



**WACO ISD EDUCATION FOUNDATION
COVER SHEET – PART II
Application for Grant:
2026-2027 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 | Extended Education for Staff |
| Enhanced Programming for Advanced Students | Emphasis on Student Performance |
| Fine Arts | STEM |
| Literacy | Enrichment |

Proposal #19

From Symbols to Success

Project Description:

"From Symbols to Success" is a district-wide speech-language initiative designed to improve communication access, academic engagement, and instructional consistency for students with diverse learning and communication needs across Waco ISD. Because language development is foundational to academic learning, social interaction, functional independence, and cognitive growth, providing students with reliable communication tools is critical. This project will primarily fund Waco ISD's Speech Language Pathologists (SLPs) with multi-year Boardmaker accounts, a computer-based program that allows educators and therapists to create, customize, and share visual supports and interactive activities. Boardmaker provides access to over 80,000 Picture Communication Symbols, hundreds of templates, and a large library of shared activities, enabling SLPs to design communication boards, visual schedules, lesson materials, and behavior supports tailored to each student's individual needs.

Through Boardmaker, SLPs can develop individualized visual schedules, social stories, self-regulation tools, and lessons aligned to standards in literacy, language, science, and social studies. Its variety of accessibility features such as text-to-speech, high-contrast modes, sign language libraries, and adjustable text settings ensure meaningful participation for students with a wide range of learning profiles and complex communication needs. In addition to Boardmaker access, grant funds will support a limited number of iPads and robust communication apps for students with severe speech impairments, allowing materials to be integrated with assistive technologies like speech-generating devices and eye-gaze systems. By establishing a district-wide Boardmaker framework, "From Symbols to Success" promotes collaboration, efficiency, and equitable access to communication supports that empower students to participate more fully in their learning environments.

1. Rationale

"From Symbols to Success" aligns directly with the Waco Education Foundation's focus on district initiatives and creative classroom projects. By providing Waco ISD Speech Language Pathologists (SLPs) with 3 years of Boardmaker subscriptions and supporting communication technology, this project equips educators with tools to create customized, symbol-supported instructional materials that enhance student engagement, learning, and independence.

This supports district priorities outlined in the WISD District Improvement Plan, including equitable access to instruction, differentiated supports for students with diverse learning needs, and alignment to standards in literacy, language, science, and social studies. Language development is foundational to academic growth, social interaction, and functional independence, yet students with communication disabilities often lack reliable tools to access curriculum and participate fully. By implementing a district-wide Boardmaker framework, SLPs can create individualized visual schedules, social narratives, self-

regulation tools, and behavior supports, ensuring students receive consistent and meaningful access to instruction across classrooms and campuses.

“From Symbols to Success” addresses the need for efficiency, consistency, and equity in communication supports while supporting collaboration among educators and specialists. Waco ISD serves a significant population of students with complex communication challenges who require accessible, symbol-supported instruction to reach their full academic and social potential.

2. Goals

The goals of “From Symbols to Success” include:

- Increase student access to communication and curriculum by providing district-wide Boardmaker accounts and supporting devices for students with severe speech impairments.
- Support individualized instruction through creation of visual schedules, social stories, self-regulation tools, and behavior supports that are tailored to each student’s communication profile.
- Promote cross-campus consistency and collaboration by allowing SLPs and educators to share resources, align supports, and use the global Boardmaker Community with 120,000+ pre-made activities.
- Enhance academic engagement and critical thinking through symbol-based lessons that encourage comprehension, sequencing, applied reasoning, and problem-solving.
- Foster creativity and innovation by allowing educators to design interactive, differentiated, and standards-aligned lessons using templates, symbols, and accessibility features (text-to-speech, high-contrast modes, sign language libraries, and adjustable text settings).
- Improve functional independence and participation for students with complex communication needs, ensuring meaningful engagement in classroom, enrichment, and social activities.

3. Plan of Operation

The “From Symbols to Success” project will provide Waco ISD Speech Language Pathologists (SLPs) with three years of Boardmaker subscriptions and a limited number of iPads with robust communication apps for students with severe speech impairments. Using Boardmaker, educators and therapists will create individualized visual schedules, social stories, behavior supports, and lesson materials aligned with literacy, language, science, and social studies standards. These materials will be integrated with assistive technologies, including TD Snap and Tobii Dynavox eye-gaze devices, ensuring that all students—regardless of physical or communication needs—can actively participate in instruction.

To ensure consistency and efficiency across the district, SLPs will collaborate with special education and general education teachers to create and share materials. Families will be included through the use of individualized visual supports and social stories that can be used at home, supporting continuity of learning and reinforcing communication skills beyond the classroom. Boardmaker trial accounts will be provided to district SLPs beginning in August 2026, so that they can begin using the system immediately

when school starts. Hands-on training will be provided during district in-service, allowing SLPs to learn while using the trial accounts, maximizing both learning and classroom preparation time. If for any reason in-service training cannot be completed, it will be scheduled as soon as possible to ensure all staff are fully prepared to implement Boardmaker supports. Implementation in classrooms and enrichment activities will occur from September 2026 through May 2027, with ongoing monitoring of usage, student progress, and feedback from teachers, SLPs, and families. At the end of the school year, outcomes will be reviewed to guide future planning and ensure the long-term success of the program.

4. Communication & Dissemination

The Waco Education Foundation will be actively involved throughout the “From Symbols to Success” project. Foundation representatives will be invited to observe classrooms in action, seeing students use Boardmaker-supported activities, visual schedules, and social stories to engage with academic lessons and participate in enrichment opportunities. Photos and videos highlighting student engagement and learning outcomes will be shared through WISD social media, campus websites, and internal newsletters, giving visibility to the foundation’s impact on student learning. Additionally, WISD Communications and WISD-TV may feature the project in district media and public broadcasts, providing further recognition and outreach.

Professional development and collaboration among staff are key components of the project. The project lead and campus SLPs will lead sessions for teachers and support staff to demonstrate effective use of Boardmaker materials in instruction, share strategies for integrating symbol-supported lessons, and provide guidance for replicating activities across classrooms. Materials created through the district-wide Boardmaker system will be shared among campuses, fostering collaboration, alignment, and efficiency in supporting students with complex communication needs. These strategies ensure that the project’s benefits extend beyond individual classrooms and positively impact the broader Waco ISD community, creating a sustainable and replicable model for inclusive communication and learning.

5. Evaluation

The success of “From Symbols to Success” will be measured through multiple, ongoing indicators. SLPs will document the use of Boardmaker materials in classrooms, noting student engagement, communication attempts, and academic participation. Student progress toward IEP goals in language, literacy, social skills, and self-regulation will be monitored through observation, data tracking, and progress reports. Feedback from teachers, therapists, and families will provide qualitative data on the effectiveness of individualized visual schedules, social stories, and behavior supports.

Additionally, the project will track district-wide collaboration, including the creation and sharing of activities among SLPs and educators, and the usage of the global Boardmaker Community. These measures will help determine how the system improves efficiency, consistency, and access to symbol-supported instruction across campuses. The evaluation plan ensures that both student outcomes and educator practices are monitored, allowing for adjustments and improvements over the three-year project period.

6. Long-Term Impact & Sustainability

“From Symbols to Success” is designed as a sustainable, multi-year initiative. The three-year Boardmaker subscriptions provide long-term access to over 80,000 symbols, hundreds of templates, and thousands of pre-made activities, ensuring that educators have the tools to support students consistently over time. At the end of the three-year term, the district can choose to renew, revise, or discontinue service, with no automatic billing or credit card on file, providing flexibility and transparency in ongoing funding decisions.

Long-term, the project will foster a district-wide culture of collaboration, creativity, and equity in communication supports. Materials created by SLPs and educators will remain in use, shared across classrooms and campuses, and integrated with assistive technologies such as iPads, TD Snap, and eye-gaze devices. Accounts will be moved and reassigned by the project lead as staffing changes occur within the SLP team. Families will continue to benefit from home use of individualized supports, reinforcing language, communication, and academic skills. By embedding Boardmaker into daily classroom practices, the project ensures lasting improvements in accessibility, student engagement, and instructional consistency across Waco ISD.

7. Key Personnel

The “From Symbols to Success” project will be led by the Waco ISD Speech Therapy Department, which includes 23 Speech Language Pathologists and Speech Assistants. All SLPs hold Certificates of Clinical Competence (CCCs) from the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) and are licensed to practice in Texas. Speech Assistants are also licensed through the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation.

- **Project Lead:** Oversees implementation, coordinates Boardmaker subscriptions and iPad distribution, and facilitates training.
- **District SLP Team:** Designs and implements individualized visual supports, collaborates with general and special education staff, and tracks student progress.
- **Special Education Department Coordinator:** Ensures alignment with district and campus improvement goals, supports family engagement, and manages integration of resources with other initiatives.
- **Technology Support Team:** Maintains functionality of devices, provides technical assistance, and supports integration with assistive technologies.

This team ensures that the project is implemented with fidelity and that students with complex communication needs receive high-quality, consistent support.

8. Budget Narrative / Justification

The total project request will cover three years of Boardmaker subscriptions and a set of iPads with accessories and apps to support students with severe speech impairments. Each item has been carefully selected to maximize student access, district-wide collaboration, and longevity.

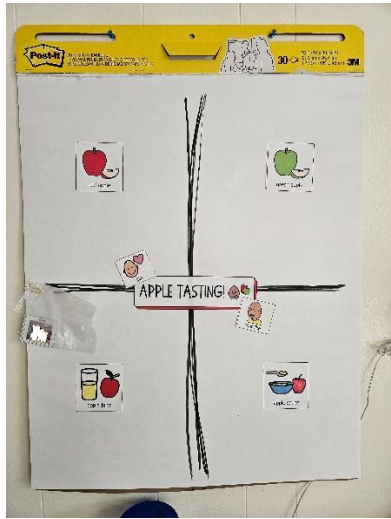
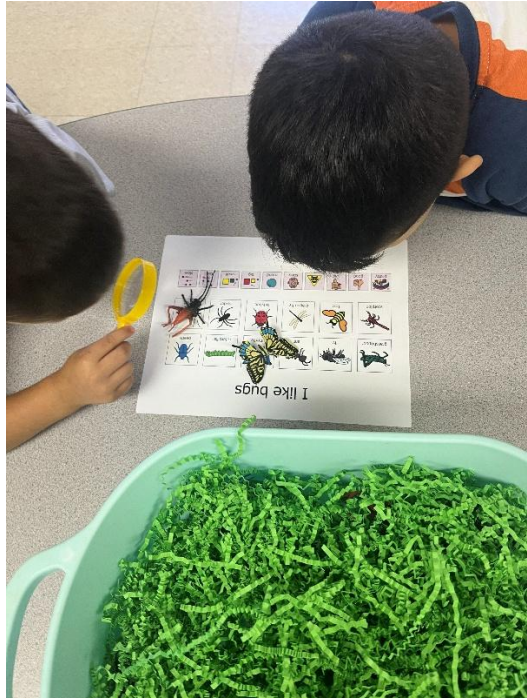
Boardmaker Subscriptions (3-year term – \$5,940.60): Provides SLPs with access to over 80,000 symbols, hundreds of templates, and thousands of pre-made activities. This subscription ensures consistent access to customizable materials for all students across Waco ISD. At the end of the three-year term, the district may choose to renew, revise, or discontinue the service, with no automatic billing or credit card on file.

iPads with Accessories (Total – \$4,029.50): Ten iPads (128 GB) will provide students with severe speech impairments access to Boardmaker materials, apps, and integration with assistive technologies such as TD Snap and eye-gaze devices. Each iPad will include a **Brenthaven Bounce protective case** (\$29.92 each, total \$299.20) and **3-year AppleCare+ for Schools** (\$49 each, total \$490), ensuring durability and ongoing support. These devices allow students to participate fully in lessons, social activities, and enrichment opportunities, while supporting individualized communication and learning goals.

Item	Quantity	Cost Per Unit	Total Cost	Notes/Justification
Boardmaker Subscription (3-year term)	20	\$278.64	\$5,940.60	Full access to 80,000+ symbols, 600+ templates, 120,000+ shared activities for all SLPs
iPads (128 GB)	10	\$324.00	\$3240.00	Supports students with severe speech impairments; integrates with Boardmaker and assistive technology
Brenthaven Bounce iPad Cases	10	\$29.92	\$299.20	Protects devices for long-term classroom use
3-Year AppleCare+ for Schools	10	\$49.00	\$490.00	Provides repair and replacement coverage for the iPads over 3 years

This funding will enable district-wide, sustainable impact, providing resources that enhance student learning, engagement, and independence across multiple campuses for years to come.

Thank you sincerely for considering this project! On the following page is a collection of photographs from engaging therapy activities supported by materials made in Boardmaker. This is just a very small example of how Boardmaker will be used!



Waco Education Foundation

Grant Budget Form

Assigned Proposal #	19
Project Title:	From Symbols to Success
Number of Students Served by Grant:	1100

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						
10	iPads (128 GB)	Y	\$3,240.00			\$ 3,240.00
10	3-Year AppleCare+ for Schools	Y	\$490.00			\$ 490.00
total Technology			\$ 3,730.00		\$ -	\$ 3,730.00
Long-Term Supplies / Equipment (items that will last beyond the grant year)						
20	Boardmaker Subscription (3-year term)	Y	\$5,940.60			\$ 5,940.60
10	Brenthaven Bounce iPad Cases	Y	\$299.20			\$ 299.20
total Long-Term Supplies			\$ 6,239.80		\$ -	\$ 6,239.80
Contracted Services						
						\$ -
						\$ -
total Contracted Services			\$ -		\$ -	\$ -
Personnel						
						\$ -
						\$ -
total Personnel			\$ -		\$ -	\$ -
Travel / Other						
						\$ -
						\$ -
						\$ -
						\$ -
total Other			\$ -		\$ -	\$ -
Totals			\$ 9,969.80	9.063454545	\$ -	\$ 9,969.80