



TCGIS PTO

Block Grants Policy Guide

This document outlines policy expectations for grants provided to the school by the PTO. It covers two types of grants being made by the PTO each year. Amounts are determined based on PTO fundraising activity and budgeting decisions.

It is important to emphasize that significant time and energy on the part of parents have been contributed in raising grant funds. The grants amount to nearly half of the PTO expenditures for the year. School staff are urged to remain mindful of this when using the funds.

I. Classroom Enrichment Funds

a. Overview

“Classroom enrichment funds” is provided to the school for supporting teachers and enriching the in-classroom environment, both in academic and social forms. It composes a block grant of funds to the school. Funds are to be managed by school administration following the policies and guidance contained in this document.

b. Management of Funds

1. Amount

The grant amount is up to \$6,000.

2. Fiscal Process

Payments to the school will be made by check, divided into three installments. The school in turn administers reimbursement to teachers for their respective out-of-pocket expenses. The installment schedule consists of:

- An initial payment of \$2,500;
- A mid-year catch-up payment (made later in the year to account for PTO cash flow needs), in an amount that covers all known school reimbursements made up to that date; and
- A final payment, made at the end of June, in an amount that covers the remaining reimbursements.

The deadline is **June 15** for the school to determine reimbursements and notify the PTO of a final total. Funds that are unused remain with the PTO.

3. Allocation

The school administration manages and determines the allocation of funds. The intent is that administrative burdens are minimized, while fully taking into account this

policy guidance.

The core basis for determining amounts available to each teacher is to follow equitable and substantially similar factors used in determining classroom or teacher budgets for curriculum, classroom supplies, and the like.

The PTO expects allocation decisions to reflect differing support needs and circumstances among teachers, along with respect to:

- Grade level (including availability of funds to serve all students); and
- Generalists and specialists.

Assuming it is agreeable to all parties, there is not a limitation on combining or sharing allotted funds among teachers.

4. Teacher Communication

A concern with classroom enrichment funding over the past few years has been under-utilization by teachers. To raise awareness regarding fund availability, a communication plan with teachers includes (1) explaining the existence and nature of the PTO-granted funds, which is a shared responsibility of the school and the PTO; and (2) identifying the amount of available (or remaining) funds for each teacher, for which the school administration is primarily responsible. Communications should take place at the start of each school year, as well as some time around midway through the year. Providing examples of past projects and uses would be beneficial as well.

5. Accountability

Management of the funds includes the following features:

- Teacher reimbursement for each expense after it is incurred, with a receipt required;
- On an ongoing basis throughout the school year, making information on remaining funds readily available to teachers;
- Ongoing consultation and review with the PTO executive committee as appropriate; and
- Utilization of a reporting mechanism that (1) is provided to the PTO on an ongoing basis; (2) is kept up-to-date, (3) summarizes the allocation decision-making; and (4) identifies amounts made available and reimbursed expenditures to each teacher.

c. Uses of Funds

1. Principles

The following constitute the core goals and guiding principles behind the classroom enrichment funds:

- **Eliminating non-reimbursed out-of-pocket expenditures by teachers** made for school-related purposes;
- **Providing additional funds beyond normal budgeting for teachers and classrooms**, which supports in-the-classroom items and activities that

supplement, but do not supplant, the school's regular classroom budgeting process; and

- **Eliminating requests for money** made from school staff to parents (with a handful of exceptions such as for field trips).

An important test for whether a proposed expenditure is an appropriate use is the following: should the school budget be reasonably expected to cover this expense? If so, it is not really enrichment for the classroom or teacher.

2. Examples

The following are intended as examples to provide a sense for fund uses rather than as a comprehensive list.

- **Appropriate uses:** beyond what is reasonably expected, additional supplies for day-to-day consumables (e.g., pencils, markers, and paper); special project supplies; teaching aids not otherwise provided by school; food and decorations for parties; general classroom decorating and decor; games; guest presenters
- **Inappropriate uses:** materials and curricular supplies normally or reasonably expected to be provided by the school; expenses incurred in Teacher Treasures and Admin Adventures events; general school marketing; activities and materials outside the classroom; field trips; extracurricular activities

II. School Event Funds

a. Overview

The "school enrichment funds" are intended to support the school in costs associated with special school gatherings of all or some sizeable portion of students.

b. Management of funds

1. Amount

The grant amount is up to \$4,000

2. Fiscal Process

Payments to the school will be made by check, following notification from the school regarding expenses.

The deadline is June 15 for teachers and the school to identify expenses and notify the PTO of a final reimbursement amount.

3. Allocation

The school administration in collaboration with teachers from each relevant grade level (and specialists as appropriate) identifies the events or activities.

Consensus on the funded events or activities is expected following a process that is both clear and accessible to teachers.

The grant can be divided following groupings of class grade levels:

- a. K-1;
- b. 2-4;
- c. 5-8.

The suggested division into groupings is intended to enable events or activities that are age-appropriate and help support interaction across grade levels. However, this does not preclude combining groupings or a school-wide special gathering. Ultimately, all classes should receive a benefit as a result of the funds.

4. Accountability

The accountability features of the Classroom Enrichment Funds apply as appropriate (outlined in section I.b.5 above).

c. Uses of Funds

1. Principles

The fund use principles of the Classroom Enrichment Funds apply (outlined under section I.c.1 above).

2. Examples

As with the Classroom Enrichment Funds block grant, the following are intended as examples to provide a sense for fund uses rather than as a comprehensive list.

1. **Appropriate uses:** educational field trips for multiple classes; educational presentations; special assemblies; performances by an outside group; group training sessions
2. **Inappropriate uses:** school functions already planned as part of the school calendar or budget; events or activities specific to one classroom.