



WATAUGA

Education Foundation

New for the 2026-2027 School Year!

Healthy School Communities: Strengthening Character & Emotional Wellness Grant

Purpose

The Healthy School Communities: Strengthening Character & Emotional Wellness Grant is designed to foster character development and emotional wellness across the school environment. The program equips students with essential life skills—including self-awareness, self-management, empathy, responsible decision-making, and perseverance—that support both academic achievement and positive behavior.

Grants will emphasize early support for students experiencing emotional or behavioral challenges, enabling schools to respond proactively to student needs. By strengthening relationships among students, staff, and families, Healthy School Communities cultivates a positive school climate where all students feel connected, supported, and valued.

It is our vision to create healthy, supportive school communities by fostering students' character, emotional wellness, and resilience, empowering them to thrive academically and socially.

Goals & Outcomes

- Improve student behavior and reduce disciplinary referrals
- Increase student engagement and attendance
- Strengthen students' social-emotional skills and character development
- Support academic growth through improved focus and resilience
- Enhance overall school climate and sense of belonging



WATAUGA

Education Foundation

Healthy School Communities: Strengthening Character & Emotional Wellness

Grant Guidelines and Application 2026-2027

Who can apply?

Applications will be accepted from Watauga County Schools administrators, counselors, social workers, educators, as well as the County Office.

- Administrators on behalf of their schools.
- Teachers- as a team/group for a grade level or multiple grade levels
- Counselors and Social Workers on behalf of their assigned schools
- County Office staff directly involved in curriculum and student services

How much will be awarded?

Amounts will be determined on an individual basis as the size and need of the project will be considered.

What kind of projects can be funded?

Projects that can be funded must be related to character education/development, emotional wellness, and positive behavior management for students in Watauga County Schools. Projects must:

- Directly benefit students through innovative and creative strategies and methods.
- Use evidenced based strategies and methods.
- Provide ongoing benefits (single use items will be considered, e.g. t-shirts, awards, food, transportation, and admission fees must not account for more than 10% of the grant request).
- Supplement but not replace state and local funding.
- Address the selection criteria listed on the following page.

Professional development and training that will provide beneficial strategies and tools that can be implemented as well as shared with other counselors, social workers, and educators will also be considered for funding.



WATAUGA

Education Foundation

How does the selection process work?

The Watauga Education Foundation Grants & Scholarship Committee will coordinate the evaluation of all applications and make its recommendations to the full Board. The evaluation process may also include community members working in teams with the Grants and Scholarships Committee members to review and make recommendations to the full Board regarding grant requests. The Watauga Education Foundation Board of Directors approves final award decisions.

How to apply:

1. Review guidelines and selection criteria before writing your proposal.
2. Complete the application which is found below following the grant guidelines. We strongly recommend that your application be typed. We require an authorized principal signature; as such, please print your edited file for his/her signature. The spaces provided for your input in the application pages below are not minimum or maximum indicators; please use less or more space as you require.
3. Mail the application to the Watauga Education Foundation, c/o Watauga County Schools Central Office, 175 Pioneer Trail, Boone, NC 28607, or drop off the application at the Central Office. Applications may also be submitted by email to wef@wataugaschools.org. The application deadline is 4:00 pm on June 7, 2026. This deadline is strictly enforced.
4. You will receive confirmation, via email, of receipt of your application.

Selection Criteria

Proposals will be rated based on how well they address these questions:

1. What student needs will your project address?
2. State your specific goals and objectives of this project and what you hope to achieve.
3. Describe your project and how it will be implemented. Include a timeline of all project activities.
4. How will students be changed because of your project (include relevance) and the number of students expected to be impacted in the first year.



WATAUGA

Education Foundation

5. How will the effectiveness of the project be evaluated and what data will be provided? What metrics will be used to collect data?
6. Clarity and completeness of budget (see attached budget page) including use of other funds and resources.
7. The overall creativity and innovation of the project.

Award Notification

In an effort to better serve you and your students, the Watauga Education Foundation, will notify applicants of Grants for the 2026-2027 academic year no later than the first week of July 2026. Recipients will be notified by both email and mail.

Award Contract and Disbursement

Recipients will receive an award contract with their notification letter. This contract must be signed and returned to the Foundation prior to disbursement of funds. Grant funds will be disbursed within two weeks following receipt of the signed contract. The contract will include such items as follows:

- Grant recipients acknowledge that items purchased with grant funds are the property of the recipient's school and must stay at that school unless prior permission is granted by the Foundation to relocate the items to another school. No items purchased with Foundation funds shall become the personal property of the Award recipient.
- All funds must be used solely for the project described in the grant application, which becomes a part of the Award contract. Any funds not used by January 31, 2027 must be returned to the Foundation.
- Grant recipient agrees to a site visit by the Foundation, to be conducted preferably during a time when students are engaged in the project funded by the grant.
- Grant recipients must provide an evaluation of the project funded and return the requested evaluation form to the Foundation by January 31, 2027. Failure to do so will disqualify the recipient from WEF grant funding for the next academic year.
- Grant recipients must provide data showing the effectiveness of the project.
- Grant recipients agree to assist the Foundation by sharing their project with peers both at their designated school as well as other schools within the district- i.e. attending a faculty meeting at another school.



WATAUGA

Education Foundation

- Grant recipients will be available to attend a showcase to share their project. The date and time of the showcase is to be determined-recipients will be notified so they can plan accordingly.
- Grant recipient agrees to the use of recipient's name, photograph and description of project in Foundation materials and press releases.

We welcome your input regarding our procedures and forms. Please feel free to contact Watauga Education Foundation at wef@wataugaschools.org.



WATAUGA

Education Foundation

Healthy School Communities: Strengthening Character & Emotional Wellness

Grant Application Cover Sheet

Deadline: June 7, 2026

Title of Project: _____

Amount Requested: \$ _____

School(s) where projected will be implemented:

- Bethel Blowing Rock Cove Creek Green Valley
 Hardin Park Mabel Parkway Valle Crucis
 WHS

Number of Students Impacted _____

Grades of Students Impacted _____

Date Project will begin implementation: _____



WATAUGA

Education Foundation

Applicant Information

**Please list Lead Applicant First for notification purposes*

Name	School	Email

Home mailing address for lead applicant:

Are any applications pending for other possible sources of funding for this project?

_____ Yes _____ NO

***If yes, please name the source and state the amount of funding requested.*

Name of Grantor	Amount Requested	Expected Date of Notification
	\$	
	\$	



WATAUGA
Education Foundation

**Healthy School Communities: Strengthening Character
& Emotional Wellness Grant**

Title of Project: _____

Project Summary:

Please describe the purpose of your project or professional development/training and its correlation to strengthening character and emotional wellness. Explain the need for the project/training and how it will help the students in your grade(s) and school. Include your inspiration for this project, how many students will be impacted, and how you will evaluate its effectiveness. Please be specific.



WATAUGA

Education Foundation

Healthy School Communities: Strengthening Character & Emotional Wellness Application

Principal Form

Project Applicant/School: _____

Project Title: _____

Principal's Certification

I have reviewed the application and found it to be consistent with the Watauga Education Foundation Grant Program and this school's overall objectives. I also affirm this project cannot be financed with state or local school funds.

Signature of Principal

Date

School



WATAUGA

Education Foundation

Healthy School Communities: Strengthening Character & Emotional Wellness Application

Budget Form

Project Applicant/School: _____

Project Title: _____

WEF funded Item/Source (Must be specific)	Amount needed from WEF grant
1.	\$
2.	\$
3.	\$
4.	\$
5.	\$
Total requested from WEF	\$

In the event your program cannot be fully funded, please indicate below the amount of partial funding you can accept and still implement the project.

WEF funded Item/Source (Must be specific)	Amount needed from WEF grant
1.	\$
2.	\$
3.	\$
4.	\$
5.	\$
Total requested from WEF	\$