



**WACO ISD EDUCATION FOUNDATION  
COVER SHEET – PART II  
Application for Grant:  
2025-2026 Funding Cycle**

**Assigned Grant Proposal #:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Project Title:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Grade Level(s):** \_\_\_\_\_ **# of Students DIRECTLY involved:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Subject Area(s):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Amount Requested: \$** \_\_\_\_\_

**Grant Focus Area(s):** In order to be considered, Waco Education Foundation Innovation Grant proposals must fall under one or more of the E4 focus areas: early childhood development, enhanced programming for advanced students, extended education for staff, and emphasis on student performance. NOTE: In addition to meeting one of the E4 focus areas above, grant readers are especially interested in creative and innovative grant requests that target fine arts, STEM, literacy, or enrichment.

**(check all that apply)**

Early Childhood Development

Enhanced Programming for Advanced Students

Fine Arts

Literacy

Extended Education for Staff

Emphasis on Student Performance

STEM

Enrichment

# **Grant Proposal**

## **Assigned Proposal #: 55**

**Title:** Nature's Classroom: Field Trip to Mother Neff State Park

### **Description:**

This field trip will provide 4th and 5th-grade students with hands-on learning in science, history, and environmental education. At Mother Neff State Park, students will explore ecosystems, study native plants and wildlife, and learn about conservation. Guided activities will highlight the park's historical significance and the role of early conservationists. By connecting classroom lessons to real-world experiences, students will develop scientific inquiry skills, an appreciation for nature, and a deeper understanding of Texas' natural and cultural heritage. This trip aligns with state curriculum standards while fostering environmental stewardship and curiosity.

### **1. Rationale:**

This project aligns with the **Creative Classroom Project** focus area by transforming learning beyond the traditional classroom and providing students with an engaging, hands-on educational experience. The field trip supports district and campus improvement plans by enhancing science and history instruction, promoting environmental awareness, and fostering critical thinking skills. Many students have limited access to outdoor learning opportunities, making this experience essential for connecting curriculum to the real world. By immersing students in nature and history, this project encourages inquiry-based learning, environmental stewardship, and a deeper appreciation for Texas' natural and cultural heritage.

### **2. Goals:**

The **Nature's Classroom** field trip aims to:

1. **Enhance Science Learning** – Provide hands-on experiences in ecology, biology, and conservation by studying native plants, wildlife, and ecosystems.
2. **Promote Historical Awareness** – Explore the cultural and historical significance of Mother Neff State Park, including early conservation efforts.
3. **Foster Environmental Stewardship** – Inspire students to appreciate and protect natural resources through direct engagement with nature.
4. **Develop Critical Thinking Skills** – Encourage inquiry-based learning through observation, data collection, and discussion.
5. **Support Academic Achievement** – Align with state science and history standards while reinforcing classroom instruction in an interactive way

### **3. Plan of Operation:**

#### **Project Overview**

The **Nature's Classroom** field trip will provide 4th and 5th-grade students with an immersive learning experience at Mother Neff State Park, focusing on science, history, and environmental education. Students will participate in guided nature walks, hands-on ecology lessons, and historical explorations, reinforcing classroom instruction through real-world applications.

#### **Activities & Strategies**

- **Science Exploration:** Students will investigate ecosystems, identify native plants and wildlife, and conduct simple environmental experiments.
- **Historical Learning:** Students will explore the park's historical sites, learning about early settlers, Native American history, and conservation efforts.
- **Environmental Stewardship:** Rangers and educators will lead discussions on conservation, sustainability, and responsible outdoor practices.
- **Reflective Learning:** Students will complete observation journals, sketches, and discussions to deepen their understanding.

#### **Objectives**

1. Strengthen students' knowledge of local ecosystems and conservation principles.
2. Connect historical landmarks to Texas history lessons.
3. Encourage inquiry-based learning through exploration and data collection.
4. Foster environmental responsibility and appreciation for nature.

#### **School & Community Partners**

- **Mother Neff State Park Staff:** Provide guided tours, educational programming, and conservation demonstrations.
- **Local Environmental Organizations:** May contribute guest speakers or hands-on activities related to conservation.
- **Parent Volunteers:** Assist with supervision, logistics, and student engagement activities.
- **School Administration & Teachers:** Ensure curriculum alignment and oversee the learning experience.

#### **Parental & Community Involvement**

Parents will be invited to participate as chaperones, reinforcing learning through shared experiences with students. The school may also collaborate with local nature groups or historical societies to enrich the trip. After the field trip, students will present their findings to parents and community members through a showcase event.

## Timeline

Date	Activity
May – June	Secure funding, confirm park reservations, and begin coordinating with park staff and community partners.
August – September	Recruit parent volunteers, finalize transportation logistics, and prepare pre-trip classroom lessons on ecosystems, conservation, and Texas history.
Early October	Conduct pre-trip activities, including lessons on local flora, fauna, and historical significance of Mother Neff State Park.
Mid-October (Field Trip Day)	Students visit Mother Neff State Park, engage in guided activities, and complete observation journals.
Late October – November	Post-trip classroom discussions, student reflections, and a showcase event for parents and community members.

## **4. Communication & Dissemination:**

To recognize the Waco Education Foundation's support, we will:

- **Invite Foundation Representatives** – Extend an invitation for Foundation members to attend the field trip, observe activities, and interact with students.
- **Photo & Media Opportunities** – Share photos and highlights from the trip with the Foundation, ensuring proper permissions, for use in newsletters, social media, and promotional materials.
- **Presentation & Acknowledgment** – Offer to present the impact of the grant at a Foundation meeting, showcasing student reflections and learning outcomes.

## **Dissemination Plans:**

- **District & Staff Sharing** – Present key takeaways during staff meetings to encourage future outdoor learning initiatives.
- **WISD-TV & School Media** – Collaborate with district media outlets to feature the field trip, emphasizing its educational impact.
- **Community Showcase** – Host a post-trip event where students share their experiences through presentations, artwork, or writing.

## **5. Evaluation:**

The success of the **Nature's Classroom** field trip will be measured using both qualitative and quantitative assessments:

1. **Student Reflections & Journals** – Students will complete observation journals during and after the trip, documenting what they learned about ecosystems, conservation, and history. These entries will be reviewed for depth of understanding.
2. **Teacher & Student Surveys** – Pre- and post-trip surveys will assess students' knowledge, engagement, and interest in science, history, and environmental stewardship. Teachers will provide feedback on curriculum alignment and student engagement.
3. **Classroom Activities & Assessments** – Post-trip discussions, projects, and quizzes will gauge knowledge retention and application.
4. **Parental & Community Feedback** – Input from parent chaperones and community partners will help evaluate the experience's impact and effectiveness.
5. **Foundation Reporting** – A summary report with student testimonials, photos, and assessment results will be shared with the Waco Education Foundation.

By analyzing these data points, we will determine the project's effectiveness in enhancing student learning and fostering environmental appreciation.

## **6. Long Term Implications:**

The **Nature's Classroom** field trip will have lasting educational and environmental benefits beyond the 2025-2026 school year. By fostering a deeper connection to nature, students will carry forward an appreciation for science, history, and conservation, influencing their future learning and decision-making.

To sustain this initiative:

- **Annual Field Trips** – We will seek continued funding and community partnerships to make this an annual experience for future 4th and 5th graders.
- **Classroom Integration** – Lessons from the trip will be incorporated into the curriculum, ensuring long-term learning reinforcement.
- **Student Leadership & Mentorship** – Older students who attended the trip can share insights with younger peers, creating a culture of environmental stewardship.
- **Community Engagement** – We will strengthen partnerships with local parks, nature organizations, and historical societies to provide ongoing learning opportunities.

By embedding outdoor learning into our school's culture, we aim to inspire lifelong curiosity, scientific literacy, and environmental responsibility.

## **7. Key Personnel:**

### **Project Coordinator (Lead Teacher)**

- **Responsibilities:** Oversee planning, logistics, and curriculum alignment; coordinate with park staff, school administration, and volunteers; ensure student engagement and safety.
- **Qualifications:** Certified elementary educator with experience in science and history instruction; background in outdoor or experiential learning.

### **Participating Teachers**

- **Responsibilities:** Prepare students with pre-trip lessons, supervise activities, facilitate discussions, and guide post-trip reflections.
- **Qualifications:** Certified elementary teachers with expertise in science, history, or environmental education.

### **Mother Neff State Park Rangers & Educators**

- **Responsibilities:** Lead guided nature walks, historical presentations, and conservation activities; provide expert knowledge on ecosystems and park history.
- **Qualifications:** Trained park rangers and environmental educators with experience in outdoor instruction.

### **Parent & Community Volunteers**

- **Responsibilities:** Assist with supervision, student engagement, and logistical support; reinforce learning during activities.
- **Qualifications:** Approved school volunteers with an interest in education and environmental awareness.

## School Administration

- **Responsibilities:** Support project implementation, approve logistics, and assist with grant management and reporting.
- **Qualifications:** School principal or instructional coordinator with experience overseeing field-based learning initiatives.

## **8. Budget and Budget Narrative/Justification:**

- **Mini Student Journals Line #7** – These journals will be used by students to record observations, sketches, and reflections during the field trip. They will reinforce scientific inquiry, critical thinking, and writing skills. The journals are a consumable item, as each student will need their own for personal use.
- **First Aid Kits Line #8** – Basic first aid supplies are essential to ensure student safety during the field trip. Kits will include band-aids, antiseptic wipes, gauze, and other minor medical necessities to address any small injuries or insect bites.
- **Color Ink Line #9** – Used to print high-quality educational materials, including field guides, activity sheets, and maps. Color printing enhances engagement and aids in species identification, historical document analysis, and overall student learning.
- **Matching Class Shirts Line #10** – These shirts will help with student identification, ensuring safety in a public park setting. They will also promote a sense of unity and school spirit. As a consumable item, each student will receive their own shirt to keep.
- **Bus Transportation Line # 42** – Covers the cost of safe and reliable transportation for students, teachers, and chaperones to and from Mother Neff State Park. Ensuring access to the field trip for all students is critical to achieving the project's educational goals.



Waco Education Foundation  
Grant Budget Form

Assigned Proposal #	55
Project Title:	Nature's Classroom: Field Trip to Mother Neff State Park
Number of Students Served by Grant:	150

Qty	Budget Item	Verify Vendor (Y or N)	\$ Requested from the WISD Foundation	Other Secured Source	\$ from Other Source (if applicable)	Total Amount
Consumable Supplies						
3	Mini Journal	Y	\$ 83.97			\$ 83.97
6	First Aid Kit	Y	\$ 59.94			\$ 59.94
2	4 Pack Color Toner	Y	\$ 1,047.92			\$ 1,047.92
150	Matching Class Shirts	Y	\$ 1,650.00			\$ 1,650.00
						\$ -
						\$ -
						\$ -
						\$ -
total Consumable Supplies			\$ 2,841.83		\$ -	\$ 2,841.83
Technology						
						\$ -
						\$ -
total Technology			\$ -		\$ -	\$ -
Long-Term Supplies / Equipment (items that will last beyond the grant year)						
						\$ -
						\$ -
						\$ -
						\$ -
						\$ -
						\$ -
total Long-Term Supplies			\$ -		\$ -	\$ -
Contracted Services						
						\$ -
						\$ -
total Contracted Services			\$ -		\$ -	\$ -
Personnel						
						\$ -
						\$ -
total Personnel			\$ -		\$ -	\$ -
Travel / Other						
4	Bus	Y	\$ 1,200.00			\$ 1,200.00
						\$ -
						\$ -
						\$ -
total Other			\$ 1,200.00		\$ -	\$ 1,200.00
Totals			Total Requested from the WISD Foundation \$ 4,041.83	Foundation Cost Per Student 26.94553333	Total from Other Sources \$ -	Total Cost of Project \$ 4,041.83