal setting.

Strengths: A high level of engagement is expected in this program based on results of a similar program implemented last year at GES. Students in grade 3 (75 students) and grade 5 (85 students) will be using the website program. The program will be used from February, 2012, until the end of the school year in June, 2013. Additional funding will be provided by the school budget.

Weaknesses: Some reviewers were skeptical about the benefits of the website.

16 Exercise Instructors. Springhill Lake Elementary School.

Recommended funding: \$500 (full funding.)

Summary: Students, school staff and the students' families will participate in four after-school exercise clinics in the school gymnasium. The clinics will be conducted by a mobile fitness company, Legendary Strength and Conditioning, at the cost of \$125 each.

Strengths: Promotes fitness and regular exercise as part of the school's overall effort to promote healthy lifestyle.

Weaknesses: None with the proposed project. The write-up would benefit from an editing review by an English Language instructor.

Proposals not recommended for funding

17 PBIS School Store; Greenbelt Elementary.

Recommended funding: \$0 (no funding.)

Summary: The grant money would be used to purchase a variety of items for a school store. These items would be used as “motivation” for positive student behavior.

Strengths: The PBIS program reminds teachers to give encouraging feedback to students, creating a positive environment. The program operates by giving positive feedback for good behavior rather than negative feedback for bad behavior. The numbers of disciplinary actions at the school were reduced with the introduction of this program.

Weaknesses: Some reviewers had concerns about whether the results of PBIS would endure without the “motivations”. The grant would purchase cheap toys rather than providing more direct contributions to the educational environment. This is an ongoing program, requiring extensive funding, and which has received ACE grants in the past. The reviewers would prefer to give grant money to start new initiatives.

18 Literary Magazine; ERHS.

Recommended funding: \$0 (no funding.)

Summary: Students will produce a very high-quality literary magazine including prose, poetry, drawing and photography.

Strengths: The magazine produced is very high quality and will be a keepsake for the students involved.

Weaknesses: At the time of proposal evaluation, ERHS had two grant reports that were overdue, despite multiple reminders. The two overdue grant reports were from previous grants awarded to support the ERHS Literary Magazine. According to the terms of the ACE grants, schools with overdue grant reports are not eligible for additional grants. ACE regrets it is unable to provide funding for this project due to the failure of ERHS to comply with the terms of the grant for the last two years.

19 Holocaust Survivor Guest Speaker 2012-2013; Eleanor Roosevelt High School.

Recommended funding: \$0 (no funding.)

Summary: During the 2012-2013 academic year, bring a Holocaust survivor into the Eleanor Roosevelt High School as guest speaker as an enrichment event for the 9th grade student population with extra remaining seats offered to the History department. The speaker recommended by the National Holocaust Museum will give the students a firsthand account of their WWII experience after the students complete the required reading of “Night.”

Strengths: For just the expenditure of the \$445 traveling (paid transportation) fee the children would have a unique opportunity to meet and hear someone who lived through the Holocaust while such opportunities still exist, as the survivors' numbers dwindle with time.

Weaknesses: Funding is requested for the Spring semester of the 2012-2013 academic year, at a time that could be funded through next year's grant opportunity. The reviewers did not feel it was a good use of funds to hold them in reserve for a year. The reviewers recommend that this proposal be re-submitted for consideration next year. This is an annual request and money was awarded last year (2010-2011), but not used because of a scheduling issue. ACE has given an extension and allowed the school to use that money for the current year (2011-2012).

RECOMMENDATION: This is the fourth time that ACE has solicited grant proposals. In the Fall 2009 school semester, ACE recommended and the City Council approved funding for 4 proposals totaling \$1500. In the Spring 2010 school semester, ACE recommended and the City Council approved funding for 16 proposals totaling \$7500. Last year (2010-2011) ACE recommended and the City Council approved funding 14 proposals totaling \$6614. Previous grants have been made to 5 of the 6 current ACE core schools plus Saint Hugh's School. The funded programs have included field trips, arts and music supplies, after-school programs and teacher education.

The ACE grants to schools program has been highly successful. The final grant reports received from the schools document the positive impact on education in Greenbelt that the program has had. The continued interest of the schools and the creativity of the proposed projects are a testament to the success of the program:

In this report, ACE recommends that the City Council approve funding for 16 proposals, totaling \$7190. This year there was \$7000 budgeted for ACE grants, but ACE requests that the City Council consider adding the additional \$190 to enable funding for these 16 proposals. However, if the budgeted amount is a strict limit, then ACE recommends dropping the lowest ranked program: Exercise Instructors at Springhill Lake Elementary School. ACE does not recommend funding for the remaining 3 proposals.

Approved by ACE on 11/29/11 with a vote of 8-0.