

E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Foundation Russellville Independent School District Proposal

Description: Russellville Independent School District requests \$22,500 from the E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Foundation to purchase Yondr lockable cell phone pouches. This initiative will create a phone-free learning environment, minimizing distractions and enhancing social emotional skills, student focus, and academic performance across our schools.

Proposal Information

Brief History and the Purpose of Russellville Independent School District:

The Russellville Independent School District (RISD), located in Russellville, Kentucky, has a long-standing tradition of serving a community marked by slight population growth, economic challenges, and a diverse student body. RISD comprises four schools—R.E. Stevenson Elementary School, Russellville Middle School, Russellville Innovation Academy, and Russellville High School—educating 1,044 students. The district's demographics reflect economic disparities and a transient student population, influenced by factors such as low-income housing and an influx of out-of-state students.

As part of our commitment to fostering a focused and engaging learning environment, RISD recognizes both the benefits and challenges of mobile devices in schools. While technology provides valuable educational resources, excessive cell phone use can be a significant distraction, negatively impacting student engagement, academic performance, and social interactions. Research indicates that when students are fully present in class, their learning outcomes and social behaviors improve substantially.

To address this issue, RISD is implementing a phone-free school policy. The policy is a "first bell to last bell" rule requiring all personal electronic devices—including cell phones, smartwatches, earbuds, AirPods, fitness trackers, and Bluetooth-connected headphones—to be securely locked away and inaccessible for the entire school day.

The district will utilize the Yondr Program, a structured approach to enforcing this policy. The Yondr system uses a simple, secure pouch to store students' mobile devices throughout the school day. Upon arrival, each student will place their device in their personally assigned Yondr pouch, which remains locked until the end of the school day. Students maintain possession of their devices but will not have access to them during instructional hours.

By removing the distractions of cell phones, this initiative will help students develop essential soft skills such as effective communication, teamwork, and problem-solving—skills that are critical for success in both higher education and the workforce. Many industries now expect employees to manage screen time effectively and engage in face-to-face collaboration, making this policy an important step in preparing students for their future careers. Additionally, this initiative will encourage greater social interaction among peers, strengthening student relationships, reducing social isolation, and fostering a more inclusive and supportive school culture.

Violations of these expectations will be addressed according to the District's Code of Conduct. If a student is found using a cell phone during the school day, the device will be collected by an administrator and returned only to a parent or guardian.

By implementing this phone-free school policy, RISD aims to create an environment where students are more engaged in learning, develop stronger interpersonal connections, and experience fewer distractions, ultimately leading to improved academic outcomes and overall student well-being.

Through this grant, we are requesting \$22,500 to purchase Yondr lockable pouches for all upper elementary, middle and high school students, ensuring equitable access to this initiative. With this investment, we seek to transform our

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classrooms into spaces where students can fully focus on their education, free from the disruptions of mobile devices, while also building essential life skills that will serve them beyond the classroom.

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Detailed budget for the project, including any charges for general administrative overhead:

- The primary cost of the project is purchasing Yondr lockable pouches for all students in grades 6–12 to ensure full implementation of the phone-free school policy.
 - To account for lost or damaged pouches, an additional 100 pouches (15% overhead) are included in the budget. This ensures that replacements are available without disrupting the initiative.
 - Unlocking bases for the Yondr pouches are included in the overall pouch cost, eliminating any additional expenses.
 - Professional development and training for administrators and teachers are provided at no cost, ensuring staff are fully prepared to implement and enforce the policy effectively.
 - A Yondr team evaluation to determine the best placement of unlocking bases is also included at no additional charge.
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Detailed Budget for RISD Phone-Free Policy

Item	Quantity	Unit Cost	Total Cost
Yondr Lockable Pouches (for 650 students)	650	\$30.00	\$19,500.00
Additional Pouches (15% overhead for loss/damage)	100	\$30.00	\$3,000.00
Unlocking Bases (included in pouch cost)	Included	\$0.00	\$0.00
Professional Development for Administrators & Teachers	Included	\$0.00	\$0.00
Yondr On-Site Evaluation for Unlocking Base Locations	Included	\$0.00	\$0.00
Total Project Cost	-	-	\$22,500.00

This grant request for \$22,500 will allow Russellville Independent School District to successfully implement the phone-free school policy, fostering a focused and engaged learning environment for students while reinforcing essential life skills such as communication, collaboration, and self-discipline.