



Blue School Grant

Water Education

Application Information

Purpose:

The mission of the Blue School Grant Program is for students to develop an appreciation for Florida's water, an understanding of water as a limited resource, and a water ethic that they can foster throughout their lifetime.

Supported by: St. Johns River Water Management District (SJRWMD)

Grant Amount: Up to \$3,000 per teacher/school, if multiple teachers apply. A total of \$60,000 is expected to be awarded for the school year. ***Funds will be awarded in January and be available to be used for the Spring semester of the school year.***

Application Deadline: September 15th

Eligible Applicants:

- Educators working with grades K–12 in public and public charter schools.
- Schools must be within the boundaries of the St. Johns River Water Management District ([Not sure what water management district you are in? Check here](#)).
- Projects may be for individual classes, teaching teams, or grade level.

General Proposal:

- To be considered for funding, submit a brief description of your proposed project, including the goal and key concepts addressed. See page 3 for more information on key concepts and project examples. All projects must include the following:
 - A **classroom** activity that integrates STEAM-related teaching strategies and Next Generation Sunshine State Standards (NGSSS). (Please note activities should take place during the school day, after school clubs are not eligible.)
 - Outreach to the school community. A take-home element is also strongly encouraged. Reach is considered in the selection process.
 - A budget outlining specific expenses and supplies required to complete project. See page 4 for information on budget constraints.
- Grant selection is competitive, and projects will be ranked using the **Scoring Rubric**.

- **Key Dates:**

August 1st	Application cycle opens
September 15th	Application deadline
End of Semester 1	Grantees notified; Signed Contracts due back from educators and administrators before funds are sent to schools
January	Funds awarded upon receipt of Signed Contracts for Spring semester projects
Spring Semester	Blue School projects completed
June 1st	Final report and documentation are due to SJRWMD*

*See the reporting form on the Blue School Grant Program webpage for more details.

Award considerations:

- Once the grantee has been selected, SJRWMD will provide funds for the project to the school district. It is the responsibility of the teacher/school to coordinate with the school district to have the funds transferred.
- All funded projects must be completed in accordance with SJRWMD and state rules, regulations, and procedures. SJRWMD reserves the right to audit the use of the funds to ensure they meet the public purpose.

Expectations of Grant Recipients:

- **Learning assessment:** A pre/post-test is mandatory. The tests should be identical. Your final report will include a copy of the pre/post-test as well as average scores.
- **Participation hours:** Record all direct student participation hours related to the grant for your final report.
- **Budget:** All budgeted items must be approved for state funding (***list of approvals provided on the last page of this document***)
- **SJRWMD resources:** SJRWMD encourages classroom use of SJRWMD publications and web resources. Please refer to www.sjrwmd.com/education for ideas.
- **Photos and promotion:** SJRWMD, as a public funding source, reserves the right to share all projects, concepts, artwork, photos, videos, and other products submitted as part of the final report. Each grant recipient should maintain school

and/or district photo/video release forms for students included in submitted work products. SJRWMD may visit schools/project sites during the production period to document projects for public dissemination (web, social media, news release, video, etc.). Please anticipate the possibility that SJRWMD may request quotes from the principal, other teachers, and students for use in a District news release or other outreach messages.

- **Making changes:** During the grant period, activity or budget items may need to be modified. If modifications are needed, seek permission from apressel@sjrwmd.com in the Office of Strategic Communications and Engagement. All changes must be requested in writing and changes should not be made until approval is given.
- **Final Documentation and Report:** All materials are due from all grantees **by June 1st**. Failure to submit this final report by June 1st jeopardizes future funding opportunities with the Blue School Grant program. You are welcome to submit application materials early. Reminders will be sent to educators in May, with a portal to submit Final Report and Deliverables.

Key Concepts for your Blue School Grant project:

Projects considered for funding must address a subset of the following key concepts:

Watershed/Ecosystem Understanding

- A watershed is an area of land which water flows across as it moves toward a common body of water, such as a stream, river, lake, or the coast.
- An ecosystem is a community of microbes, plants, and animals (including humans) that interact with one another and with the physical environment in which they live. Water connects all types of ecosystems.
- Plants need water and adequate sunlight to grow; Hydrology and soils determine the kinds of plants that grow in specific locations.
- Groundwater is replenished by rainfall as water circulates through the water cycle.

Water Quality

- We all live in a watershed and everything we do can affect the quality of our water.
- Scientists use different types of equipment and tests to measure water quality.
- Pollution comes from many sources, and pollution on the land's surface can end up in our lakes, rivers, springs and aquifer.

Human Use (supply and conservation)

- Florida's future depends on a continued supply of freshwater for human consumption and natural systems; conserving water is vital.
- Different irrigation methods use various amounts of water.
- Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ practices require less water and can protect water supply and quality.
- Most of the water used in Florida's homes and schools comes from the aquifer or groundwater.

Examples of Activities and Projects: The following projects/activities are provided as examples; please feel free to submit proposals for other projects, so long as they address a subset of the key concepts surrounding water resources listed above and include classroom learning as well as an outreach component that incorporates the school and/or neighboring community.

Regional Freshwater/Estuarine Resources Field Study: Students can test water quality and identify native or freshwater aquatic plants and invertebrates during a visit to a wetland area near the school. Students do a research project on current issues relating to freshwater resources and contamination and share the project with classmates. Include a summary of the field study and follow-up project on the application.

Optional add-on: Conduct a habitat restoration, cleanup, or service-learning project

Watershed and Aquifer Stewardship: Through classroom activities, students study the water cycle and sources of freshwater, learn that rain provides freshwater to the Floridan aquifer system (the region's primary source of drinking water), build an awareness of the connection between land and water, and discover ways to reduce human impacts on our water supply.

Water Conservation: Students learn the importance of implementing best management practices, like [Florida-Friendly Landscaping™](#) and [Florida Water Star](#) and the positive impacts they can have on water quality and quantity. Challenges such as reducing runoff containing fertilizers and pesticides can be addressed by projects or presentations. Students could compare traditional irrigation methods to water-conserving irrigation methods, participate in water quality labs, and make informational pamphlets to share with families and others.

*Please note School Gardens included within a project application must include direct ties to water resources and water conservation as described above.

Budget: Prepare your budget based upon the list of approved budget items.

Provide the quantity and estimated costs per item and if applicable, include shipping in the cost of each item. It is your responsibility to find the lowest cost for each item requested. It is also your responsibility to contact the locations on the pre-approved field trip list for pricing.

Examples of qualifying budget items:	Non-qualifying budget items:
• Water test kits and supplies • Soil test kits • Probeware • Rentals for kayak, canoe or boats (life jackets, paddles, waders, etc.) • Dip nets • Microscopes (up to \$150 each) • Microscope slides • Field notebooks and study guides • Watershed model (e.g., Enviroscape®) • Groundwater model • Freshwater resources books, DVDs, software, and activity kits • Project-specific consumable supplies and materials (printing, postage, paper, poster board, art supplies, etc.) • Rain barrels and coordinating supplies • Micro irrigation supplies • Weather station • Rain gauge • Educational signage • Transportation • Substitute teachers	• Club/After School activities • Capital expenditures • Infrastructure (pavers, boardwalks, fences, benches, cisterns, gutters, construction projects, etc.) • Storage sheds, carts or display cases • Purchase of kayak, canoe, or boat • Computer hardware (e.g., thumb drives, computers, iPads, drones) • Computer software not exclusively related to water resources education • Food or beverages • Cameras or GPS equipment • Graphic design/artwork • Salaries • T-shirts • Video or audio equipment • Website development • Items not related to water resources education • Water refill stations