

**JCEF Mini-Grant Committee
Policies & Procedures
February 8, 2010**

The purpose of mini-grants is to provide funding for materials, projects, and activities which fall outside the coverage of block grants. Block grants are the preferred method of funding; that is, if funds are available in an applicable block grant, those should be exhausted before a mini-grant is requested.

There are two mini-grant cycles per academic year: mini-grants are awarded at the November and March Foundation meetings, after the Board hears the recommendations of the mini-grant committee.

Appropriate Uses of Mini-Grants. A primary goal of mini-grant process is to allocate funds to assist the greatest number of students in the long term. For instance, books or uniforms that can be used for many years are generally preferable to supplies that are used only once. Mini-grants may not be used to fund employee positions, nor individual students' participation in events such as science fairs/spelling bees. If a mini-grant funds a field trip, funds may not be used to pay for chaperone tickets.

Mini-Grant Cycle Timeline.

- * A mini-grant cycle begins in the first week of October and February, a month before the November and March Foundation meetings. The mini-grant committee chair starts by setting a deadline for mini-grant applications. The deadline should be about one week before the mini-grant committee meeting. The chair then announces the start of the application process: by posting notices on the cork boards in the teachers' workroom and lunch room. Make sure there are plenty of mini-grant applications in the forms area near the workroom paper cutter. Put an announcement into every teacher's mailbox, and email every teacher and school employee, with the deadline and directing them where to find the mini-grant applications.

- * After the application deadline, the mini-grant committee chair collects the applications from the school principal or office staff. If time permits, it is helpful to have a quick meeting with the principal to discuss the applications. The committee chair arranges the applications into packets, places the packets in the Foundation mailbox, and emails the committee members to get their packets. Committee members will have several days to get the packets and review the applications.

- * Just prior to the full board meeting: the mini-grant committee meets to discuss the applications, in order to make recommendations to the full board.

- * At the full board meeting: the mini-grant committee makes its recommendations. The board votes on the mini-grants, identifying grants to receive funding.

- * After the board meeting, the mini-grant committee chair writes letters explaining the status of the grant request, and delivers them to applicants' mailboxes. Letters are typically boilerplate "award" or "denial" letters. Denial letters may briefly explain the board's reasons for the application's denial. The board may want more information before making a grant, so occasionally a letter will ask for more details; or deny a grant but ask for more information in order to reconsider.

- * Award letters should also include instructions for the applicant to coordinate with the school to make all authorized expenditures prior to requesting reimbursement from the Foundation. Typically this will be accomplished by issuing a purchase order.

- * Mini-Grant Chairperson also gives a list of approved Mini-Grants (with the amounts granted) to the JCS School Secretary (Cathryn Babinski or successor)

The committee chair keeps a binder with all applications (awarded or denied), along with a spreadsheet detailing awards and denials.

Non-cycle grants. Mini-grant cycles provide a routine that can make the process simpler for teachers and the Board, however grant requests outside of the usual cycle are allowed. Special care must be taken in these cases to make sure that the request, followup letter, etc. do not fall through the cracks. The mini-grant chairperson is responsible for following up on these out-of-cycle cases.

Mini-Grant Reimbursement Procedure.

1. The mini-grant Chairperson provides a list of approved mini-grants to the JCS school secretary

2. The school secretary receives paperwork from staff when they order approved materials. This may be an invoice or a credit card receipt. She pays the bill or reimburses the staff member either from Student Body Fund or the General Fund.

3. The school secretary provides this paperwork to JCCEF with an invoice explaining which of the two above funds need to be reimbursed. Small amounts may be "batched" to avoid multiple check writing

4. JCCEF writes check to reimburse either Student Body Fund or JCS General Fund for the expenditure. This can be done monthly at the JCCEF meeting.

5. JCCEF keeps spreadsheet of approved mini-grants and the status of each: particularly, how much of the approved total has been funded. (A Google Documents spreadsheet makes collaborating on a spreadsheet easy.)

6. Mini-grant funds must be expended by the end of the school's fiscal year (June 30) or they will be forfeited.