



August 1, 2025

Dear HSE Faculty and Staff,

The mission of Hamilton Southeastern Education Foundation (HSEF) is to enhance educational opportunities, inspire excellence and engage the community to foster a legacy of achievement. HSEF was formed in 2001 to benefit every student, every grade, every school within HSE Schools. One of the ways we support our mission is through grant opportunities that provide resources and create opportunities to bring the next best practices in education to our students and staff.

Faculty and staff should follow HSEF on [Facebook](#), [X](#), [Instagram](#) and [LinkedIn](#) (@hsefoundation) for new funding opportunities as well as deadline reminders. HSEF is planning the following grant opportunities for the 2025-26 school year:

- HSEF Fall staff grants: Application deadline is Thursday, September 18, 2025.
- HSEF Spring staff and student grants: Application deadline is Thursday, December 18, 2025. (*Tentative*)

All grant applications are accepted online at www.hsefoundation.org/grants. Applicants are strongly encouraged to review guidelines below and/or connect with Foundation representatives to ensure your desired project is eligible for funding.

HSEF can also help in other philanthropic areas. For example, HSEF maintains a list of community-based funders on our website. We can often assist in the identification and submission of proposals to external funders, as well as the provision of grant writing training. Finally, HSEF can help you establish a scholarship, provide service hours to students, assist with relationship building with the business community, or aid with lesson planning around community service and philanthropy. You may reach us at HSEFoundation@hse.k12.in.us for more information.

Thank you all you do on behalf of our students and our community.

Sincerely,

Justin Hirnisey
Executive Director
jhirnisey@hse.k12.in.us

Kristen Wolf
Director of Programs and Communications
kristenwolf@hse.k12.in.us

Jeena Siela
Grants Committee Chair



OVERVIEW

Since its inception in 2001, the Hamilton Southeastern Education Foundation (HSEF) has served the Hamilton Southeastern Schools community by supplementing state and local funding to support innovative programs that enhance educational growth.

After each application deadline the selection committee, composed of teachers, district administrators, and community leaders, meets to determine recipients. This committee uses a combination of objective and subjective criteria including sustainability, student impact, educational value, and innovation/creativity when evaluating grant applications. Applications that clearly meet more criteria will generally be viewed more favorably during evaluation. In some instances, HSEF cannot fund requests due to budgetary constraints. This does not always mean that a rejected application is inappropriate or unsatisfactory.

Projects funded by HSEF have varied from a few hundred to \$75,000, though an average classroom grant is around \$2,000.

GRANT GUIDELINES

ELIGIBILITY, PREFERENCES, RESTRICTIONS, AND CONDITIONS:

Funding is only available to projects impacting HSE schools, staff and students and must be submitted and led by a current HSE employee. There is no limit on the number of proposals or awards a faculty/staff member may submit or receive. Similarly, there is no limit on the number of awards an individual school or department may receive. However, past grant recipients must complete and submit their final grant report from their original awarded project by the listed due date in order to be eligible to apply for a new grant.

HSEF is seeking the best new ideas in education in any number of disciplines including, but not limited to, STEM, literacy, social justice, mental health, fitness, civics education, special education, and physical space. HSEF funding supports all 22 local schools, central office, and departments such as school nursing, school counseling, food services, and transportation.

In general, high value criteria include innovation, creativity, educational value, student impact, sustainability, and the ability to leverage community support and funding.



As of Fall 2025, HSEF does NOT provide funding for the following:

- Apparel
- Food/drinks for parties or meetings
- Story walks
- Playgrounds
- Flexible Seating
- iPads/computers/TVs
- Benches
- Landscape/concrete work
- Greenhouses
- Sensory/calming rooms and/or materials
- Incentives or monetary prizes
- Basic classroom or student needs including books without an innovative program
- Courses taken by staff for credit toward a degree or advanced salary schedule
- Professional Development
- Compensation and benefits for employees or students
- Travel Expenses (including field trips)
- Student Club Expenses
- A repeat request for a previous project

Additionally,

- Decodable book sets must first be discussed/approved through Dr. Danielle Thompson
- ENL translation materials must first be discussed/approved through Danielle Riego

NOTE: The committee will not fund new awards to individuals who have not completed the appropriate reporting or other requirements of previous awards.

APPLICATION:

Applications are accepted online via www.hsefoundation.org. Applicants will likely be required to submit the following information. Note: the online system does not generate a copy of the proposal. If applicants want to retain a copy, they are encouraged to write their proposal in Word and then copy and paste the information into the appropriate fields. Applicants should notify his/her Principal/Supervisor of the project and intended proposal and secure support.

1. Project Director: An application may be prepared by any Hamilton Southeastern Schools' employee or group of employees. While multiple staff members can participate, there can only be one project director. The project director will be responsible for all communication with HSEF, as well as the management, reporting and implementation of the project.

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2. Abstract: Brief, succinct overview of the project, including the estimated number of students directly impacted. If awarded, this will serve as your project description online, in press releases, and in recognition spots (i.e. social media, HSEF website, presented to the HSE School Board).

3. Project Need: Describe the need for the proposed project. Include any information about the purpose of the project along with key goals and/or rationale that the project will enhance the learning environment, promote academic excellence or enhance the student experience. Explain what current learning standard, school improvement plan goal, or district initiative this request correlates to and how the project will support it.

4. Innovation: Describe how this project is innovative. *This section is heavily weighted.* Consider how is this project different from current practices? How does the project help serve students in a new way? Can this project serve as a pilot to other educators, schools, etc.?

5. Project Activities: Include a timeline of your action steps. This section should include not only critical steps toward success, but target dates and responsible parties. Please include how and when you will announce the award and project to your school community, the district, and the public.

6. Evaluation: How will you evaluate the success of this program? Consider both qualitative and quantitative methods.

7. Budget: Applicants need to include a total cost of the project as well as a total amount requested from HSEF. The budget should include an itemized list of project expenses. This list should be inclusive of direct project expenditures as well as indirect expenses. Applicants should also identify any funding that is or could be available from other sources.

8. Technology and Facility Approval: We recognize that many applications will incorporate technology and/or facilities into existing curriculum. For proposals that utilize these resources, approval from Jeff Harrison and/or Lisa Hogenkamp must be secured. There is a section of the proposal that can support this request. In addition to completing the recommender request section within the application, applicants must connect with Jeff Harrison and/or Lisa Hogenkamp via email to explain project elements.



FUNDS:

Faculty and Staff may apply for funding from one or more of the following sources:

- HSEF Fall Grant Fund – Grant proposals are due by 11:59pm on Thursday, September 18th, 2025
- HSEF Spring Grant Fund – Application deadline is tentatively Thursday, December 18, 2025. Staff or students working with an HSE staff member who acts as a mentor to create an idea, research the process/materials, create a proposal, and implement funded projects can apply.
- Restricted Funds – HSEF administers several restricted funds. These funds tend to be discipline specific (i.e. Civics Education, wellness, Mental Health). Faculty and staff are encouraged to follow HSEF online, visit the website, or contact HSEF staff to learn about the availability of these funds.

AWARD REQUIREMENTS AND EXPECTATIONS:

Written notification of decisions will generally occur within six (6) weeks, and all applicants (both those awarded and those declined) will be notified. Grant recipients will also be publicized on the HSEF website and likely via press release, school-based recognition and other communication methods.

HSEF expects that an applicant will begin the project as soon as possible and as described in the application. Details regarding how to access your funds will be included in your award letter. Modifications to the project and/or the budget may only be made after written approval has been secured.

Funds awarded will be available for use only during the project period referenced in the award letter, which shall generally not exceed one school calendar year. After this time, the remaining balance will be forfeit. In unusual circumstances, HSEF may, at its discretion, extend the project period of an active grant in response to a written application.

Goods and services purchased with funds from HSEF become the property of the Hamilton Southeastern School Corporation. In the event a teacher moves from one Hamilton Southeastern School to another; the departing school principal may request that the grant materials remain at the original school.



Awardees agree to notify your classroom and school community of the project and use a recognition statement similar to the following in all printed materials and publicity about your project: “This project has been made possible by the Hamilton Southeastern Education Foundation (HSEF).” As appropriate label project materials with “Provided by the Hamilton Southeastern Education Foundation (HSEF).”

All awardees are required to submit a Post Grant Report within one year of the award. This helps HSEF track outcomes, celebrate success, and make recommendations to other educators based on your work.

PUBLIC RELATIONS AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:

All awardees are expected to be active ambassadors for HSEF. You are why we exist! Celebrating your efforts and success will help attract and retain supporters of HSE Schools. Following all district requirements, to the extent possible, create public awareness about your grant. Public awareness assists the Foundation in generating additional funds to reinvest in future grants:

- Follow HSEF on social media – specifically Facebook, Twitter/X and Instagram. Tag the Foundation (@HSEFoundation) when announcing your award and throughout your project. Use photos and video when possible.
- Make sure to announce your grant in classroom newsletters, e-newsletters, Skyward, Canvas, the school’s newsletter, school’s daily announcements or other sources.
- Assist HSEF in providing information in a timely manner for press releases or website features as requested and appropriate. You may be asked to present your project to the HSEF Board of Directors and/or the HSE School Board.
- Help HSEF promote activities that raise funds for educators – specifically Mudsock VIP (September), Giving Tuesday (November), and Legacy Celebration (February).
- Post recognition e-mail signature and signage (provided) outside of your classroom.