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Milton Foundation for Education Seeks Schools Proposals for a \$10,000 "Decade Grant"

By Ed Hayward
Milton Foundation for Education

Marking its 10th anniversary of building private support for the public schools, the Milton Foundation for Education is seeking proposals from teachers and principals for a \$10,000 "Decade Grant", which would be the largest single competitive grant award ever made by the non-profit foundation.

The Decade Grant will expand on the foundation's history of grant-making to teachers, librarians and specialists working in Milton's public schools. The foundation's successful twice-year-old competitive grants program awards grants ranging from a few hundred dollars to \$4,000 for innovative learning proposals, generally aimed at a single classroom, school or event.

"The success of the MFE's grants program has shown us that innovation is alive and well in Milton's schools," said Carol Rosner, president of the MFE's Board of Trustees. "The people who generously support the foundation know their contributions make a positive difference in the classroom. Now we're asking teachers and school personnel for an ambitious proposal with broad impact. We're excited to see the ideas they generate."

The Decade Grant is intended to "help propel the Milton Schools into the next decade," according to a request for proposals released this month. MFE is looking for projects that are as broadly based as possible, affect as many students as possible, and have a long-term impact on the Milton public schools. Single classroom or single event projects will not be considered.

MFE grants are made possible by generous donors to the MFE's annual spring fundraising appeal, which is going on this month, and the Celebration for Education, a live and silent auction dinner event held in November.

The Decade Grant builds upon the success of the MFE's competitive grants program, which awarded more than \$17,000 last fall and another \$20,000 to proposals received this spring.

"We want to see the next big idea for the Milton schools," said Jim May, a member of the MFE board who chairs its Grants Committee. "We expect to see proposals that give depth to teaching a particular subject, build capacity in the system as a whole, or promote cross-disciplinary approaches. We are encouraging proposals that affect entire grades, entire subject areas, or entire schools, as well as projects that affect multiple grades, multiple schools, or multiple subject areas."

The MFE took a step toward making larger grants earlier this month when it awarded up to \$5,000 to Pierce Middle School for an innovative project to build a database that "maps"

the school's curriculum in order to better coordinate lesson planning, instruction and assessment work.

"This was a proposal we saw as a chance to help a school really accelerate the work that's already going on to make sure that lessons are in line with the state requirements and the needs of our middle school students," said May. He added that the grant will assist with software purchase, training and maintenance of the project for up to five years.

The MFE will identify one proposal and work closely with its proponents in order to develop an operationally and financially practical project.

Any faculty or administrative staff member of the Milton Public Schools, except staff from the central office, are eligible to submit proposals. Projects developed by groups are preferred, according to May.

The deadline for the receipt of proposals is Monday, June 11, 2005. Submissions must be received by 5 p.m. in the office of Assistant Superintendent of Schools and MFE Trustee Mary Gormley.

For more information about the Decade Grant, contact Jim May at 617-696-2895.

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