



Express Grants fund **innovative ideas and experiences** that will enhance academic and social emotional learning beyond what is supported by the District or individual building budgets. Approved grants are funded for the **current school year** and have a **\$1000 limit**.

NEF's goal is to fund new and innovative projects. Due to the high number of recent grants which funded ukuleles and calming corners, grants will not be considered for these items in the 25–26 school year.

WHO CAN APPLY:

- All grants must be initiated by a District 203 staff member or student and support at least one D203 school
 - Student submissions must be approved and supervised by a teacher and/or administrator who must serve as the grant lead.
 - High-value parent engagement programs are considered providing the Principal or staff member is the originator and oversees implementation.
- Grant writers can submit a maximum of 3 Express Grant submissions per school year.

GRANTS MUST BE:

- Original, creative and/or innovative
- Approved by the school's Principal
- Aligned to your school's Improvement Plan and/or to a curricular area, learning standard, and/or high-value need, and/or District Comprehensive Equity Plan and/or Focus 203 Strategic Blueprint
- Up to \$1,000 in value
- For implementation in the current school year

PROCESS AND TIMELINE

- Apply online. Drafts may be saved and edited as needed before submission.
- Applications submitted by the 15th of each month will be notified of approval or denial by the last day of that same month.
- Each application is reviewed by a committee of NEF volunteers and District personnel.
- Evaluation criteria are listed on the next page.
- Grant applications are accepted each school year until the NEF Express Grant budget is exhausted.
- All grant recipients will be asked to:
 - Submit a summary of the grant and its impact within 30 days of implementation.
 - Share information about the NEF-funded grant with the school community, such as through a Talk 203 email.
- Materials funded by the grant become property of the school where the grant originated and not the property of any individual or group.
- Unused grant funds are returned to NEF.

GRANT REQUESTS MAY **NOT** INCLUDE:

- Items covered by the District or individual building budgets
- Curricular materials or resources (e.g., books, school supplies, computers, occupational or physical therapy aids)
- **Books** – Due to the district's recent investment in literacy curriculum, requests for books will not be funded
- Furniture (e.g., classroom seating, desks, tables)
- Fundraising efforts (e.g., clubs, other non-profits, or for individuals)
- Professional development for staff
- Salaries (e.g., Naperville 203 staff)
- Storage materials (e.g., bookshelves, organizers, rolling carts)
- Transportation (e.g., vehicle rentals, fares, or fuel)

If you have questions about your proposal meeting the above guidelines, please reach out to Jayne Willard, Melissa McHenry or Chuck Freundt, NEF Express Grant District Representatives.

Express Grants Evaluation Rubric

NEF Mission: NEF encourages **creativity, innovation and excellence** in our students by helping to ensure that every Naperville 203 student can take advantage of opportunities that make the most of their education.

Area	Not evident 0 points	Weak 1 point	Satisfactory 2 points	Excellent 3 points
A. Project Summary Required elements: 1. Defines the high-value need 2. Highlights the direct benefit to students 3. Specifies the materials and costs needed to fulfill the grant	Does not address all required elements	Addresses all required elements, but lacks details	Addresses all required elements in a clear and detailed manner	Addresses all the required elements in a clear and detailed manner, and makes a compelling case
B. Connect project to one or more school or District initiative(s): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Improvement Plan</u> • Curricular area • Learning standard • High-value need • <u>Comprehensive Equity Plan</u> • <u>Focus 203 Strategic Blueprint</u> 	Not addressed or does not connect to a specific school or District program	Connects project with school or District goals, but lacks details	Clearly describes connection, citing specific school and/or District goals	Clearly describes connection, citing specific school and/or District goals, and makes a compelling case
C. Grant's alignment to NEF Mission to encourage "creativity, innovation and excellence"	Not addressed or does not align	Alignment to mission lacks clarity	Clearly describes alignment to NEF mission	Clearly describes alignment and advances the NEF mission
D. Grant implementation	Not addressed	Plan lacks clarity and/or is not reasonable	Plan is complete, concise and reasonable	Plan is complete, concise and reasonable, and includes plans to kick-start, maintain and track quantifiable and/or qualifiable outcomes
E. Grant duration	Not addressed	Duration lacks clarity and/or is not reasonable	Includes specific start and stop dates	Includes specific start and stop dates, and implications for extension and expansion
F. Budget	Missing	Budget exceeds \$1,000 limit, has inaccuracies, unjustified expenses, excluded items and/or missing URLs	Budget equals no more than \$1,000, is accurate and includes URLs for each item	Budget equals no more than \$1,000, is accurate and includes URLs for each item. The budget is comprehensive and all items are justified
G. Relation to previous grants	This item will not be scored, but if the author has submitted this grant or a similar one in the past, they should explain in a compelling manner why this proposal is of high-value to the school.			
H. Project evaluation	Missing	Evaluation is weak, lacking specific details	Evaluation is clear, detailed and reasonable	Evaluation is clear, detailed and reasonable, and defines qualitative and quantitative connections to addressing the need

Revised 08.15.25