

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION  
REPORT TO COUNCIL**

**SUBJECT:** ACE GRANT PROPOSALS - 2013

**SUMMARY:** ACE recommends approval of 17 grants to local schools, totaling \$7483.04. ACE requests an enhancement of \$2000.00 to the ACE grants budget for next year.

**BACKGROUND:** The Advisory Committee on Education recently solicited grant proposals for the 2012-2013 school year.

ACE solicited grant proposals for up to \$500 each from the six ACE core schools: Greenbelt Elementary, Springhill Lake Elementary, Magnolia Elementary, Turning Point Academy, Greenbelt Middle and Eleanor Roosevelt High School. Proposals were welcome either from the school itself or from the school's parent-teacher organization. There was no limit to the number of proposals that could be submitted from each school. The proposals were due on November 1, 2012. The proposals were for activities which will take place between February 15, 2013 and the end of the 2013-2014 school year.

The ACE Grants Program will support activities which enhance or enrich school-based activities. Some examples include supporting field trips, bringing an activity into the school, or purchasing equipment and materials for a special project. The grants are NOT intended to underwrite items that are normally supplied by the school system such as copier paper, etc.

**FINDING:** ACE received a total of 21 proposals from 4 schools for a total request of \$10,489.04. Proposals were submitted from Greenbelt Elementary, Springhill Lake Elementary, Magnolia Elementary and Eleanor Roosevelt High School. ACE did not receive any proposals from Greenbelt Middle School or Turning Point Academy this year.

Despite outreach to Turning Point Academy and expressions of interest by TPA parents, ACE has never received a grant proposal from that school. On the other hand, Greenbelt Middle School

has been an active participant in the ACE grant program in the past. ACE believes that there are two reasons why there were no grant proposals from GMS this year. First, with the new building, equipment and programs, the teachers are putting a lot of effort into getting used to their new environment. With all that is new this year, the teachers are not thinking of additional enhancements to the educational experience. ACE believes this will change in future years. Second, with the addition of 45 minutes of instructional time to the school day at the Middle School, the teachers have less planning time to think about enhancements.

Selection of the proposals for funding is made by the Greenbelt City Council based on the input from ACE. This is a summary of ACE recommendations. The proposals are listed in priority order.

#	School	Title	Request	Recommend	Total
<b>Proposals recommended for funding</b>					
1	ERHS	Special Education Grant Proposal, 2013 - 2014	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00	\$ 7483
2	ERHS	Victory Garden Grant	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00	
3	GES	Literature Circles	\$ 483.04	\$ 483.04	
4	SHLES	Discovery Packs (supplies)	\$ 500.00	\$ 250.00	
5	SHLES	Discovery Packs (books)	\$ 500.00	\$ 250.00	
6	GES	Beech Tree Puppet Theater	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00	
7	GES	IXL Math Website	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00	
8	GES	Study Island - 5th Grade Science	\$ 503.00	\$ 500.00	
9	SHLES	Science Experiments	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00	
10	ERHS	Drama 2 Field Trip	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00	
11	GES	Drying Rack for Art Room	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00	
12	ERHS	Buses for School Music Festival (County Assessment)	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00	
13	ERHS	ERHS Literary Magazine, 2012/2013	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00	
14	GES	Physical Education Equipment	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00	
15	GES	SMART Response System	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00	
16	MES	Walking Club, Walk for Education, Healthy Schools	\$ 500.00	\$ 300.00	
17	MES	Magnolia Blooms GREEN: Plastic Bottle Recycling Program	\$ 500.00	\$ 200.00	
<b>Proposals not recommended for funding</b>					
18	GES	Study Island - 4th Grade Science	\$ 503.00	\$ 0.00	\$ 0
19	ERHS	Drama 3 Field Trip	\$ 500.00	\$ 0.00	
20	SHLES	Healthier Breakfasts	\$ 500.00	\$ 0.00	
21	SHLES	Staff Wellness	\$ 500.00	\$ 0.00	

## Proposal Review

ACE met on Tuesday, November 27, 2012, to consider the proposals. For each proposal, the committee listed the strengths and weaknesses and assigned a numerical score on a 100-point scale. The points were assigned according to the following scale:

- Intrinsic merit (40%) – Will the proposed project enhance or enrich school-based activities? Does it meet the criteria listed in the ACE grants call?
- Budget (30%) – Is the proposed budget realistic? Is the budget well justified?
- Benefit to students (20%) – Will the program provide wide benefit to the students in the school, or will it just benefit a few students?
- Proposal format (10%) – Did the proposal follow the proposal rules, including proposal length, project schedule, requisite signatures, etc.? (Note: severe violation of the proposal rules could result in rejection.)

On the basis of this careful consideration, the committee makes the following recommendations:

### Proposals Recommended for Funding:

#### **1 Special Education Grant Proposal, 2013 - 2014; ERHS.**

**Recommended funding: \$500 (full funding.)**

Summary: Provide agenda books to 204 Special Education students at Eleanor Roosevelt High School for the 2013 – 2014 academic year (ordered in the spring of 2013). Cost per student is \$3.30, for a total of \$673.20. The remaining \$173.20 of the expense will be covered by the Special Education Department. The agenda books will assist the Special Education students with development of self-management and organization skills.

Strengths: Affects the entire estimated Special Education population at the school. Cost-effective and well planned.

Weaknesses: None

#### **2 Victory Garden Grant; ERHS.**

**Recommended funding: \$500 (full funding.)**

Summary: Funding will be used for supplies to create a “Victory Garden”, modeled on the gardens of the World War II era.

Strengths: The after-school project will be tied to the history, science, government, math and physical education curricula, and supports the objectives of both Eleanor Roosevelt and

Michelle Obama. Matching contributions and support has also been obtained from Home Depot.

Weaknesses: None

### **3 Literature Circles: GES.**

**Recommended funding: \$483.04 (full funding).**

Summary: Purchase a variety of chapter books, both fiction and nonfiction that meet the Common Core Curriculum Standards. Students select a book and form a group to read and discuss the book, guided by their teacher. Materials are provided to aid in the discussion of the books. The budget is based on a detailed quote from the vendor Amazon.com for six copies each of 20 titles, for a total of \$483.04.

Strengths: The selection of literature and the use of literature circles address requirements of the Common Core State Standards that the state of Maryland has adopted. Guided group discussions allow the students to interact with each other, not only to talk about the books themselves but also questions and ideas that the students raise upon reading and reflecting on the books. The literature circle is targeted to a specific first-grade class, but the books will be placed in the school book room where they are available to all teachers in the school.

Weaknesses: None.

### **4 Discovery Packs (supplies) and 5 Discovery Packs (books); SHLES.**

**Recommended funding: \$250 each (requested funding is \$500 each.)**

Note: Requested funding for the Discovery Packs (Supplies) and Discovery Packs (Books) was \$500 each, or \$1000 total. ACE recommends partial funding of each proposal at \$250 each or \$500 total. Linked proposals such as these are not allowed within the ACE grant rules. ACE believes that with partial funding the program can still be conducted successfully at the lower level.

Summary: To provide appropriate books and materials at home to practice and reinforce what they are learning at school to enable students to learn how to read and prevent below- grade levels in reading and writing.

Strengths – The program will enable parents and students to read, share, enjoy and discuss in a positive, skills-enhancing and accelerating the acquisition of reading skills, encourage the habit of nightly reading and get families involved and excited in their child's growing abilities as a reader.

Weaknesses: No procedures in place to ensure that books given out to students will be returned in reusable condition.

**6 Beech Tree Puppet Theater; GES.**

**Recommended funding: \$500 (full funding.)**

Summary: Presentation of a Grimm's fairy tale, The Crystal Ball, through a puppet show. The show has been written specifically for children at the elementary school level. The story is a "coming of age" story about a prince who rescues his brothers who have been changed into animals by an evil sorceress. Children will have an opportunity to ask questions about the story and explore the stagecraft and artistry of the production. The performers charge \$50 each per performer, per show. Five shows would cost \$500.

Strengths: The show will be presented to all students at Greenbelt Elementary in grades 1 - 5, with one show for each grade. The presentation will be made by classically trained performers (Greenbelters Ingrid Cowan Haas and Ole Haas) who have created the puppets and set, and written the story and music. The story emphasizes positive values such as courage, steadfastness, and love for truth and is presented in an engaging manner for the students.

Weaknesses: None.

**7 IXL Math Website; GES.**

**Recommended Funding: \$500 (full funding.)**

Summary: Provide all first-grade students access to the IXL website for practice of key math skills. The funding requested, \$500, will cover the cost of a license for approximately 100 students.

Strengths: The website helps strengthen students' basic math skills in a way that engages the students and allows them to practice at home as well as at school. It provides feedback to the teacher on individual student progress, as well as overall class progress. Higher grades are already using the IXL website with positive results. The skills taught are aligned to state standards and the common core curriculum.

Weaknesses: None.

**8 Study Island - 5th Grade Science; GES.**

**Recommended funding: \$500 (requested funding was \$503.)**

Note: two similar proposals were received to fund Study Island 5th Grade and Study Island 4th Grade. Due to limited funding and for reasons listed below, ACE recommends funding for the 5th grade proposal only.

Summary: The 5th grade students at Greenbelt Elementary School will have the opportunity to utilize Study Island for Science in order to review learned concepts, and provide MSA practice in preparation for the MSA in the spring. The Study Island program is also a great tool which gives teachers instant feedback in order for differentiated instruction to occur. The students already have access to Study Island for Math and Reading; this proposal extends the resource to include

Science. Study Island is aligned to the Maryland State Voluntary Curriculum. The entire cost is \$503.

Strengths: This is an excellent proposal. Study Island is a great educational program and will benefit the entire 5th grade population. The 5th grade is evaluated on Science in the MSA tests. The license will last 1 year and will therefore also benefit next year's 5th grade class in the beginning of next year.

Weaknesses: None.

#### **9 Science Experiments; SHLES.**

##### **Recommended Funding: \$500 (full funding.)**

Summary: To increase curiosity in science for grades K-5 (ages 5-12). Each student will be provided a hands-on science experiment and each grade will receive an hour-long science demonstration with a specialist.

Strengths: Experiments will provide hands-on learning for grades K-5, to enable students to attain knowledge and help prepare them for our scientific and technological world.

Weaknesses: None.

#### **10 Drama 2 Field Trip; ERHS**

##### **Recommended funding: \$500 (full funding.)**

Note: two similar proposals were received to fund Drama 2 Field Trip and Drama 3 Field Trip. Due to limited funding and for reasons listed below, ACE recommends funding for the Drama 2 proposal only.

Summary: This grant would make it possible for 47 Eleanor Roosevelt High School Drama 2 students to attend a production of "James and the Giant Peach" at Imagination Stage in Bethesda.

Strengths: Attending this performance would enhance the learning in the Drama 2 classes. This grant would reduce the cost per student from \$17 to \$6, which is certainly affordable for most students who attend ERHS.

Weaknesses: None.

#### **11 Drying Rack for Art Room; GES.**

##### **Recommended Funding: \$500 (full funding)**

Summary: There have been several cuts in the arts instruction in PGCPs. Greenbelt Elementary is now Pre-K through 5th grade. When the 6th grade students moved to Greenbelt Middle School, there were classrooms available at the elementary school. Greenbelt Elementary students now receive arts instruction 4 times a year through a county-funded grant. A drying rack would allow the adequate drying of the student's art work such as paintings and any other

wet art work pieces. This would also benefit the students in the after school art program as well. The entire cost is \$549 in which \$49 is being provided through already pledged donations.

Strengths: The drying rack would be a new addition to the art room and would allow more space to dry the art work.

Weaknesses: None.

**12 Buses for School Music Festival (County Assessment), ERHS.**

**Recommended funding: \$500 (full funding.)**

Summary: This grant would provide transportation for 162 Eleanor Roosevelt High School students who play in four ERHS bands to perform in the County Assessment Festival at Northwestern High School in March 2013.

Strengths: By performing in this Festival, the students would receive detailed notes and ratings from the judges. The County provides one bus for this activity; this grant, plus their fundraising, would provide the two additional buses that would be needed to accommodate all four bands.

Weaknesses: None.

**13 ERHS Literary Magazine, 2012/2013: ERHS.**

**Recommended funding: \$500 (full funding.)**

Summary: Students will produce a very high-quality literary magazine including prose, poetry, drawing and photography.

Strengths: The magazine produced is very high quality and will be a keepsake for the students who are involved. The group has a good record of raising the additional funding needed to complete the project.

Weaknesses: None.

**14 Physical Education Equipment: GES.**

**Recommended funding: \$500 (full funding.)**

Summary: The physical education department would like to improve levels of physical fitness at Greenbelt Elementary. A variety of items will be purchased such as aerobic steps, hula hoops, various balls and fitness task cards. The goal is to promote a healthier lifestyle for each student at Greenbelt Elementary.

Strengths: Each student that attends Greenbelt Elementary is required to have physical education. The equipment will service the current students and future students.

Weaknesses: The proposal was not sufficiently specific as to the equipment that would be purchased.

**15 SMART Response System: GES.**

**Recommended funding: \$500 (full funding.)**

Summary: This is an interactive response system consisting of a receiver and remote clickers for students to use in 3rd grade classes. Teachers and students receive immediate feedback as assignments are being completed and can adjust their teaching in real time according to the student's needs.

Strengths: This system allows teachers to make assessments easily, helps deliver questions more efficiently, and manages data more effortlessly.

Weaknesses: Some reviewers were not familiar with the use of clickers in education and would have appreciated a more detailed introduction to their use.

**16 Walking Club, Walk for Education, Healthy Schools: MES.**

**Recommended funding: \$300 (requested funding was \$500.)**

Summary: As part of the county's Healthy School Initiative, students and staff will walk around the field near the school one day in October. Grant funds would also be used to provide reading materials about healthy food to eat. Funds would also be used to purchase materials for students such as bracelets and charms to be used as rewards for the ongoing Walking Club, which includes grades 3 to 6 as well as staff.

Strengths: This project would provide opportunities for students and staff to get physical exercise and activities together. It would promote a healthy lifestyle.

Weaknesses; Intrinsic value for enriching school-based activities could have been higher and there was some question about the project benefiting at-risk students. The proposed budget included T-shirts for the participants. Some reviewers questioned the value of T-shirts. Due to limited funding, ACE recommends that the portion of the budget allocated to T-shirts should not be awarded.

**17 Magnolia Blooms GREEN: Plastic Bottle Recycling Program. MES.**

**Recommended funding: \$200 (requested funding was \$500.)**

Summary: To support the county's GREEN initiative, the school will start a project to collect empty plastic bottles from the classrooms after breakfast and bring them to recycling bins. As part of this program, paper will also be collected to put in recycling dumpster.

Strengths: The project would help eliminate plastic and paper waste. Some funds would be used to purchase rolling carts for transporting waste paper and plastic and also recycling bins.

Weaknesses: There is a lack of connection with classroom learning. The proposed budget included T-shirts for the participants. Some reviewers questioned the value of T-shirts. Due to limited funding, ACE recommends that the portion of the budget allocated to T-shirts should not be awarded.

## **Proposals not recommended for funding**

### **18 Study Island - 4th Grade Science.**

#### **Recommended funding: \$0 (no funding.)**

Summary: This proposal was very similar to the Study Island – 5th Grade Science proposal that was recommended for funding. Study Island is aligned to the Maryland State Voluntary Curriculum. However, as the project will be started in February 2013 and last for 1 year, the current 4th grade students (rising 5th grade students) at GES will still benefit from the recommended program when they reach 5th grade because the project ends in February 2014.

Strengths: This is an excellent proposal. Study Island is a great educational program and would benefit the entire 4th grade population.

Weaknesses: Science MSA is tested in 5th and 8th grade. Due to limited funding, ACE recommends funding for the current 5th grade student program only and not the current 4th grade students.

### **19 Drama 3 Field Trip; ERHS.**

#### **Recommended funding: \$0 (no funding.)**

Summary: This proposal was very similar to the Drama 2 Field Trip proposal that was recommended for funding. This grant would make it possible for 47 Eleanor Roosevelt High School Drama 3 students to attend a professional production of “Hello Dolly” at Ford’s Theatre.

Strengths: Attending this performance would enhance the learning in the Drama 3 classes. This grant would reduce the cost per student from \$57 to \$46.

Weaknesses: Even at \$46, the cost of this field trip for the ERHS students remains high. The grant would not lower the per student cost enough to make a large difference in whether students can attend. Due to limited funding, ACE recommends funding for the Drama 2 Field Trip program only and not the Drama 3 Field Trip.

### **20 Healthier Breakfasts; SHLES.**

#### **Recommended funding: \$0 (no funding.)**

Summary: The grant would be used to purchase fruit for students on days they are not provided fruit by the Breakfast In The Classroom program.

Strengths: Prince George’s county provides students with either a fruit or juice during breakfast. This grant would enable students to have the option of a fruit every day which is much higher in natural vitamins and contain less sugar than the juice which will otherwise be offered.

Weaknesses: ACE believed that the Breakfast In The Classroom program providing breakfast should provide an adequate breakfast. It would not be an appropriate use of City funds to enhance this program within a limited budget.

## **21 Staff Wellness; SHLES.**

### **Recommended funding: \$0 (no funding.)**

Summary: Provide two after school exercise clinics and one massage for the staff.

Strengths: None.

Weaknesses: The requested funds would provide limited benefit to staff members and no benefit to the students. Although the proposal purports to address health and stress issues of the staff, there is no education component that might provide long-term benefits to the staff.

**RECOMMENDATION:** This is the fourth year that ACE has solicited grant proposals. In the 2009-2010 school year, ACE recommended and the City Council approved funding for 20 proposals totaling \$9000. For the 2010-2011 school year ACE recommended and the City Council approved funding 14 proposals totaling \$6614. For the 2011-2012 school year, ACE recommended and the City Council approved funding 16 proposals totaling \$7190. Previous grants have been made to 5 of the 6 current ACE core schools plus Saint Hugh's School. The funded programs have included field trips, arts and music supplies, after-school programs and teacher education.

The ACE grants to schools program has been highly successful. The final grant reports received from the schools document the positive impact on education in Greenbelt that the program has had. The continued interest of the schools and the creativity of the proposed projects are a testament to the success of the program.

In this report, ACE recommends that the City Council approve funding for 17 proposals, totaling \$7483.04. This year there was \$7000 budgeted for ACE grants. ACE is currently making some changes in the Science and Reading clubs and those clubs have gotten off to a slow start this year. ACE has identified an additional \$500 within the allocated ACE budget that could be re-directed to the grants program, and therefore ACE requests that the City Council consider adding the additional \$483 to enable funding for these 17 proposals for a total of \$7483.04. ACE does not recommend funding for the remaining 4 proposals.

Both the number and quality of ACE grant proposals is increasing from year to year. In this year, for the first time, ACE has felt that hard choices had to be made between the proposals. If, as expected, there are additional grant proposals next year from Greenbelt Middle School, ACE believes that the budget allocated to the grant program will be inadequate and would result in excellent proposals being turned down. ACE therefore requests that the budget be increased next year by \$2000 to a new total of \$9000 for the grant program.

Approved by ACE on 11/27/12 with a vote of 7-0 with two members absent.