CHAPTER TWO:
ADVOCACY AND FUNDING

So by now I've convinced you that there is a growing market in this country, if not around the world, for students who have a good grasp of the Nine Essential Skills. A bright future awaits them. But not if they don't have the place, equipment, software, curriculum, and time to learn these skills. Not to mention dedicated teachers to point the way and provide the structure within which they can explore and discover their aptitudes and passions.

Of course, all it takes is money. Well, perhaps not all, but money is certainly a big part of starting and running a multimedia program. As a teacher you may be in one of two scenarios: either the district or school already sees a need for a multimedia program and has secured a budget, picked you to be the teacher, and is eager to get rolling; or, the district or building has other fish to fry and aren't considering a program like this, but you see the need for this program and are passionate about giving students such a future-oriented opportunity.

If you're in the first camp, great! You can skip this chapter and dive into the rest of the Plan section: what a lab is, what it does, how it's built, and how to evaluate your existing space in the following chapters. If you're in the second camp, then you've just become an advocate for your students (and future students) and need to organize an awareness campaign. Now!

You, the advocate

Chapter one should give you some statistics and facts you can use to make your case. You should do more research, especially in your local area and your state, to see what local opportunities exist for graduates with the Nine Essential Skills.

Then you need to get people involved, as many stakeholders as possible. Of course you want students, but parents, teachers, school administrators, the local chamber of commerce, local business owners, even local government officials should all be invited. The more folks who know about the benefits of this program, what it will mean to the students, the school, the district, and the community (all of which is covered in the Impact section), the more support you have. The more support, the more likely you'll be successful. This core group can also form the basis of a committee to steer the project through to completion.

Once you've mustered some support, you've got to get the word out. Since one of the nine skills is social media, that's a great place to start. Start a Facebook page and invite your friends and stakeholders to like the page. Twitter,

Instagram, and other social media platforms will help spread the message and help garner more support. You can also create a blog, a web page, and, on point for this project, a video (or series of videos) as well as a podcast. Let your passion for this project drive you forward.

By the time you've finished this book, and interacted with the online resources, you'll know what to do to create your video projects, or video series.

Funding types

There are two types of funding needed for creating a multimedia lab: startup and ongoing. Startup funding is necessary for initial purchase of lab equipment, supplies, curriculum (even if developed in-house), technical support, and teacher training. Ongoing funding is necessary for replacing or repairing equipment, restocking supplies, curriculum and technical support maintenance subscriptions, and for ongoing teacher training.The good news for ongoing funding is that once the lab is established and students are training, there are a variety of income projects that can help with funding the lab's continuing needs.

Sources for funding

Funding sources are varied and can be found inside and outside the district. In no particular order, these include:
- Your building budget
- Your district budget
- Your state education budget
- Local bond issues, either as part of a larger bond for district building initiatives, or a special bond just for multimedia lab creation
- Educational grants that can be local, regional, statewide, national, and can be governmental or foundation based
- Grassroots fundraising, which can include online services
- Gifts

You are probably familiar with your school's, if not your district's, budget. I'll bet your principal doesn't have multimedia lab startup costs idling in his or her budget; likely every penny is already allocated. The same may be true of your district budget. But it doesn't hurt to ask, even just to find out the state of the budget. Your passion and enthusiasm for a project like this, which gives students marketable skills and can be an income producing program that benefits the school, district, and community might just change some attitudes and free up some funds.

Realistically, though, you're likely looking to attract outside funding. Your state may have technology or jobs initiatives that would be a perfect match for a program like this. If they do, funds are likely distributed via a grant-like mechanism with required documentation and deadlines, so it's best to find out early to get the ball rolling. If it takes parents to raise a child, it likely takes a building or a district to get additional program money from the state. So be prepared to work with your colleagues to get the necessary information to fill out the required paper work. And don't forget to put the deadline on your calendar so you don't miss it!

Seeking a Grant

A grant is the primary source of funding for most schools that want to either implement a technology program or enhance an existing one. The ability to sell the case for your school's need for a Multimedia Lab or for Editing/Production Stations is essential.

The good news is that there are organizations and foundations that exist to give away money! If your project meets their criteria, and you can prove need, you can get money to fund your multimedia lab.

The bad news, however, is that grant awarding entities have strict processes you must go through, and these processes vary widely; stringent requirements for documenting your project, its outcomes, its budget, its project management, and its suitability to the granting entity's mission; a definite, but sometimes quarterly, deadline that must adhered to; reporting requirements so the grantor can keep tabs on the project it is funding; and they will often only award one grant per requesting institution per year, although an award could be a multi-year grant.

All grants are finite, even multi-year grants. Multi-year grants typically last three years, with diminishing funding per year—for example, the first year might be funded at 100%, the second year at 67%, and the third year at 33%. Your grant funding will expire, and it's likely that you'll not be able to get another grant from that grantor until a certain time limit has expired. So it's important to plan for funding your program beyond the duration of the grant.

Oh, and did I mention that seeking grant funding is *competitive*? Like NASCAR, NFL, MLB, and Ivy League competitive. Really. Who doesn't want free money? So you'll want to read every application *multiple* times, comply with *every* requirement, cross every *t,* and dot every *i*. Obsess over the details, have an irresistible project like the one I describe in this book, and your chances of getting funded increase.

If you've ever completed a grant writing and submission process, then you

already know what to expect. For those of you who have not had the pleasure of seeking grant funding, this is a "must read" and will provide you with the need-to-know information. Also keep in mind that someone in your district has written grants before and you need to find who and contact them for help.

The Grant Process

Because the grant writing process is so important, I have put together a sample grant proposal for funding the implementation of a multimedia program. You can access that sample online here [insert relevant URL] You can download it and modify it to meet your needs. Before you download the sample and start editing, through, you should understand the grant process.

One of the best ways to do this is check with your school district, local education cooperative, and your state for grant workshops. Because these workshops and In-services are valuable for grants for all projects, you may be able to get funding to attend a workshop to learn how to write grants. I highly recommend pursuing this if you want to write grants for your school or district.

Funding Sources

The first thing to do is familiarize yourself with typical sources for grants. One of the best sources for finding grant sources is the Foundation Directory Online (FDO) from the Foundation Center (http://founationcenter.org). The downside is that it requires a subscription to access; the upside is that many public libraries have a subscription, and as long as you're using a computer attached to the library's network, you can access the library's FDO subscription. Large school districts may also have a subscription. Check with your school's librarian or technical staff.

Another great source for grants from the United States federal government is Grants.Gov at http://www.grants.gov. Their Get Started link (https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/apply-for-grants.html) is the best place to start the journey to federal money. It's a great tool to have in your funding tool belt. Some additional sources for grant information can be found at the end of this chapter.

Learn the Requirements

After identifying likely sources, check out their online grant information. You'll want to note the process they use, the requirements for submitting an application, the deadline or deadlines for submission, and the award date following the deadline. Many organizations make grant awards at their quarterly board meetings; others less frequently. You'll want to coordinate the award date with your project start date.

Generic Grant Application Components

Then you'll want to start writing that grant! Realize that this is going to be a lengthy process, and will likely involve many folks in your school or district, especially where the budget is concerned—but your enthusiasm will see you through!

A typical grant has the following components:

- The introduction, where you set out the credibility of your organization by stating its vision, mission, and purpose. The net effect should be to establish the organization as the expert in what it does. The introduction should also define who is helped by the organization—this will likely be the target audience for your grant funded project, but that audience could be a subset of the overall audience for the organization.
- A problem statement that defines the problem you are going to solve given the grant funding.
- The goals necessary to address the problem, and the specific measurable objectives necessary to complete each goal. This section is no different from curriculum goals and objectives, and, in fact, specific curriculum goals may be incorporated into the goals used to solve the problem.
- A section that spells out
    - The staffing, dates, milestones, and rationale for achieving each objective. This can be in a bulleted or narrative format.
    - Who will manage the project. This may include multiple levels of management depending upon the scope of the project.
    - The future of the project, most especially how the project will endure once the grant funding has run out.
- An evaluation section, that details how the project will be evaluated to show that the goals and objective have been met within the timeline specified in the grant. This information will be requested by the grantor as part of the reporting process.
- A budget. This is *the essential* portion of the grant, and should cover costs for equipment; software; personnel (salaries or wages, and benefits); consumables; any subscription services like support; repair and replacement; training; and cash flow, which details the flow of funds from the grantor through the project however long the project lasts (one off, year-long, or multi-year).
    - It is especially important in the budget to include *all* funding being considered or already committed for the project. For example, the school district may be picking up the cost of personnel through staff assignments to the project. This does a couple of things:

- It shows the grantor that you are looking far afield for contributions to the project and are not relying solely on this one source of funding for the whole project. Grantors like funding part of projects with multiple sources of funding.
- It shows the grantor the seriousness with which you are pursuing your goal. Many grants have lofty goals, but seek too little funding. Grantors can judge your seriousness by comparing your goals to your budget and funding sources.
- A summary of the project. Though listed last here, this may be the first thing in your grant application. Think of this as the executive summary—a one page (or less) document that gives the granting organization's senior leadership the 411 on your project.

There is one caveat to using this, or any, format for your grant application—the grant you are applying for will have its own format for the application *which you must follow*. Failure to follow a particular format for a given grant will result in your grant application not being considered.

This particular format lists all of the things a grantor looks for in an application. Writing your grant according to this form, before you fill out any applications, will enable you to cut and paste into grant applications (especially online applications) without having to treat each application as a brand new project. You'll find this will save you much time if you are pursuing multiple grants (which you should be doing, as it will likely increase your success).

Additional Funding Sources

Most of the following links are from Tech Ed Magazine. My friend Tom Shaw, the publisher, provides further information on grants and how to obtain them. They update monthly, and you'll need subscribe. Tell him Video Chuck sent you. His site will be more up to date then the date this book is published.

Resources for grants are many but Carl Perkins www.canton.edu/grants/docs/Perkins_Grant_Overview.pdf and www.grants.com is a great start.

NEED TO CHECK THE SITE AND OTHERS

- http://techedmagazine.com/home
- http://techedmagazine.com/content/450-million-available-community-college-and-career-training

- http://www.ksde.org/Agency/FiscalandAdministrativeServices/InformationT

echnology(IT)/TAKE/tabid/836/ItemId/20/Default.aspx
- Click on Education Initiatives, TAKE/E-Rate and Educational Resources for information on technology incentive programs, grants, and funding.

- http://dese.mo.gov/
  - Grants that are available in Missouri and other states are listed on this site. Among them are technology acquisition grants, technology enhancement grants, competitive grants, incentive grants, safe schools grants, school-to-work/school-to-career grants, A+ Schools Grants, and Community 2000 Grants.

- http://www.mcrel.org/connect/tech/funding.html
  - This web page provides a directory of funding opportunities, grant writing aids and strategies for schools interested in acquiring and establishing new technologies.

- http://www.k12.wa.us/default.aspx
  - A resource for students and teachers, the Washington State Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction lists information on grants and funding for technology that can be found on the Internet.

- http://www.discoveryeducation.com/
  - Six sites are listed with information on professional development opportunities, RETA 98 (project of Los Alamos National Laboratory and the New Mexico Department of Education), grant resources for Oregon teachers.

- http://www.cfda.gov/
  - Federal programs that provide assistance in a wide variety of areas, including funding for technology assistance.

- http://www.ed.gov/Technology/challenge/
  - U. S. Department of Education Technology Innovation Challenge Grants: Promotes innovative uses of educational technology by awarding grants to partnerships of school districts, universities, businesses, libraries, software designers, and others.

- http://www.ed.gov/funding.html
  - U.S. Department of Education: Money Matters: State and Federal grant information (guidelines and regulations). Included is A+America Free Technology For Schools HomePage http://www.aplusamerica.org/
  - Friends of the School and Corporations will help if they know what you are doing. You could offer then a professional sales or training video (I will help Your class) just for grading it. You know 1-10 scale.