

Art City Elementary Grant and Proposal

By Cody Eckman

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Letter of Intent/Proposal

Ms. Lori Harding
Individual Development Commissioner
5192 South Greenpine Drive
Salt Lake City, UT 84123

Dear Ms. Harding,

I am writing to ask whether the Utah PTA would be interested in receiving a proposal for updating Springville's Art City Elementary School's theatre sound system under the Arts Education Grant. The sound system in question is over a decade old and has no Bluetooth capability, which has caused issues with connectivity and ease of use in prior productions.

Students in the fourth, fifth, and sixth grades at Art City Elementary have traditionally put on a show each year with the existing sound system. Funding for an updated sound system would enable those experiences to be more enriching for students, as the faculty's directorial capabilities would no longer be limited by wasted time due to using old equipment and would allow the staff and volunteers involved to use their time to more effectively interact with the students instead of having to deal with outdated equipment. The problems a new system would solve also include allowing newer Bluetooth technology into the auditorium which will make musical productions in particular much more seamless and easy to put on. Additionally, a more modern system would provide participating students with more accurate expectations for what they might find as they pursue theatre in other venues after they've moved on from elementary school.

New microphones, speakers, and a soundboard will facilitate more professional productions, thus instilling confidence and furthered fulfillment in students as more patrons are encouraged to attend their performances, helping Art City Elementary live up to its name and full potential as a true school of the arts.

If we are able to secure this funding, the transition to the new system will be made in the interim between school years, allowing the next batch of performances to utilize the updated technology and begin to immediately reap those benefits. The aforementioned benefits will grow quickly out of the integration of the new system with our existing program of excellence.

If allowed to propose, we would be seeking the full \$500 on offer through the Arts Education Grant in order to purchase the new sound system for our theatre program. We are not currently

requesting funding from any other foundations. If awarded this grant, our ability to continue serving our students and community through our theatre program would be significantly bolstered.

In pursuit of ensuring our high standards of excellence, our PTA currently has plans to organize a fundraiser for our art department for new lights for our stage. If we are not awarded the entire \$500 we would be seeking, some of that funding could be used to subsidize the costs of updating our sound system, as it is our highest priority and we believe that it will have the biggest single impact on the quality of our future performances.

We'd love for you to visit our school and see the joy theatre brings our students and their families. This year, our students will be performing a stage adaptation of *Moana*, which will be directed by Shana Huffaker. Shana has proudly served our school and greater community as play director for over fifteen years. Every dollar awarded to our school will go directly toward our new sound system, and the resulting benefits will be deeply appreciated by our students, faculty, and audience members. If you have any questions for us, or would like to attend one of our productions, please reach out to us. You can contact us by phone at 435-668-1421 or email at shana.huffaker@nebo.edu.

Sincerely,

Cody Eckman

Budget Summary

Check Grant Consideration Area That Applies	Dance	Theatre X	Music	Visual Art	Media Art	Literary Art
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	Amount Requested from Utah PTA Education Fund (\$500 Maximum)	Your Matching Funds (At Least 50% of the Total Cost of the Project)	Matching Funds Source
Artist Salary			
Travel, Lodging, and Per Diem Costs			
Instructional Materials			
Art Supplies			
Equipment Purchase and Rental	\$500	\$500	PTA Fundraiser & School Funds
Other (Please Specify)			
Total	\$500		
Grant Total	\$1000		

RFP Qualifications

1. What are the arts education needs of the student body as determined by the PTA?

In order to provide a more fulfilling and complete theater experience for their students, the Art City Elementary PTA is seeking funding to update the sound system in the school's auditorium, as their current system is outdated and providing a less-than-ideal experience for those using it. The current sound system's speakers are old and worn resulting in a distorted sound that lacks clarity and detracts from the listeners experience. The sound system also lacks modern bluetooth capability. The outdated system makes rehearsals and performances difficult because of the technical issues that are constantly arising.

2. What are the school's PTA goals and objectives?

The Art City Elementary PTA prides itself on providing a powerful voice for the students they represent and enabling a connection between parents and teachers. Their goal is the betterment of student experiences and to help drive funding to programs at the school that would be otherwise underfunded, including Ribbon Weeks, Christmas wish trees, a schoolwide Field Day, a Teacher Appreciation Week, a formal 6th-grade graduation ceremony, and more. The PTA also sets aside money every year for child advocacy in the Utah state legislature.

3.
 - a. Describe the arts education project for which the PTA is requesting funds and which area of grant consideration is applicable and why.

Because the theater program at Art City Elementary—located in the heart of Springville—is so active and impacts so many of its students, having quality equipment is a necessity. While much of the available equipment is adequate for their current needs, their outdated sound system provides distorted audio and lacks Bluetooth capability making for difficult and unsatisfactory rehearsals and performances. With an updated system, students will be better prepared for the kinds of systems they'll be using in future productions at higher levels, feel more confident because of the higher-quality shows that are able to be produced, and not be bogged down during rehearsals and performances by less-than-ideal equipment.

- b. Additionally, how the project will help the PTA achieve its goal and objectives.

Giving a voice to students is more than mere advocacy—for students to be enabled and empowered, they must be given the proper tools for success. Obtaining and implementing this new sound system will directly impact students, their projects and passions, their capacity for confidence, and their ability to be heard. This sound system will both literally and figuratively give students a powerful voice, not only by improving the sonic

precision and absolute detail levels of their amplified speaking, but also by bolstering confidence in their ability to perform.

4. Describe the timeline for this project including when the project starts and when it will end.

Due to the timing of available funding and the local PTA's own fundraising projects, it would be best to implement the new sound system in the summer of 2022, ideally by June or July so that school faculty will have time to become familiar with the new equipment prior to the start of the new school year. Our hope is that the sound system will be up and running and making the theatrical productions of that year—and all those that follow—higher-caliber productions that ultimately provide more useful experiences for Art City Elementary's students.

5. Who and how many will benefit from participation in this project? (Grades, teachers, parents, community volunteers, etc.)

Higher-quality productions lead to a more engaging experience for performers, which translates directly into usable skills. Because it takes many people to make these productions happen, the implementation of a new sound system will streamline the process for all involved, especially students and teachers. Teachers will be able to put time that they would have spent wrangling with unintuitive or malfunctioning equipment toward engaging with their students; in turn, those students will have a more consistently educational and enriching experience. Additionally, we foresee that the increased quality of productions will incentivize more parent volunteers to make contributions to other areas of production as well, such as costuming and set design, providing even more opportunities for child performers to learn and grow through both passive observance and active participation.

Due to the increased quality of the school's performances, more patrons will want to attend them, which will benefit the entire program and school in both a financial and a communal manner. Art City's theater program is a staple of the local community, and ensuring that it continues to be so will pave the way for further community engagement, including fundraising, service, and educational opportunities.

6. How will the PTA measure and evaluate the impact/success of this project?

While we hope that increases in ticket sales over time will be an identifying factor of success, we will not necessarily be able to prove causality between that and the new sound system. Therefore, we will also make an effort to survey students, faculty, and audience members about their experience with the new sound system, making adjustments as necessary to ensure satisfaction for all involved.

7. This grant is about PTA involvement *beyond* writing grants and raising funds. How will parents of the school be directly involved in this arts project?

Like many other programs in our public schools, the theater program's success is dependent on the aid of the PTA. Whether making costumes, playing piano, or assisting the theater director during rehearsals, the PTA is involved at every turn. As mentioned previously, our expectation is that the increased quality of productions due to the new sound system will act as an incentive for parent volunteers to get involved in other areas of production as well (e.g. costuming and set design). Such engagement will not only provide opportunities for meaningful connection between parents and teachers throughout the production process, but also give child performers the chance to learn about areas of production that they may not have otherwise.

Additionally, the theater program isn't simply about helping students develop confidence and an appreciation for the arts. The program also provides parents—volunteers or otherwise—with the unique opportunity to see their children apply skills they have developed in school outside of the classroom.

8. If you are paying an artist salary, please give details about their qualifications and artistic experience. Please include a short bio and contact info.

[N/A]

9. Has your school received the Utah PTA Arts Education Grant previously? If so, what year?

We have not previously received the Utah PTA Arts Education Grant.

Body

For the past fifteen years, Art City Elementary has produced countless school plays, programs, talent shows, and much more, all without ever upgrading its sound system. For many years, the sound system was adequate to the school's needs and functioned without issue—however, as time has passed, it has become outdated and troublesome to operate. Wires have shorts in them, buttons have become sticky, no wireless capabilities, etc. The solution to this problem is simple yet costly; install a new sound system as soon as possible. In doing this, we hope not only to improve students' experiences as performers, but also to streamline the directing and production processes for faculty, parent volunteers, and all others who graciously facilitate the many different productions that use the sound system throughout the year. In upgrading the sound system, we hope to accomplish the following things:

- 1) Increase ease of use for all involved in school productions.
- 2) Improve the quality of sound for music, singing, and speaking.
- 3) Eliminate the need for cords by implementing wireless devices.

In doing these three things, we hope for better compatibility on all levels with a new sound system. Our goal is to create a more enjoyable experience for students, which will excite them about future possibilities involving music, theater, and public speaking. We hope to highlight different pieces that can be helpful in upgrading the sound system that would help us accomplish the goals we have set.

In searching for and buying a new sound system, we will aim to highlight the certain pieces of equipment we will be purchasing with the grant, and how each piece can help accomplish our goals. First off, we would like to purchase two new high-quality speakers to go on either side of the stage. These speakers would improve the sound quality to heighten the audience experience. Second, we would like to purchase four handheld wireless microphones and four clip-on wireless microphones. Finally, we would like to purchase a new soundboard computer system. The current soundboard that is used is very obsolete and difficult to learn. A new soundboard would enable both young students and faculty to be able to easily navigate and control the sound settings of the many events that occur.

It is clear that a new sound system will increase the viability and trajectory of our program, help students climb to higher heights, and bring us closer to our goals of having a modernized theater experience for students, faculty, and audience members involved in our programs. In the fourth grade, I was able to play the lead role in the school play that was put on

each year about the history of Utah. As you can imagine, I was quite nervous about my first performance. Our school only had two handheld microphones that we passed around for each person who had a speaking part. During the middle of the program, the microphone I was using went out. In that moment, I then had to yell and carry my voice across the gymnasium so that the audience could hear the lines I worked so hard at memorizing. As one who has personally experienced a failing sound system, I know how important it can be to have a working one. It is our hope that by being awarded this grant for the Art City Elementary School that each child may be able to have a great experience by using a fully functioning and working sound system.