

**2016 Grant Application**  
**Oak Ridge Public Schools Education Foundation**  
**Return to:**  
**Dr. Tracey Beckendorf-Edou**  
**Executive Director of Teaching and Learning**  
**304 New York Avenue**  
**Oak Ridge, TN 37830**  
**Grant Submission Deadline: January 22, 2016**  
**For more information call: (865)241-3667**  
**or e-mail [jessica.steed@orau.org](mailto:jessica.steed@orau.org)**

**Summary of the grant proposal:**

**Matching funds are being requested to upgrade and relocate the sound equipment in the ORHS Performing Arts Center (PAC) to improve audio clarity and quality. Improved sound will lead to a better performance experience for both the student performers and the audience, thus encouraging both groups to stay actively involved in the schools' performing arts programs. Additionally, the improved sound equipment will facilitate use of the PAC by community users, providing additional enrichment opportunities for students.**

**Total amount of funds requested:**  
**\$13,610**

**School or Department:**

**Performing Arts Groups of Oak Ridge High School (Masquers Drama Group, Choral Department, Band Department and Orchestra Department)**

**School or Department Address:**

**ORHS, 1450 Oak Ridge Turnpike, Oak Ridge, TN 37830**

**School or Department Phone:**

**(865) 425-9601**

**School or Department Email:**

**[VMoreno@ortn.edu](mailto:VMoreno@ortn.edu)**

**Grant Applicant and Position:**

**Vidal Moreno, Teacher and Masquers Drama Club Sponsor**

**Signature of Applicant:**

**School Principal:**

**[Martin McDonald](#)**

**Signature of Principal:**

**Signature of Superintendent:**

**ORPSEF grants may be made for educational programming, professional development, equipment, facilities, travel, conferences, or other purposes that might be approved by the Foundation.**

**Who may apply: teachers, administrative staff & student groups via staff sponsor.**

### **I. Title of Program/Project**

**(What is the title of your project? What is the primary goal of your project?)**

Sound system upgrades for the ORHS Performing Arts Center (PAC) to improve audio quality and enhance the student performance experience

### **II. Major Objectives of the Program/Project**

**(Describe each objective of the program/project and the need that each objective will address. This portion of the request should fully explain each objective of the program/project and why it is important.)**

The three major objectives of this project are to:

#### **1) Improve the audio clarity/quality within the PAC to provide performing arts students with professional stage and concert experiences.**

The benefits of students participating in the performing arts and music education are well documented. For example, there is a direct correlation between music participation and improved math scores. Through theatre, students learn self-confidence and other essential skills (e.g., teamwork, ingenuity, creativity and problem solving) that they will carry with them for a lifetime. According to studies cited by the Educational Theatre Association, “researchers have found that sustained learning in theatre correlates to greater success in math and reading, and students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds see the greatest benefit.” Additionally, students learn transferable technical skills in sound, lighting and stage prop design. Students have gone on from ORHS to perform professionally on Broadway and stages around the world, while other students have applied their theatre skills to professional careers across a breadth of fields that positively impact the community (see letter of support from a former student).

At ORHS, the culmination of student participation in band, orchestra, chorus and drama club is performing professionally in front of a live audience. Thus, the quality of the infrastructure for performances is key to ensuring students have the best experience possible to boost confidence, retain them in performing arts programs and prepare them for future opportunities after high school. There is a need to upgrade and relocate the original sound equipment in the PAC to enhance the sound clarity/quality and enhance the performing experience (see “Section III. Scope of Project” for a detailed explanation of the equipment need).

#### **2) Provide a high-quality audience experience, leading to increased attendance of performances and more community support of the performing arts.**

Sound system upgrades will improve the quality of performances and ensure that the audience will be able to enjoy events, especially for audience members with hearing impairments. In turn, a quality experience will encourage community members to attend school performances, which supports performing arts programs financially through increased admission and encourages strong community support for students in the programs.

**3) Enhance overall user satisfaction by PAC renters (i.e., Oak Ridge schools and community groups), providing additional enrichment and learning opportunities for students.**

The ORHS PAC serves both the student population and the East Tennessee community-at-large. Over 90 events were held in the PAC in the 2014–2015 school year. The venue hosts Oak Ridge schools events that include school plays and musicals, band and orchestra concerts, school assemblies and parent information meetings. In addition, the site is available for a nominal fee to community groups, with a large number of symphony orchestra and ballet performances held there each year. Ballet companies from Knoxville, Maryville and Jacksboro, TN are frequent users of the facility. A wide array of other community organizations also host public seminars in the auditorium. As examples, past events have included presentations by a Times Magazine journalist on climate change issues and a physician-led seminar on techniques for healthy weight management. As a low-cost resource to the community, the auditorium enables enrichment events to be held for Oak Ridge and surrounding communities that would normally be limited by the availability of space or funds. Thus, improvements to the PAC will increase the overall user experience and promote use of the auditorium, providing more opportunities for students to participate in learning experiences outside of school hours.

### **III. Scope of Program/Project**

**(Address who will be served and at what grade level. How many students and/or staff members will be directly affected? How many will be indirectly affected? Is this a school or system-wide program/project? Is it limited to one school/ grade level/classroom? Will it be shared by other students and/or teachers besides those directly served?)**

The requested funds will be used to relocate the present sound equipment within the ORHS Performing Arts Center and to upgrade the soundboard to a digital mixing system. During construction, the sound equipment was inappropriately placed in a room that segregates it from the auditorium. Because of this placement, the audio engineers have great difficulty in mixing live sound. The proposed project would relocate the sound equipment and the controls to a more appropriate place in the auditorium (central balcony area). This fix will allow the engineers to hear what the audience hears and will lead to enhanced sound quality, which in turn improves the ability of performers to fine tune their sound during performances. Additionally, a digital mixing system offers the benefit for students to learn sound engineering on trade-standard equipment and an array of features will facilitate sound settings by multiple community users. During the upgrade, the controls for lights will also be relocated to the same location as the soundboard so that the technical crew has co-access to both light and sound systems.

The majority of K–12 students within the Oak Ridge school systems will either directly or indirectly benefit by the sound upgrades to the PAC. At ORHS, over 60% of the student body are directly involved with the performing arts, either through course work, after-school clubs or other experiences. Additionally, elementary and middle school band, choral and orchestra concerts are often held in the PAC. A number of other events (e.g., school assemblies, teacher training) are held in this space that facilitate large group participation and interaction. The sound upgrades will also benefit the student body and their families through attendance at other community events held in the PAC. The PAC is a community resource that enables a wide range of groups to offer inexpensive, family-friendly events for the Oak Ridge community, such as health seminars, ballets and jazz concerts to name a few. Also, many students are involved with these community productions, thus providing even more opportunities for students to practice and showcase their performing arts talents.

#### **IV. Implementation Plan**

**(What steps will you take to put your program in place and what is your timeframe for implementation?)**

**Spring 2016:** Masquers Drama Club will take the lead on raising the additional funds needed to match a grant from ORPSEF to make the sound upgrade project a reality (see “Section V. Funding” for a detailed plan).

**Summer 2016:** The sound equipment will be professionally installed, and the auditorium director and other relevant staff/students will be trained on the proper use of the equipment.

**Fall 2016:** The new sound equipment will be used during events held in the PAC. Auditorium staff will train other community users on the equipment as needed. Where possible, we will evaluate overall satisfaction with the sound in the auditorium, and subsequently report on the project to ORPSEF by the requested deadline.

#### **V. Funding**

**(Provide a detailed breakdown of projected costs and itemize the funds being requested in this application. Also, provide answers to the following questions).**

**A. Will the grant enhance or supplement an ongoing project? If so, briefly describe results of the project to date.** Yes  No

**B. Are other funding sources being sought or used? If so, what are they?**  
X Yes  No

Total project costs are estimated at **\$27,220** to include costs of the new digital sound equipment, professional installation and a console to house the equipment (see Appendix 1 for detailed project budget). We are requesting half of this amount (**\$13,610**) from the ORPSEF and then we will be raising matching funds to equal this requested amount. To date, we have set aside an amount of **\$5,500** to be contributed to this project, as verified by the ORHS principal Mr. McDonald (see letter of support). **\$1,000** of this amount was previously donated from Energy Solutions for the sole purpose of sound system improvements. The remaining amount of **\$4,500** was raised by the volunteer efforts of staff and students (e.g., talent shows).

We are committed to raising additional funds in the amount of at least **\$8,110** to match the grant from the ORPSEF. Masquers Drama Club under the direction of Vidal Moreno will take the lead in these fundraising efforts as described below. A parent volunteer has agreed to donate her professional services in consulting on these efforts. A multifaceted approach will be taken that targets a diversity of funding options, paying careful attention to avoid overlap with the fundraising efforts of individual performing arts groups.

This plan will include but are not limited to the following approaches:

1. Based on encouragement from ORPSEF members, we will create a list of potential corporate sponsors in cooperation with community members (e.g., teachers, parents, foundation staff, school alumni) who can facilitate contact with these organizations. Masquers students have agreed to meet with these companies to make a personal appeal for support of the sound equipment upgrades.

2. We will reach out to all the non-school community groups who use the PAC with a personal appeal (e.g., in-person or letter request) for a donation that is lines with their budgetary capabilities (see Appendix 2 for a complete list of recent community users).
3. We will consider contacting other performing art centers in the region, especially those centers where ORHS alumni have attended, to ask for funds in support of future performing artists.
4. We will research other local foundations (e.g., corporate and private family) that support education initiatives in the region and initiate contact to determine interest in supporting this project.
5. If we are close to the funding goal but still need to raise a small amount of funds, Masquers will look at hosting a skit night or other special performance with admission directed specifically toward the auditorium sound upgrades.

As part of the funding plan, donors will be acknowledged for their gracious contributions based on a tiered donation structure (e.g., gifts of \$50+, \$100+, \$250+, \$500+, \$1,000+). Recognition and appreciation may include a combination of the following items for the 2016–2017 Masquers season: mentions on the Masquers Facebook page and in programs; free admission or special viewing for company employees of a Masquers production; giveaway items such as Masquers posters, DVD and t-shirts; logo placement on Masquers t-shirts and programs; announcement of sponsorship at live shows; and acknowledgement of donation in media announcing the sound equipment upgrades.

## **VI. Evaluation of Program/Project Success**

**(Describe how you will measure the project's success in relation to the goals you have stated in this application. Describe how you intend to report on your program/project's achievements to Oak Ridge Public Schools Education Foundation.)**

The auditorium director and related staff will supervise the professional installation of the sound equipment to ensure the project is on track and installed within the summer time frame. The equipment will be tested upon installation and informally evaluated to verify the equipment is properly functioning. Performing arts staff will be invited to this testing to ensure that all users have input considered during the finalization of the equipment install. In addition, the auditorium director will document the training process they receive from the installers and prepare quick guide materials to facilitate proper training of other equipment users in the future. This training will be important to ensure that the equipment is maintained in top working order. Additionally, we currently use an informal evaluation instrument with all PAC renters. This survey will be modified to include a few questions related to rating the sound quality and ease of equipment use. These surveys will be monitored and adjustments made as needed.

Appendix 1. Project budget for sound system upgrades in ORHS PAC

Line Item	Amount	Budget Explanation
<b><i>Project Expenses</i></b>		
Digital mixing system	\$18,970	Installation, shipping and accessories for addition of a digital mixing system. Includes training on the equipment, and installation, labor and cabling required to move head end units to the balcony loft area of the auditorium.
Electrical work	\$2,500	Estimate of costs and labor for electrical work to prepare area with electrical outlets for installation of sound equipment.
Console	\$5,750	Estimate of material costs and carpentry labor for building a console to hold the audio and other auditorium equipment.
<b>Total Costs</b>	<b>\$27,220</b>	
<b><i>Matching Contributions</i></b>		
Less amount pledged by ORHS	-\$4,500	Amount pledged from ORHS from special fund account with funds raised through volunteer staff/student activities (e.g., talent show).
Less amount raised via corporate sponsorships	-\$1,000	Previous corporate contributions from Energy Solutions.
Less amount from projected fundraising efforts	-\$8,110	Amount of matching funds remaining to be raised by Masquers through a multifaceted fundraising approaching (e.g., corporate sponsors, capital campaign), contingent upon securing requested funds from the ORPSEF.
<b>Total Requested Funds</b>	<b>\$13,610</b>	

## **Appendix 2. Groups that hold events in the Oak Ridge High School Performing Arts Center**

1. Oak Ridge High School:
  - a. Masquers Productions
  - b. Choral Concerts
  - c. Orchestra Concerts
  - d. Band Concerts/Clinics
  - e. Class presentations
  - f. Club presentations
  - g. Parent meetings/Open House
  - h. Student/Teacher Talent Show
  - i. National Honor Society Induction
  - j. Awards Presentations
  - k. High School Convocation
  
2. Oak Ridge Public Schools and Tennessee Department of Education
  - a. Elementary and Middle School Band, Choral and Orchestra Concerts
  - b. System-Wide Teacher Meetings and Training (e.g., IEP training)
  - c. Coordinated School Health
  
3. City of Oak Ridge
  - a. Townhall meetings
  
4. Arts, Literacy and Music Community Events for East Tennessee Region
  - a. East Tennessee Junior Band Clinic
  - b. East Tennessee Junior Orchestra Clinic
  - c. Knoxville Opera
  - d. Oak Ridge Civic Music Association Concerts
  - e. Oak Ridge Civic Ballet Association Productions
  - f. Oak Ridge Community Band Concerts
  - g. Oak Ridge Wind Ensemble Concerts
  - h. Imagine Dance Studio Recitals
  - i. Revolution Dance Company Recitals
  - j. Oak Ridge Academy of Dance Recitals
  - k. Let's Dance Ballroom Dance Studio
  - l. Masskus Drama Productions
  - m. Special Guest Concerts (i.e., Edgar Myer)
  - n. Quarterback Club (e.g., Temptations concert)
  
5. Oak Ridge Community Groups
  - a. Emory Valley Center Events
  - b. Nursing College Graduations
  - c. East Tennessee Sports EXPO
  - d. ORNL Employees Federal Credit Union Annual Meeting
  - e. ORNL Employees Federal Credit Union Employee Training Sessions
  - f. First Presbyterian Church Sustainability Lecture Series
  - g. Alpha Kappa Alpha Debutante Ball