Foundation
for Seminole County Public Schools

2025-2026
Program Guidelines & Overview

What is Grants for Great Ideas?

► Grants for Great Ideas (GFGI) is a program of The Foundation for Seminole County Public Schools.

► Each year teachers can put their great ideas into action for their students by applying for funding through this program.

► Since 1989, the Foundation has awarded over $2 million to support the great ideas of our Seminole County teachers.

► These projects go beyond normal classroom instruction, allow teachers to provide memorable learning experiences for their students, and enhance student achievement.

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2025-2026 Grant Application Deadlines and General Information

▶ Awards are funded up to $1,000 for single classroom grants or $2,500 for grade-level/school-wide projects.

▶ Subject areas are:

  ▶ English Language Arts (ELA)

  ▶ Science, Technology, Engineering, & Math (STEM)

  ▶ the Arts

  ▶ **Character Development**

▶ Deadlines to Submit Your Applications are:

  ▶ Grant Cycle I – Deadline: Sunday, September 14, 2025

  ▶ Grant Cycle II – Deadline: Sunday, October 26, 2025

  ▶ Grant Cycle III – Deadline: Monday, December 1, 2025

NEW CATEGORY

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Character Development Category

▶ The new Character Development category was created in response to feedback from SCPS teachers and schools!

▶ This new category looks to advance student achievement through Character Development including areas of resiliency, citizenship, character, and life skill development.

▶ Projects should empower students to overcome challenges while recognizing and celebrating the success in doing so.

▶ Projects goals may be to:

  ▶ Increase positive classroom behavior

  ▶ Increase attendance

  ▶ Reduce student discipline

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Who Can Apply for GFGI?

▶ All SCPS educators, Assistant Principals, and Principals are eligible to apply for grant funding through Grants for Great Ideas.

▶ All SCPS elementary, middle, and high schools are eligible for funding including Seminole County Virtual School, VPK programs, and special centers.

▶ All projects and funds must be used to impact SCPS students.

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GFGI Requirements:
What does the Review Committee _need_ to see?

▶ Projects should address school and district goals

▶ Projects should meet Florida standards

▶ Projects <u>must</u> have measurable outcomes

▶ Projects should be hands-on and creative

▶ Projects should provide changes in knowledge, skills, attitudes, and/or behavior

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GFGI Requirements: Measurable Outcomes

▶ All projects must have measurable outcomes and the ability to track those outcomes with all students who participate.

▶ All projects must track the number of students and teachers who participate.

▶ Include the learning goals for your students and a standardized measurement tool.
What do you want them to learn? How will you determine if they met the goal?

> ▶ Examples of data collection for all students involved include test scores, pre-and post-participant surveys, or teacher administrated skills test, such as iReady.

▶ Each project's GFGI final reports provide the required data FSCPS needs to report to our current donors and secure future program funding.

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GFGI Requirements: Tracking & Measuring Outcomes

Collecting the required reporting data is easier than you think!

Track measurable outcomes associated with your project using:

- **STEM PROJECTS**
  - Utilize Student Test Scores or Grades
    - Track student improvement using a teacher administrated skills test related to the subject such as i-Ready.
    - Track student improvement using overall grade in a related subject.
  - Implement Pre-and/or Post-Surveys
    - Have students' complete surveys before and after the project.
    - Gauge changes in students' interest in STEM Careers, STEM majors/learning, and their participating in STEM-related activities outside of coursework.

- **ELA PROJECTS**
  - Utilize Student Test Scores or Grades
    - Track student improvement using a teacher administrated skills test related to the subject such as i-Ready.
    - Track student improvement using overall grade in a related subject.
  - Implement Pre-and/or Post-Surveys
    - Have students' complete surveys before and after the project.
    - Guage changes in students' attitude toward ELA, their interest in pursuing more ELA related activities, and if they have increased how much do they read outside of school.

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GFGI Requirements: Tracking & Measuring Outcomes

Collecting the required reporting data is easier than you think!

Track measurable outcomes associated with your project using:

- **ARTS PROJECTS**
  - Utilize Student Test Scores or Grades
    - Track student improvement using overall grade in a related subject.
    - Teachers can have students create a project, receive a grade for the project, and report on that.
  - Implement Pre-and/or Post-Surveys
    - Have students' complete surveys before and after the project.
    - Gauge changes student's interest in continued learning about the arts, or their interest in pursuing artistic endeavors, careers, or majors.

- **CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS**
  - Utilize Student Grades or School Data
    - Track student improvement using overall grade in a related subject.
    - Teachers can have students create a project, receive a grade for the project, and report on that.
    - Compare school data through out the project or compared to previous year such as attendance or discipline referrals.
  - Implement Pre-and/or Post-Surveys
    - Have students' complete surveys before and after the project.
    - Guage changes in students' attitude and behaviors in the areas of resiliency, citizenship, character, and life skill development.

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GFGI Requirements: School, District & State Approval

▶ Prior to submitting your application, ensure school leadership (Principal or Assistant Principal) approves of the overall proposed project including its activities, purchases, and any facility impacts to your school site.

▶ Ensure project and all its activities, materials, and curriculum complies with district and state education standards.

- [SCPS Library Catalogs (Approved Books)](#)
  - SCPS staff can access an individual school's library collection or search all available SCPS libraries to find print or eBooks. Please contact your school for your login and password.

- [SCPS BEST EEMTR Chart.pdf](#)

Benchmark	Description
MA.K12.MTR.1.1	Actively participate in effortful learning both individually and collectively.
MA.K12.MTR.2.1	Demonstrate understanding by representing problems multiple ways.
MA.K12.MTR.3.1	Complete tasks with mathematical fluency.
MA.K12.MTR.4.1	Engage in discussions that reflect on the mathematical thinking of self and others.
MA.K12.MTR.5.1	Use patterns and structure to help understand and connect mathematical concepts.
MA.K12.MTR.6.1	Assess the reasonableness of solutions.
MA.K12.MTR.7.1	Apply mathematics to real-world contexts.

FLORIDA'S B.E.S.T.
BENCHMARKS FOR EXCELLENT STUDENT THINKING
STANDARDS

Benchmark	Description
ELA.K12.EE.1.1	Cite evidence to explain and justify reasoning.
ELA.K12.EE.2.1	Read and comprehend grade-level complex texts proficiently.
ELAK12.EE.3.1	Make inferences to support comprehension.
ELA.K12.EE.4.1	Use appropriate collaborative techniques and active listening skills when engaging in discussions in a variety of situations.
ELA.K12.EE.5.1	Use the accepted rules governing a specific format to create quality work.
ELA.K12.EE.6.1	Use appropriate tone and voice when speaking or writing.

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What Purchases are Allowed with GFGI Funds?

Ensure all purchases comply with district and state education standards, are project related, and add to the educational value of the project.
This is a non-exhaustive list of allowable purchases/expenses and should be used in conjunction with the unallowable expenses to guide your purchases.

▶ Technology and equipment directly related to the project's goals and not available through the district such as 3D printers, coding robots, tablets, specialized art tools, school garden equipment, etc.

▶ Consumable supplies like wiring, circuit boards, paint, brushes, workbooks, etc.

▶ Printing expenses for classroom resources and learning at home resources.

▶ Field trips costs (digital, in-house, or external) such as transportation, admission fees, etc.

▶ Performers/performances associated with and paid by an organization that are tied to a structured activity related to the project.

▶ SCPS approved virtual/online expenses that will enhance student learning such as Virtual Field Trips, ebooks, software/apps/technology accessible online.

▶ Approved classroom books and curriculum related to the project and its goals.

▶ Manipulatives materials that allow students to explore an idea in an active, hands-on approach.

▶ Costuming and other performance materials for school productions.

▶ Directly grant related rewards and recognition items such as trophies, trinkets, or certificates up to $500. ***NEW ALLOWABLE EXPENSE!***

What Purchases are NOT Allowed with GFGI Funds?

This list outlines unallowable expenses:

- ▶ Books, curriculum, or any materials that DO NOT comply with district or state education standards.

- ▶ Sales tax. The teacher and school are responsible for ensuring funds are not spent on sales tax.

- ▶ Food or refreshments.

- ▶ More than $500 in project rewards and recognition items such as trophies, trinkets, or certificates.

- ▶ Rewards and Recognition unrelated to the project.

- ▶ Gift cards or certificates of any kind.

- ▶ Furniture including but not limited to bean bag chairs, shelving units, storage bins.

- ▶ Uniforms or clothing items. This does not include costuming for drama productions which is an allowable expense.

- ▶ Speaking fees paid to individuals such as authors, celebrities, and other professionals. This does not include performers/facilitators associated with and paid by an organization which is an allowable expense.

- ▶ Equipment, hardware, and software that can be funded by a school's budget.

- ▶ Equipment, hardware, and software unrelated to the project or does not provide educational value.

- ▶ Projects at non-SCPS schools or charter schools.

- ▶ Postage costs such as mailing of letters and/or packages by the students.

- ▶ Materials that will not remain property of the school for example later donated to the community, auctioned off, and/or sold as a fundraiser.

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2025-2026 Timeline Reporting Schedule

▶ February 13, 2026 – Complete the GFGI Progress Report Survey by this date. This short survey is only meant to help FSCPS identify each project's status, ensure it is on track for success, and offer support if needed.

▶ February 27, 2026 – All Cycle I, II, III grant awards must be spent by this date.

▶ March 12, 2026 – Deadline for Bookkeepers to return any unused funds to The Foundation.

▶ April 10, 2026 – All projects must be fully implemented by this date in order to gather required data (grades and measurable outcomes) from your students.

▶ April 17, 2026 – Final Evaluation **AND** Expenditure reports due.

▶ **All reporting will be online and done in a similar format to the application.**

▶ **Teachers who complete their GFGI Progress Report Survey and Final Evaluation & Expenditure Reports on time will be entered to win gift cards. *NEW THIS YEAR!***

▶ **Failure to submit expenditure report or evaluation report may disqualify you and your school from future GFGI awards.**

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Be Ready to Share Your Outcomes

Keep in mind each project must be prepared to answer these questions in their final report.

IMPACT - Every Project must track ALL of the following:

▶ **Students Primarily Impacted**

  ▶ Number of students who will be tracked/evaluated

▶ **Teachers Impacted**

  ▶ Number of teachers involved in the project

▶ **Students Secondarily Impacted**

  ▶ If other students benefitted from the project but were not evaluated

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Be Ready to Share Your Outcomes

Keep in mind each project must be prepared to answer these questions in their final report as determined by their category.

ARTS PROJECTS – Must track at least one of the following:

- ▶ Number of students who increased their knowledge, skills, attitudes, and/or behavior.
- ▶ Students who received a passing grade on the grant related project.

CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS – Must track at least one of the following:

- ▶ Decrease in number of students with 15+ absences compared to prior year.
- ▶ Decrease in number of students receiving at least one discipline referral or out of school suspension compared to prior year.
- ▶ Number of students who increased their grant related knowledge, skills, attitudes, and/or behavior.
- ▶ Number of students who received a passing grade on the grant related project.

ELA PROJECTS – Must track at least one of the following:

- ▶ Number of students who maintained "C" or above or improved their overall grade in a related subject; or number of students who maintained on-grade level score or improved their scores on a teacher administered skills test.
- ▶ Number of students with an improved attitude toward reading and literacy.
- ▶ Number of students with an increased interest pursuing reading or literacy-based activities.
- ▶ Number of students who have increased the amount of time they read outside of school.

STEM PROJECTS – Must track at least one of the following:

- ▶ Number of students who maintained "C" or above or improved their overall grade in a related subject; or number of students who maintained on-grade level score or improved their scores on a teacher administered skills test.
- ▶ Number of students with an improved attitude toward reading and literacy.
- ▶ Number of students with an increased interest pursuing reading or literacy-based activities.
- ▶ Number of students who have increased the amount of time they read outside of school.

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Be Ready to Report on Expenditures

▶ All funds should be spent by February 27, 2026. An online short survey verifying total funds spent will be required at that time.

▶ Your Expenditure Reporting will be completed online in the Spring as part of your Final Evaluation Report due Friday, April 17, 2026.

▶ Work with your bookkeeper to secure a detailed report of all your expended funds. This report will be uploaded as a part of your Final Evaluation Report.

    ▶ If you're not able to secure a detailed report from your bookkeeper, a detailed purchase summary and copies of all receipts will be required.

▶ Keep your receipts for every purchase. While you may not be required to submit your receipts with your Final Evaluation Report, please keep these receipts for at least a year in case they are ever needed for an audit.

▶ Because The Foundation has to report on the impact of all projects to our program funders, failure to submit expenditure report by the required date may disqualify your school from funding for at least one year.

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Grants for Great Ideas – Making An Impact

➢ "My 6th-graders had the **opportunity to explore hands-on**, sustainable farming through our new aquaponics system. This project **sparked curiosity**, **taught responsibility**, and **connected students to real-world science** in a meaningful way. These contributions helped shape the next generation of agricultural innovators. Thank you for making that possible!"

   - STEM GFGI Recipient Cara Maiden

➢ "Thank you so much for helping to fund this reading program! I was able to offer many **additional reading resources** to our classroom to **meet the needs of the growing readers**! THANK YOU! Additionally, some of these **resources can continue to be utilized** by readers in future years."

   - ELA GFGI Recipient Patria Slaughter

➢ "There are no words to thank you enough for what you've brought to our students. We have **uncovered hidden talents** in many of our kids that even they didn't know they had. This has been an **amazing experience for both students and staff**. We are looking forward to continuing this project for years to come. Thank you so much!!!!"

   - Arts GFGI Recipient Michele Oliver

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2024 – 2025 SCHOOL YEAR

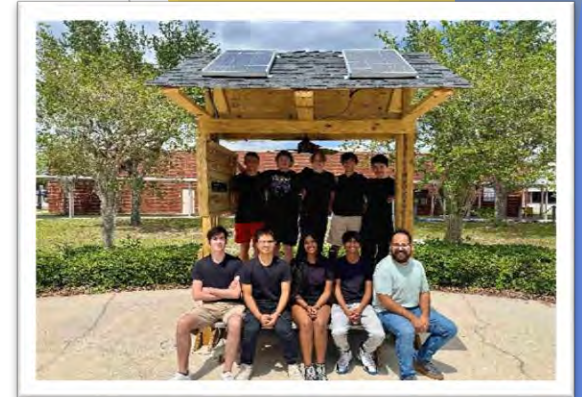**$65,967 Awarded**
47 Projects
31 Schools
182 Teachers Impacted
19,867 Students Impacted

- 91% of students maintained "C" or above or improved overall grade or scores in the related subjects.
- 62% of students increased interest in STEM-related activities outside of course work.
- 69% of students improved attitude toward reading and literacy.
- 93% of survey students maintained or increased interest in art interest in art topics and interest in pursuing artistic endeavors, careers, and majors.
- 100% of teachers reported a positive experience with the program.

Grants for Great Ideas – YOU Can Do It!

➤ "Honestly, I'm **not sure why it took me so long to apply** for a grant, **but I'm so glad I finally did**. Thank you again for making this opportunity available to teachers like me."

➤ "**This program is truly one of a kind**. I very **proudly display the GFGI sign** that was presented to me in my classroom as a **reminder of the amazing things that can happen in our classrooms** with supportive communities such as ours."

➤ "The GFGI program is an **exceptional opportunity for teachers** to enact enrichment **projects that further student learning** in a rich and varied environment."

➤ "I am so appreciative of GFGI. The **program and requirements are very clearly presented**, and the **staff was very helpful (and patient)** with any questions I had."

➤ "The GFGI program is truly **a gift to educators and students alike**. It provides a meaningful way for **schools to access high-quality resources that would otherwise be out of reach due** to budget limitations."

➤ "This is a wonderful way for **teachers to think outside the box for different ways we can impact students**. This is all possible because of the Foundation providing us with the means to make it happen."

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Making Your Project Stand Out: What does Review Committee *like* to see?

▶ **Thorough Plans** – A detailed, thought through plan gives the committee more confidence you will be able to complete the project you're proposing. Not everyone on the committee is from an education background so please explain any educational acronyms or jargon.

▶ **Detailed Budgets** – Try to specify your purchase plans as much as possible to show you've done your research and justify you need the amount requested. You may also want to provide links to unique, subject specific, or technological purchases. The more information the better but we understand this is an estimated budget for planning purposes and purchase costs and materials may vary as a program is implemented.

▶ **Collaboration and Sharing of Resources** – The committee loves to see if you're able to collaborate with other teachers or share the resources/lessons learned when possible. This can be during your project or after.

▶ **Lasting Impact** – If possible, they like to see if a project can be repeated or if technology and/or materials can be used the following year(s).

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Looking for Inspiration?

Past recipients share their Guides for Great Ideas

Ready to Get Started?

GFGI Application Template and Question Resource (Word doc)
GFGI 2025-2026 Budget Form
GFGI 2025-2026 Online Application

HELPFUL LINKS

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Good luck and we look forward to seeing your Great Ideas put into action!

Questions along the way? Contact Missy Mercado
at 407.320.0119 or mercadmz@scps.k12.fl.us