



**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

#70

EXPLORING THE UNIVERSE IN OUR OWN BACKYARD

2025

GRANT PROPOSAL

1. Project Description

The universe is enormous and hard to comprehend. It is even harder when you can't visualize it! With so much light pollution in the area, how could our students see the stars and constellations? In addition, there is so much folklore and mythology connected to the constellations, but without seeing the entire constellation, it is hard to visualize it. The funding from this grant would bring a mobile planetarium to our school! Our students would come to the presentation in grade-level rotations to learn all about our solar system, galaxy and the constellations. There is also a focus on the Greek mythology which make up the constellations. With full funding, every grade level would have the change to participate.

2. Project Rationale

Our students deserve access to high-quality, hands-on learning experiences that go beyond traditional classroom instruction. This experience directly addresses the need for:

- **Enhanced STEM Education:** Providing engaging and interactive STEM experiences that align with Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS).
- **Increased Student Engagement:** Captivating students' attention and fostering a love for learning through an immersive and exciting experience.
- **Collaborative Learning:** Promoting teamwork and communication skills through shared exploration and discovery.
- **Innovative Learning Environments:** Introducing students to cutting-edge educational technology and fostering a culture of innovation.

This grant aligns to many aspects of the Education Foundation focus areas, but specifically fosters collaboration and innovation in several ways:

- **Collaborative Learning:** Students will work together to observe and interpret astronomical phenomena, fostering teamwork and communication skills.
- **Inquiry-Based Learning:** The planetarium experience will encourage students to ask questions, explore their curiosity, and develop critical thinking skills.
- **Technology Integration:** The use of advanced projection technology and immersive environments introduces students to innovative learning tools.
- **Teacher Collaboration:** Teachers will collaborate to integrate the planetarium experience into their existing curriculum and develop follow-up activities.

While this activity is sure to be one for the record books, with current educational funding, this cannot be written in to the regular campus budget – we would need to pay for it with grant funding.

3. Goals

The main goal of this grant activity is to provide our students with a unique opportunity to explore astronomy, Earth science, and related TEKs in a dynamic and memorable way. The Mobile Planetarium directly aligns with several Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) for elementary science, particularly in the areas of:

- **Kindergarten:**
 - Science K.8(A): observe and describe patterns of objects in the sky, including the Sun and Moon.
- **1st Grade:**
 - Science 1.8(A): observe, describe, and record patterns of objects in the sky, including the Sun, Moon, and stars.
- **2nd Grade:**
 - Science 2.8(A): observe, describe, and record patterns of objects in the sky, including the appearance of the Moon.
- **3rd Grade:**
 - Science 3.8(A): observe, measure, record, and describe basic weather conditions, including temperature, wind, and precipitation, and relate them to the seasons.
 - Science 3.8(D): identify the planets in our solar system and their position in relation to the Sun.
- **4th Grade:**
 - Science 4.8(C): identify and describe the physical characteristics of the Sun, Earth, and Moon.
- **5th Grade:**
 - Science 5.8(D): describe the characteristics of the Sun, Earth, and Moon, including their relative sizes and distances.

The planetarium experience will provide concrete examples and visual representations of these concepts, enhancing student understanding and retention.

4. Plan of Operation

This grant is to bring a mobile planetarium to the campus for an “on-campus” field trip. As such, it will occur in one day. We will secure the date in August, but we will plan the event in February, as that is when most of the TEKs listed above are written to be covered within the district curriculum. By pairing the event with the curriculum in class, it will provide more concrete examples and support the work the teachers are doing. We will invite members of the Education Foundation to attend the event with our students so they can experience the learning alongside us.

5. Communication and Dissemination

If awarded the grant, a date will be chosen in August. We will share this date with the WISD Communications Department so a photographer can be there. For the weeks leading up to the event, we will publish the information in our weekly parent newsletter and Facebook so all of our students know to be at school. We will take pictures during the event and share them with our families via our usual methods – Facebook and ParentSquare.

6. Evaluation

The success of the program will be evaluated through:

- **Student Surveys:** Assessing student engagement and learning outcomes.
- **Teacher Feedback:** Gathering feedback on the effectiveness of the program and its alignment with TEKs.
- **Observational Data:** Observing student participation and collaboration during the planetarium experience.
- **Pre and Post Testing:** If applicable, measuring student knowledge gain on subjects covered within the dome.

7. Long Term Implications

This grant project is for a one-time event, though the memory and learning will continue on with the students. If successful, the campus may look at trying to bring the mobile planetarium back every three years, so students have a chance to experience it twice in their elementary career.

8. Key Personnel

The grant-writer will be responsible for most of the implementation of this grant. She will work in conjunction with the teachers to decide the best calendar day within the unit to have the event. Classroom teachers will administer the evaluation tools to their students.

9. Budget Narrative

The budget will include cost of the mobile planetarium program. There will not be additional items needed, as notes and other supplies could come from the general budget.

Waco Education Foundation
Grant Budget Form

Waco Education Foundation Grant Budget Form				Assigned Proposal #		70	
				Project Title:		Exploring the Universe in our Own Backyard	
				Number of Students Served by Grant:		440	
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							
						\$ -	
						\$ -	
						\$ -	
						\$ -	
						\$ -	
						\$ -	
total Consumable Supplies			\$ -		\$ -	\$ -	
Technology							
						\$ -	
						\$ -	
total Technology			\$ -		\$ -	\$ -	
Long-Term Supplies / Equipment (items that will last beyond the grant year)							
						\$ -	
						\$ -	
						\$ -	
						\$ -	
						\$ -	
						\$ -	
total Long-Term Supplies			\$ -		\$ -	\$ -	
Contracted Services							
	mobile planetarium	Y	\$ 2,000.00			\$ 2,000.00	
						\$ -	
total Contracted Services			\$ 2,000.00		\$ -	\$ 2,000.00	
Personnel							
						\$ -	
						\$ -	
total Personnel			\$ -		\$ -	\$ -	
Travel / Other							
						\$ -	
						\$ -	
						\$ -	
						\$ -	
total Other			\$ -		\$ -	\$ -	
Totals			Total Requested from the WISD Foundation \$ 2,000.00	Foundation Cost Per Student 4.545454545	Total from Other Sources \$ -	Total Cost of Project \$ 2,000.00	