



DATE: November 13, 2019

MEMO TO: Nels Leutwiler, Chair
Preservation Foundation Board

FROM: Nan Buckardt
Director of Education

RECOMMENDATION: Recommend approval of a \$2,210 grant to develop and launch a Teacher Ambassador Program.

FINANCIAL DATA: This grant would result in a \$2,210 reduction in unrestricted funds.

BACKGROUND: The Education Department of the Lake County Forest Preserves requests support to develop and launch a Teacher Ambassador Program during the current school year. The purpose of this program is to create an innovative professional development opportunity for teachers, who, in their role as ambassador, will help strengthen the connection between their school and the Forest Preserves. The Teacher Ambassador Program also supports the Education Department mission to serve as a leading resource for Lake County teachers and students.

The District's Education Department has offered teacher-training opportunities for many years. These have included an annual Teacher Open House, which began in 2008, as well as individual training sessions provided on various topics related to Lake County history, environmental education, and temporary exhibit topics. The Teacher Ambassador Program will expand upon these trainings and enable District Education staff to work more closely with teachers, benefitting from their perspectives to plan and develop new educational opportunities.

Proposed Project

The goal of this program is to continue with a new cohort of teachers each school year, building a network of educators that are strong voices of support and understanding of the educational opportunities provided by the Forest Preserves.

For Lake County K through 12 educators, the program will provide a unique opportunity to connect with Forest Preserve education staff and utilize resources, such as our Museum collections, and learn how to incorporate them into their classrooms. It will support their professional development, develop inquiry-based teaching skills, and establish connections to local resources and content. Teachers will have the added benefit of connecting with their peers and district staff, creating a learning community that can support them throughout their teaching career. In return, Teacher Ambassadors will connect their school and professional network to the Forest Preserves, helping disseminate information about educational opportunities and providing feedback on how the District can best meet the needs of teachers and students.

Initially, the program will focus on the resources of the Dunn Museum. It will begin with a mandatory orientation session as part of the annual Teacher Open House, held each fall, then three learning sessions will follow, with session topics and themes changing with each new cohort and school year.

In 2020, the sessions will include the following topics: 1) Hands-on History; 2) Object-based Learning; and 3) Biographies. The program will conclude with a Year-end Celebration honoring the work of that cohort and including Teacher Ambassadors and a guest and program staff. Each Teacher Ambassador will receive a pin upon completion of the program, to distinguish their role as an ambassador to others as well as help advertise the program to others. In future years, past program participants will be invited to come back to promote networking opportunities for each cohort of teachers.

Over the course of the program, teachers can earn professional development training credit and will complete a final project, which will change from year to year. Forest Preserve staff and teachers will agree upon the specific type of project, and the results will be posted on the Forest Preserves website and made available for all teachers to access and benefit from.

Project Costs

This grant would support direct program costs, including:

Program materials and supplies: journals, workshop supplies (including activity kits), celebration supplies	\$1,600
Teacher Ambassador lapel pin (200 @ \$2.5 each) (estimated to provide pins for up to ten cohorts)	\$500
Grant Administration Fee (calculated at 5% of total costs)	\$ 110
Total	\$2,210

REVIEW BY OTHERS: Chief Development Officer/Executive Director of the Preservation Foundation, Education Manager.

PRESERVATION FOUNDATION BOARD:

Date: _____ Roll Call Vote: Ayes: ____ Nays: _____
 Voice Vote Majority Ayes; Nays: _____