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Bridging the Budget Gap through Grants

In today's trying economic times, where school budgets have been slashed to the bare minimum again and again, and compromise has given way to sacrifice, Manatee County's Adult, Career, and Technical (ACT) Education Department continues to strengthen and advance its efforts to support teachers and provide students with a rigorous and relevant education. How do they do it? Through diligence and perseverance in search of grant monies.



"As funds grow ever limited, grants can help bridge the gap as well as provide the means for new equipment and learning opportunities for our students and teachers," stated Grant Resource Specialist Melissa Schwab. "I spend my days researching sources for grants, tracking legislation, writing, and building relationships within the community to learn what is being funded and how the District can partner in an initiative."

Grant and Leadership Development Assistant Suzanne Theiss aids with the research in order to meet the various requests, which often have pressing deadlines.

"My job is fast paced and continually presenting new challenges," Melissa continued. "I can be working on an agriscience grant one day, a solar grant the next day, and then something for the performing arts after that. Grants, in general, support innovative experiences that aren't normally covered by a general operating budget. These special services are a true benefit to our teachers who now have that cutting-edge curriculum, that up-to-date piece of equipment, or the necessary workshops to keep abreast of ever-changing technology. Another part of my job is to teach teachers how to become savvy in grant writing themselves so they can apply for classroom grants to sponsor smaller initiatives."

Grant monies are essential to enhancing quality education and moving the District forward in its quest to provide students with an outstanding education and opportunities. Experiences funded by grants help make the connection between academics, career pathways, and the world beyond the classroom. Grants help students participate in pioneering experiences in the world of work and higher education here in our community as well as at the state and national levels.

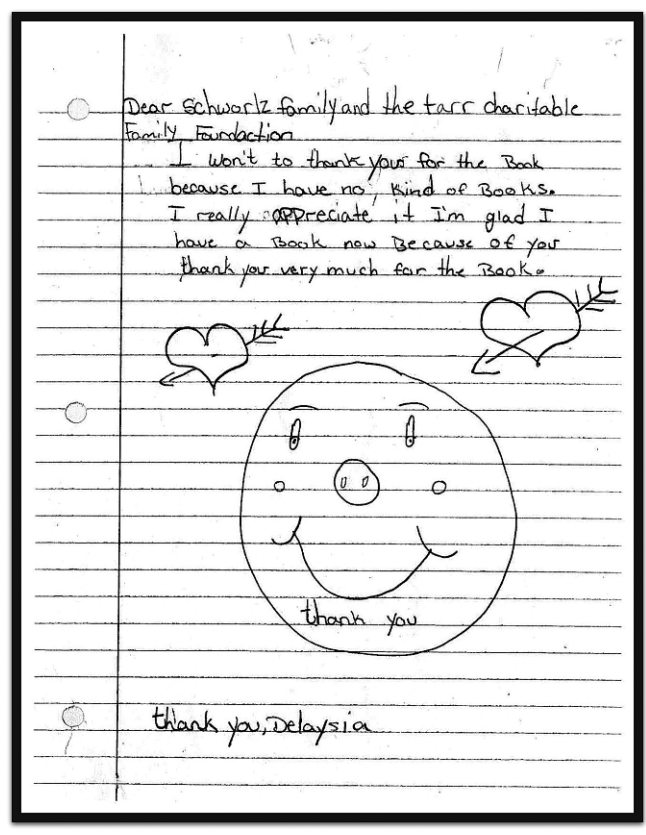
As funding falls, Melissa's determined and dedicated pursuit of grant monies continues to bridge the widening budget gap. Her efforts are helping provide teachers with the resources necessary to engage students in their education and provide them with outstanding learning experiences that help them to learn, dream and achieve.



Melissa Schwab and Suzanne Theiss work hard finding and procuring grants to enhance our students' education.

In the end, it's our students who most benefit from grants.

Grant efforts through the Adult, Career and Technical Education Department, to date.	
Grants and dollar value	Totals
Number of grants applied for:	369
Number of grants approved:	285
Number of grants pending approval:	12
Dollars applied for:	\$90,087,561
Dollars approved:	\$60,990,600
Dollars pending approval:	\$2,378,964



The Adult, Career & Technical Education Department (ACT) in Manatee County is the umbrella for all of the adult, career and technical education programs in our elementary, middle, high schools, and Manatee Technical Institute. Our academically centered programs link the world of education to the world of work. Through our programs we prepare youth and adults for careers by providing leadership in developing an educated, prepared and competitive workforce.

PARENT CORNER

- Discussion starter: Fight an "entitlement" attitude in our young people. Help your child appreciate this nation's free public education. Despite budget cuts, our students attend amazing schools at no direct personal cost to the child. (Other than taxes, of course.)
- Parents: how can you support your child's school? Can you participate in an advisory council, donate paper or other supplies to the Teacher's Wishing Well, or volunteer in the classroom?
- "It's really rewarding to work with our teachers and staff in securing the funds needed to enhance our students' education. These resources, skills, and hands-on experiences will provide a solid foundation for their future careers and lifelong success." *Melissa Schwab, Grant Resource Specialist.*

FCAT reading comprehension QUESTION

★ What types of experiences do grant monies usually provide?

Answer: Innovative experiences that aren't normally covered by a general operating budget, including pioneering experiences in the world of work at the community, state, and national level.

What's on the WEB?

www.ManateeACT.com
<http://act.manateeschools.net/documents/grants/grant.html>
www.ManateeSchools.net

EdVantage EdVantage Strategic Objective #3: Each student will continually participate in the democratic process. Inspiring Our Students to Learn, Dream and Achieve.



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