



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

Assigned Grant Proposal #: 67

Project Title: Nature's Classroom-Inspiring Young Minds in the Great Outdoors

Grade Level(s): 6th-8th # of Students DIRECTLY involved: >800

Subject Area(s): All

Amount Requested: \$ \$8,500

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)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Early Childhood Development | <input type="checkbox"/> Extended Education for Staff |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Enhanced Programming for Advanced Students | <input type="checkbox"/> Emphasis on Student Performance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fine Arts | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> STEM |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Literacy | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Enrichment |

1. Our proposed project aligns with the Waco Education Foundation's Creative Classroom Project by creating an outdoor educational seating area that fosters collaborative learning and community engagement. This space supports Goal 3 of our Campus Improvement Plan by offering enrichment opportunities that inspire students. Currently, our school lacks a dedicated outdoor learning space, limiting students' ability to enjoy fresh air while working. This project will provide a functional, screen-free environment that enhances focus, creativity, and well-being. By supporting diverse learning experiences, it aligns with district initiatives and promotes innovation in education.
2. Our goal is to create a dedicated outdoor educational seating area that enhances student learning, collaboration, and well-being. This space will provide a structured yet flexible environment where students can engage in lessons, group discussions, and hands-on activities outside the traditional classroom.

Specific Expectations:

- Increase Student Engagement: Outdoor learning will provide a refreshing change of environment, encouraging creativity, focus, and participation.
- Enhance Academic Success: Teachers will use this space to deliver interactive lessons across various subjects, reinforcing key concepts in an inspiring setting.
- Promote Well-Being & Social Development: Access to fresh air and nature will support students' mental health while fostering teamwork and communication skills.
- Encourage District-Wide Involvement: The space will be available for school-wide and district events, strengthening partnerships beyond the classroom.

By implementing this project, we aim to create a lasting, sustainable learning environment that enriches education and student experiences for years to come.

3. Our project aims to create a functional and inviting outdoor educational seating area that fosters student engagement, collaboration, and community involvement. By providing a structured yet flexible space, this initiative will enhance learning experiences across various subjects while promoting outdoor learning and student well-being.

Activities & Implementation: The project will include the assembly of multiple benches, laying mulch and a border, and organizing the space for functionality and sustainability. The work will be completed by CCMS Leader in Me students, allowing them to take ownership of the project while developing leadership and teamwork skills. We also invite parent and community volunteers to assist, fostering school-community collaboration.

Objectives:

- Create an engaging outdoor learning space for students and teachers to use year-round.
- Develop student leadership and teamwork by involving Leader in Me students in the project.
- Encourage parental and community involvement in school initiatives.
- Enhance student well-being by providing a natural, screen-free environment for learning and collaboration.

Strategies for Success

- Student Leadership: Leader in Me students will design, organize, and help construct the seating area, fostering a sense of ownership and pride.
- Community Involvement: Parents and local community members will be encouraged to participate, reinforcing the importance of collaborative efforts in education.
- Sustainability: The materials used will be durable, and teachers will incorporate this space into their lesson plans to ensure long-term use and impact.

Timeline & Calendar

- Spring 2025: Planning phase, securing materials, and recruiting student and community volunteers.
- Summer 2025 (1-3 Days): Assembly and installation of benches, laying mulch and borders, and finalizing the space.
- Fall 2025 & Beyond: The outdoor learning area will be fully available for teachers and students throughout the school year.

Parental & Community Involvement: We actively encourage parent volunteers to assist with assembly and setup. Additionally, we will reach out to local businesses and community partners for material donations or financial support. This project will strengthen community ties while providing a lasting, impactful space for student learning.

This initiative aligns with our school's mission to create enriching, student-centered learning experiences while promoting leadership, collaboration, and community engagement.

4. To ensure visibility and recognition of this project, we will actively involve the Waco ISD Communications Department and School Board in key milestones. We plan to invite them to observe and document the construction process as Leader in Me students and volunteers bring the outdoor learning space to life. Additionally, we will host a groundbreaking ceremony to celebrate the project's completion, providing an opportunity to share the vision and impact with the broader community.

- Media & Publicity:
 - Work with Waco ISD Communications and WISD-TV to document and share progress.
 - Share photo and video updates on social media platforms, celebrating student and teacher use of the space.
 - Engage with local news outlets to spread awareness of this initiative.
- Community Engagement & Partnerships:
 - Strengthen ties with Baylor University and other local organizations, encouraging collaborative educational opportunities in the outdoor space.
 - Provide updates to district leaders and stakeholders about the project's success.
- Staff & Educator Involvement:
 - Encourage teachers to share lesson plans and experiences using the space.
 - Offer insights at staff development meetings on how the outdoor classroom enhances student learning and engagement.

By incorporating district-wide communication, media coverage, and community partnerships, we will ensure that this project not only benefits our school but also serves as a model for future innovative learning spaces within Waco ISD.

5. The success of this project will be measured by tracking the frequency and variety of its use across different subjects and grade levels. We will implement a teacher sign-up document to monitor how often the outdoor learning space is utilized, providing measurable data on its impact.
 - Usage Tracking: The number of teachers signing up and the frequency of outdoor lessons conducted.
 - Cross-Curricular Integration: Observing participation from teachers across multiple subjects, demonstrating the space's versatility.
 - Student Engagement & Feedback: Gathering informal feedback from students and teachers on how the outdoor environment enhances learning, focus, and collaboration.
 - Sustainability & Maintenance: Ensuring the space remains functional and well-maintained for continued use year after year.
6. The outdoor learning space is designed for long-term use, ensuring that students and teachers benefit from it well beyond the 2025-2026 school year.

Sustainability Plan:

- Durability: The seating area will be built with sturdy, weather-resistant materials to withstand outdoor conditions, minimizing the need for frequent repairs.
- Ongoing Maintenance: Leader in Me students will take an active role in maintaining the space, fostering a sense of responsibility and stewardship.
- Teacher Integration: Educators will be encouraged to incorporate the outdoor space into their lesson plans across all subjects, ensuring consistent use.

Long-Term Impact:

- Continued Student Engagement: Future students will have access to a unique, engaging environment that enhances learning and creativity.
- Community Collaboration: Partnerships with local organizations, Baylor University, and parent volunteers will help maintain and expand the space as needed.
- School-Wide Enrichment: The outdoor classroom will serve as a lasting educational resource, promoting experiential learning, collaboration, and well-being for years to come.

By establishing a strong foundation for this project, we are creating a sustainable, innovative learning space that will benefit our school community for many years.

7. Responsibilities

- Guide Leader in Me students in constructing benches and laying out the outdoor learning area.
- Coordinate with teachers and staff to ensure the space meets educational needs.
- Communicate with WISD administration and community partners for support and resources.

Leader in Me Students

- Actively participate in assembling benches and setting up the area, fostering leadership and teamwork skills.
 - Take responsibility for the ongoing maintenance and care of the space.
8. We are purchasing 4 gliders, 15 stump seats, and 12 convertible benches to provide flexible seating options for students, ensuring that even larger classes, such as electives, can utilize the outdoor classroom comfortably. To maintain a clean and well-defined space, we are also purchasing mulch and a border. For safety and durability, we have included anchors to secure the furniture to the ground, preventing movement or tipping. Additionally, a metal sign will be installed to commemorate the space and highlight its significance. To support our Leader in Me students and volunteers during the setup process, we have budgeted for pizza and water, ensuring they are well-fed and hydrated while working on this meaningful project.

Waco Education Foundation

Grant Budget Form

Assigned Proposal #	67
Project Title:	Nature's Classroom: Inspiring Young Minds in the Great Outdoors
Number of Students Served by Grant:	800

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						
20	Pizza for student helpers	Y	\$ 170.00			\$ 170.00
100	Water for student helpers	Y	\$ 200.00			\$ 200.00
						\$ -
						\$ -
						\$ -
						\$ -
120	total Consumable Supplies		\$ 370.00		\$ -	\$ 370.00
Technology						
						\$ -
						\$ -
	total Technology		\$ -		\$ -	\$ -
Long-Term Supplies / Equipment (items that will last beyond the grant year)						
4	Glider	Y	\$ 1,380.00			\$ 1,380.00
15	Stump Seating	Y	\$ 1,185.00			\$ 1,185.00
15 cy	Mulch	Y	\$ 700.00			\$ 700.00
12	Convertible Bench	Y	\$ 2,496.00			\$ 2,496.00
32	border	Y	\$ 960.00			\$ 960.00
4	Anchor sets	Y	\$ 108.00			\$ 108.00
1	Metal Sign: The Eagle's Nest	Y	\$ 99.00			\$ 99.00
67	total Long-Term Supplies		\$ 6,928.00		\$ -	\$ 6,928.00
Contracted Services						
1	assembling and preparing site	N	\$ 1,202.00			\$ 1,202.00

						\$ -
	total Contracted Services		\$ 1,202.00		\$ -	\$ 1,202.00
Personnel						
4	District/campus leadership		\$ -			\$ -
20	current/previous grad		\$ -			\$ -
6	Current CCMS staff		\$ -			\$ -
30	total Personnel		\$ -		\$ -	\$ -
Travel / Other						
						\$ -
						\$ -
						\$ -
						\$ -
	total Other		\$ -		\$ -	\$ -
Totals		Total Requested from the WISD Foundation		Foundation Cost Per Student	Total from Other Sources	Total Cost of Project
		\$ 8,500.00		10.625	\$ -	\$ 8,500.00