

Grant Writing Tips

Occasionally the Ministry of Education and other organizations put out requests for proposals for funding for school related projects. In the past these projects have included monies for student involvement, parent involvement, and health promotion. DSB Ontario North East schools and Parent Councils have benefited from many of these grants. To help your parent council, school or students tap these sources of funding we've put together this brief list of grant writing tips.

- **Read the project guidelines carefully.** Follow them exactly. Sounds simple but many grant proposals fail to meet written guidelines, making it very easy for funders to turn down these proposals. Your goal should be to make it as difficult as possible for an organization to deny your request. If your project doesn't quite fit the guidelines, altering the project to make it fit will exponentially increase your chances of success.
- **Understand the Purpose.** What is the underlying theme of the grant? Ensure that your grant proposal reflects this theme. If the theme is increasing parental involvement, be sure that your proposal is designed to increase parental involvement. And be sure your written proposal accurately reflects this theme. Great intentions are of little use if they're not communicated to those who will judge your funding request.
- **Create a team.** Get someone to act as researcher, writer and proofreader. Work together to brainstorm ideas.
- **Be Realistic.** Know how much time and effort your project will involve. Know that everyone who needs to be on board with your idea is on board. Have a detailed budget and a plan to evaluate your project once it is complete. Don't be afraid to reach for the sky... just be sure you know what you're going to do with it once you have it!
- **Use your experts.** Have a parent who is a writer or editor? Ask them to help. Writing a proposal for a health related grant? Tap into the wealth of knowledge health professionals can provide. Ask them to vet your proposal or to make suggestions.
- **Watch your words.** Choose your words carefully. Check for spelling, grammar and flow. They matter. An easily read funding proposal that

is clear, concise and free of errors is much more likely to be successful than one that is poorly written.

- **Get a second read.** Have someone who is not involved with the project read your proposal for clarity. If it doesn't make sense to them, chances are it won't make sense to the people who will decide whether or not to fund your project.
- **Keep copies of EVERYTHING.** Most organizations will require you to follow up with a report once the project is finished. Although this can be as simple as filling out an online form, it will be much easier to complete if you have your original research and proposal on hand.
- **Don't be discouraged.** Even if your project is a great idea and your proposal is perfect you may be turned down. Most organizations possess limited funds and are forced to turn down many worthwhile projects. Just file it away for next time and wait for the next call for proposals.