

Foundations For Excellence – Quality Standards for Local Education Foundations

Consortium of Florida Education Foundations

A. Mission and Strategy

An effective Florida Education Foundation has:

1. A clear mission publicly stated that is clearly connected to student success.
2. Organizational (strategic) plans that describe how current work aligns with the mission.

B. Program Quality

An effective Florida Education Foundation includes Programs that:

3. Are responsive to local needs and/or aligned with school district priorities.
4. Are aligned with mission and reflective of best practice for comparable programs.
5. Demonstrate impact through clear measurement.
6. Are cost-effective.

C. Board and Leadership

Local Education Foundations in Florida have:

7. Roles for board members and CEO clearly defined in writing.
8. Board members are successfully recruited to maintain participation and engagement with the organization.
9. Regular reviews of Board performance.
10. Regular reviews of CEO performance.
11. Clear orientation for Board members.
12. Ongoing learning and development in place for board and CEO.
13. Broad-based board membership enabling deliberations among Board and CEO on substantive matters for the improvement of the Foundation.

D. Fundraising and Sustainability

In order to support an Education Foundation:

14. Effective donor relations and communication are in place.
15. Annual fund development plans guide fundraising activities.
16. There are clear roles for Board and staff in fundraising.
17. Leadership makes efforts to diversify revenue sources.
18. Long term relationships and infrastructure for sustaining donors over time are built including consideration of options for planned giving and endowments.

E. Partnerships, Public Awareness and Engagement

Foundations must be oriented and connected towards the broader community by:

19. Effectively working with the local school district on aligned efforts.
20. Connecting to other relevant local partners and business and community for relationship building and ongoing program connections.
21. Building an identifiable brand and independent identity that is promoted in the community.
22. Aligning messages from the foundation with mission and programs.
23. Following clear policies and procedures for advocacy and connection to official decision making (school board, legislature)

F. Effective Business and Organizational Operations

Education Foundations operate effectively as demonstrated by building:

24. A clearly defined working relationship with the school district.
25. Procedures for compliance with Federal, State and Local requirements and policies.
26. A budget that pays for insurance for directors, programs and organizational liability.
27. Internal controls that meet industry standards for financial and operational management.
28. A leadership succession plan.
29. Clear policies for staff salary and benefits appropriate for local context.
30. An annual budget – approved by the board – including an established policy on operational reserve.

A. Mission and Strategy

An effective Florida Education Foundation has:

Standard	Criteria	Example Evidence
1. A clear mission publicly stated that is clearly connected to student success.	a. Does the Organization have a written mission statement ?	IRS 990 Board materials Other organizational documentation
	b. Does the mission statement answer essential questions succinctly? <ul style="list-style-type: none">Why does the organization exist?Strive to accomplish?For whose benefit?	Description from website Guidestar Other published organizational documents
	c. Is the Mission statement revisited/revised by the board to stay current?	Board meeting or strategic planning minutes or notes
2. Organizational (strategic) plans that describe how current work aligns with the mission.	a. Are the purpose of the organization and priorities for the year written down?	Program documents Strategic plan Board meeting minutes
	b. Is there an updated strategic plan document that connects strategies to mission?	Strategic plan
	c. Is there a multi-year Strategic Plan that demonstrates alignment and intentionality: Local Need, Mission, Organizational Goals and Programs. (e.g., Theory of Change)?	Strategic plan

B. Program Quality

An effective Florida education foundation includes programs that:

Standard	Criteria	Example Evidence
3. Are responsive to local needs and/or aligned with school district priorities.	a. Are programs responding to identified local need?	Programs tied to either written district priority or other document showing local need (e.g., strategic plan)
	b. Is data used to identify local needs?	Matching Grant application Program report to board
	c. Are programs reviewed and adjusted when necessary based on changes in local conditions or district priority and/or strategic plan changes?	Board meeting minutes Staff meeting minutes/notes

B. Program Quality

An effective Florida education foundation includes programs that:

Standard	Criteria	Example Evidence
4. Are aligned with mission and reflective of best practice for comparable programs.	a. Are the programs in place aligned to articulated priorities and mission?	Program list/description including how related to organizational mission and priorities Website Strategic Plan Other organizationally published document
	b. Do program designs show how improvement of specific outcomes will be achieved?	Program planning documents Matching Grant application
	c. Are programs reviewed for alignment with and success at achieving organizational goals and, when relevant, compared against best practice standards (i.e., scholarships, teacher awards)?	Staff meeting minutes/notes Program evaluation/review
5. Demonstrate impact (producing positive outcomes) through clear measurement.	a. Are there articulated intended outcomes for programs and are results of programs measured quantitatively?	Matching Grant application Program evaluation/review
	b. Are most programs evaluated to include assessment of impact?	Matching Grant application Program evaluation/review
	c. Can you show how internal and/or external reviews lead to program re-evaluation and adjustments as needed?	Program evaluation/review Staff meeting ,minutes/notes
6. Are cost-effective.	a. Do you know the cost of your programs overall and per person (teacher/student/other)?	Annual and/or program budget Reports of participation numbers and program costs
	b. Do you have a full understanding of costs of programs (direct cost, labor, etc.) reflected in budget or other program planning documents?	Program budgets
	c. Can you articulate a clear Return on Investment (ROI) calculation for most programs? (e.g., cost/student)	Program review or board minutes

C. Board and Leadership

Local Education Foundations in Florida have:

Standard	Criteria	Example Evidence
7. Roles for board members and CEO clearly defined in writing.	a. Are there clear written roles for CEO and board members?	Bylaws Board manual CEO job description
	b. Are descriptions for CEO, Board Chair, Treasurer, Secretary, and Board Members written and approved?	Board meeting minutes
	c. Have role descriptions been recently updated?	Dated Bylaws Board meeting minutes
8. Board members are successfully recruited to maintain participation and engagement with the organization.	a. Is there a defined recruitment strategy for board members and a review of current board member participation levels?	Recruitment strategy summary Board attendance/participation records
	b. Do board roles describe expected participation and engagement levels with annual review of activity levels?	Board manual Bylaws Board meeting minutes Board member agreement
	c. Are board members supported to improve participation and engagement?	Bylaws CEO job description Board meeting minutes
9. Annual reviews of Board performance.	a. Does your board of directors participate in an annual performance self-evaluation?	Board self-evaluation Board meeting minutes
	b. Are there are both individual member and collective board evaluation tools in place for regularly conducting board self-review?	Evaluation tools
	c. Has there has been a third party assessment of board engagement and performance?	Assessment tool Board meeting minutes

C. Board and Leadership

Local Education Foundations in Florida have:

Standard	Criteria	Example Evidence
10. Regular reviews of CEO (board leader for all-volunteer organizations) performance.	a. Has the CEO (board leader for all-volunteer organizations) completed a self-assessment of performance and initiated a conversation about who should review with executive committee, board chair and/or Superintendent?	Confidential copy of the CEO (board leader for all-volunteer organizations) self-assessment
	b. Has a leader (superintendent/ executive committee/ both) reviewed and provided feedback on regular CEO (board leader for all-volunteer organizations) performance reviews?	Confidential copy of signed assessment Board meeting minutes
	c. Has there been an assessment of the CEO (board leader for all-volunteer organizations) to established annual goals that include a mechanism for external input?	Confidential copy of assessment
11. Clear orientation for Board members.	a. Are written documents about roles and responsibilities of board membership shared with new board members?	Orientation manual/packet Board manual Board member agreement
	b. Is there a board manual and signed acknowledgment of receipt that includes understanding of board member roles and responsibilities by board members?	Board member manual Tracking tool of board member manual receipt
	c. Is there a formalized process of orientation and onboarding for board members?	Board member agreement Board/committee/orientation mtg notes/minutes
12. Ongoing learning and development in place for board and CEO.	a. Are there regular (at least annual) planning sessions of the board?	Board meeting minutes or agenda Planning session agenda
	b. Does a representative of the organization attend at least two Consortium membership meetings per year?	<i>Consortium will upload meeting attendance.</i>
	c. Is there is a budget for CEO and/or board professional development?	Annual budget Board meeting minutes Receipt of attendance at PD event

C. Board and Leadership

Local Education Foundations in Florida have:

Standard	Criteria	Example Evidence
13. Broad-based board membership enabling deliberations among Board and CEO on substantive matters for the improvement of the Foundation.	a. Is Board membership intentional and representative of the community?	Board member list with member demographics, skills, industry Community demographic and industry snapshot
	b. Have Board committees been formed?	Board committee list with definitions/charters.
	c. Does Board conduct annual review of progress against strategic plan?	Board meeting minutes Strategic plan

D. Fundraising and Sustainability

In order to support an Education Foundation:

Standard	Criteria	Example Evidence
14. Effective donor relations and communication are in place.	a. Are donor lists available (individuals and institutional) with records of donations?	Sample list of donors
	b. Is fund development software in place and can staff identify priority prospects for increased or new gifts?	Printout from fund development software
	c. Is there a written stewardship plan and process in place with evidence of connection to mission and programs?	Stewardship or fundraising plan
15. Annual fund development plans guide fundraising activities.	a. Does solicitation of donations follow a defined process?	Written definition of process in job descriptions Fund development plan
	b. Is there a formal fund development plan in place that includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• a communication plan• strategies for increasing donations• an identified person with responsibility for executing on the plan	Fund development plan
	c. Has your organization raised enough annually to cover operating costs for the last three years?	Income statements IRS 990s

D. Fundraising and Sustainability

In order to support an Education Foundation:

Standard	Criteria	Example Evidence
16. There are clear roles for Board and staff in fundraising.	a. Are there clear fundraising roles defined for Board and staff?	Board Member roles & responsibilities Job descriptions of applicable staff
	b. Does the CEO of the foundation oversee and lead fundraising efforts (not just delegating to others)?	CEO job description Organization chart
	c. Are Board and staff members engaged in resource development and meeting fundraising expectations?	Committee and board minutes Board assessment Program, solicitation and event materials
17. Leadership makes efforts to diversify revenue sources.	a. Is there a clear understanding of the current types and sources of revenue and the potential risks to the organization given the current revenue?	Revenue report
	b. Are there initial efforts to diversify the types and sources of revenue?	Board meeting minutes
	c. Are intentionally identified different types and sources of revenue showing growth?	Diversification model Business plan
18. Long term relationships and infrastructure for sustaining donors over time are built including consideration of options for planned giving and endowments.	a. Has the organization identified sources for possible multi-year giving?	Donor list
	b. Are planned-giving and endowment policies in place?	Planned-giving Endowment policies
	c. Have planned gifts and/or endowment donations been received/pledged?	IRS 990 Accounting records

E. Partnerships, Public Awareness and Engagement

Foundations must be oriented and connected towards the broader community by:

Standard	Criteria	Example Evidence
19. Effectively working with the local school district on aligned efforts.	a. Does the organization have at least an informal alignment/relationship with school district?	List of Board members Board meeting minutes MOU with district Policy statements
	b. Is routine information shared with school district about priorities?	Communications plan Notes from meetings with district staff
	c. Do organizational priorities reflect output of collaborative planning inclusive of school district leadership?	Agendas/notes from meetings with school district leaders Presentation to district leadership
20. Connecting to other relevant local partners and business and community for relationship building and ongoing program connections.	a. Does the organization have support of business partners/organizations and a strategy for recruiting new partners/organizations?	Partner list Strategy for increasing business partners
	b. Are there specific partnership strategies and/or agreements that guide your relationships with key partners?	Strategy for increasing partnerships Partnership agreements
	c. Is there intentional engagement with community and individuals around education?	Strategy for engaging community around education Meeting notes from discussions with community members
21. Building an identifiable brand and independent identity that is promoted in the community.	a. Is the foundation brand identified with programs and separate from the school district?	Letterhead Website Other collateral showing foundation brand
	b. Does the foundation have an individual website, logo, and consistently branded materials?	Website Logo Other collateral materials
	c. Does the foundation follow clear brand standards and is there an overall communication plan in place?	Communication plan Brand standards.

E. Partnerships, Public Awareness and Engagement

Foundations must be oriented and connected towards the broader community by:

Standard	Criteria	Example Evidence
22. Aligning messages from the foundation with mission and programs.	a. Does the Foundation send Foundation-specific communications to identified audiences?	Sample communications
	b. Do foundation communications reflect intentional strategies and tie to overall missions? (including incorporation of language from Consortium April 2020 Messaging Toolkit)	Communications plan
	c. Are Foundation communication strategies aligned with mission and described in a marketing plan inclusive of multi-channel communication?	Multi-channel communications Marketing plan
23. Following clear policies and procedures for advocacy and connection to official decision making (school board, legislature)	a. Does the foundation have a basic, written policy in place for advocacy?	Board member manual Advocacy policy Bylaws
	b. Does the foundation participate in Consortium legislative calls and days and engage local legislative delegation on ongoing basis (events, program tours, delegation meetings, etc.)?	Records from local legislative events or meetings <i>Consortium will upload attendance record from Legislative Committee meetings</i>
	c. Is there a Board-adopted policy in place for advocacy strategies including an active role for the board?	Advocacy policy

F. Effective Business and Organizational Operations

Education Foundations operate effectively as demonstrated by building:

Standard	Criteria	Example Evidence
24. A clearly defined working relationship with the school district.	a. Is there informal conversation and a relationship with district if non-DSO? If your foundation is a DSO, do you have copy of authorizing board resolution?	Resolutions Board meeting minutes Summary notes/emails from collaborative meetings
	b. Is there evidence of a formal working relationship with the school district in relation to the Foundation?	Board list Board meeting minutes MOU or DSO agreement
	c. Is there regular, connected communication and evidence that school district and Foundation see each other as full partners?	Emails/memos Program designs reflecting district involvement
25. Procedures for compliance with Federal, State and Local requirements and policies.	a. Has foundation applied for 501c3 status and state registration?	Application letter for 501c3 State registration (<i>Consortium will upload Sunbiz registration</i>)
	b. Does the foundation have an established 501c3 and is state registration active?	IRS determination letter State registration (<i>Consortium will upload Sunbiz registration</i>)
	c. Is there Board policy or governance structure in place for regular review of compliance with federal and state regulations?	Board policy Committee description Audit
26. A budget that pays for insurance for directors, programs and organizational liability.	a. Is the board aware of need for establishing proper insurances for board, volunteers and employees?	Board meeting minutes Annual budget
	b. Are appropriate insurances in place?	Insurance policy certifications
	c. Is there Board policy and routine practice of insurance reviews at least every three years?	Board meeting minutes Board policy
27. Internal controls that meet industry standards for financial and operational management.	a. Are there financial policies written and inclusive of at least board chair role in oversight/control?	Financial policies
	b. Is there an annual financial audit or external review completed?	Audit
	c. Is the foundation's annual audit free of material deficiencies and available publicly?	Audit GuideStar Silver certification or higher

F. Effective Business and Organizational Operations

Education Foundations operate effectively as demonstrated by building:

Standard	Criteria	Example Evidence
28. A leadership succession plan.	a. Does the Foundation have a full working board as defined by by-laws?	Board roster Bylaws
	b. Is there a leadership (CEO/board chair) succession plan adopted by board?	Succession plan
	c. Is the succession plan in place for CEO and key employees, reviewed annually by Board Chair or Executive Committee? <i>(This will not apply to all-volunteer organizations.)</i>	Succession plans Board meeting minutes
29. Clear policies for staff salary and benefits appropriate for local context.	a. Do volunteer and/or paid staff have written job descriptions?	Job descriptions
	b. Does the foundation have a written employee manual and are annual performance reviews completed for employees? <i>(This will not apply to all-volunteer organizations.)</i>	Employee manual Performance review tool
	c. Are regular reviews completed of employee manual, benefits, and compensation package? <i>(This will not apply to all-volunteer organizations.)</i>	Board and/or committee meeting minutes
30. An annual budget – approved by the board – including an established policy on operational reserve.	a. Is there a written annual budget in place that has been reviewed and approved by the board?	Annual budget Board meeting minutes
	b. Are quarterly reviews of financials completed by board or board committee?	Board meeting minutes
	c. Are operational reserve, investment and/or other finance policies in place and regularly reviewed and updated?	Policies with date showing last update