



# Beyond Ordinary Learning Opportunities

Application Package FY 2024-25

Tennessee Department of Education | July 2024



# General Information

## **Overview/Purpose**

During the 2024 Legislative Session, [Public Chapter 954](#) established the Beyond Ordinary Learning Opportunities Act. The purpose of this new legislation is to support five public schools in the development and implementation of a therapy dog pilot program during the 2024-25 school year.

## **Use of Funds**

Local education agencies (LEAs) and Public Schools in Tennessee are eligible to apply for these funds.

State Board of Education rule 0520-01-02.01 establishes that *"a **public school** is the basic administrative unit of a state, county, city, or special district school system, consisting of one (1) or more grade groups, one (1) or more teachers to give instruction, and one (1) principal, which school shall be subject to the statutes of the State of Tennessee and to the rules, regulations, and minimum standards of the State Board of Education (State Board)."*

Grants will be awarded to eligible public schools that meet all criteria in accordance with the scoring rubric below. These funds may be used to support LEA and school efforts in introducing a therapy dog pilot program during the 2024-25 school year.

## **Funding/Match Requirements**

Funds are allocated to the awarded public school submitted by the LEA based upon an even distribution across the state of \$10,000 per award (total of \$50,000) and are **NOT subject to a local match**.

## **Eligibility and Grant Awards**

The intent of the grant is to provide five public schools the opportunity to develop and implement a therapy dog pilot program during the 2024-25 school year. In order to be eligible for the funds, all required information in the grant application must be completed in full. Grant awards are limited to ten thousand (\$10,000) per school in a fiscal year. One school from each Grand Division of the state must receive the grant funding.

## **Review Process**

All complete application packages received by the Tennessee Department of Education (department) on or before the application deadline will be reviewed by an internal review committee of at least three (3) State employees. The five LEAs or schools with the highest application scores will be awarded \$10,000 in grant funding.

**Note: One LEA or school from each grand division will be chosen.**

***All applications will be reviewed against the submitted project budgets and the grant application narrative.***

### ***Application Instructions***

All LEAs that are interested applying for this grant **must submit an application for the selected public school by August 12, 2024 in ePlan**. LEAs may only apply for one school within the LEA.

There are three areas to complete for the Beyond Ordinary Learning Opportunities grant application: Budget, Program Details, and Assurances. The ePlan application opens July 29, 2024.

#### **Budgeting in ePlan:**

Each awarded public school will receive \$10,000 in grant funding for one year. The total budget can be viewed in ePlan by the LEA who submitted the application. The funding must be used for implementation of a therapy dog program in one school for the 2024-25 school year.

#### **Application details in ePlan:**

In the application in ePlan, LEA's must provide a narrative of at least five hundred (500) words in length detailing the therapy dog implementation plan. Within the narrative, please make sure you address the following:

- Identify the school and the team of professionals involved in the grant opportunity.
- Describe how the LEA plans to support the school and personnel involved in this grant opportunity.
- Describe how the funds will be utilized to address the school's nonacademic needs.
- Provide details on anticipated scope (e.g., grade level, classroom level focus) with a rationale and desired outcomes as well as the LEA's or public school's plan for how they anticipate this grant opportunity will support overarching LEA or public school goals.
- Outline in detail the evaluation plan to share with state level stakeholders by the end of the 2024-25 school year.

## Beyond Ordinary Learning Opportunities Assurances:

The following assurances must also be read and acknowledged by checking the box next to the statement:

1. The Grantee shall implement the Beyond Ordinary Learning Opportunities Pilot Program no later than January 7, 2025, in order to collect and submit data to the department as required by [Public Chapter 954 of 2024](#).
2. The Grantee assures that the school receiving this grant opportunity does not currently have a therapy dog program.

You will be asked to acknowledge separate state assurances within ePlan.

## Timeline

<b>July 29, 2024</b>	<b>Grant Information Released</b> – The Beyond Ordinary Learning Opportunities Pilot application package will be published in ePlan.
<b>July 29- August 12, 2024</b>	<b>LEAs and schools can submit application requirements</b> – Completed applications that meet all established requirements will begin being reviewed and approved by the department starting July 29. The application will close on August 12.
<b>August 19, 2024</b>	<b>The department will begin notifying LEAs and/or schools of grant award status</b> – The department will review all applications and notify all LEAs and/or schools if they have received the grant funds based upon a fully completed application in ePlan and a review process. LEAs and/or schools will also be notified if grant funds are not awarded.

## Grant Administration

This grant is administered via [ePlan](#), the department’s online grant management system. To complete the application in ePlan, Grant Administrators will need to ensure they have access to ePlan. Grant Administrators that do not have access will need to complete this [user access form](#) and email it to [ePlan.Help@tn.gov](mailto:ePlan.Help@tn.gov). Disbursements of grant funds are made on a reimbursement basis, either monthly or quarterly, by submitting a reimbursement request in ePlan.

The Beyond Ordinary Learning Opportunities Pilot is subject to audit and monitoring. Each LEA or school should maintain appropriate documentation of expenditures.

## Technical Scoring Section

A peer review committee, made up of at least three (3) State employees, will independently evaluate and score the applicant's application. Each evaluator will use the following whole number, raw point scale for scoring the Application Components listed below:

1 point= POOR      3 Points= SATISFACTORY      5 Points= EXCELLENT

The three evaluator scores will be averaged to determine the applicant's final score.

<b>Application Component</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Assigned Points</b>
Personnel	Narrative clearly indicates the school that will implement the therapy dog program and the personnel who will be involved in implementing the program.	Narrative indicates the school that will implement the therapy dog program, but it is unclear who will be involved in the grant implementation.	Narrative does not clearly name the school or personnel who will be involved in the grant program,	
Grant Implementation	Narrative provides concise, strong procedures and deliverables that are fully explained. In addition, the narrative provides a clear plan for obtaining the therapy dog and implementing the program no later than January 7, 2025.	Narrative provides adequate design with activities and deliverables, but Proposal does not have a well-defined design, is vague, or is not clearly aligned to overall program outcomes. The project timeline is somewhat. vague.	Narrative does not have a well-defined program design and the timeline for implementation is unclear.	
Budget	Narrative clearly describes how the funds will be utilized to address needs. The applicant provides an appropriate budget that	Narrative somewhat describes how the funds will be utilized to address needs. The applicant provides a budget, but it is unclear	Narrative does not address how the funds will be utilized to address needs. The applicant does not	

	aligns to program activities and outcomes.	how the funds align to program activities and outcomes.	provide an appropriate budget.	
Scope of work	Narrative provides strong details on the anticipated scope of the program. In addition, the narrative provides a clear rationale with desired outcomes.	Narrative provides some details on the anticipated scope of the program. In addition, the narrative provides a rationale, but it is unclear how the program will produce desired outcomes.	Narrative does not provide appropriate details on the anticipated scope of the program and does not provide a clear rationale.	
Evaluation plan	Narrative clearly outlines in detail the program evaluation plan and provides a clear timeline for collecting and reporting data gathered during the 2024-2025 school year.	Narrative somewhat outlines the program evaluation plan and provides a timeline for collecting and reporting data gathered during the 2024-2025 school year.	Narrative does not provide an appropriate program evaluation plan and the timeline for collecting and reporting data is unclear.	
<b>SCORE (maximum possible score = 25)</b>				
<b>Evaluator Identification:</b>				

On August 19, the department will begin notifying LEAs of grant award status. LEAs will also be notified if grant funds are not awarded.

*If you have questions concerning the grant, please contact one of the following individuals:*

- **Sarah Arnold** – Director of Student and Family Services
  - Email: [Sarah.Arnold@tn.gov](mailto:Sarah.Arnold@tn.gov)

- Phone: 629-259-3199
- **Elizabeth Davis** – Project AWARE Manager
  - Email: [Elizabeth.J.Davis@tn.gov](mailto:Elizabeth.J.Davis@tn.gov)
  - Phone: 615-772-6279