

Great Public Schools Fund Grant Program Guidelines

Note. The information presented here is excerpted from the “Great Public Schools Fund Grant Program” section of *Guidelines for the Use of the Special Fund to Advance Great Public Schools for All Students* (National Education Association, 2026).

NEA State and Local Affiliates, either individually or as partnerships between multiple Affiliates, may apply for GPS Fund Grants to advance the goal of great public schools for every student. Grants will be awarded to Affiliates who demonstrate capacity and competency through initiatives and partnerships to generate and advance student-centered policies and professional practice programs.

The goals of the Great Public School (GPS) Grant Fund are to:

1. Generate and develop innovative ideas designed to promote sound practice.
2. Capture key learnings that promote student success.
3. Develop and deliver supports by members for members that promote professional excellence.
4. Establish new organizational partnerships toward improving professional practice and aligning it with organizational priorities; and
5. Cultivate sustainable programs to be reproduced and amplified by other Affiliates to make meaningful change in public education for educators and students.

Restrictions

Grants may not be used to fund the following:

- Indirect expenses
- Political campaigns
- Capital improvements or large equipment purchases
- Programs or activities covered by other NEA Grants or funded with other NEA monies
- Hiring of permanent staff positions, unless there is a commitment from the applicant to support the position(s) in their program budget after the grant term ends. **Hiring a full-time or part-time term-limited position to manage a Grant is an allowable Grant expense.*
- Supplanting or replacing existing professional practice budgets.

Criteria for Evaluation

The GPS Fund Oversight Committee will evaluate each application received based on:

1. Submission of a Professional Excellence Theory of Change.
2. The scale of potential impact and potential for extending the learnings, program, and/or resources developed to other NEA State and/or Local Affiliates.
3. Alignment of the proposed work to the [NEA Leadership Competency](#) “Leading Our Professions” Level Two (mobilizing and power building) and/or Level Three (agenda driving) progressions for themes:
 - a. Supports professional excellence and builds capacity for continual improvement and learning to ensure the success of all students; and
 - b. Recognizes and promotes the Association’s role in improving the learning of all students.

Application and Awards

1. The submission date/s for upcoming GPS Fund Grant applications will be announced by May 1st each year.
2. Grant award decisions will be communicated to applicants no later than August 1st each year.
3. The funding range for GPS Fund grants is \$50,000 to \$150,000. Applications requesting less than \$50,000 are not eligible for Grant awards.
2. GPS Fund grants are awarded for a period of no greater than eighteen (18) months with unspent award amounts returned to NEA at the conclusion of the grant period.
3. One grant extension, not to exceed six (6) months, may be permitted with approval of the Oversight Committee.
4. Following the initial Grant proposal review, the Oversight Committee may request:
 - a. Additional information to clarify or support a proposal;
 - b. Recommendations or verification of partner support and involvement;
 - c. Evaluation/assessment of previous or existing Grants to ensure they are in compliance with their intended goals and purpose; and
 - d. For State Affiliates, evidence of compliance with NEA/NCSEA Financial and Operational Standards.
5. NEA reserves the right to determine the final Grant awards based on:
 - a. Compliance with Fund Guidelines;
 - b. Previous performance of other Grant or program awards;
 - c. Evaluation of Grant budget expenses;
 - d. NEA's organizational priorities;
 - e. Distribution of Grant awards across Affiliates; and
 - f. Available funds.
6. GPS Fund Grant applicants may request NEA consultation in preparing their proposals.

Dispute Resolution

If an Affiliate is not satisfied with the action taken by the NEA President and the NEA Executive Director on its application for a GPS Fund Grant, it may appeal to the NEA Executive Committee. The NEA Executive Committee may take such action as it deems appropriate, and the action taken by the NEA Executive Committee will be final.

Reference: National Education Association. (2026, February). *Guidelines for the use of the special fund to advance great public schools for all students* (Rev. February 2026) [Internal organizational document].