

## Interested in grant writing? 7 Smart Tips

If you are looking to bring additional funds into your school through grant writing, take a look at these tips (excerpted from *Education Grants Alert*, Susan Bacon)

- Understand your skills.** Writing grants is similar to doing lesson plans because you have objectives, outcomes, goals, and data, and you have to know how to measure results and talk about them. You have to be able to tell the story.
- Obtain backing.** Before you plan to tackle a grant proposal or even begin looking for opportunities, you need to get the backing of your administrative team. The principal is the one who is going to be signing off on the grant application.
- Gather information.** The information you need to submit will vary by grant and the kind of programs at the site. Some key pieces of information that you can gather ahead of time and place into a folder to have ready include demographic data, free and reduced school lunch rates, test scores, school population, etc.
- Think sustainable.** Think about looking for funding for projects or programs that are sustainable and that keep on going once the money is done. You've got to be able to show how you can sustain the project. "I would strongly recommend that you already have a program in place at least two to three years where you have good results," said consultant Susan Bacon. "You don't do a start-up and then go ask for money because the funder is going to want to see proven results."
- Show impact.** You need to show the impact your program is making.
- Match needs.** To find a grant that your school is eligible for, you need to look at both your needs and the funder's needs. Look at what the funder says it is going to fund, and don't stretch it. For example, if a funder says it will fund an afterschool program for grades 1-3 focusing on literacy rate for EL students, don't just plug in any other student groups or any other grades. Make sure what you are doing exactly fits what the funder says they will fund.
- Start small.** Don't try to attempt a big grant on your first grant writing foray; do something simple with an established program. After you have a proven success rate, then you consider going after larger grants.