



**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 |

Doubling the Groove: Expanding Access & Sound in our Middle School Jazz Program

Proposal #82

OVERVIEW

Our middle school jazz program is a rapidly growing, high-interest component of our music curriculum that serves students with a wide range of musical backgrounds and abilities. Enrollment has increased significantly, and student enthusiasm for jazz performance continues to expand. To meet this growth and elevate instructional opportunities, we seek funding to purchase a second drum set, a second electric piano, amplifiers, and saxophone fronts.

Obtaining a second full set of jazz equipment will allow us to divide students into two instructional ensembles rather than rotating limited resources. This will significantly increase hands-on playing time, improve rehearsal efficiency, and support differentiated instruction. Most importantly, it will enable the formation of an elite traveling jazz ensemble composed of advanced students who demonstrate strong musicianship, leadership, and commitment.

With dedicated equipment, this elite group will be able to rehearse independently and perform throughout the community at school events, civic functions, local celebrations, and outreach programs. These performances will not only showcase student talent but also strengthen community connections, promote arts education, and represent our school with professionalism and pride. Students will gain authentic performance experience, confidence, and real-world musical skills while serving as ambassadors for both the jazz program and the broader school community.

The requested equipment—specifically a second drum set, electric piano, amplifiers, and saxophone fronts—will ensure consistent sound quality, portability, and professional presentation at off-campus events. These tools are essential for preparing students for live performance settings and creating a polished ensemble capable of performing in a variety of venues.

By investing in this equipment, the grant will have a lasting impact: expanding student access, supporting advanced musical growth, and enabling meaningful community engagement through the art of jazz. This project directly aligns with goals of arts enrichment, student leadership development, and community partnership, while laying the foundation for a sustainable and highly visible middle school jazz program.

RATIONALE

Doubling the Groove: Expanding Access & Sound in our Middle School Jazz Program

This proposal is directly aligned with the WISD Education Foundation's mission to fund innovative and creative projects. By investing in this project, the grant will produce long-term benefits: expanded access to jazz education, elevated instructional quality, leadership development, and sustained community engagement. This proposal addresses an immediate programmatic need while laying the groundwork for a vibrant, sustainable, and highly visible middle school jazz program that serves students and the community for years to come.

GOALS

The goals of this project are deeply aligned with the development of critical thinking, creativity, innovation, and collaboration—skills that are essential for student success in both academic and real-world settings.

Critical Thinking:

Jazz performance requires students to make constant, real-time decisions as they interpret charts, follow chord progressions, listen for harmonic changes, and respond to musical cues from other ensemble members. With access to a second full set of jazz equipment, students will have increased rehearsal time and performance opportunities that strengthen analytical listening, problem-solving, and decision-making skills. Students learn to evaluate balance, tone, rhythm, and form while adjusting their playing to improve the overall ensemble sound.

Creativity:

Improvisation is a foundational element of jazz and a powerful driver of creative thinking. This project supports creativity by giving students the tools and space to explore musical ideas, take artistic risks, and develop individual musical voices. The formation of an elite traveling ensemble encourages original interpretation, expressive performance, and creative ownership, allowing students to move beyond reproduction of music into true artistic creation.

Innovation:

The project promotes innovation by expanding the traditional school ensemble model into a flexible, performance-ready jazz program that engages the community. Using modern equipment such as electric piano and amplifiers prepares students for contemporary performance settings and encourages them to adapt to different venues and audiences. Students experience how technology enhances musical expression and learn to apply their skills in new and dynamic contexts.

Collaboration:

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Jazz is inherently collaborative, requiring trust, communication, and shared responsibility among ensemble members. Students must listen closely to one another, support soloists, maintain rhythmic unity, and work together toward a common artistic goal. By dividing students into multiple ensembles and establishing an elite group, this project fosters teamwork, peer leadership, and mentorship. Performances in the community further strengthen collaboration as students represent their school collectively and work together to deliver high-quality, professional presentations.

Through these experiences, the project cultivates well-rounded learners who think critically, create boldly, innovate thoughtfully, and collaborate effectively—using jazz as a powerful vehicle for 21st-century skill development.

PLAN OF OPERATION

With awarded grant funds, we will purchase a second drumset, a second electric piano, three amplifiers with cables and eight saxophone fronts.

- The jazz ensemble requires **three amplifiers** to support standard instrumentation: electric piano, guitar, and bass. Dedicated amplification ensures proper balance, sound clarity, and age-appropriate volume control during rehearsals and performances. Multiple amplifiers are necessary for simultaneous instruction, efficient setup, and safe equipment use, particularly when rehearsing or performing in off-campus venues where shared amplification is not available. Note: we do not have any working amplifiers at the moment for even one jazz band.
- Multiple amplifiers are essential for effective jazz instruction and ensemble balance. Each amplified instrument serves a distinct musical role and requires individualized volume and tone control. Sharing amplification limits rehearsal efficiency, reduces student playing time, and compromises sound quality. Dedicated amplifiers allow students to develop proper listening skills, understand ensemble balance, and rehearse under authentic performance conditions. This setup mirrors real-world jazz ensembles and prepares students for live performances, adjudicated events, and community outreach opportunities.
- Saxophone fronts promote equitable sound projection, support healthy technique, enhance professional presentation, and build student confidence during instructional and community performances.

COMMUNICATION AND DISSEMINATION

If awarded, we will actively recognize and include the Waco ISD Education Foundation in both performances and communications related to the grant. The jazz ensemble will

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perform at a Waco ISD school board meeting as a formal thank-you, with a visible acknowledgment displayed during the performance recognizing the Foundation's support. Foundation representatives will be invited to observe rehearsals and performances, and photo opportunities will be coordinated to highlight the impact of the funded equipment.

Results will be disseminated district-wide through WISD-TV coverage, school and district social media platforms, and campus newsletters. Additionally, the program and equipment impact will be shared with fellow music educators through staff development sessions and fine arts meetings, highlighting best practices for jazz instruction and student engagement. These efforts ensure public recognition of the Foundation while sharing the project's outcomes and instructional value across the district.

EVALUATION

Project success will be measured by increased student access to jazz instruction, the ability to rehearse multiple ensembles simultaneously, and expanded community performance opportunities. Additional indicators include improved rehearsal efficiency, increased active playing time, and enhanced ensemble sound quality. Student growth will be evaluated through performance outcomes, director observation, and student reflections, while community engagement will be measured through public performances and audience feedback.

LONG TERM IMPLICATIONS

The equipment purchased through this grant will be durable, reusable, and integrated into the jazz program for many years beyond the 2026–2027 school year. These resources will become permanent assets of the Waco ISD middle school jazz program and will be used annually to support multiple instructional ensembles and a traveling performance group. Proper maintenance and storage procedures will ensure the longevity of the equipment.

Long-term impact includes sustained access to jazz education for increasing numbers of students, expanded leadership and performance opportunities, and continued community engagement through public performances. As students advance to high school, they will bring stronger musicianship, improvisation skills, and ensemble experience, strengthening vertical alignment across district fine arts programs. This investment establishes a scalable, sustainable jazz model that will benefit students, schools, and the broader community for years to come.

KEY PERSONNEL

Project Lead – Head Band Director (Applicant)

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The Head Band Director will serve as the project lead and is responsible for overseeing implementation of the grant, including equipment selection, setup, instructional integration, and performance planning. Responsibilities include leading the non-varsity jazz band, assessing student growth and program outcomes. The Head Band Director brings extensive experience in middle school band instruction, jazz pedagogy, ensemble leadership, and community performance coordination.

Assistant Band Director (Co-Applicant)

The Assistant Band Director will lead the elite traveling varsity jazz ensemble, manage equipment use and maintenance, and support performances and community outreach events. The Assistant Band Director's experience in instrumental instruction and ensemble rehearsal ensures consistent instructional quality and effective use of grant-funded resources.

Together, both directors will collaborate to ensure the project is implemented with fidelity, sustainability, and measurable impact.

BUDGET AND BUDGET NARRATIVE/JUSTIFICATION

Drumset -

Electric Piano -

Amplifiers -

Saxophone Fronts -

