



**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

“Sensory Learning Overload” (SLO)



Project Description:

In years past, thanks to funds provided by Waco Education Foundation, our fifth grade students were able to take a unique look at Texas through an extensive, overnight academically-integrated study trip to The Outdoor School in Marble Falls, Texas. The Outdoor School (TOS) is a place where participants can see, hear, touch, smell, even taste nature. It is a place where they can learn about themselves, their natural environment and their peers while participating in fun and educational outdoor activities. These experiences have helped our students build self-confidence and participate as members of a team.

Rationale:

The “Sensory Learning Overload (SLO)” fieldtrip will provide opportunities for students and teachers to learn the content all together. Through this trip, everyone has the same experiences to take back to the classroom. This “being there together” opportunity promotes the retention of material into long-term memory. It’s an emotional experience that students are able to draw from whether in math, science, language arts, social studies, or writing. Research shows that the body and the brain are inseparable. Dr. John Ratey states, “What the brain communicates to the body depends largely on what messages the body is sending to the brain. Together they collaborate for the good of the whole organism.” In other words, by taking the students out into the real world and letting them move about and explore helps their brains simultaneously comprehend and learn all that they are encountering. “Being there input occurs when real things are studied in their real-world context—literally, being there! All 19 senses are activated, producing maximum electrical and chemical activity in the brain. Input is rich, varied and plentiful.” *Exceeding Expectations: A User’s Guide to Implementing Brain Research in the Classroom*, Susan J. Kovalik and Karen D. Olsen, Susan Kovalik and Associates, Inc., 2015.

The Outdoor School (TOS) uses proven challenges, initiatives, and ropes course training that enhance children’s teamwork, trust, empathy, communication and group problem-solving skills. The activities are guided by facilitators as students work together to achieve common goals, think creatively to meet posed challenges and test their perceived limits to overcome physical obstacles. During the field trip the students will complete activities such as finding the height of a tree, reading tables and graphs and using them to solve problems while finding the age of rocks or fossils. They participate in activities involving recycling by learning how to reduce and reuse. Students will use measurement in determining the amount of waste, charts, and graphs

on how much is being saved or wasted over time. They will utilize their knowledge of coordinates when reading maps and finding locations for activities. All of these activities use math skills in everyday life, as they obtain real world knowledge on why you would need to do math even in the wilderness.

At the Outdoor School some of the activities the students are able to do involve visiting a dry creek bed to identify where weathering, erosion and deposition have occurred. The students are also able to take soil samples and see how different soil layers are present. Another activity allows students to look at recycling, reducing and reusing different materials. There is also an activity that looks at forms of alternative energy.

This field trip will allow students to participate in situations that they would not normally experience in a classroom setting. They will have to use their critical thinking skills to problem solve situations like rock climbing or archery and work together to achieve their goal of hitting the target or reaching the top. This information will transfer to working in small groups within the classroom.

1. Goals:

The “SLO” trip will cover many testable standards in 5th grade; such as, but not limited to:

Reading & Writing Skills

- Work cooperatively with small groups in order to problem solve
- Respond to sources that are read, heard, or seen
- Develop foundational language skills in reading, writing, thinking, and speaking through working in small groups
- Reflect and write about experiences learned

Math Skills

- Solve problems in real world situations
- Read and solving problems on tables and graphs
- Add, subtract, multiply and divide numbers
- Use coordinate grids and identify mathematical relationships

Science Skills

- Learn how wind, water, and ice cause changes to Earth’s surface
- Use supplies and materials in a manner to conserve, recycle, reduce and reuse in investigations
- Conduct simple investigations involving force
- Identify how living and nonliving things interact
- Learn how organisms are connected in food webs.
- Demonstrate safe practices and the use of safety equipment as described in the Texas Safety Standards during classroom and outdoor investigations; and

- Explore the processes that led to the formation of sedimentary rocks and fossil fuels; identify fossils as evidence of past living organisms and the nature of the environments at the time using models.
- Increase creativity, literacy, and STEM (Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics) 5th grade classroom

2. Plan of Operation:

The 5th grade teachers will begin working on organizing the trip and scheduling the buses during the early weeks of school. Teachers will plan for students to take the trip in early Fall in order to give students the best opportunity to connect prior learning and a better opportunity to retain skills learned to apply as they prepare for state, district, and campus testing. As a backup, teachers will include a plan for Spring Semester dates in the event of any state or district testing conflicts.

Activities / Objectives / Strategies:

- Reinforce skills through peer learning
- Present presentations created by student or teacher
- Apply skills taught throughout the subject areas
- Create projects and power points presentations about the learning experience.



Measuring Trees

Timeline/Calendar:

August - October – Teachers will prepare and provide rigorous, engaging lessons across the 5th grade curriculums. Students will engage in team-building and collaborative-learning activities.

September – October - Submit purchase order for all budgeted items. Send information about trip to parents. Prepare students for fieldtrip with post activities. Secure reservations with the Outdoor School and finalize preparations with the buses.

October – Students will take the fieldtrip to The Outdoor School

October – May - Students will reflect on the fieldtrip experience through discussions and writing. They will also continue their learning's through Science and Math activities.

3. Communication & Dissemination:

During previous trips, members from local churches, as well as our Campus Decision Making Council (CDMC), were an integral part of this same type of trip during previous school years. The community members gathered at the school prior to the trip and met with the different teachers to discuss the expectations and the academic areas that were going to be taught in the different locations. We are hoping this can occur again for the next trip, if we are able to go. These personal were given the paperwork and other necessary information that would allow them to be useful, vital facilitators to the students in the different trip locations that were visited.

4. Evaluation:

The student's complete and total immersion in the integrated academia on this study trip will result in a higher comprehension of the standards being taught; and the result will be an increase in the state standardized tests (STAAR) scores for all students in the 5th grade. The school received a letter grade of "C" for the 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 school years. We strive to continue to build on the success we have achieved. While we missed achieving a letter grade of "B" by a small margin, a few years ago, we believe the "being there" experience The Outdoor School will provide will go far in helping close the gaps for our students. During the variety of tests administered following our previous trip to The Outdoor school, a particular area of success shown was in our Checkpoint data for our fifth graders in Science. The Science scores went from a 40% on Checkpoint 1 to 74% on Checkpoint 2. The students maintained a high average of 71% on Checkpoint 3, 70% on Checkpoint 4 and 72% on Checkpoint 5. This was a significant increase and exceeded the minimal standard to pass Phase 2 of the STAAR expectations at that time. In Math our fifth graders scored almost 20% on Checkpoint 1 but then made tremendous progress on Checkpoint 2 with an average of 69%. These are just a few of the accomplishments and evaluations noted for our students as we continue to build on what they had learned during the trip to help them be more successful. We are confident increased success will be achieved by providing this field trip opportunity again for our students. We look to regain this growth and even more in some of the areas where we find our students struggling to connect their lessons to real-world applications. This grant is very much needed. Our small campus lack the funds to provide this type of trip for our students.

5. Long Term Implications:

Improving student interests and motivation in Science and Math continue to be a focus as we continue to pursue our 21st Century Learning goals for our students. Our 5th grade teachers believe that the results of giving the students the opportunity to experience the state's standards in the real environment is outstanding! "Studies of the Prostar Theory have proved in practice to be immediately valuable to teachers in planning and effecting gains in learning say that the brain "uses the principle of "the match" by which incoming

pattern information matches, more or less exactly, the pattern stored in the brain, or else it is not recognized.” *Human Brain & Human Learning, Updated*, Leslie A. Hart, Longman, Inc, 2010. In other words, if the students are given the experiences in a real-world setting, when they get back to the classroom the brain will recognize the “pattern” that was experienced and will be able to layer new information onto the already existing information (pattern).



Solar Panel / Heat for Water

6. Key Personnel:

Personnel	Responsibilities
Principal	• budgeting issues • misc. administration responsibilities related to study trips
5 th Grade Teachers	• making necessary contacts and arrangements with community for “being there” experience for students • organizing materials for the 5th graders and community members that will be accompany on the trip • preparing the study trip materials for the students to take notes/record data/and other information • help with securing transportation details for participants (students and adults) for the being there experience

7. Budget and Budget Narrative/Justification:

Budget: Please see attached sheet.

<u>Item</u>	<u>Cost</u>
"Sensory Learning Overload (SLO) – The Outdoor School Fieldtrip	\$8,500.00
TOTAL	\$8,500.00

Every year our teachers work hard to teach curriculum in an integrated, brain-compatible way. However, when the 5th graders took this trip in the past, students were able to relate back to the study trip as they continued to build and layer new knowledge on top of what they experienced while on the trip. The students remained excited and showed an increased energy when finding they had prior knowledge on subjects that they're learning in the classrooms. We want to continue to provide that feeling of enjoyment of learning and want students to have a better sense of the "world" and how to apply what they are studying

Waco Education Foundation
Grant Budget Form

Assigned Proposal #	40
Project Title:	SLO Sensory Learning Overload
Number of Students Served by Grant:	35

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						
1	The Outdoor School		\$ 7,000.00			\$ 7,000.00
						\$ -
total Contracted Services			\$ 7,000.00		\$ -	\$ 7,000.00
Personnel						
						\$ -
						\$ -
total Personnel			\$ -		\$ -	\$ -
Travel / Other						
1	WISD Transportation		\$ 1,500.00			\$ 1,500.00
						\$ -
						\$ -
						\$ -
total Other			\$ 1,500.00		\$ -	\$ 1,500.00
Totals		Total Requested from the WISD Foundation		Foundation Cost Per Student	Total from Other Sources	Total Cost of Project
		\$ 8,500.00		242.8571429	\$ -	\$ 8,500.00