



**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

Project Description: This grant proposal aims to integrate Merge Cube technology into 1st and 2nd grade classrooms to enhance learning through augmented reality (AR). The project will provide students with interactive, 3D experiences that make abstract concepts tangible and engaging. By using AR, students can explore subjects like math, science, and geography in a hands-on manner, fostering curiosity and improving retention. Additionally, Merge Cube can enhance literacy and writing skills by offering immersive storytelling experiences and interactive reading activities. This innovative approach promises to transform traditional education methods, boost student engagement, and improve comprehension and creativity in young learners.

1. **Rationale:** This project aligns with the Waco Education Foundation's focus on creative classroom projects by integrating Merge Cube technology to enhance learning through augmented reality (AR). It supports the District and Campus Improvement Plans by improving student performance and engagement through innovative teaching methods. The project addresses the need for interactive and immersive learning experiences, making abstract concepts more accessible and engaging for young learners. By fostering curiosity and improving retention, this initiative aims to boost academic achievement and creativity, ultimately contributing to the district's goal of advancing excellence in education. This project is essential for our school to stay at the forefront of educational innovation and to provide students with the tools they need for success.
2. **Goals:** With this grant project, we aim to accomplish the following goals:
 1. **Enhance Student Engagement:** By integrating Merge Cube technology, we intend to make learning more interactive and engaging, capturing students' interest and fostering a love for learning.
 2. **Improve Academic Performance:** Through immersive AR experiences, students will better understand and retain complex concepts in subjects like math, science, geography, literacy, and writing.
 3. **Boost Creativity and Critical Thinking:** The project will encourage students to think creatively and critically as they explore and interact with 3D content, enhancing their problem-solving skills.
 4. **Support Literacy and Writing Skills:** Merge Cube will be used to create interactive storytelling and reading activities, helping students develop their literacy and writing abilities.
 5. **Align with Educational Goals:** The project supports the District and Campus Improvement Plans by incorporating innovative teaching methods that aim to improve overall student performance and engagement.
3. **Plan of Operation:** Over the course of the year we will incorporate the Merge Cube into our social studies, science, and STEM lesson plans using both pre-designed lessons provided in the Merge EDU dashboard and new lessons we will create. The pre-designed lessons are already standards-aligned and include simulations, a variety of HoloGlobe activities, and over 1000 virtual objects from historical artifacts and body parts to famous works of art and machines.

- a. **Timeline:**
 - **August** – Establish a baseline for student engagement with and knowledge of the planned learning topics. Introduce the Merge Cube and setup each student's account.
 - **September - May** – Begin weekly lessons alternating between social studies and science with the Merge Cube.
 - **November** – Repeat the baseline assessment to begin gathering data on the impact of the project.
 - **January** – Students will demonstrate the Merge Cube to parents, community members, and the Foundation at the campus STEM night. This month will also include the mid-year retest of the baseline assessment to evaluate the impact Merge Cubes have had on student engagement and learning outcomes.
 - **February** – Begin discussion on whether to continue, expand, or disband the project for the following year taking into account budget, required time, and outcomes.
 - **March** – Repeat the baseline assessment for the third time to continue to establish impact data.
 - **May** – Conduct final assessment to determine the overall impact of the Merge Cube on the students' experience. Depending on decisions made, either wind the project down, transition the Merge Cubes to a different learning cohort on campus (second and third grades or fourth and fifth grades), or begin the process of acquiring additional Merge Cubes to expand to other grades and/or other campuses.
- b. **Parental/Community Involvement** – This project will not be dependent on parental or community involvement but will provide an opportunity, through the campus STEM night, for parents and our community to see how the students are using these tools to enhance their learning experience.
4. **Communication & Dissemination:** The Foundation will be invited to the campus STEM night typically held in January. After the January midyear assessment, a presentation could be made for the Foundation or the District to discuss the early outcomes and the potential for renewing the project for continued study or expanding the project to other campuses or grade levels.
5. **Evaluation:** Students will be given an assessment at the beginning of the year to gauge their interest and knowledge of the planned learning topics. The assessment will be done in the form of a short survey taken on their District issued iPads which can be repeated at intervals throughout the project to evaluate impact of the project on student learning engagement, retention, and overall learning outcomes.
6. **Long Term Implications:** In order for the district to continue the project beyond the first year, Merge Labs would need to be confirmed as an approved vendor for the District. The District would need to reach out to Merge Labs for a quote to license either a lab (30 devices), a campus, or the entire District.
7. **Key Personnel:** One advantage of this project is that it has minimal dependency outside of the four teachers at the campus who would be implementing it. Each of those teachers will be provided access to Merge EDU's extensive self-service training and will work together collaboratively to learn the platform. District IT staff will need to add the four Merge Labs

applications, Merge Object Viewer, Merge Explorer, Merge HoloGlobe, and Merge Scanner, to Clever for the campus's first and second grade students.

8. **Budget Narrative:** For the project the budget is simply the cost of the 40 Merge Cubes as listed on Line 16 of the attached budget form. Effort was made to find an uncomplicated solution with a low, up-front cost per student to implement.

Waco Education Foundation
Grant Budget Form

Assigned Proposal #	17
Project Title:	Young Innovators: Augmented Reality for Early Education
Number of Students Served by Grant:	90

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						
40	Merge Cube (40 Merge Cubes and 1 year Subscription Pack @ \$99.99 each)	Y	\$3,999.60			\$ 3,999.60
						\$ -
total Technology			\$ 3,999.60		\$ -	\$ 3,999.60
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						
						\$ -
						\$ -
						\$ -
						\$ -
total Other			\$ -		\$ -	\$ -
Totals		Total Requested from the WISD Foundation		Foundation Cost Per Student	Total from Other Sources	Total Cost of Project
		\$ 3,999.60		44.44	\$ -	\$ 3,999.60