

First Amendment Schools

Project School Grant Award Program

Funding Criteria

First Amendment Schools awards Project School grants to help schools become laboratories of democratic freedom. Every FAS Project School commits to a three-year, whole-school reform process. An FAS Project School works to practice and teach First Amendment principles throughout its school community.

In May, First Amendment Schools will select four Project Schools for the 2004-2005 school year. Each Project School will receive a \$12,000 yearly grant, subject to review and renewal in August 2005 and August 2006. Renewal of each Project School's grant will be contingent upon the school's demonstrated progress toward the goals to which it commits itself in this application.

Each Project School will send a team to the annual conference held in the summers of 2004, 2005 and 2006. As a part of that commitment, Project Schools may need to dedicate up to \$3,000 to cover the cost of their team's travel. Each school's team must include six participants, reflecting a range of constituency groups. This year, Project Schools will meet in Washington, D.C., in July 2004.

Once a school is selected, it must sign a memorandum of understanding that delineates the requirements for the grant. The principal, the district superintendent, and the school board chairperson will sign this document, and they should review the attached copy prior to their school's application for the grant.

Eligibility

The Project School grant is open to all schools in the United States: K-12, public and independent. School pathways — i.e. one high school, one feeder middle school, and one feeder elementary school — may apply for a joint grant. Additionally, schools with different multiyear configurations may apply.

Selection Criteria

The strongest applications will provide evidence of the school's capacity and commitment to live up to the guiding principles of the FAS Vision Statement. The selection committee will consider the following questions:

- To what extent does the proposal promote education for freedom and responsibility?
- Does the proposal identify and build on existing school efforts that reflect the FAS Vision Statement? Does it identify needs within the school that may be addressed by inclusion in FAS?
- How persuasive is the school's expression of interest in and support for the FAS Vision Statement?
- Are the proposal's goals and timeline realistic and manageable?
- How well-conceived is the school's plan to monitor the proposal's effectiveness over the short and long term?

Application to Become a First Amendment School

Deadline for submission:

April 25, 2004

Applications must be postmarked by 5 p.m.
Print applications must include one original
and 10 copies.

School name

Address

School's Web site _____

(if available)

School district _____

(if available)

Principal name _____

Signature _____

Contact name _____

Contact position _____

Signature _____

Mailing address

(if different)

Telephone _____

Fax _____

E-mail address _____

Important: Please attach the most recent school performance data, including student achievement, attendance, graduation rates, etc., and mail along with your printed applications to:

**John Kent, First Amendment Center
c/o Freedom Forum
1101 Wilson Blvd.
Arlington, VA 22209**

Type of school

- public independent sectarian
 independent non-sectarian

Level of school

- elementary middle/junior high high

School community

- rural urban suburban other:

Grade levels

Enrollment

Number of staff by role

___ administrators ___ teachers
___ guidance counselors ___ support personnel

Percentage of students

___ American Indian/Alaskan Native
___ Asian/Pacific Islander ___ Hispanic
___ Black (not of Hispanic origin)
___ White (not of Hispanic origin)
___ Multiracial ___ Undesignated

Percentage of students

who qualify for special education services ___
who qualify for free/reduced lunch ___
with limited English proficiency (LEP) ___
who receive financial aid ___

Application Narrative—Part 1

As you prepare responses to the following statements, consider: (1) the state of the First Amendment in your school today (you may complete the First Amendment Schools Checklist at www.firstamendmentschools.org for reference); (2) the First Amendment Schools Vision Statement; (3) your school's goals for the project; and (4) your school's plan to realize project goals using grant funds and local resources. Please limit each response to one page.

I. First Amendment Schools are laboratories of democratic freedom.

Describe one “best practice” at your school that helps demonstrate your commitment to creating a laboratory of democratic freedom. How was the practice developed? Who benefits? What is the evidence of your success?

Explain how you propose to use FAS resources (see list on next page) to realize your goal to build democratic learning communities among students, educators, and families.

II. First Amendment Schools commit to honor inalienable rights and promote civic responsibility.

Describe one “best practice” at your school that helps demonstrate your commitment to honor inalienable rights and promote civic responsibility. How was the practice developed? Who benefits? What is the evidence of your success?

Explain how you propose to use FAS resources to realize your goal to educate students, teachers, and families to exercise First Amendment Rights with responsibility.

III. First Amendment Schools engage all stakeholders.

Describe one “best practice” at your school that helps demonstrate your commitment to engage all stakeholders. How was the practice developed? Who benefits? What is the evidence of your success?

Explain how you propose to use FAS resources to realize your goal to engage diverse stakeholders in the school community.

IV. First Amendment Schools promote opportunities for active citizenship in the school and the community.

Describe one “best practice” at your school that helps demonstrate your commitment to promoting active citizenship. How was the practice developed? Who benefits? What is the evidence of your success?

Explain how you propose to use FAS resources to realize your goal to develop the knowledge, skills, and virtues required for thoughtful and effective participation in the civic life of a democracy.

Application Narrative—Part II

Respond to each of the following as completely as you can. Please limit each response to one page.

1. Explain how you plan to monitor the proposal's effectiveness in reaching the goals you identified in Narrative I. Please include appropriate timelines for your monitoring plan.
2. Describe how you involved all stakeholders in the process of applying for this grant. Please have those involved sign the description and identify their role group (teacher, student, parent, etc.).
3. Explain how affiliation with the First Amendment Schools Project enhances other school-wide initiatives at your school. What needs does it meet for students, staff, and the larger community?
4. Describe how affiliation with the First Amendment Schools Project will be integrated with your overall school management plan. Please include information related to your school's focus on standards, accountability, and student achievement.

Budget and Budget Narrative

Prepare a line-item budget that projects the cost of what you propose to do. Explain in a budget narrative how each line item relates to the initiatives outlined in your proposal. Identify any other funds, including in-kind contributions, the school plans to dedicate to implementing the guiding principles of the FAS Vision Statement.

Dual Consideration for Affiliate School Status

There are two types of schools in the FAS Network: Affiliate Schools and Project Schools. Whereas the Project School program engages entire communities in whole-school reform, the Affiliate School program is designed to give schools an entryway into the larger FAS Network. It allows school communities to identify themselves with the FAS aims of educating for freedom and responsibility, and provides them with useful resources to help them in their daily work. There is no fee to become an Affiliate School. For a full list of Affiliate School benefits and responsibilities, visit www.firstamendmentschools.org.

- Yes! If not selected as a Project School, please consider my school for Affiliate School status.**
- No. My school is only interested in being considered for Project School status.**

Letter of Commitment

Submit a letter, signed by the superintendent and chairperson of the school board, that communicates a commitment to First Amendment Schools and expresses a willingness to support the school in its efforts to enhance how the First Amendment is taught and applied across the school and community.

Supporting Documentation

Submit 10 copies of school publications (for example, a newsletter to parents, excerpts from the school plan, etc.) that support the statements of your application narrative. Supporting documentation should not exceed 10 pages.

Application Packet Checklist

An application must include the original and 10 copies of the following documents:

- General Information Sheet
- Profile of School/Profile of Students (including a recent summary of school performance data)
- Application Narrative, Parts I and II
- Budget and Budget Narrative
- Letter of Commitment, signed by Superintendent and School Board Chairperson
- Supporting Documentation (10 page limit)

Requirements of Grant Recipients

- Project Schools will identify a First Amendment Schools Team that will coordinate the efforts the school community undertakes to realize the guiding principles of the Vision Statement. The team should consist of at least one student, one teacher, one administrator, one central office administrator, one parent/community member, and one School Board member.
- Project Schools will develop and monitor an action plan and timeline for implementation of strategies related to the guiding principles.
- Project Schools will send six participants, including, at minimum, the principal, a teacher and a parent to the annual Project School meetings in Washington, D.C. Schools may be required to spend up to \$3,000 of the grant on travel to the annual FAS meeting.
- Project Schools will submit annual progress reports and account for how the grant was spent. Grants will be renewed annually, pending a review of progress and budget reports.

- Project Schools will participate in an FAS-sponsored external program evaluation and project documentation.
- Project Schools will commit to sharing with other project schools and project staff strategies, revised policies, best practices, and new instructional resources developed in the course of the grant. Schools agree to publish student work, engage in reflective self-assessment, and welcome Project and Affiliate Schools that express an interest in visiting.
- Project Schools will work to involve the larger community in the life of the school, making purposeful efforts to broaden participation, to promote thoughtful discussion, and to increase public understanding of First Amendment principles.
- Project Schools will strive to retain the principal in the school for the duration of the project.

Resources

In addition to the grant award, First Amendment Schools will provide Project Schools with resources designed to help them implement the Vision Statement's guiding principles. These resources include, but are not limited to, the following:

- On-site visits and support from project staff, First Amendment scholars and school reform experts.
- Opportunities to apply to a reserve fund for supplemental grants to fund initiatives designed to address local needs.
- Assistance in identifying local and national resources that can support project school initiatives.
- Annual conference of the FAS Network of Project Schools.
- Opportunities to meet, visit, and collaborate with members of other project schools.
- Online resources for teachers, administrators, and community members on First Amendment principles and school-based reform topics.
- Online and on-site professional development opportunities for teachers, administrators, and community members on First Amendment principles and school-based reform topics.
- Selected First Amendment Center publications, including *Finding Common Ground: A Guide to Religious Liberty in Public Schools*, and *The First Amendment in Schools*, a legal guide for students, educators, and parents.
- One institutional membership to the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD), which includes: 10 subscriptions to *Educational Leadership*; 10 subscriptions to *Education Update*; 10 subscriptions to *Curriculum Update*; two conference vouchers worth \$100 each; 10 PD Online keys to access online professional development courses; access to the Institutional Membership Web Site; one ASCD Premium Membership; and special discounts on ASCD resources and events when purchased as an institution.

Memorandum of Understanding

(To be completed only upon receipt of a grant award)

Date _____

School _____

Contact Person _____

Telephone Number _____ E-mail address _____

It is essential that FAS Project Schools strive to implement fully the guiding principles of the First Amendment Schools Vision Statement. To that end, it is expected that every school community will commit to honor the expectations of First Amendment Schools.

Our school community agrees to:

- Create a First Amendment Schools Team charged with coordination of school-based initiatives;
- Develop and monitor an action plan and timeline for implementation of the guiding principles;
- Submit annual progress and budget reports;
- Participate with our principal in meetings of FAS project schools;
- Share school initiatives, resources, and strategies at meetings and via the FAS Web site;
- Welcome Project and Affiliate Schools that express an interest in visiting the school;
- Commit to extend project initiatives into the community;
- Participate in the FAS-sponsored external program evaluation and project documentation;
- Strive to retain the principal in the school for the duration of the project.

This memorandum of understanding is approved by:

Principal

District Superintendent

School Board Chairperson