



REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

**Commitment to Excellence in Science, Technology,
Engineering and Mathematics (STEM)**

GRANT APPLICATION

COMPETITION #17 / 2026-2027 Cycle

**As funded by Act 529 of 2001 through the Arkansas
Committed to Education Foundation and
administered by The Arkansas STEM Coalition
(ACEF License Plate Funds)**

APPLICATION DUE DATES

- **APPLICATIONS AVAILABLE: Saturday, August 1, 2026**
- **APPLICATIONS DUE: Friday, September 18, 2026, by 5:00 PM**
- **FUNDING NOTIFICATION DATE: Monday, October 5, 2026**
- **FINAL REPORTS DUE: Wednesday, June 30, 2027, by 5:00 PM**

Electronic Submission only (except for parts indicated) to:

Grants@ArkansasSTEMCoalition.com

Commitment to Excellence in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Grant

The Arkansas STEM Coalition is requesting applications for the Commitment to Excellence in STEM Grant to promote STEM education in Arkansas's K-6 classrooms. The purpose of the Commitment to Excellence in STEM Grant is to help bridge the technology divide that exists in Arkansas public schools, particularly in schools serving Kindergarten through sixth grades, by recognizing schools through technology-based incentives.

Funding for these grants is made available through the sale of special "Committed to Education" license plates that are offered by the Arkansas Department of Finance & Administration and are purchased by Arkansas vehicle owners each year. A portion of the funds received for each license plate are deposited with the Arkansas Committed to Education Fund (ACEF). ACEF has partnered with The Arkansas STEM Coalition to create and administer the Commitment to Excellence in STEM Grant program in order to disburse the license plate funds collected to deserving schools. In keeping with the original purpose of the funding in Act 529 of 2001, the Arkansas STEM Coalition has developed a grant process to distribute the funds. Each year, The Arkansas STEM Coalition releases a Request for Application that sets out that year's available funding, eligible entities, grant parameters, deadlines, and application requirements.

The amount of funding available for each cycle will be equal to the amount received by The Arkansas STEM Coalition from ACEF the prior July 1-June 30 that is earmarked for grant funding, plus any funds that were not awarded from the previous cycle. For the 2026-2027 cycle, this includes grant funds received from July 1, 2025-June 30, 2026 of \$105,800.00 plus unawarded amount of \$6,345.20 from the 2025-2026 cycle, for a total available of \$112,145.20.

Applications will be reviewed and scored using a consistent rubric, which is attached to the application, with applicants scoring based on various eligibility and demographic criteria as well as the quality of their applications. Awards will be announced based on the stated schedule, with the amounts and names of grantees made public. NOTE: Any application scoring below 70.00 points will not be funded. The equipment and materials purchased with grant funds will be used by Arkansas students during hands-on learning activities in order to develop better knowledge of and a deeper understanding of concepts in the sciences, mathematics, technology, engineering, and other STEM subjects. Professional Development (PD) may be secured by the applying entities in order to increase the teachers' content and instructional skills in the STEM areas needed to fully utilize the equipment and materials purchased with grant funds. PD may be provided at the school site, in the student classrooms, and/or offsite.

Applications will be accepted from the following eligible entities:

- ALL public schools in Arkansas that serve Kindergarten, first, second, third, fourth, fifth, and/or sixth grades are eligible to apply, either as individual schools, through a public school district (on behalf of an eligible school), or through a STEM Center (on behalf of an eligible school).
- Only ONE application per school will be accepted, regardless of the applying entity.
- Each public school included in an application must teach at least one of the following grades: Kindergarten, first, second, third, fourth, fifth, or sixth. Public schools teaching at least one of these grades are eligible, regardless of other grades taught or not taught at that school.
- The below University STEM Centers are eligible to apply, on behalf of a public school or district:
 - A-State Delta STEM Education Center (Arkansas State University)
 - A-State Rural STEM Education Center (Arkansas State University)

- ATU STEM Education Collaborative (Arkansas Tech University)
- Lewis “Tony” Finley STEM Center (Harding University)
- The STEM Center at Henderson State University (Henderson State University)
- SAU STEM Center for K-12 Education (Southern Arkansas University)
- STEM Education Center (University of Arkansas at Fort Smith)
- UA Little Rock STEM Education Center (University of Arkansas at Little Rock)
- UAM STEM Center (University of Arkansas at Monticello)
- Mathematics and Science Pre-College Center (University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff)
- UCA Institute for STEM Professional Development and Education Research (University of Central Arkansas)
- NO entity will be eligible to apply if they have unspent funds from prior year awards that have not yet been returned to OR if they have any outstanding report(s) due to The Arkansas STEM Coalition. Once all funds have been fully spent and accounted for (or returned) and once all reports have been submitted and accepted, entities may become immediately eligible as long as all other eligibility requirements are met.

NOTE: If you represent a STEM Center housed at an institution of higher education in Arkansas and would like to become an eligible entity, please email us at Grants@ArkansasSTEMCoalition.com or call us at 501-425-2626.

Award Limits:

- The total amount of funding available for the 2026-2027 funding cycle is \$112,145.20. The amount of actual funds awarded and/or spent may be slightly less or slightly more, in the sole discretion of The Arkansas STEM Coalition, based on a variety of factors. Any funds from this cycle that are not disbursed may be rolled over to the 2027-2028 funding cycle.
- The lowest scoring limit for funded applications is 70.00 points. Any application scoring below 70.00 points WILL NOT be funded, regardless of the funding amount available.
- Schools must be individually eligible, and each school should submit a separate application.
- There is no minimum request amount.
- There is no maximum request amount for districts or STEM Centers; HOWEVER, the maximum requested amount per school is \$10,000.00. This is not an average of schools applying from your district or through a STEM Center! Each school’s individual budget request may not exceed \$10,000.00, including professional development (whether itemized costs or taken as a Professional Development Consulting Fee).
- Each school’s budget request may include up to 15% of the total award (up to \$1,500 if requesting the maximum award of \$10,000) to provide Professional Development, which should be reflected in the budget. Please note:
 - This does not mean you can request \$10,000 in equipment plus \$1,500 for professional development. The entire budget request must not exceed \$10,000.
 - The only way to get the full \$1,500 for PD is to ask for the full \$10,000 award with \$1,500 for PD and \$8,500 in equipment.
 - You can calculate the maximum amount you can request for PD by filling in the highlighted cells on the second tab of the budget spreadsheet (Calculate PD).
- You do not have to request funds to provide PD, but you will need to explain why you aren’t asking for funding. If you don’t need PD at all, you will also need to explain that.
- If you are requesting 10.00% or less of your total amount for PD, this is considered what we call a PD Consulting Fee. If you are doing this, you will need to show that PD was completed, but you

DO NOT have to itemize expenses on your budget. In addition, you will not need to provide receipts showing purchase/expenditures for each item. The highest allowable amount for a PD Consulting Fee is 10.00% of the total request (up to \$1,000 if requesting \$9,000 in equipment).

- If more than 10.00% of the total amount is being requested for PD, the budget must include an itemized list of expenses, and final reports will be required to itemize these expenses and provide receipts showing purchase/expenditures for each item. You will also need to show that PD was completed. Itemized PD funding may not exceed 15.00% of the total request (up to \$1,500 if requesting \$8,500 in equipment).

Provisions:

- Schools that have not been awarded this grant in the past – or who have not received it recently, whether individually or through STEM Centers, will be awarded points on a sliding scale during the scoring process, as indicated in the included scoring rubric.
- Funds awarded for materials and/or equipment must be used to purchase materials and/or equipment that directly affects student learning in STEM areas. Examples of items allowed include lab equipment (i.e. microscopes, proscopes, beakers etc.), science kits which include equipment and resources, technology equipment or software (i.e. netbooks, probeware, GPS, etc.), mathematics manipulatives, makerspace supplies and equipment, robotics equipment and kits. These are examples; specific materials and equipment must be listed in a proposed budget included in the application.
- Software and software subscriptions ARE allowed, if needed to access curriculum materials, software, etc., but if subscription is for a limited amount of time, preference may be given to applications requesting items that can be used for longer periods of time.
- Consumable materials are allowed, but priority may be given to projects that provide lasting, durable materials and/or equipment that will be used over multiple years.
- Items that will not be used during the grant period will not be allowed.
- Items that do not pertain to the project(s) discussed in Project Narrative will not be allowed.
- Purchases that are NOT allowed include, but are not limited to:
 - Field trips
 - Competition entry fees
 - Any intangible item(s) other than software subscriptions needed to access curriculum
 - Items that will be exclusively used by students who are not in K-6 (sharing is okay)
 - Paying salaries or consulting fees that are not PD-related (i.e. you MAY pay somebody to conduct PD, but not the cost of hiring a substitute to cover for a teacher attending PD)
 - Indirect Costs
- Funds awarded for professional development may be used to:
 - purchase and/or reproduce professional development and/or teacher training materials, such as books, handouts, manuals, etc.
 - pay registration fees for instructors to attend professional development classes, conferences, and/or workshops.
 - pay instructors to provide professional development classes, conferences, and/or workshops, including hourly costs and mileage.
 - pay actual mileage expenses incurred to attend professional development. Mileage should be paid at the State of Arkansas rate at the time the travel is made. A template for mileage reimbursement will be provided, but any invoice for mileage may be used that includes: date(s) of travel, starting and ending odometer readings for each trip (using a trip meter is acceptable), starting and ending address(es), and reason for travel.

Invoices based on mileage estimates WILL NOT be acceptable. Do NOT attach Google Map/MapQuest directions to invoice in lieu of actual mileage. Reimbursement will not exceed budgeted amount, regardless of if reimbursement rate changes over time.

- pay other approved costs, which must be explained and described in the application and approved as part of the award. If you have questions about allowable costs, email Grants@ArkansasSTEMCoalition.com, or call 501-425-2626.
- Grants will be awarded on a competitive basis, with scores compiled through a uniform scoring rubric, a copy of which is attached to this application. Scoring will be based on the application each school submits, with weight and/or points given to schools that show evidence that:
 - They have not received the grant in the past, or, if schools have received the grant in the past, scores will be given on a sliding scale based on how long ago the grant was received, with schools that have never received the grant (or have not received it recently) receiving the most points, and schools that have received the grant most recently receiving no points.
 - Schools are uniquely in need, particularly that funding is unlikely without this grant. Scoring will be weighted based on each school's Low Income/Free & Reduced Lunch percentage, School Letter Grade, and ATLAS Math-Combined and Science-Combined scores. ADE data from 2024-25 is used for scoring, as it is the most recent comprehensively available data.
 - The equipment purchased will serve multiple grades and larger percentages of students.
 - The equipment and materials purchased are lasting and durable, and will be used over multiple years.
- NOTE that, while extremely valuable skills, critical thinking, working in groups, creativity, creating things, hands-on learning, project-based learning, collaboration, etc. **ARE NOT SPECIFIC STEM SKILLS**. They may be utilized or learned through STEM learning projects, but talking about them – in and of themselves – is not going to get you a top score on your Project Narrative. Same goes for GT standards, classes, and projects.
- Any application scoring below 70.00 points will not be funded.
- Individual schools will be scored and awarded separately, regardless of the Applying Entity. Therefore, a district or STEM Center may apply on behalf of three schools, but zero, one, two, or three schools may be awarded grant funds based on each school's individual application score.
- Funds awarded will be distributed to the applying entity – an individual school, a school district, or a STEM Center – unless the applying entity and The Arkansas STEM Coalition agree to have items purchased directly by The Arkansas STEM Coalition.
- Provisions for The Arkansas STEM Coalition to purchase materials and/or equipment, and to have it delivered to schools, will be agreed upon at the time awards are accepted by the applying entities, and may be subject to a written grant agreement between the entity and The Arkansas STEM Coalition. This agreement may include limited vendors and other factors and/or parameters that are more limiting than listed in this RFA.

Things that will get your application disqualified (as in, we will NOT read it and we will NOT score it):

- Asking for more than \$10,000 per school, including professional development (\$10,000 is the limit for each individual school – NOT an average per school!)
- Asking for more than 15.00% of award for professional development
- "Signatures" that are typed or e-signed rather than handwritten. **NO ELECTRONIC/E-signatures will be accepted no matter the reason! Scans of handwritten signatures are okay.**
- Not turning in – or not having correct signature(s) on – a Grant Assurance Form

- Not turning in – or not having correct signature on – a Letter of Support from your Superintendent (required for ALL applications)
- Turning in ANY part of the application late. Late means an application is received after 5:00 PM on September 18, 2026, no matter what. Absolutely no exceptions for any reason whatsoever.
- Sending Zip files or sending Google Drive, Dropbox other shared access links.
- Sending a combined application that can't be opened in Microsoft Word or PDF reader. Our advice is to download the application in a Word file, complete it, save as a PDF or print to PDF, then submit that file, which must be emailed. Signature pages may be attached or sent separately, but are preferred to be included in the PDF. Budget MUST be submitted separately.
- Not sending budget as a separate Excel file. The budget template must be filled out and attached separately as an Excel file – NOT as part of the combined application PDF.
- If we note certain things on your application during pre-scoring, we may not fully evaluate and score the application if it is clear that it will not be competitive. The lowest score for funded applications is 70.00 points. Any application scoring below 70.00 points will not be funded.

IMPORTANT NOTES AND RANDOM TIPS:

- Read all of the instructions carefully. Then read them again and make sure you follow them.
- Submit a separate application for EACH school. This is NEW, and is meant to lessen confusion.
- ANY type of teacher/class may apply for this grant. However, you must relate your project to STEM education and list STEM standards in your application.
- Sign up and attend an info session!!! We can't recommend this highly enough. Visit <https://arkansasstemcoalition.com/programs/excellence-in-stem-grant/apply-for-excellence-in-stem-education-grant/> to find and sign up for an info session.
- DO NOT LEAVE ANYTHING BLANK. If any information is missing, you WILL lose points. If the information does not exist – i.e. you don't have a direct work number – type N/A as the answer.
- NOTE AGAIN that, while extremely valuable skills, critical thinking, working in groups, creativity, creating things, hands-on learning, project-based learning, collaboration, etc. **ARE NOT SPECIFIC STEM SKILLS**. They may be utilized or learned through STEM learning projects, but talking about them – in and of themselves – is not going to get you a top score on your Project Narrative. Same goes for GT standards, classes, and projects.
- We don't need to be convinced about how important funding is for STEM education – we know! In the Project Narrative, we want to know **why** you don't already have this funding, not just that you don't have the funding. This should be complete, but doesn't have to be complicated.
- Most people reviewing your application are NOT educators! They are volunteer professionals working in all types of STEM careers. Do NOT use language or acronyms they may not understand. If you do, you may lose points because they don't know what you mean.
- Be sure that your budget and items being purchased makes sense. For instance, if you say that you are serving 25 kids, your budget should not include purchasing 50 sets of headphones unless you explain why each student needs to use two sets of headphones at a time.
- Use the checklist to ensure that you have included all parts of the application.
- DON'T ASK WHEN AWARDS WILL BE ANNOUNCED. THEY WILL BE ANNOUNCED AT SOME POINT ON THE SCHEDULED DAY. If you do not get an email on that day, email or call the DAY AFTER.

APPLICATION CHECKLIST

Use this checklist to make sure that you have included ALL parts of your application.

Part 1. A Single Combined File – send a Word or PDF ONLY. Name the file your school's name. Include:

- ☐ Cover Sheet (ALL Applications)
- ☐ STEM Center Information Sheet (ONLY for STEM Center Applications)
- ☐ District Information Sheet (ALL Applications)
- ☐ School Information Sheet (ALL Applications)
- ☐ Project Information Sheet (ALL Applications)
- ☐ Project Timeline & Standards (ALL Applications)
- ☐ Project Narrative (ALL Applications)
- ☐ Grant Assurance Form SIGNED BY APPROPRIATE PARTIES (ALL Applications – see list on form)
- ☐ Superintendent Support Letters SIGNED BY SUPERINTENDENT (ALL Applications)

NOTE: If needed, Grant Assurance and/or Superintendent Support Letter MAY be sent as separate documents or sent under separate cover. **No typed or e-signatures; handwritten signature ONLY.**

Part 2. Budget Spreadsheet – send an Excel file – NO PDFs. MUST use provided budget template:

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1rW2r033huAfyo1GGCxBuLTRwqCSFtxJb/edit?usp=drive_li&nk&oid=105823191452574736949&rtpof=true&sd=true & ATTACH AS A SEPARATE EXCEL FILE, not a PDF. Name the file your school's name. Include:

- ☐ Expense Budget Spreadsheet (MUST USE EXCEL TEMPLATE & ATTACH SEPARATELY AS AN EXCEL DOCUMENT, NOT A PDF)

The **completed application** package should include two files:

- 1) a single combined file (PDF or Word) containing ALL REQUIRED ITEMS from list above, and
- 2) the Budget Spreadsheet attached as a separate file in Excel format (not PDF).

If you send Zip files or shared file links, your application WILL be disqualified. If you send files that can't be opened in a PDF reader or in Microsoft Word, your application WILL be disqualified!

The complete application package must be EMAILED to Grants@ArkansasSTEMCoalition.com no later than Friday, September 18, 2026, at 5:00 PM. Late applications will not be considered. No exceptions. Applications even one minute late will not be considered. If all required items are not received by the deadline, the application will not be considered.

IMPORTANT DATES

Open Date	Due Date	Review Period	Award Notification Date		Grant Period	Equip Purchase Deadline	PD & Expense Deadline	Final Report Due
8/1/2026	9/18/2026 by 5:00 PM	9/19- 10/4/2026	10/5/2026		10/5/2026- 5/31/2027	4/1/2027	5/31/2027	6/30/2027 by 5:00 PM

Commitment to Excellence in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Grant **COVER SHEET**

(All information is REQUIRED for EVERY application.)

GENERAL INFORMATION

(Checks will go to Applying Entity Name at Applying Entity Mailing Address)

Applying Entity is	☐ an Individual School ☐ a School District ☐ a STEM Center
Applying Entity Name	
Applying Entity Tax ID #	
Applying District	
Applying School	
Applying Entity Mailing Address (IF AWARDED, THIS IS WHERE CHECK WILL BE MAILED)	

NEW: If applying for more than one school, MUST complete a separate application for each school.

Applying Entity Contact Names & Contact Information

(This will be used if we need additional information about this application. **MUST** be school contact with school email, not personal Gmail, etc. Contact phone numbers should be different numbers. **If information doesn't exist – i.e. you don't have a direct work number – type N/A in the space.)**

Main Contact Name	
Main Contact Direct Work Phone (or N/A)	
Main Contact General Work Phone	
Main Contact Cell Phone	
Main Contact Email	

Backup Contact Name	
Backup Contact Direct Work Phone (or N/A)	
Backup Contact General Work Phone	
Backup Contact Cell Phone	
Backup Contact Email	

STEM CENTER INFORMATION SHEET

(**ONLY complete this page if you are applying as a STEM Center.**

All information is REQUIRED for STEM Center applications.)

STEM Center Information

(MUST be school contact with school email, not personal Gmail, etc. Contact phone numbers should be different numbers. **If information doesn't exist – i.e. you don't have a direct work number – type N/A in the space.)**

University & STEM Center Name	University Name: STEM Center Name:
University DUNS number	
STEM Center Director Name (MUST MATCH GRANT ASSURANCE FORM)	
STEM Center MAILING Address	
STEM Center Director Work and Cell Numbers	Direct Work Number: Cell Number:
STEM Center Director Email	
Research / Sponsored Programs MAILING ADDRESS	
Main Contact Name (MUST MATCH GRANT ASSURANCE FORM)	
Main Contact Direct Phone	
Main Contact Cell Phone	
Main Contact Email	
Backup Contact Name	
Backup Contact Direct Phone	
Backup Contact Cell Phone	
Backup Contact Email	

DISTRICT INFORMATION SHEET

(All information is REQUIRED for EVERY application.)

School District Name		
School District LEA # (7 digits)		
Superintendent's Name (MUST MATCH SUPERINTENDENT SUPPORT LETTER)		
Superintendent's Email		
Superintendent's Phone Number		
School District PHYSICAL Address (included for auditing/review purposes)		
School District MAILING Address		
School District General Phone Number		
School Coop Area (MUST answer even if you don't participate in your Coop! This is to see if you are eligible for additional geographic-based funding.)	☐ Arch Ford ☐ Arkansas River ☐ Crowley's Ridge ☐ Dawson ☐ DeQueen-Mena ☐ Great Rivers ☐ Guy Fenter ☐ North Central	☐ Northeast ☐ Northwest ☐ Ozarks Unlimited ☐ South Central ☐ Southeast ☐ Southwest ☐ Wilbur Mills ☐ Pulaski County Schools

SCHOOL INFORMATION SHEET

(All information is REQUIRED for EVERY application.)

Participating School Name	
Participating District Name	
Has this School been known by another name since 2010? If so, what other name(s) has it had?	
Has this School merged with or split from another school since 2010? If so, what school did it merge with or split from?	
Did this school open in the last five years? If yes, what was the first full operating year?	☐ No ☐ Yes If yes, first full operating year: _____
Participating School LEA # (7 digits)	
Participating School PHYSICAL Address (for audit/review purposes)	
Participating School MAILING Address	
Main school phone number	
Principal's Name (MUST MATCH GRANT ASSURANCE FORM, which every Principal MUST sign)	
Principal's Email	
Principal's Phone Number	

PROJECT INFORMATION SHEET

(All information is REQUIRED for EVERY application.)

Participating School Name:

In what type of environment will equipment be used?	☐ Regular classes ☐ After-School Program or Club ☐ GT Breakouts ☐ Other Breakouts ☐ Other: _____
Check all grades that school serves.	☐ PreK ☐ K 1 st 2 nd ☐ 3 rd ☐ 4 th ☐ 5 th ☐ 6 th ☐ 7 th ☐ 8 th ☐ 9 th ☐ 10 th ☐ 11 th ☐ 12 th ☐ Other Grades (list): _____
Check all grades participating in grant activities at this school.	☐ K ☐ 1 st ☐ 2 nd ☐ 3 rd ☐ 4 th ☐ 5 th ☐ 6 th ☐ Other Grades (list): _____

Estimated Number of Students and Teachers Affected (report by Grade)*			
Grade Level	# Students Enrolled	# Students Affected	# Teachers Affected
Kindergarten			
1 st Grade			
2 nd Grade			
3 rd Grade			
4 th Grade			
5 th Grade			
6 th Grade			
Other Grades**			
TOTAL:			

*Do not duplicate student numbers or teacher numbers. If a student will use items in regular class and after-school program, they should still be counted as one student. If a teacher teaches more than one grade, they should be included for only one grade. If all students in a grade will use items, just use current enrollment numbers for that grade.

**If serving grades other than K-6, give a brief explanation of how you will do this. All items must primarily be used by at least one grade from K-6. Sharing items with other grades is okay when not being used by K-6 students, but you MAY NOT ask for items that will be used solely for grades other than K-6. If you are only serving K-6 student with this project, type N/A.	
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PROJECT TIMELINE & STANDARDS

(All information is REQUIRED for EVERY application.)

Participating School Name:

Complete the chart below to indicate the timeline for implementation of equipment purchase, distribution, and usage as well as PD. This timeline should guarantee that the project will be completed and the final grant report will be submitted by the reporting deadline! Names and/or titles (i.e. “John Jones” or “first grade teachers”) and REAL DATES must be used below (at least month and year) to show that you have thought through the needs and timeline. You will NOT be held to this; we are just making sure you have thought it through.

Activity	Person/People Responsible for Performing Activity	Estimated Start Date	Estimated Completion Date
Purchase Equipment			
Distribute Equipment to School			
Provide Professional Development			
Time Period Equipment Will Be Used			
Submission of Final Grant Report			

List specific Arkansas Academic Standards for Science, Mathematics, Computer Science, or other STEM areas that are pertinent to this grant request. You must include STEM standards, even if request is to fund a non-STEM classroom. Include subject area and FULL text for each standard, and include standard number, Topic, Practice, Disciplinary Core Idea, etc. for each standard in order to fully explain standard to a non-educator.
You may add more lines if needed, or attach a completely separate list if you need more room or have the applicable standards in another file or format.

PROJECT NARRATIVE

(All information is REQUIRED for EVERY application.)

Include a Project Narrative for each Participating School. The Project Narrative should be a **MAXIMUM of one page**, typed or handwritten. You do NOT need to restate the questions.

Participating School Name:

The Project Narrative must include the following information, either in Q&A or narrative form:

1. Give an explanation of what you want to buy, what you want to do, who will be served, and how the project will benefit the students being served.
2. Explain why your school/students need this equipment, why it is important to your classroom and/or project, how it will support your school's STEM instruction, and how it aligns with the curriculum, instruction, and/or standards you plan to utilize.
3. Explain any professional development needed, how it will be provided, and who will provide it. If you are not providing PD, give an explanation of why it is not needed. If you are not requesting funds for PD, explain how it will be funded (included from manufacturer, school providing, teachers teaching other teachers, etc.).
4. Explain why you need this funding and why other funding is not available. If you are requesting to purchase consumable items, you must explain how you will sustain future funding.

The Project Narrative MAY (but does not have to) include any other information you believe is relevant and compelling

PROPOSED SCHOOL EXPENSE BUDGET

(REQUIRED for EVERY application. You MUST use the provided Budget Template and follow all directions. Budget must be attached to your submission as a separate Excel file. NO PDFs)

**Include ALL equipment, materials, and itemized PD costs (or PD Consulting Fee)
NO INDIRECT COSTS ARE ALLOWED**

You will need the following information to complete the budget spreadsheet:

- School Name
- Your choice of Professional Development funding (SEE BELOW for explanation of PD Options)
- Name of each item being purchased, along with a detailed description
- A URL/web address for each item being purchased (it must be “live” so that it can be clicked)
- The name of the vendor you expect to purchase each item from
- The price of a single unit of each item being purchased
- The total number of units you wish to purchase
- Total estimated tax, shipping, and handling costs (if \$0, must include explanation at the bottom)
- **NOTE: BE SURE TO INCLUDE SALES TAX & SHIPPING (especially if getting a quote!!! If you don't include tax and shipping, you will not have enough money to purchase your requested items!**

Professional Development Options

- **OPTION 1:** You do not have to request money for PD. If you aren't, check the first box on the spreadsheet “We are not requesting funds for PD.” Nothing else is needed on the budget for PD.
- **OPTION 2:** You can request a PD Consulting Fee of up to 10.00% of the total award (NOT 10.00% of the equipment and materials cost). This is the simplest way to request PD funding. If you choose this, you MUST add a single line on your budget spreadsheet that says “PD Consulting Fee” and put in a dollar amount. You will be required to show that you provided PD, but you will not be required to tell us how you are spending it or submit receipts in your final report.
- **OPTION 3:** You can request 10.01-15.00% of your total award for PD by providing detailed itemized expenses on your budget spreadsheet. You will need to report exact expenditures, including receipts, on your final report. Itemized expenses could include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Mileage: must indicate number of proposed trips, estimated mileage, and purpose
 - b. Professional Development Materials: list specific materials being purchased
 - c. Other Operating Costs: any other allowed PD costs must be explained in detail
- **NOTE:** Figuring the percentage of PD costs of your total award can be a bit complicated, so we have provided a way to check this for you on the second tab of the expense spreadsheet. However, this page is ONLY for calculation purposes. If requesting PD funding, you must include at least one line on the School Budget page for PD and include the amount. **PLEASE USE THE PD CALCULATORS AND CONTACT US IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS OR ARE CONFUSED!**
- **NOTE:** You may NOT request more than \$1,500 in funds for PD. You may NOT request more than 15% of your total award for PD. **If you exceed either, your application won't be scored!**

REMEMBER: MAXIMUM REQUEST IS \$10,000 PER SCHOOL, INCLUDING PD!

GRANT ASSURANCE FORM

2026-2027 Commitment to Excellence in STEM Grant Award (REQUIRED for EVERY application.)

Participating School Name:

I/we, the below-signed person(s) who represent(s) the Applying Entity, Participating Schools, University STEM Center, and/or associated University, agree(s) to the following conditions:

- All funds used to purchase equipment and/or materials for Participating Schools must be spent by April 1, 2027. Funds for Professional Development must be spent by May 31, 2027.
- All funds will be spent as listed in the application budgets, and will be used for STEM-related equipment and/or materials to be used in K-6th grade classrooms, for expenses related to providing professional development, and for other expenses as indicated on approved budget
- Any changes will be agreed upon in writing by both parties, which may be via email.
- Final Narrative Report and Final Financial Report with copies of receipts are due no later than June 30, 2027 by 5:00 PM. Templates will be provided for these reports.
- NO indirect costs are allowed.
- All other provisions and stipulations provided in RFA are understood and agreed to.

Individual School Principal

Date

School District Superintendent

Date

STEM Center Director

Date

Office of Research and Sponsored Programs

Date

This Grant Assurance Form **MUST** be signed by the following (names must match application pages):

- If Applying Entity is an Individual School: Principal
- If Applying Entity is a School District: Principal, Superintendent
- If Applying Entity is a STEM Center: Principal, Superintendent, STEM Center Director, Office of Research and Sponsored Programs (or the equivalent office).

NO E-SIGNATURES OF ANY TYPE! Scanned pages of signature(s) are okay.

Grant Assurance Form may be emailed separately to Grants@ArkansasSTEMCoalition.com, or a paper copy may be mailed to: The Arkansas STEM Coalition, Attn: Grants, P.O. Box 3142, Little Rock, AR 72203. However submitted, **FORM MUST BE RECEIVED BY THE STEM COALITION NO LATER THAN Friday, September 18, 2026, at 5:00 PM. No exceptions. We are not responsible for postal delays.**

SUPERINTENDENT SUPPORT LETTERS FOR PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS/DISTRICTS

2026-2027 Commitment to Excellence in STEM Grant Application

(REQUIRED for EVERY application.)

ALL APPLICATIONS require a Letter of Support from the Superintendent of EACH school, which must be signed and included as part of your application. Each Letter of Support should establish support for STEM instruction, support for the STEM equipment that will be provided, support to print necessary materials for the lessons and training provided, support for time that professional development will be provided (if any) to teachers and/or staff, and continued appropriate use of equipment and materials.

Superintendents may use the form on the next page or may write their own letter, but it **MUST BE ON DISTRICT LETTERHEAD AND MUST BE SIGNED BY HAND. E-signatures of any type are NOT acceptable and will result in an application not being scored. Scanned copies of handwritten signatures are okay.**

When amending the template letter, be sure that **ALL HIGHLIGHTED PORTIONS** have been adjusted and that all parts of the letter make sense for how you are applying and what you are requesting. For instance, if you are not receiving PD from a STEM Center or other PD provider, you will need to adjust/delete the second paragraph of the letter and the bullet point regarding PD.

If you are not able to attach a letter or letters to the combined application file, letters may be emailed separately to Grants@ArkansasSTEMCoalition.com, or a paper copy may be mailed to: The Arkansas STEM Coalition, Attn: Grants, P.O. Box 3142, Little Rock, AR 72203. However it is submitted, a **SUPPORT LETTER MUST BE RECEIVED BY THE STEM COALITION NO LATER THAN Friday, September 18, 2026, at 5:00 PM** in order for application to be scored. **No exceptions. We are not responsible for postal delays.**

E-signatures of any type will NOT be acceptable. A scanned copy of a handwritten signature is okay.

SUPERINTENDENT SUPPORT LETTER FORM

DISTRICT LOGO/LETTERHEAD

Date

The Arkansas STEM Coalition
PO Box 3142
Little Rock, AR 72203
via email to Grants@ArkansasSTEMCoalition.com

RE: 2026-2027 Commitment to Excellence in STEM Grant Application

To The Arkansas STEM Coalition,

This letter serves as verification that the [DISTRICT NAME] is committed to STEM education and instruction and that I support the staff at [SCHOOL NAME(s)] as they seek funds for the 2026-2027 Commitment to Excellence in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Grant.

The [STEM Center/PD Provider Name] is a valuable partner with our school, and we look forward to collaborating with them to improve our science, technology, engineering, and mathematics education and instruction. We are excited to receive much-needed equipment and to learn to work with the equipment that will be provided through these grant funds.

In support of the grant application, we pledge the following:

- We will store, utilize, and maintain any equipment provided to us through these grant funds on a regular and an as-needed basis.
- We will print any materials necessary for training and instruction provided through this grant.
- We will coordinate on-site and/or virtual professional development opportunities between [STEM Center/PD Provider Name] personnel and our staff to work with the equipment provided with these grant funds, and as additional needs are identified.
- We will provide time for staff to participate in any professional development needed to perform the activities in this grant application.
- We will verify receipt of grant funds and/or equipment purchased with these grant funds in writing.
- We confirm that all equipment purchased with these grant funds will be used by students and teachers identified in the grant application. If that changes (i.e. a school closes), we will redistribute the remaining equipment and materials to a similar school(s) to be used primarily by K-6 students.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

SUPERINTENDENT SIGNATURE (may not be typed or electronic!)

Superintendent Printed Name

Appendix: SCORING RUBRIC

APPLYING ENTITY NAME		
District Name:		
School Name:		
PRE-TEST INFORMATION (must answer ALL YES or N/A to move to scoring)		
APPLICATION ITEM NAME	Item	Instructions / Considerations
Grant Assurance Form/ Superintendent Letter		Write YES, NO, or N/A next to each APPLICABLE item below. Items 1-4 are signatures found on Grant Assurance Form and item 5 is the separate Superintendent Support Letter. 1 & 5 required for all
1. Principal Signature?		ALL applications need Principal's signature. Signature is NOT electronic or typed. Name matches School Info Sheet.
2. Superintendent Signature?		School District and STEM Center applications must have Superintendent's signature on Grant Assurance. Signature is NOT electronic or typed. Name matches District Info Sheet. If applying entity is a School, N/A/.
3. STEM Center Director Signature?		Only STEM Center applications must have STEM Center Director's signature. Signature is NOT electronic or typed. Name matches Cover Sheet. If applying entity is NOT a STEM Center, N/A.
4. Office of Sponsored Programs Signature?		Only STEM Center applications must have Office of Sponsored Programs' signature. Signature is NOT electronic or typed. Name matches Cover Sheet. If applying entity is NOT a STEM Center, N/A.
5. Superintendent Support Letter?		ALL applications must have support letter from Superintendent. Signature is NOT electronic or typed. Name matches District Info Sheet.
IF ALL REQUIRED ITEMS ABOVE ARE PRESENT AND COMPLETE, PROCEED TO SCORING		
POINT SCALE		
5 points / Excellent	The best answer. Question answered completely and thoroughly, identifies need(s), and information is 100% consistent with purpose of grant. All requested/required information is provided. Answer is well-written, easily understood, and discussion is convincing. Shows evidence of focus on appropriate Learning Standards, shows vertical alignment, and encourages more hands-on and inquiry-driven instruction. All information is provided within required space limits.	
4 points / Very Good	Answer is better than average. Complete information given, but may not be 100% thorough. Generally identifies needs, which are consistent with grant purpose. All information is evident, but may not be the clearest / most convincing.	
3 points / Adequate	Adequate answer to provide information and show that grant purpose is met. Question is answered with all, or at least most, requested/required information, but with just enough information to be adequately understandable.	
2 points / Fair	Effort is evident but does not adequately provide all requested/required information. May be confusing or incongruent. Convincing but does not have good consistency with grant purpose and may lack complete / thorough	

1 point / Poor	Application provided an answer, but answer is not understandable, does not relate to question(s) being asked, is of very poor quality, has missing information, answers question(s) poorly, and/or is not consistent with purpose of grant.				
0 points / Missing	Question was not answered or is completely blank. Information is not provided or is of such poor quality as to be considered not provided. Not consistent with grant's purpose.				
SCORING ITEMS INPUTTED BY STEM COALITION					
SCORING ITEM (Input from STEM Coalition)	Points Scored 1-5 SEE SCALE	Multi-plier	Total Points Possible	TOTAL POINTS SCORED	Instructions / Questions to Ask
- School last received grant in (year)		1	5	0	2016/17 or earlier = 5 pts 2017/18-2018/19 or earlier = 4 pts 2019/20-2020/21 = 3 pts 2021/22-2022/23 = 2 pts 2023/24-2024/25 = 1 pt 2025/26 = 0 pts
- School's Low Income/Free & Reduced Lunch Percentage (2024-25 ADE data, unless a brand new		0.6	3	0	100% = 5 pts 90-99.99% = 4 pts 80-89.99% = 3 pts 70-79.99%=2 pts 60-69.99% = 1 pt Less than 60% = 0 pts
- School Letter Grade (2024-25 ADE data, unless a brand new school)		0.6	3	0	F = 5 pts D = 4 pts C = 3 pts B =2 pts A = 1 pt NOTE: LETTER GRADE IS ALSO USED FOR TIE-BREAKER
- School's Math-Combined ATLAS Score - Level 3 or 4 (2024-25 ADE data, unless a brand new school)		0.3	1.5	0	Scored below state average, lower half of schools (0.00-19.94%) = 5 pts Scored below state average, upper half of schools (20.00-33.08%) = 2.5 pts Scored at or above state average (33.12% or higher) = 0 pts
- School's Science-Combined ATLAS Score - Level 3 or 4 (2024-25 ADE data, unless a brand new school)		0.3	1.5	0	Scored below state average, lower half of schools (0.00-25.88%) = 5 pts Scored below state average, upper half of schools (25.93-36.00%) = 2.5 pts Scored at or above state average (36.03% or higher) = 0 pts
- Deductions		1	0	0	STEM Center Sheet Incomplete or Missing/Incorrect = up to -2 pts or N/A Support Letter Incomplete or Missing/Incorrect = up to -2 pts ENTER DEDUCTIONS AS NEGATIVE NUMBER IN "Points Scored" COLUMN (1 point deduction for each piece of missing information)

APPLICATION SCORING					
APPLICATION ITEM NAME	Points Scored 1-5 SEE SCALE	Multi- plier	Total Points Possible	TOTAL POINTS SCORED	Instructions / Questions to Ask
Cover Sheet		0.4	2	0	5 = all information provided. Subtract 1 point for each missing or incomplete item, with 0 as lowest score.
District Info Sheet		0.4	2	0	5 = all information provided. Subtract 1 point for each missing or incomplete item, with 0 as lowest score.
School Info Sheet		0.4	2	0	5 = all information provided. Subtract 1 point for each missing or incomplete item, with 0 as lowest score.
Project Info Sheet		0.2	1	0	5 = school name and environment complete. Subtract 2.5 points for each missing or incomplete item, with 0 as lowest score.
- Participating Grades		1	5	0	six or seven grades served (must be K-6) = 5 pts four or five grades served (must be K-6) = 4 pts three grades served (must be K-6) = 3 pts two grades served (must be K-6) = 2 pts one grade served (must be K-6) = 1 pts no grades indicated = 0 pts DO NOT COUNT "OTHER" GRADES SERVED IN THIS SCORE.
Total # K-6th served:					Add total number of K-6 students to be served from School Sheet.
Total # students K-6th:					Copy total number of K-6 students from School Sheet.
Total # ALL students:					Copy total number of students from School Sheet.
% of K-6th grade students served:	#DIV/0!				Cell will automatically calculate. Use this percentage to score percentage of K-6th Grade Students Served (below).
- Percentage of K-6th Grade Students Served (score based on percentage calculated above)		1.2	6	0	100% = 5 pts 85-99.99% = 4 pts 70-84.99% = 3 pts 55-69.99% = 2 pts 40-54.99% = 1 pt Less than 40% = 0 pts

- Explanation of Other Grades Served		0.2	BONUS POINT	0	BONUS POINT: If grades other than K-6 are indicated, AND applicant has given excellent explanation at the bottom of the page, score for bonus point (regardless of how many additional grades or students are served). DO NOT SCORE IF BOTH ARE NOT COMPLETE. Not counted in total possible
Timeline		0.6	3	0	Did applicant include school name at top? Is there a name and/or title for each responsible party? Does each estimated date have a real date included? Do the estimated dates fit within the required timeline? (For instance, the earliest funds could be disbursed is September 19, 2026, and the final report is due by June 30, 2027.) Do dates make sense? (For instance, is start date of using equipment before it is delivered?) Is it clear that applicant thought this through?
Standards		0.6	3	0	Are standards STEM-specific standards? Is each standard listed fully, including standard title/number, full text, and other items such as Topic, Practice, Disciplinary Core Idea, etc.? Are standards listed relevant to requested equipment and project? Are there enough standards listed - and in enough detail - to explain the intended use and give an idea of what/how students will learn? No minimum number is required, but 100 is probably too many and five or six is probably not enough. See sample if needed.
Project Narrative NOTE: ONLY READ 1 PAGE OF NARRATIVE. If more than 1 page, score based only on page 1.		0.2	1	0	Did applicant include school name at top? Yes = 5 pts No = 0 pts
- 1. Give a general explanation of what you want to do and why.		3	15	0	Did applicant provide an introduction and/or general explanation of what they want to do and why school wants/needs this? Is explanation thorough enough to understand full scope of project? (i.e who is served, what is needed, what will be learned, and how it will be learned?)

- 2. Explain why the equipment you will buy is needed and important, how it will support your STEM instruction, and how it aligns with the curriculum and instruction you plan to provide.		3	15	0	Is explanation clear and well-written? Did applicant explain why this specific equipment is needed and how it is important to STEM instruction? Did applicant explain how it aligns with the curriculum and instruction they plan to provide? If requesting durable equipment, should be scored more highly than consumable supplies and materials. NOTE: DURABLE VS. CONSUMABLE IS ALSO USED FOR TIE-BREAKER.
- 3. Explain what professional development will be needed and how it will be provided.		1.2	6	0	Did applicant explain the PD needed for the purchased equipment? Did applicant explain how it will be provided (who will provide, how long it will take, how it will be done, etc.)? If no PD is needed, did applicant adequately explain why?
- 4. Explain why you need this funding and why other funding is not available. If you are requesting to purchase consumable items, explain how you will sustain future funding.		3	15	0	Did applicant discuss the reason(s) they need this specific funding? Did they explain why they have not been able to secure other funding for these items? If requesting consumable items, did applicant discuss how they plan to pay for consumable items in the future?
Proposed Budget					
Proposed Expense Budget		1.6	8	0	Are items appropriate for project described? Do listed budget items provide adequate detail to understand items being requested, and/or are links clickable? Are all items listed with a cost per item, quantity, and total for items? Are taxes and S&H included? If not, do they explain why not at the bottom of the budget? Is budget total correctly calculated? (Add up all budget lines yourself to make sure!)
PD Budget		0.4	2	0	Is PD budget included in spreadsheet/complete? Is PD budget $\leq$ a max of 15% of TOTAL award? If PD is $\leq$ 10%, no need to itemize. If $>$ 10%, must be itemized. If itemized, do items provide adequate detail to understand what is being requested? IF THEY INDICATE NO PD, score as 5.
Total points possible:			100		
TOTAL POINTS SCORED:				0	

BUDGET DETAIL & EXPLANATION		
BUDGET ITEM	Requested Amount	Instructions
Total Equipment Requested Amount		Copy from budget spreadsheet.
Total PD Budget Requested Amount		Copy from budget spreadsheet.
TOTAL REQUESTED AMOUNT	\$ -	Copy from budget spreadsheet.
TTL AMOUNT CHECK	\$ -	Should automatically calculate to see if applicant added correctly. If this is NOT zero, the total on application is not calculated correctly.
PD as % of total amount requested	#DIV/0!	If PD is $\leq 10\%$, no need to be itemized. If $> 10\%$, must be itemized. If PD $\geq 15\%$ of total, application will not be considered.
TOTAL NUMBER & COST PER STUDENT (not scored; for data purposes only)		
Total # K-6th students served:	0	Should fill from worksheet above.
Total # K-6th students:	0	Should fill from worksheet above.
Total # ALL students:	0	Should fill from worksheet above.
Total cost:	\$ -	Should automatically calculate.
Cost per student served K-6th:	#DIV/0!	Should automatically calculate.
Cost per student ALL:	#DIV/0!	Should automatically calculate.