

Teacher Leadership Fund: A Grant Opportunity for BTU Educators

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The Teacher Leadership Fund empowers educator-led innovation to address authentic classroom, school, and district challenges in service of student learning and well-being. Our mission is to:

- Create communities of educator-led innovation
- Provide diverse educators with access to resources to better serve our most marginalized students
- Celebrate, disseminate, and iterate new learning and promising practice

What is the Teacher Leadership Fund?

A feature of the BTU-BPS contract, The Teacher Leadership Fund awards grants up to \$15,000 to teams of educators. The fund puts resources directly into the hands of educators to work toward solutions to challenges in their schools or the district, especially those challenges that impact our most marginalized students. When educators discover promising solutions, the Teacher Leadership Fund will facilitate opportunities to share learning, ideas, or resources with other schools or educators who may face similar challenges.

Who is eligible?

Teams of BPS educators consisting primarily (more than 50%) of members of the BTU teacher bargaining unit. Team members can include other teachers, paraprofessionals, administrators, school or district leaders, and/or support staff. Proposals will be accepted from two types of teams:

- School-Based Teams: Teams of educators within a school/program/department who plan to work and learn together to address a challenge in their school. Applications require support from the team's school leader and BTU building representative.
- Teams of Educators Across Schools: Educators from across schools who share a common learning interest or who want to solve a shared challenge.

What types of proposals are you looking for?

- **Action Grants** will support teams interested in designing and implementing an intervention to address a challenge impacting marginalized students.
- **NEW Study Grants** will support teams interested in learning more about the various dimensions of an identified challenge impacting marginalized students and developing an action plan based on that learning.

All proposals must:

1. identify and explain a problem or challenge
2. align to a subcompetency of the [Essentials for Instructional Equity](#). ([Summary](#))
3. describe what learning or work you will undertake.

Detailed application information can be found [here](#).

Why is the teacher leadership fund focused on equity and diversity?

- **Equity**: Despite our standing as one of the highest performing urban school districts in the nation, significant opportunity and achievement gaps exist within our schools and in the district as a whole. For this reason, proposals must explicitly address opportunity and achievement gaps, and focus on marginalized students.
- **Diversity**: If we do not tap the strengths of a diverse range of educators, we are unlikely to access the range of solutions we need to address our most persistent challenges. For this reason, we are committed to ensuring that grants are awarded to educators that reflect the full range of diversity within our staff and the students we serve.

For complete Teacher Leadership Fund application and program info check out bit.ly/bpsbtutlfund.

Applications due April 1st.

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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What is the Teacher Leadership Fund?

The Teacher Leadership Fund was created in the 2016-2018 BTU contract when the BTU and BPS agreed to reallocate the \$300,000 dedicated to the Lead Teacher program for this purpose. The Teacher Leadership Fund is jointly governed by a committee appointed by the Superintendent and the BTU. The Committee makes all decisions by consensus.

Mission and Vision

The Teacher Leadership Fund empowers educator-led innovation to address authentic classroom, school, and district challenges in service of student learning and well-being. Our mission is to:

- Create communities of educator-led innovation
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ELIGIBILITY and APPLICATION PROCESS

Can I apply as an individual or do I need to be part of a team?

All applicants need to apply as part of a team that includes at least two people. Each team must identify a lead applicant who will be the primary contact, expected to participate in calls and attend the in-person meetings.

Who can be on the team?

Team members can include other teachers, paraprofessionals, administrators, school or district leaders, and/or support staff. Teams must be composed primarily (at least 50%) of members of the BTU teachers bargaining unit (teachers, related service providers, nurses, COSE, guidance counselors, supervisors of attendance, assignment and transportation specialists)

Do all team members have to be from the same school?

No. Teams may be organized in one of two ways:

- School- Based Teams: Teams of educators within a school/program/department who plan to work and learn together to address a challenge in their school. Applications from these teams require support from the team's school leader and BTU building representative.
- Teams of Educators Across Schools: Teams of teachers across schools who share a common learning interest or who want to solve a shared challenge. Projects that make use of any educator's contractual time or school resources (e.g. cross-site visits requiring sub coverage, conference or professional release days, use of facilities for team meetings, inviting outside guests to school buildings etc.) require the support and approval of the school leader.

Can I be on more than one grant team?

No. Each educator may be a part of only one team.

Can more than one team from a school be awarded a grant?

Yes. The committee will work to distribute the funds equitably. This may mean that more than one team from a single school is awarded a grant.

How do we apply?

1. Work with your team to identify the problem or challenge you want to address and to develop your work and learning plan.
2. Consult with your school leader and school secretary when developing the budget and workplan.
3. Review the application questions and components [here](#).

4. Complete the application form [here](#).

Is there an alternative to a written proposal narrative?

Yes, if you would prefer to complete elements of the proposal narrative in a video or webinar/screen cast, you may indicate this in the form and include a link to the video.

If I choose to do a video how should I make it?

We will not be judging the production values of your video. We simply provide this option as an alternative to written proposal components. You can use your phone or computer camera and can include only you and/or your teammates speaking or other video elements that may help us understand your school, classroom, or the issue. Do not film students without permission.

When is the deadline?

All applications are due on or before April 1st by 11:59pm. Late applications will not be accepted.

When will grants be awarded?

Grantees will be notified by May 3rd.

APPLICATION COMPONENTS:

We recommend that you gather all of the information and components below before beginning to complete [the application form](#).

- It may be helpful to review
 - the [scoring rubric](#)
 - this [reflection](#) on stronger and weaker applications after last year's application process.
 - Some [exemplar proposals](#) from last year

ALL Applications:**1. The Team**

- Lead applicant: Name, Role, Email Address, Phone Number**
- All team members: Names, Roles and Email Address**
- As described above, the district's value of diversity and equity lie at the center of this work. In what ways does the composition of your teacher leadership team apply the value of diversity?**
(1-2 sentences)

2. Identifying the Challenge

- Project Title** (15 words or fewer)
The title should help us and the BPS community understand the project.
- What problem or challenge have you identified?** (250 words or fewer)
As you describe the problem or challenge be sure to concisely explain:
How has the problem or challenge been identified?
What qualitative or quantitative data has helped you identify or understand the problem?
 - NOTE: Please refer to the rubric for the criteria for effective use of data in identifying a problem or challenge.
How does this problem manifest in your school or context? What do you suspect are the root causes of the problem? How does this problem or challenge impact opportunities for or achievement of marginalized students? There are many ways to identify and reflect on root causes. You may use one of these resources to help identify the problem or clarify your thinking. ([Problem Tree Analysis](#), [5 Whys](#), [Fishbone Diagram](#))
- Alignment to BPS Essentials for Instructional Equity**
Identify one [subcompetency](#) to which the problem/challenge most closely aligns. ([Summary](#))

- d. **Choose Type of Grant Sought:** Because every challenge is unique, every plan to address it will also be unique. While some teams may plan for members to initially engage in learning about the problem, associated research, or possible solutions, others may be ready to implement existing learning, programs or practices. Either approach, or a combination of both, is perfectly acceptable. For this reason, we have created two categories of grant projects.

Action Grants will support teams interested in designing and implementing an intervention to address a challenge impacting marginalized students.

NEW Study Grants will support teams interested in learning more about the various dimensions of an identified challenge facing marginalized students and developing an action plan based on that learning.

3. Grant Narrative Components (choose the appropriate link below)

a. for [Action Grants](#).

- i. Implementation Narrative
- ii. Anticipated Impacts

b. for [Study Grants](#).

- i. Background Research
- ii. Learning Plan

Action Grants Implementation Narrative:

a. **What work will you engage in if your project is funded? (up to 500 words)**

1. What do you need to do to address the challenge in practice? How do you know this is the right course of action to take (research, experience, etc.)?
 - a. MOST IMPORTANT: Is the work you plan to lead/do within your sphere of influence? Will others who are not engaged in the work need to “buy-in,” change their practice, or develop new mindsets in order for you to be successful? Please conduct an honest assessment of your ability to implement all aspects of the plan. A modest, but focused, plan within your sphere of influence will probably be more successful than an ambitious one outside of it.
 - b. Is the plan realistic and doable?
 - c. With whom do you need to collaborate (other than team members)? Who are other members of your community who might want or need to participate?
 - d. What supports might you need from inside your school or out of it?
 - e. What systems or structures might need to be addressed or adapted to accommodate the work?
2. What is your road map for the grant period with benchmarks?
 - a. Consider some key benchmarks for learning, experimenting and developing your plan.
3. Here are two sample workplan templates. These are NOT required, but may help you think through your process for addressing your challenge. ([Simple plan](#), [Detailed plan](#)) You will be required to enter aspects of this in the budget form below, so you may find that document helpful for planning purposes.
4. Learning:
 - a. What skills or knowledge within your team will be assets to your work?
 - b. What knowledge or skills do you believe you need to acquire to address this challenge?
 - c. What kinds of professional learning do educators on your team or others in your school need? Be as specific as possible about books, conferences, professional development opportunities, etc, that your team seeks.
 - i. Is there learning that the members of the team will need to lead for others? (Consider: Do you need support or learning in the facilitation of learning or in leading teams?)

b. **Anticipated Impact** (100 words or fewer)

1. REQUIRED: How do you anticipate your work/learning will impact student learning or well-being?
2. REQUIRED: How will you know? What data (qualitative or quantitative) will you collect?
3. OPTIONAL: How do you anticipate your work/learning to impact educator learning and/or school/district culture? How will you know?

Study Grants:

a. Background Research and Existing Learning Opportunities (up to 300 words)

1. What do you already know about the topic or challenge? Who are the (are there) current “experts” in the field? What research exists?
2. What educators or administrators within BPS might have resources, guidance, or expertise to share?
3. Are there examples of schools or individuals that have addressed this challenge in other contexts?
4. In what ways might biases inform or hinder your understanding of the dimensions of the problem? What mindsets might need to be addressed?
5. What existing structured learning opportunities exist related to your challenge? (e.g. Conferences, workshops, graduate courses etc.)

b. Learning Plan (up to 300 words) -

- i. What opportunities for learning will you need to create yourself? (e.g. book or text study, independent research or resource creation, PLC or Critical Friends group, site visits)
- ii. Do you have, or do you have a plan to develop, the skills necessary to design and facilitate this learning?
- iii. Do you and the members of your team have the necessary time and support to engage in the learning? How frequently will you meet together? What will take place in the summer and what will take place during the year?
- iv. What might you try to implement as you learn? Will you engage in any form of structured or informal inquiry or action research cycle?
- v. How might small experiments lead to greater learning or an eventual plan for wider implementation?
- vi. Who might you need to engage in order to successfully experiment with small or larger experiments or interventions?

4. Sharing Learning - How might you share your learning?

We will provide grantees with opportunities to share learning in venues like the Teacher Summer Institute or a fall convening of grantees. Besides these forums, please consider:

How might you invite others into your learning as you go about your work?

How might you share what you learned, both inside your school or with others, at the conclusion of the grant? (e.g. leading a workshop, creating a toolkit, bibliography etc.)

5. Budget and Plan. Please use a copy of [this form](#) to complete your budget and plan. You will link this document into the application form. Ensure that all expenditures are categorized as follows.

- i. **Contracted Services** - Outside services, consultants, professional development providers, others to whom fees must be paid in exchange for services.
- ii. **Transportation/Travel** - Airfare, train/bus travel, etc.
- iii. **Educational Supplies** - NOTE: Amazon is not an approved BPS vendor, Please work with your school secretary to identify alternative vendors from the approved list. Purchases of technology hardware are not allowable under this grant (chromebook carts, ipads), but software licenses are allowable.

- iv. **Per Diem Sub** - Grant projects frequently leverage the services of substitute teachers to cover teachers who attend professional development, conferences, cross site-visits, or off-site meetings. Please ensure you have discussed all proposed release time with your supervisor. The current rate is \$148.68 per day.
- v. **Professional Stipend:** Stipends are typically calculated in one of two ways. All stipended work must be backed up by documentation. Stipends may only be paid for completed work.:
 - 1. A flat rate: A fixed sum in exchange for completing a project or taking a leadership role.
 - 2. Hourly rate: The total number of hours worked is anticipated in advance but only actual hours worked and documented are compensated. The BTU hourly rate for teachers is \$48.76 per hour. Paraprofessional hourly rates vary and can be found on pages 139-140 of the [contract](#).
- vi. **Professional Development or Training:** Conference or workshop registration fees or tuition.
- vii. **Other:** All other expenditures

GRANT AWARDS

1. What is the size of the grants?

- a. Grants range from a minimum of \$2,500 to a maximum of \$15,000.
- b. We will not award partial grants (ie. less than what is asked for), so it is important that applications accurately reflect the anticipated costs of the project.

2. What criteria will be used to evaluate the proposals?

The committee will use [this rubric](#) to evaluate proposals. Proposals that satisfy most of the domains in the rubric will be considered for funding.

3. How many will be awarded?

By contract, the Fund may allocate up to \$300,000 per year. The number of grants will be dependent on the size of awarded proposals, the number of high quality applications, strategic alignment of awarded proposals and other factors related to achieving the mission and realizing the vision of the Fund . The joint BTU/BPS committee that governs the fund may hold money in reserve in order to support expansion or continuation grants later in the year, or to support grantees who encounter unanticipated expenditures.

4. What is the grant period?

- The work of the grants should be completed between June 1st, 2019 and June 1st, 2020.
- Learning grants interested in implementation funding through the subsequent year's pool should plan to complete their work by March 1st 2020.

5. How and when will I receive the funding?

- a. All funds will be available beginning July 1st.
- b. We recognize, however, that some grants will include expenditures that must be made in June. If your grant has such expenditures, we can work with you to identify funds to be spent during this timeframe.
- c. Any stipends included in the grants will be paid upon completion of the work.
- d. School based teams will have funds transferred to school budgets, while cross-school teams will have their funds managed out of a Central Office pool.
- e. All teams will be required to attend a training on how to spend and manage their funds on May 15th.

BUDGET

How do I submit a budget?

Please copy and paste and then complete the form [here](#). Please name your new file in a fashion that will clearly identify it as yours. (For example: “Johnson School TLF Proposal Budget” will allow us to clearly differentiate which budget is yours. “Teacher Leadership Fund Budget” will not clearly differentiate your document.)

What types of expenses are allowable?

Expenses may include:

Stipends (Flat or at BTU hourly rate), Materials (books, supplies, curricular materials), Professional Development, Conference Registration Fees, Travel Fees or other expenditures, but must be included in the budget according to the categories provided in the budget template.

What types of expenses are prohibited?

1. food and alcohol purchases are not permitted.
2. Reimbursements for previously spent funds
3. Technology hardware purchases (e.g chromebook carts, ipads, etc.)
4. Field trips.
5. Payments to outside entities to deliver direct services to students.
6. Furniture.
7. Stipends for non-BTU members (Administrators, school or district leaders, and central office staff are not eligible for stipends through this program, but may be included in other expenditures such as conference registration fees as long as they participate in collaboration with BTU team members.)

DELIVERABLES and REQUIREMENTS of GRANTEES

If my team is awarded a grant, what is required of us?

- Before the grant period.
 - Immediately upon notice of receiving a grant on May 3rd, you will be asked to review your proposal and budget for any changes that need to be made. This will be due by May 14th.
 - You are required to attend a convening on May 16th from 4:30-7:30pm to learn about the Teacher Leadership Fund, hear from past grantees, and receive a training in spending and managing the grant funds. Ideally your school leader and/or school secretary would join you at the convening.
- During the grant period.
 - Check-ins: You will be required to participate in at least three check-ins with a member of the TLF Committee. These are short (<30 min.) phone calls or in person meetings to check on your progress.
 - Early Fall check-in: To discuss summer work and recommit to the workplan in light of any changes over the summer.
 - Mid/late Fall: To gauge progress and prepare for the Fall convening.
 - Winter/Spring: To prepare for finalizing project
 - At least one team representative must attend a late Fall ‘19 and Spring ‘20 convening of grantees to share your work, receive feedback, and provide feedback to other grantees (dates TBD)
 - To the best of your ability complete the work/learning outlined in your proposal
 - Optional: Share your learning in progress at Teacher Summer Institute
- At the Conclusion of the grant period
 - Final reflection on the process (guidelines forthcoming)
 - For Action Grants: Data collected as indicated in grant application
 - For Study Grants: An implementation plan that explains how you will apply the learning
 - Program feedback form

- One or more of the following as appropriate:
 - Toolkit or resource to share
 - Case study or plan for future work/learning
 - Professional learning experience
 - Other product to share learning or practice

What if my project or expenditures change as the work unfolds?

Make your best effort to stick to the proposed work plan. However, if plans change as the grant is implemented, there is flexibility to make some adjustments while adhering to the original grant budget. If major changes arise, please contact Shakera Walker.

Are there opportunities for additional funding when this grant concludes?

No. However, grantees may apply for TLF funding in subsequent years. For those planning to apply in a subsequent year, all final deliverables from one year must be submitted by the application due date for the following year. Many other organizations also provide similar grant opportunities for educators.

APPLICATION SUPPORTS

Do you have examples of successful application from the past?

Yes. This resource folder includes

- a selection of successful applications from last year.
- This year's scoring rubric
- An example of project deliverables

Who should I contact with questions or for support?

Please contact TLF@bostonpublicschools.org with questions or requests for support. A member of the Teacher Leadership Fund Committee will respond to your question as soon as possible.

Teacher Leadership Fund Committee

Ulana Ainsworth, Curtis Guild School Teacher

Kimberly Kulasekaran, Carter School Teacher

Shakera Ford Walker, Director of Teacher Development

Mary Driscoll, Associate Superintendent of Elementary and Middle Schools

Paul Tritter, BTU Director of Professional Learning