



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

Assigned Grant Proposal #: 45

Project Title: Ukuleles for Engaging Upper Elementary Students

Grade Level(s): 4th/5th # of Students DIRECTLY involved: ~100

Subject Area(s): Music

Amount Requested: \$ 2998

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

Project Description

"Ukuleles for Engaging Upper Elementary Students" introduces a classroom set of 30 concert ukuleles to provide 4th and 5th graders with hands-on instruction in an easily accessible instrument. The ukulele expands on elements of melody and rhythm, while also introducing harmony and chordal theory. These are all things that will help students who choose to do band, choir, or orchestra in middle school. This project allows students to foster skills in musical literacy and creative expression. Through this project, we will increase student engagement, ensuring every student has the opportunity to develop instrumental proficiency and a lifelong passion for music.

1. Rationale

This project aligns with the Creative Classroom Project focus area by introducing a unique, highly engaging instrument that standard budgets do not cover. It supports the District and Campus Improvement Plans by supporting "Whole Child" development. 85% of our students are identified as being of low socio-economic status, and the cost of buying an instrument and paying for private lessons is a significant barrier to them. Providing them with ukuleles will remove that barrier and provide access to high-quality instrumental music instruction. The ukulele is a "low-floor, high-ceiling" instrument, meaning students will see immediate results, which directly supports whole child development. It builds confidence and contributes to a growth mindset. It also gives students who may need it a healthy emotional outlet. All of these things will benefit students not just in the music room, but in life in general. Research consistently shows that quality music instruction contributes to higher academic achievement across the board.

2. Goals

- **Musical Literacy:** 100% of students will identify and play the C, F, and G7 chords.
- **Technical Proficiency:** Students will demonstrate knowledge of strumming patterns as well as the ability to quickly change between chords.
- **Ensemble Success:** Students will perform unison (one part) and multi-part arrangements (melody and harmony) as a cohesive group, improving collaborative listening skills.

3. Plan of Operation

Objectives & Strategies: I will use the lessons provided in the Quaver Music curriculum to teach the foundational skills for the ukulele. From there, I will develop a multi-step program called "Ukulele Karate", similar to "Recorder Karate" that many music teachers use to teach recorder. The program will provide a piece for students to play on their ukulele for each "belt." To earn a belt, students must demonstrate mastery of the piece. The belts must be worked through sequentially, beginning with white and ending with black. Students will work through at their own

pace, and I will use the data on their progress to provide targeted small group instruction in order to meet the needs of all students. **Community/Parental Involvement:** Towards the end of the year, students will present a ukulele performance, demonstrating for their parents and the community the skills which they have learned.

Timeline:

- **August 2026:** Procurement and inventory of instruments/tuners.
- **September 2026:** Introductory Unit (Anatomy of the Uke, Tuning, Single Notes).
- **Oct–Dec 2026:** Chordal Fundamentals (C, F, G7)
- **Jan 2027:** Begin Ukulele Karate Unit
- **March 2027:** Begin learning repertoire for campus performance.
- **May 2027:** Final Campus Performance and Program Evaluation.

4. Communication & Dissemination

We invite the **Waco Education Foundation** to join us for our performance at the end of the year for photo opportunities and to see the "results of the reward" in action. I am also eager to present the project's success at a board meeting or District leadership gathering. I will also use the data I collect from the unit to provide professional development to the district's music teachers.

5. Evaluation

Success will be measured through:

- **Performance-Based Assessment:** Student performance will be measured and tracked through the "Ukulele Karate" unit.
- **Engagement Surveys:** Students will be given pre- and post-unit surveys measuring their interest in continuing music in middle school.
- **Growth Data:** I will track the percentage of students who can successfully master each belt in the "Ukulele Karate" unit.

6. Long Term Implications

This project is highly sustainable. Once the initial set of instruments is purchased, the only recurring costs are replacement strings (approx. \$5/unit). The ukuleles will impact hundreds of students over the next 7–10 years. Long-term, this creates a stronger pipeline for Waco ISD middle and high school fine arts programs. Students will enter 6th grade with foundational music skills that will benefit students who wish to learn another instrument in band or orchestra. The project will also benefit choir because students will have experience being part of an ensemble. It can even benefit programs such as theater and dance by providing students with the confidence they need to be successful performers.

7. Key Personnel

- **Music Teacher:** Jeremy Wallace, 8 years of experience. Responsible for curriculum design, instruction, and instrument maintenance.
- **Campus Principal:** Cari Detlefsen. Responsible for scheduling and administrative support for community events.
- **WISD Fine Arts Coordinator:** Larry Carpenter. Provides district-level oversight and assistance with dissemination of results.

Budget Rationale

The budget for "Ukuleles for Engaging Upper Elementary Students" is strategically designed to provide high-quality, durable equipment that ensures the project's sustainability for 10+ years.

- **Makala MK-S Soprano Ukulele Classroom Set, Set of 30 Ukuleles from West Music (\$1,949):** We have selected a "classroom-grade" instrument bundle. Makala is a highly trusted brand among music teachers. Unlike "toy" ukuleles, these instruments feature geared tuners and bridge stability, ensuring they stay in tune during instruction—a critical factor for student success and ear training. This cost includes 30 instruments, clip-on electronic tuners, method books to provide a structured curriculum, and a supply of replacement strings to account for normal wear and tear through 2027 and beyond. Even though most of our classes currently don't have more than 20 students, that could quickly change in the next few years, and having a few more than needed will also help make sure we have a consistent supply to account for both normal wear and tear and unforeseen circumstances that could make some instruments inoperable.
- **Mobile Ukulele Storage Cart (\$969):** Proper storage is the most critical factor in instrument longevity. This specialized cart prevents instruments from being stacked or stepped on, which is vital in a high-traffic elementary classroom. Furthermore, the cart's mobility allows the "Ukulele Program" to be shared across grade levels or moved easily to the cafeteria/stage for performances. It will also make it more feasible to transport the instruments off campus should we have opportunities to perform in the community.
- **Oversized Shipping Charge (\$80):** This is a mandatory fee for the delivery of the specialized storage cart. Due to the cart's large size, standard shipping is not an option.

Total Project Investment: \$2,998

The Bottom Line: By investing in professional-grade storage and quality instruments upfront, we eliminate the need for annual replacement costs, ensuring that thousands of Waco ISD students will benefit from this grant over the next decade. If we assume we will see around 1000 students over the next ten years, the price per student to fund this project is <\$3 per student.

Waco Education Foundation Grant Budget Form

Assigned Proposal #	45
Project Title:	Ukuleles for Enaging Upper Elementary Students
Number of Students Served by Grant:	~100

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)						
1	A&S Crafted Products Band Room 30-Unit Multi-Size Ukulele Rack from West Music	Y	\$ 969.00			\$ 969.00
1	Makala MK-S Soprano Ukulele Classroom Set, Set of 30 Ukuleles from West Music	Y	\$ 1,949.00			\$ 1,949.00
						\$ -
						\$ -
						\$ -
						\$ -
	total Long-Term Supplies		\$ 2,918.00		\$ -	\$ 2,918.00
Contracted Services						
1	Oversized shipping charge	Y	\$ 80.00			\$ 80.00
						\$ -
	total Contracted Services		\$ 80.00		\$ -	\$ 80.00
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
			\$ 2,998.00	#VALUE!	\$ -	\$ 2,998.00