

APPLICATION DEADLINE: Monday, March 6, 2017 at 5:00 pm
Email to elizabeth_ascoli@psbma.org
Or mail or hand-deliver to BEF, 40 Webster Place, Brookline, MA 02445

BROOKLINE EDUCATION FOUNDATION
Teacher Grant Application for 2017-2018 Academic Year
Cover Page

APPLICATION MUST BE TYPED

Project Title	Puffins and Peatlands: Birdwatching 101
Name of Applicant(s)	Elisabeth Wolfson
School and Grades/Subjects You Teach	Upper Devotion School Grade 5 Classroom Teacher
Home Telephone Number(s)	781-863-0079
Email Address(es)	Elisabeth_wolfson@psbma.org
Years Teaching in PSB, Total Years Teaching	25 years
Amount Requested	\$ 857.00
Are you applying for the Charlie Baker Legacy Award?	No
Please list previous BEF grants (year, title, teacher/collaborative)	2010, EmPower: A Method for Teaching Expository Writing, Teacher grant 2010: Schools Attuned in Practice, Collaborative 2007: Supporting Critical Friends Group Facilitators, Collaborative 2006: Devotion Critical Friends Coaches Winter Meeting, Collaborative

I understand that, should the Brookline Education Foundation fund my grant application, I am obligated to submit a written evaluation of my project at its completion and present the results of my grant at a BEF sponsored event. Evaluations of projects completed during the summer will be due by December 31, 2016. Evaluations of projects completed during the school year will be due by May 31, 2017. I further understand that only educators employed by the Brookline Public Schools at the time the project is undertaken are eligible to receive funds.

Acknowledgement of Applicant(s):

Elisabeth Wolfson

Date: 1/18/17

For online submissions, please acknowledge that you have read and agreed to the above statement. X

BROOKLINE EDUCATION FOUNDATION
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Project Description Section

1. Project Summary (1-3 sentences)

I will participate in a 3-day bird watching and nature trip on the Maine coast. The Audubon Society sponsors the trip which is led by professional guides.

2. Goal Statement

What are your explicit goals for the project? What would be the best outcome for the work you propose?

My goals for the trip are two-fold. One goal is to expand my knowledge base about birds, ecosystems, and conservation efforts. This trip provides hands-on experiences as a naturalist as well as instruction from expert guides about the natural history of the sea coast.

A second goal is to live my classroom motto of YOU CAN LEARN ANYTHING. In my classroom each fall, students learn about growth mindset through inquiry projects and other activities. Then we try to embody a growth mindset throughout the school year. Over the past three years, I've been finding my own opportunities to learn new things of all kinds. For instance, I keep challenging myself to learn and incorporate new technologies into my teaching and curriculum such as designing a website for my classroom or taking a course on how to use Google Earth. Learning to be a birdwatcher provides another opportunity for developing my growth mindset.

3. Context

a. What experiences or needs have led you to apply for this grant?

The 5th grade science curriculum includes a unit called Bird Sleuths. Through the unit, students learn five big ideas of biology through the study of bird adaptations and behaviors. I conclude the unit with a conservation project. Each student researches a bird from the Massachusetts Endangered Species list. Through learning about these birds and what threatens their populations, students learn about conservation efforts and citizen actions that support the species and the natural environment in general. One population I've used as an example is the Puffins of Egg Rock. We read the book, *Project Puffin: How We Brought the Puffins Back to Egg Rock* by Steven Kress and watch videos of Kress's conservation work that reintroduced the puffin population to the Maine coast. I am excited to see puffins in person on Machias Seal Island as well as (possibly) view a number of other species that I've come to learn about through the students' projects.

b. How have your education, training, and/or classroom experiences prompted the interest in or need for this project?

I've been teaching the Bird Sleuths curriculum for three years and have become more and more interested in birding. Understanding bird populations and behavior leads me to think more and more about the natural environment and what threatens it. I believe that having my students learn to be naturalists is an important part of their development as citizens. I want to expand my own experience as a naturalist

4. Project Description

Describe the structure of this grant. What is your time frame? When and where will you be working? With whom will you work? You may include copies of supporting material (e.g., conference brochure, tour

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itinerary). Links to websites may be used for supporting materials and are preferred, if available.

The Puffins and Peatlands trip goes from July 13-16.

It is offered by the Massachusetts Audubon Society.

Attached is the trip itinerary, with detailed descriptions of each day's activities and potential bird sightings.

5. Impact

Describe as specifically as possible the impact of the work you propose. As part of this description, please let us know how you might evaluate that impact.

- On Yourself - How do you expect this project will change you as an educator? How might this work impact future professional activity?
- Going on this trip is out of my comfort zone for a few reasons. First, I am a novice birder. Although I do own a pair of binoculars, I use them mainly to observe a pair of sparrows who nest in my gutter. So, this trip will provide an experience of being a beginner, a learner. I will be learning from the trip leaders as well as more experienced birdwatchers on the trip. Second, the trip will increase my background knowledge about birds, coastal habitats, and conservation. I'm excited to find ways to incorporate my learning into my teaching and science curriculum.
- On Your Colleagues - What impact will your project have on your professional community, either directly or indirectly? I have two other Devotion colleagues who teach science at my grade level. I will share my photos and experience with them as well as any curriculum I develop as a result of my trip.
- On Your Students - How will your students benefit from this project in the short or long term? As my interest in birding grows and my skills develop, I will naturally pass this along to my students. So far, I have learned birding techniques mainly from the videos available from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. I think sharing my direct experiences will be both exciting and effective. Also as I mentioned above, I believe I have an important role in developing my students' environmental awareness and stewardship. This trip will serve as a model for them.

6. Evaluation

How will you evaluate the success of the project? For example, will you create a before and after study, conduct a survey, collect and examine work products, engage in peer observation?

Honestly, the success of the project will be seen in my increased enthusiasm for the Bird Sleuths unit and in different applications of the experience to my curriculum. I will take photos and keep a written journal of the experience.

7. Dissemination

How will you share your learning with others in your school and district community? For instance, will you share results in departmental meetings or on departmental wikis, or design other forms of dissemination of your project?

I will post photos and journal entries on my class website (5Wdevo.weebly.com). I will share curriculum connections with my colleagues at Devotion and at the grade level through the Science curriculum coordinator.

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Budget and Finances Section

Expense	Purpose	Cost
Consultant		
Materials and Supplies		
Travel and Accommodations*	Trip fee includes travel by van, overnight accommodations, and all site fees	\$ 680.00 (Audubon member fee) \$ 177.00 (Single occupancy fee)
Conference Fee		
Other		
Substitutes**(please indicate days/hours needed)		
TOTAL		\$ 857.00

* **Single rooms are acceptable if preferred by the applicant.**

****The BEF's ability to pay for subs is limited; requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis.**

Please be as specific as possible.

Finances

- a. Will there be additional funding from other sources? Please describe. No
- b. Are resources needed to continue the work of the project after BEF funding ends? If yes, please describe how these resources will be obtained. If no, please describe how the work of the project will be funded or continued after completion of funding by the BEF. No
- c. Do you foresee any potential challenges /obstacles and, if so, what is your strategy for dealing with them should they occur? No
- d. Will you be able to complete the project if only partial funding is available? ___Yes No
If only partial funding is available, would you be able to redesign the project? ___Yes No
Please explain:
- e. For groups of three or more educators applying together: If the BEF can fund only a subset of your group, is there a reason this would pose a problem for you? ___Yes ___No
Please explain:

Charlie Baker Legacy Award If you are applying for the Charlie Baker Legacy Award (fully described in the Call for Proposals), please indicate how the additional \$1,000 funding would extend and/or enrich your project. Please limit your response to one page.