



**WACO ISD EDUCATION FOUNDATION  
COVER SHEET – PART II  
Application for Grant:  
2026-2027 Funding Cycle**

Assigned Grant Proposal #: 3

Project Title: Research Reserves

Grade Level(s): 6-12 # of Students DIRECTLY involved: 600+

Subject Area(s): Social Studies, Science

Amount Requested: \$ 6000

**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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Enhanced Programming for Advanced Students | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Emphasis on Student Performance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fine Arts   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> STEM                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Literacy  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Enrichment                      |

### Assigned Proposal #3 Research Reserves



## **Project Description:**

Research Reserves would provide \$1,000 to each of the WISD secondary campuses to support their history and science fair research project efforts. This mainly includes the items needed for project construction, but could include entry and travel fees.

History and science fair projects allow advanced students to pursue areas of interest, helping combat boredom, fostering deep intellectual curiosity, and developing critical thinking skills beyond standard curricula.

Baylor sponsors annual regional history and science fairs in the early spring semester. Top-placing projects at both competitions can advance to state and national levels.

### **1. Rationale**

This project corresponds with the Waco Education Foundation's aims in the following funding focus areas:

- Enhanced programming for advanced students
- Emphasis on student performance
- STEM
- Enrichment

The materials obtained will be used to improve learning for advanced *and* on-level students and overall student performance.

This project supports the Waco ISD's District Improvement Plan: Descriptor 13.1- "Assist schools identifying and serving gifted and talented students." While Research Reserves would not impact the identification process for GT students, it would provide substantial support in meeting the needs of this population.

With the expansion of the GT research class to all middle schools next year, a large focus will be on producing projects for the regional history or science fairs. The Research Reserves grant can help ease the financial burden associated with these events for all participating campuses.

### **2. Goals**

- Student Autonomy: Student-directed inquiry that allows students to design and execute their own research.
- Professional Tools: Bridge the "resource gap" by providing access to "industry-standard equipment" (video cameras, editing software, etc.).
- Equity of Access: Ensure students have access to high-cost materials and field experiences at no personal cost.

- Workforce Readiness: Develop “future-ready” skills in data literacy and critical analysis that align with state standards and modern career paths.

### 3. Plan of Operation

It has been many years since the secondary campuses in Waco ISD had large, strong research programs. Over a decade ago, all of these campuses held large campus fairs, which allowed them to send top-quality projects in most (or all) categories to the regional level. While we are a long way from building back to this level, all GT middle schoolers taking the research class next year will be participating in either history or science fair. That should guarantee more representation for WISD at the regional competitions than the recent past.

Below is a general timeline of events for project creation and competition. The highlights indicate items specific to this grant.

**Late Spring/Summer 2026:** Identify the campus staff in charge of sponsoring both the history fair and science fair student groups.

**Early Fall 2026:** Students select history or science fair topics and begin their research. Advanced Academics will meet with all campus sponsors to coordinate purchase of supplies needed.

**Mid-Fall 2026:** Campuses hold campus fairs to narrow down regional participants, if necessary.

**Late Fall 2026:** Campus sponsors register their participants for history and science fairs.

**February 2027:** Baylor hosts Central Texas Engineering and Science Fair and Heart of Texas Regional History Fair. Top two projects in all categories advance to the state competition. Advanced Academics coordinates securing travel arrangements for the state competitions, which are held in April.

**March 2027:** Advanced Academics, with the leadership of the Waco ISD Social Studies Coordinator, will host a research day at the Texas Collection and Baylor University. This event is exclusively for any students that have advanced to the state competition.

**April 2027:** Texas Science and Engineering Fair is held at Texas A&M. Texas History Day is held at UT Austin. First- and second- place projects advance to the nationals competitions.

**May 2027:** International Science and Engineering Fair is held in Phoenix, Arizona.

**June 2027:** National History Day is held in College Park, Maryland.

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

Possible ways to inform and include the Foundation:

- Invitations to campus and regional history and science fairs
- Scheduling photo opportunities
- Willingness to share at district meetings (presentation or professional development)

#### **5. Evaluation**

Success will be measured by the WISD participation in the regional history and science fairs. Below is a breakdown of the participation this year:

Heart of Texas Regional History Fair:

- Lake Air Montessori Middle School sent 4 students (1 project)
- Cesar Chavez Middle School sent 6 students (5 projects)
- Tennyson Middle School sent 10 students
- Waco High School sent 9 students (2 projects)

Central Texas Engineering and Science Fair:

- Tennyson Middle School sent 12 students to compete at the Central Texas Engineering and Science Fair

Our efforts will be considered successful to have more representation next year at both the Heart of Texas Regional History Fair and the Central Texas Engineering and Science Fair. Areas for growth include participation of all 6 secondary campuses at both competitions– this would be considered a major win for the Advanced Academics department.

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

At this time, we do not foresee needing to apply for a similar grant again next year. The bigger ticket items (cameras, software) should last a few years at a minimum. The more temporary items will need replacing each year (namely trifold boards, paper materials, etc.), but those do not account for much in the overall budget for these projects, and any leftover supplies can be maintained and used in future years.

#### **7. Key Personnel**

- History Fair Sponsors (one on each campus)– These staff members support students by assisting in project management, compliance, and event logistics. They are also the point of contact for History Fair needs and efforts for the Advanced Academics department.
- Science Fair Sponsors (one on each campus)– These staff members support students by assisting in project management, compliance, and event logistics.

They are also the point of contact for History Fair needs and efforts for the Advanced Academics department.

- Advanced Academics Department– The Director, Coordinator, and Administrative Assistant will work closely with campus sponsors to ensure equitable guidance and support is provided.

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

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