

Star-Struck

Finding the Funding to Make Your Dreams of a STARLAB Purchase Come True

A Resource Guide and How-to Manual



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1 Introduction: Where There's a Will, There's a STARLAB

Where There's a Will, There's a STARLAB

This handbook is designed for those who have experienced the excitement of a STARLAB Portable Planetarium and want to bring its magic to the young people in their community, but who do not have the readily available funding in their budget to make this purchase. If this describes you, we have two important messages for you:

1. You're in good company! Hundreds of others have been in your shoes. They have solved the budget problem in dozens of creative ways and are now happily using a STARLAB in their classrooms/museums/science centers, etc.
2. If they could do it, you can, too! This manual is a collection of their success stories, along with tips and helpful resources.

"Where do I start?" you may be thinking. "I'm not a fund-raiser." We recommend that as a first step, you read through Chapter Two, which briefly outlines the various approaches that others have found successful. One or two of these funding solutions are bound to sound easier or more appealing to you than the others, so your next step is to turn to the corresponding chapters, where you will read in more detail how others have used this technique. The detailed chapters include instructions on how to get started.

Keep in mind that many others with no more fund-raising or budget-lobbying experience than you have succeeded in obtaining a STARLAB. As you will see in the stories collected in this handbook, their paths to success differed widely, but they all shared a common determination. Where there's a will, there's a STARLAB!

2 Where's the Money?

Where's the Money?

Since 1977 when STARLABs first became available through Learning Technologies, Inc., (LTI), the planetariums have been used in thousands of classrooms, museums, and science centers across the United States and in more than 50 other countries. STARLAB's inventors are continually amazed with the new, innovative ways STARLAB users harness the domes' unique teaching powers.

The same can be said for the new and creative ways educators are finding to secure funding for the purchase of STARLAB systems. We here at LTI are constantly learning about new grant programs, funding sources and innovative solutions put together by our customers, who are determined to procure the versatile, empowering teaching tool that we call "STARLAB." It is no surprise, really, for the creativity and problem-solving abilities that lead a person to a career in science education are the very same skills that make him or her resourceful and persistent when it comes to tracking down budget solutions.

What follows is a brief description of the types of funding solutions STARLAB users have found. The following chapters tackle each funding solution one at a time, providing more detail and illustrating with anecdotes. There's no need to read all the chapters in this handbook. Just read through the summary section that follows and then turn to the chapter that corresponds to the solutions that best fit your situation.

School District Funds (page 6)

Almost all districts include, as part of their budget, a sum of money for "capital outlays." Individual schools petition the district for money for special equipment purchases.

Community and Local Education Foundations (page 7)

Large cities and many counties and regions often have a community foundation whose mission is to fund causes that enhance the quality of life in the community. Community foundations fund a broad range of programs, usually including education. These foundations have a permanent endowment fund made up of gifts from generous citizens (some of whom left the money to the foundation in their wills) and sometimes from local corporations. The foundation invests the principal, producing annual income that is distributed for good causes — such as STARLAB purchases. Your local library's reference librarian should be able to tell you whether you are lucky enough to have one of these foundations serving your town. There are more than 760 community foundations in the United States, giving away over \$2.9 billion a year.

Public or local education foundations are community-based foundations that are established specifically to fund a particular public school district. Though independent of their local school districts, public education foundations work closely with public school administrators, teachers, and school boards. Your school's principal or superintendent will be able to tell you if there is a public education foundation for your district, and how to apply for funds.

Independent Foundations (page 9)

There are over 60,000 independent foundations in the United States. Their primary purpose is to give away grant money. Many were established by wealthy industrialists or entrepreneurs and carry the founder's family name. Their existence has made many STARLAB purchases possible. Due to the huge number of foundations out there, it can be

daunting to figure out which to approach, but it's worth the effort, since independent foundations give away a total of over \$23 billion a year, all across the country.

Corporations (page 11)

Many companies — ranging from banks to insurance firms to manufacturing companies to fast-food restaurants — give out grants as a way of demonstrating to their customers, their employees, and their communities that they are “good corporate citizens.” Because the company's motivation is not purely altruism but rather enhancing their public relations image, it is critical that you — the grant recipient — help them receive public recognition for their gift. Many STARLAB purchasers have harnessed the corporations' desire for publicity by offering to print the company's logo on the STARLAB dome (a service LTI is happy to provide). As a result, many STARLAB purchases have been made possible by corporate grants.

Parent-Teacher Organizations (page 16)

Most schools have volunteer organizations run by parents eager to enhance the education their children receive. Often, these PTOs, PTAs, Booster Clubs (or whatever name they happen to use) are open to the idea of purchasing a STARLAB for their school, either with money they already have on hand or by undertaking additional fund-raising projects.

Service Organizations (page 17)

Organizations such as Rotary, Kiwanis, Junior League, Elks, etc., have also been involved in fund-raising for STARLAB purchases. If your community has active chapters in any of these organizations — particularly if parents in your school or members of your school board are active members — you can explore the idea with them.

Earned Income (page 18)

A number of STARLAB purchases have been made possible through old-fashioned student fund-raising drives, with students selling candy, crates of oranges, wrapping paper, magazine subscriptions, etc. This approach can be time-consuming, but many com-

munities respond generously to student sales. Students who are excited and motivated by a STARLAB demonstration (which the LTI sales force can often provide), can be extremely effective salespeople.

Federal Funds (page 19)

These are your federal tax dollars at work. Many people are surprised to learn that Congress has established several ongoing programs that make money available year after year for innovative teaching, in order to bolster the science and math knowledge of American youths, and thereby shore up the economic future of the country. Some of this federal money is given away on a state-by-state basis, so that you apply not to the federal government itself but rather to a panel in your state that is authorized to give away your state's portion of the pie. At times, the local decision-makers have more money on hand than requests, so they are eager to speak with people who have good ideas.

State Funds (page 21)

Here again, your tax dollars may finally do what you want them to do. Some state legislatures have provided money for STARLAB purchases as a “special appropriation.” The key is getting a particular local representative to champion your cause.

Collaboration (page 22)

In many cases, a group of schools or school districts have pooled their resources to enable them to purchase a single STARLAB to share among the group. Collaborative use requires organization, with someone taking the lead to allocate time slots to each participant. The collaboration solution also works when the players are different types of institutions — for instance, a science center in collaboration with schools; a collection of private and public schools working together; a school district in collaboration with a local college, and so on.

Other Creative Solutions (page 23)

Several people have devised with their own creative methods to get the money to fund their STARLAB.

3 School District Funds

School District Funds

Known as “capital outlay monies,” these funds come from the school district itself and are allotted each year to the individual schools. There is generally a deadline once a year (usually in the fall) to recommend purchases, which are then voted on by school committees in the spring.

A large portion of school-based STARLAB users purchase their units with district funds. Many report that the key to their success was having school administrators and members of the school committee witness a STARLAB demonstration. One teacher arranged this by renting a STARLAB from a Cooperative Educational Service Agency (CESA) in his state, while another arranged with his STARLAB dealer for a demonstration at an area science fair, to which he then invited the school board.

The First Step

Ask your principal or department head how the capital allocations process is managed in your district. Find out the deadline for submitting a request and whether there are forms to complete, or whether you are simply expected to write a memo to the district superintendent.

Proposal-Writing Hints

It can be helpful to use your district’s science curriculum as a starting point when writing your proposal — in many cases, STARLAB fits right in with local or state (even national — see Chapter Sixteen) science and math standards. LTI offers a handy, grade-specific chart that correlates the STARLAB cylinders to the standards. It is available for free from the LTI website. Go to: www.starlab.com/sldownloads.html. Quote the language of the curriculum to remind the readers of the philosophy behind science classes, and then describe the many ways STARLAB will enhance the teaching of this curriculum.

It can also be persuasive to include testimonials from STARLAB users in other parts of the country, as well as media coverage on other schools’ experience with STARLAB. Both of these elements are available from LTI or your STARLAB dealer. One teacher in Texas included enthusiastic letters from teachers and students in his own school who had witnessed a STARLAB demonstration.

4 Community and Local Education Foundations

Community and Local Education Foundations

If you are lucky enough to have a community or public education foundation serving your area, this can be an ideal source of funds for a STARLAB purchase. Community and local education foundations generally produce printed guidelines showing the foundation's mission statement, current priorities and application deadlines. They may also print an annual report listing the projects they've funded in the past year. It is crucial to read and understand the foundation's materials before proceeding further. Their literature offers important insights into what types of projects they like and what they are trying to achieve, overall, through their gifts.

Decisions on grants are usually made by a board of trustees, and it never hurts to know a trustee. When reading the foundation's annual report, be sure to scan the board list. See if you or others you know have any connections with board members. If so, contact that board member; let him/her know about your intention to apply, and ask for advice.

Some foundation staff will take the time to meet with you and advise you on the suitability of your project in light of their current giving priorities. If you can get such an appointment, consider taking along copies of articles on STARLABs in use elsewhere (LTI can provide these, see Chapter Sixteen). When talking with the foundation staff, think about their goals, not just yours. Translate your ideas into terms of how STARLAB will achieve their aims.

Be sure to submit your proposal well ahead of the official deadline. Foundations often get swamped by so many proposals that their decision-meeting agendas fill up early. Those proposals that come in at the last minute — even though technically they met the deadline — may be bumped to a future decision date months away.

The First Step

Ask around to find out whether there is a community or education foundation serving your area. Your school district's grants office, your local library's reference librarian, and fund-raising professionals from other local nonprofits (the YMCA/YWCA, a college, the United Way, etc.) are all sources of information. Track down the foundation's phone number and give them a call to request guidelines and their most recent annual report. Many community foundations and some public education foundations have their own websites where you can get their funding guidelines, annual report, and proposal submission deadlines.

Proposal-Writing Hints

Community and education foundations usually have a straightforward application process. Sometimes this consists of forms to fill out, while in other cases they just ask you to put the request in your own words. Either way, it helps to keep in mind the foundation's own priorities and relate your project to the foundation's goals.

For instance, some foundations are often concerned with helping "under-served" or "at-risk" youth. If this is the case, you might try emphasizing how much of your school population is needy, as defined by qualifying for the free or reduced-price lunch program. You might also use statistics from your city or town on median income in the area, and show how it compares to the overall state median. Even in school populations that are not economically underprivileged, you can demonstrate need by citing statistics on the increase in proportion of children from single-parent households, or by comparing current test scores to those 10 or 20 years ago.

Note

Some foundations (though not all) require that grant applicants must have nonprofit status from the IRS called 501(c)(3) incorporation. Be careful not to assume that your institution has this. For instance, most public institutions (including public schools) may not make this claim. However, some public school systems have set up special offices with federally-approved nonprofit status in order to qualify for foundation grants. Ask your school district's legal office about this. Also check the foundation's policies to see if they require nonprofit status.

5 Independent Foundations

Independent Foundations

Over \$23 billion a year is given away by over 60,000 independent foundations throughout the United States. These are entities whose primary function is to make grants to serve the public good. Since there are so many foundations, it can be difficult to figure out where to focus your efforts, but this step is crucial to your ultimate success. You will have to put some work into the research stage to determine which ones to approach.

First, it's helpful to know some background about independent foundations. Many were established by wealthy individuals and carry the founder's family name. Funds are given away by trustees, which may include the original founder, the founder's family members, and other advisors. Some foundations are so big and sophisticated that they are run by professional staffs, with little or no involvement from the founder or his/her descendants.

Often, a foundation will focus its philanthropy on the town or region where it is located, or where its founder(s) live(d). Others focus on a particular issue or set of issues, and give money with no geographical limits, so long as the grant recipient works on projects in the foundation's interest area. Still others are run as closely-held family "piggybanks," only giving to causes the family chooses and refusing to read unsolicited proposals.

Because of these differences, it is crucial to do your homework and find the foundations that are the best fit for you. Fortunately, foundations are required to file detailed information with the IRS each year demonstrating that they did, in fact, give away charitable grants totaling at least five percent of their holdings (thereby qualifying for their preferential tax status). These IRS returns, called 990-PF forms, are public information. Even more beneficial to grant-seekers is the fact that this information is available on the Internet for free.

The First Step

The Internet has replaced printed materials as the best source for information on many independent foundations. In addition, your local library may have a section devoted to this information, and a knowledgeable librarian who can help you target your search. Whether using the Internet or foundation directories in book form, there is a wealth of information to be had on foundations.

The Foundation Center, a national nonprofit dedicated to helping grant-seekers, is the best place to start. The Foundation Center's website is a wonderful source of information – much of it available for free. At <http://foundationcenter.org> you can use the Foundation Finder to look up basic information on particular foundations, or you can search for those that are located in your state. The Foundation Finder also has a link to each foundation's 990-PF form, so you can view the foundation's most recent tax return right at your computer. The Foundation Finder provides only basic information about each funder. More detailed information is available in the Foundation Center's printed directories which you can find at your local library, or at libraries with "cooperating collections" affiliated with The Foundation Center. The Foundation Center also offers a subscription-based database with detailed information on an extensive list of funders. Since this is an expensive option, Learning Technologies offers a free grant research service for customers who are raising funds to purchase a STARLAB. See <http://www.starlab.com> for more information.

When searching for foundations, first look for those that make grants in your state. Then check to see if the foundation makes grants in your local area. Many funders only support organizations in very limited geographic areas, like one or two counties. Then, depending on your organization, narrow down your list to foundations that are interested in education, youth, museums, and/or science. Note which foundations do not accept unsolicited applications and disregard them — unless by chance you

recognize any of the trustees' names and think you could get them to talk with you. You can also look for foundations that fund nationally, particularly if your program serves a broad population.

You will probably end up with a list that's too long to manage — after all, you don't want to send out dozens of proposals. Go back and read the sample grants made by these foundations (the good directories include sample grants) to see which ones sound like they'd be most interested in a STARLAB. Also read the typical grant size, and eliminate those foundations whose average grants are too small (or too large) to be useful to you.

When you have a “short list” of a dozen or fewer, you need to get the foundation's “funding guidelines.” The guidelines explain what the foundation is interested in supporting, who they are interested in supporting, deadlines for proposal submission, and the application process. Many foundations now have their own websites where they publish their guidelines, along with other useful information such as a list of recent grants. If the foundation does not have a website, call or write to ask for their annual report and guidelines. Read the material carefully and see which foundations seem like the best matches. Then, call and ask to speak to a program officer. (If they are not professionally staffed, they can still be a good prospect for you, so make the phone call anyway, but instead of asking to speak with a program officer, just ask to speak to whoever manages their application process.) Explain that you're an educator, not a professional fund-raiser, and ask if you can have a moment of their time to explain the project and determine their interest. Describe the STARLAB and its use, emphasizing the ways it fits into the foundation's stated goals. Ask for an honest assessment of their interest. Offer to come by and show them STARLAB literature with photos.

Once you get an indication of real interest, you can submit a proposal. Follow their forms, if they have any, and be sure to include all the information their guidelines require. Ask not only when their deadline is but also when the decision will be made. Phone after they've had the proposal for a week or so to ask if they have any questions. Polite persistence is the key — you want to develop a rapport with the foundation, but be careful not to be a pest.

Rather than going after one large grant to cover the entire cost of the project, you may need to piece the

funds together by securing several smaller grants. Many foundations are not interested in funding 100% of a project, and want to see participation from several sources in the community. Your application will be stronger if you can show that some funds have been committed by the school district, parent groups, or other donors to your organization.

Proposal-Writing Hints

See Chapters 14 and 15 in this booklet for more detailed information about proposal writing. In addition, [The Foundation Center website](#) has a free online grantwriting tutorial that is an excellent resource for first-time grant writers. An experienced grantwriting consultant who has secured foundation funding for STARLABs has the following suggestions:

- Submit a written curriculum with your proposal, and point out how the STARLAB fits into your existing curriculum. Make it easy for the funder to see how the STARLAB will be used in the curriculum.
- Emphasize the limitless applications of the STARLAB, and show that it can be used in many disciplines.
- Include numbers of students who will benefit. Remember to multiply the class numbers by the long life of the STARLAB. If it will be used by a whole district, demonstrate the large numbers of students involved.
- Don't forget to include teacher training as a component of your grant. If the teacher trainer is well-known, include her/his name and credentials and mention that he/she has a proven reputation.

Note

Most foundations require that grant applicants must have nonprofit status called 501(c)(3) incorporation. Be careful not to assume that your institution has this. For instance, most public institutions (including public schools) may not make this claim. However, some public school systems have set up special offices with federally-approved nonprofit status in order to qualify for foundation grants. Ask your school department's legal office about this. Check the foundation's policies to see if they require a nonprofit status.

6 Corporations

Corporations

Many STARLAB purchases have been made possible by corporate grants. Corporate grants come from companies as diverse as a local bank, a fast-food franchise, a small high-tech computer firm, and a Fortune 500 conglomerate whose international headquarters is in town. Some companies have very formal giving programs, with printed guidelines and application forms. In other cases, it's much less formal — some companies don't think much about giving until a compelling idea comes their way. In general, the more structured the program, the longer the company will take to reach a decision on your application. All corporate philanthropy will have one thing in common: businesses donate money to projects that will increase their visibility and/or goodwill in the communities in which they operate. Geography is very important! Concentrate on the corporations/businesses that are located in your community and employ people involved with your organization (i.e. parents).

Let's start with the more formal giving programs. Many large companies have two different "pots" of money available to support community groups. First, there are traditional "corporate philanthropy" programs which operate very similarly to independent foundations (see Chapter Four). These programs typically have written guidelines and are staffed professionally. Most corporate philanthropy programs support education. Some technology-related businesses have a particular interest in projects that advance math and science education, so be on the lookout for those companies! While some corporate philanthropy programs are very interested in increasing their company's visibility in the community, others are less so. Take your lead from their written guidelines and conversations with their program officers in deciding how much to push the public relations value of STARLAB.

The other pot of money available at larger businesses is the marketing budget. This is typically used to sponsor community events, such as a walk for

cancer research or a major exhibit at an art museum. But marketing dollars are also used for more modest projects that can still offer high visibility — like STARLAB. The marketing/public relations office will be separate from the corporate philanthropy office, and will operate quite differently. You may still have to submit a written proposal, but your "pitch" should be much more sales-oriented. This is where you should really push the idea of putting the company's logo on the STARLAB dome.

The opportunity to have a face-to-face meeting with a decision-maker at the company is one that will dramatically increase your chances of success. In fundraising, as in so many businesses, it is often who you know that is the deciding factor. To secure an appointment, try to find someone to act as a "door-opener." This can be anyone you know — a former student, a parent of a present or former student, a member of the school committee, a neighbor — with a personal contact high up at the company. Have your door-opener call and ask for the meeting. If your volunteer is willing to come to the meeting too, that's even better. If you cannot find a door-opener, by all means take the direct approach and call for an appointment yourself. If you are unable to secure an in-person meeting, try to have a phone conversation with a decision-maker. In either case, the opportunity to talk with someone at the company will give you valuable feedback on your proposal, and will increase your chances of success.

In the meeting, describe the STARLAB not just in terms of the benefits it will bring to the school, but also the benefits it holds for the company. For instance, you might bring to your presentation a bulleted chart including such items as:

- STARLAB improves education, which means a better educated workforce for [xyz company] for the future.
- STARLAB improves the quality of schools, which means increased satisfaction with life in this community for [xyz company's] current workforce.

- STARLAB sponsors can have their name imprinted on the dome, which is a permanent reminder to the community of [xyz company's] generosity and commitment to the community.
- STARLAB is photogenic and newsworthy, and the [abc school/science center] will work with [xyz company's] public relations department to arrange newspaper coverage of the new STARLAB in use.
- The STARLAB will be used by an estimated [x] students [or visitors] per year, and STARLABs in other schools have lasted 10 or more years. That means this onetime grant when divided over all that usage comes to less than [\$n] per student — a very economical grant.

Many STARLAB users find that a single corporation is not willing to shoulder the full cost of the STARLAB but is willing to provide a “challenge grant” or a “matching grant” — which means they promise to give [x] dollars if you raise the rest elsewhere. If you find that your first funder takes this approach, just continue your discussions with others, telling them of the first funder's conditional promise. Many STARLABs have been funded with complementary grants from two or three companies.

The First Step

Local banks are a good starting point, as are any big corporations with plants or headquarters in your area. Consider, too, any companies that you know employ a substantial portion of the parents in your school system. You can also contact the Chamber of Commerce and ask for a copy of their membership list. Although many of the Chamber of Commerce members tend to be small mom-and-pop operations, it is also a way to find out which of the bigger companies are civic-minded. Keep an eye out for technology-related businesses, among others.

Another way to look for leads is to see which local companies are listed as sponsors in the event programs or annual reports of other nonprofit organizations in your area. For instance, if there is a museum, hospital, college, United Way, etc. in your town, stop by and ask for a copy of their annual report, and scan the list of their donors. Sometimes this information is also available on the organization's website. You can also ask to meet with the individual in charge of fund-raising for any of these local non-

profits and seek his or her advice. Most professional fund-raisers will take the time to help an amateur.

It is relatively easy these days to get a wealth of information about many large and mid-size companies on the Internet. Most corporations have their own websites where they proudly post information about their support for the community. To find information about corporate philanthropy or corporate sponsorships, look for a section on the website called “About Us,” “In the Community,” or “The XYZ Foundation.” Information about corporate giving programs can usually be found in one of those areas, or under a section with a similar title. Companies with formal giving programs usually post their guidelines on their websites, just like independent foundations. Some companies also post their sponsorship guidelines on their websites as well, although these may be located in a different part of the site. Researching corporate giving programs may take some detective work, but persevere! If the company does not have a website, or does not post its funding information, you should call and find out who is in charge of corporate contributions.

Hint

LTI offers a separate booklet specifically dedicated to the issue of corporate funding called “Helping Kids Reach for the Stars: Making a STARLAB Donation” at <http://starlab.com/slfunds.html>. This is an informational tool for you to give to any corporation, business or foundation considering the sponsorship (full or partial) of a STARLAB. It gives a description of STARLAB, lists benefits of corporate sponsorship, lists past corporate sponsors, shows photos of STARLAB domes with logos on them, includes comments from teachers and students, provides some sample articles, and shows survey highlights.

Note

Be careful about telling any donor that a gift to your organization is tax-deductible. This may or may not be true, depending on your organization's tax-exempt status. Most public institutions (including public schools) may not make this claim. However, some public school systems have set up special bureaus with IRS-approved nonprofit status — called 501(c)(3) incorporation — in order to receive gifts. Lack of 501(c)(3) status does not prevent a donor

from making a gift — it just prevents them from claiming it as a tax deduction. Even without tax deductibility, there are many compelling factors that motivate companies to donate funds to public schools (see bulleted points above), so stick with those in your discussion.

Getting Prepared for an Interview with a Potential Sponsor

The following are questions you may get asked when you meet with a potential sponsor — they are great to consider for writing grant proposals too!

Why are you coming to me? We get lots of requests for donations, why should we help you?

You can start by explaining how your search led to them — for example, if they are a bank, that the school is a long-standing customer of theirs, or that they have a reputation in the community for being a supporter of education. Talk about the STARLAB as being a very unique and exciting interactive tool — something that makes kids want to learn. Point out how many children the STARLAB can reach and how varied the subjects that can be taught in it. Also point out that it is a donation that will last for many, many years.

What's in it for us?

Probably one of the first things that a corporate representative will want to know is how they stand to benefit from a STARLAB donation. This is a good time to pull out the “Helping Kids Reach for the Stars: Making a STARLAB Donation” booklet, available as a PDF at <http://starlab.com/slfunds.html>. Point out the different ways the corporation can get publicity — newspapers, radio, TV — as well as the exposure that their logo on the dome will give them. Talk about how their donation provides them recognition and a link to the community. It is the “gift that keeps on giving.” STARLAB can benefit students not just for one year, but for many years to come.

How many students will benefit from the purchase?

Potentially, 20,000-25,000 students stand to benefit from a single STARLAB purchase (based on a 200-day school year, five classes per day, 25 students per class) — and that's just for one year. A STAR-

LAB can last for many years. Point out that STARLAB is enjoyed by adults as well — star parties, adult education, fundraisers. Because every situation is different, do your own numbers. Estimate realistic numbers of students (and/or adults) who will experience the STARLAB in one year.

How long will the STARLAB last?

On average, a STARLAB dome should last at least 10 years (this, of course, depends on how well it is being taken care of). Many systems have lasted for more than 15 years. And, with the exception of replaceable parts, the projector should last indefinitely. Point out also that there is technical and product support such as the “STARLAB Shape-up Program” from the company designed to keep each system going for a very long time.

How do we get our corporate logo on the dome?

This is done very easily. They just need to supply a printed or digital copy of their logo (even a piece of company letterhead will do) and the rest is done by Learning Technologies.

How will we know that the STARLAB is getting utilized?

You may want to offer to send periodic updates on your STARLAB program. If you have any evening star parties or adult education programs in STARLAB, make sure to include them on your mailing or invitation list.

How will teachers learn to use this planetarium?

Initial training is provided free of charge with the purchase of a STARLAB system. Subsequent training is also available (for a fee). In addition, a copy of *Astronomy and More* is included with a STARLAB purchase and includes step-by-step set-up and operation instructions (as well as loads of curriculum materials!). And, the STARLAB is so easy to use, even teachers with no astronomy experience and students can easily and quickly learn to use the equipment.

When or how can I see the STARLAB?

Company representatives from the potential sponsor are welcome to be present at the demonstration given to the school or a separate demonstration can be arranged for them. They should also be encouraged to view the STARLAB Website at www.starlab.com.

How much money do you need?

In addition to the cost of the STARLAB system itself, make sure to consider shipping charges, logo charges (about \$300-\$500 per logo put on the dome depending on complexity and number of colors), additional components or other extras that you may want to include in the purchase price.

Some Questions to Think About Before the Meeting

Why isn't the school or institution buying the STARLAB themselves?

How will the STARLAB be utilized? What topics will be taught in STARLAB? What grade levels?

How many students will benefit from a STARLAB purchase?

Where will it be set up? In a cafeteria? A gymnasium? A classroom?

How will you measure the success of your STARLAB program?

Happy Endings: Six Success Stories

Follow the lead of these successful funding finders!

1 Personal contacts can be a good starting point . . . friends, business contacts, relatives, students.

Lulu Martin, an earth science teacher in the Caddo Parish Public School System, was instrumental in obtaining STARLAB funding from the Commercial National Bank of Shreveport, Louisiana. CNB was her personal bank and, therefore, a natural starting point for Lulu in her search. (It also helped that she had a friend who was a loan officer at the bank!)

CNB was also known as being a supporter of many community projects.

Lulu typed up a simple 2-page proposal to the bank explaining what she wanted to purchase with the funds (including a description of the STARLAB) and how it would be used for many disciplines. She also described how it would be used throughout the school system, the number of students that would benefit from the purchase and where she would purchase it.

Because the STARLAB was intended for the entire school system and had the ability to reach so many students, CNB was happy to help. They provided over \$11,000 for the planetarium to serve the stu-

dents in 17 middle schools in the district. Teachers received training and became qualified to use STARLAB for one or two weeks in their classrooms.

2 Proposals that are concise and to the point are more likely to be read.

Marie Vayo-Greenbaum, a teacher at the Tower Hill School in Wilmington, Delaware also met success at a local bank. Her school was a good customer of this bank as were many of the other schools in her district. Marie's proposal submitted to the bank was short and to the point. (This seems to increase the possibility of having it read.) The proposal included *why* the STARLAB was needed, *who* would share the STARLAB, and *how* the sharing would take place. Marie's plan for sharing the planetarium described how each of the 9 schools mentioned in the proposal would receive it for 3 weeks during the school year, and she would act as the coordinator, facilitator and trainer of teachers.

In a few weeks, the money was granted. The STARLAB, which included the bank logo, was ordered and training was begun. Each school in the consortium of 9 schools agreed to pay a small sum per year for upkeep of the planetarium. Marie keeps the bank informed of the excitement created by the STARLAB. The bank is always happy to hear from her and feels that their investment was a very wise one.

3 Persistence can pay off.

In Halifax, Nova Scotia, Mary Lou Whitehorne had done some extensive and well-organized searching for the funds to purchase a STARLAB. Her organization, The Atlantic Space Sciences Foundation (TASSF), was interested in using a traveling STARLAB to teach astronomy at schools in the area. She had done several mailings and made many phone calls to area businesses but, unfortunately, the results were disappointing.

She decided to conduct a more focused campaign, and set her sights on aircraft manufacturer, Pratt & Whitney. They were an obvious choice, being one of the largest companies in the area. Unfortunately however, they said no. But Mary Lou asked again. Once again they said no. Undaunted, she asked yet again and this time her persistence paid off!

Once Pratt & Whitney saw evidence that Mary Lou and TASSF were serious educators, they fi-

nally agreed to help. Now their corporate logo is prominently displayed on the STARLAB dome right beside the TASSF logo. Best of all, in its first year, Mary Lou's STARLAB provided a planetarium experience to over 9,700 students.

4 Providing a detailed plan and clear objectives can have a huge impact.

Linda Buzzard, a middle school teacher in Shelby County, Alabama attended a STARLAB demonstration at a state science teacher's convention and became convinced of the enormous impact STARLAB would have on the children of her school system. She decided to apply for one of the annual education grants awarded by AmSouth Bank.

Linda's proposal included a concise description of the proposed program with an expanded description of how the plan would work. The proposal detailed how the program would begin with the training of 10 enrichment teachers who would serve as facilitators in their cluster schools. The goal for the first year was to train teachers and reach students in 13 elementary schools. In the next year, there would be the possibility of reaching over 18,000 students. Linda's proposal included specific objectives relating to classroom and multidisciplinary instructional environments as well as how astronomical information would be disseminated to students and the community. This plan was endorsed by the local college staff and local amateur astronomers. Linda then added a budget and evaluation plan to her proposal.

Linda's detailed proposal was successful and her program funded!

5 Make it a community effort.

Walter Soule, a teacher (now retired) from the McCall Middle School in Winchester, Massachusetts, first saw STARLAB at a teacher's convention. Later that same year, a traveling STARLAB visited his school and was quite a hit with the students. The idea of the McCall school buying its own STARLAB followed soon after.

Eventually, a group of interested teachers approached the local Winchester Education Foundation. Through the foundation, a family that operated several McDonald's restaurant franchises in the Winchester area provided all of the funding necessary for the purchase of the STARLAB. The McCall Middle School now has its own planetarium. The

McDonald's logo (containing the famous McDonald's arches) was put on the dome of the STARLAB.

6 Collaboration may just be the ticket.

Cheri Clausen, a Talented and Gifted Coordinator at the May Roberts Elementary School in Ontario, Oregon was just back from a summer astronomy institute featuring STARLAB. She knew STARLAB would be beneficial to her programs, but wasn't sure how to get one. Meanwhile, Wally Johnson, from Treasure Valley Community College in Ontario was on the lookout for a way to collaborate on a project with school districts in the county. When they met at a math and science teacher's group meeting, the collaboration seemed like a natural.

Wally, who was a long-standing community member, approached several businesses — those where he had personal contacts and those that he knew were supporters of education. (One bank advertised their support of education in the community newspaper.) He was able to secure funding for two STARLABs by using Eisenhower (Title II) funds and contributions from Orchard Bank, First Interstate Bank, US West Communications, and a local produce company.

The two STARLABs have been used for teacher training and outreach, benefitting a great number of students throughout the county. Cheri provides STARLAB training to area teachers which allows these educators to become certified STARLAB users and more effective astronomy teachers.

7 Parent-Teacher Organizations

Parent-Teacher Organizations

PTOs and PTAs have been the key to many STARLAB purchases. These organizations are often very successful at raising funds but are sometimes unsure about what to buy with their profits. Some of them have money already and are just waiting for a compelling project to spend it on. Others may not have the money in hand but are eager to undertake the fund-raising required. By no means should you overlook this option in your funding assessment — PTAs and PTOs can be the quickest, easiest route of all to a STARLAB purchase.

One STARLAB user reported that the PTA at her individual school became interested in funding a STARLAB and subsequently the district level PTA joined the fund-raising effort, as well. Another teacher reported that after his local PTA got involved, the PTA president introduced him to the city-wide PTA officers and they gave him permission to speak with the separate PTAs at all the schools in the city. He cautioned that there is a certain protocol to follow — you cannot simply contact all PTAs in all the city's schools without seeking permission first from the head PTA. However, when he followed the etiquette he was welcomed by all the organizations.

A STARLAB demonstration can be helpful in “selling” the PTA/PTO on the exciting benefits the STARLAB will deliver to their children's education.

First Step

Contact the head of your school's parent-teacher organization. If you don't know who this is, ask your principal.

Hint

Keep in mind that the parents who volunteer in PTAs/PTOs are motivated by the desire to secure the best possible education for their children. They want their children to enjoy school and to find learning exciting, and ultimately, they want to see their children find fulfilling, financially stable careers. When

talking with these parents, therefore, you should cite the wonderful effects STARLAB has on children — helping them enjoy school and find learning fun, opening them up to the joys of science, leading them to think about scientific careers, etc. LTI can provide some helpful statistics on this that were gleaned from an independent research project entitled “A Survey of Educator's Perceptions Concerning the Impact of the STARLAB Planetarium on Teaching and Learning” See Chapter Sixteen for more details.



Service Organizations

Service Organizations

Service organizations such as the Rotary Club, the Junior League, etc. are community-oriented and are often interested in projects that benefit local youth. There have been a number of cases in which these organizations have raised the money for STARLAB purchases. In the case of the Junior League, our STARLAB users tell us the organization will likely want to have an ongoing role in the STARLAB's use — such as serving as classroom volunteers or helping transport the STARLAB from one site to another — rather than to simply supply the money for the STARLAB's purchase. When talking with representatives of the Junior League or any service club, be sure to determine whether they have a long-term volunteer relationship in mind, and if so, work that into your discussions (assuming you are able to accommodate this kind of ongoing volunteer role).

A good example of a successful funding partnership with a service organization is that of a science center in upstate New York, which had worked with a local Rotary Club on an earlier (non-STARLAB) project. They went back to the same Rotary Club later when they wanted to purchase a STARLAB. Having an established relationship with the Club made it easy to convince the Club to take on the new project. The lesson here is not to overlook past partners. Don't assume if you've already tapped a given "well" that you would be unwelcome there again — the reverse is more often true: donors give more easily to organizations they already know and trust.

The First Step

Ask around to find out which service organizations are most active in your community. Then contact them to present the STARLAB idea. If possible, find out whether anyone connected with your organization (a board member, parent of one of your students, etc.) is an active member of the service club. If so, make your initial contact through this person.

9 Earned Income

Earned Income

Girl Scouts aren't the only ones out there selling cookies. As you are no doubt aware, calendars, wrapping paper, magazine subscriptions, crates of oranges, light bulbs, and much more are sold by school children to fund so-called "enrichment" activities — meaning anything the school budget does not provide for. Then there are the car washes, dog washes, rummage sales, spelling bees and countless other activities that enterprising organizations undertake to turn elbow grease into gold. One teacher tells us her school astounded everyone involved by raising \$15,000 in one night through an auction of donated prizes (restaurant dinners, ski lift tickets, use of a vacation home, and other valuable items — this was definitely not a rummage sale). Another teacher related that the magazine-sale company her school contracted with, called QSP, did almost all the organizational work and made it very easy for 800 middle school students to raise \$20,000. All of these undertakings are labor-intensive, but if the energy is there, they can really pay off. A STARLAB demonstration is worth a thousand words when it comes to motivating your "sales force" (students) and "customers" (parents and the community at large).

The First Step

Talk with your administrators to learn of any regulations that might govern earned income-generating projects. Then seek project ideas and/or company referrals from other teachers who have experience managing these activities. Calculate how much you would have to sell or how many cars you'd have to wash, etc. to meet your financial goal, and compare all the different possibilities to see which is most efficient and most appealing. Recruit some reliable volunteers to help so the work becomes fun.

10 Federal Funds

Federal Funds — Part One

Many teachers have successfully funded their STARLAB purchases with grants from the federal government. In recent years, the landscape of federal funding for education has changed dramatically with the advent of the No Child Left Behind Act, which was signed into law in January, 2002. Although the programs listed below are federally funded, school districts must apply for these grants through their State Education Agencies (Departments of Education). Each state sets its own deadlines and program priorities for these grants. For information about the types of projects that each grant program will support, who is eligible, and how to apply, please contact your state's Department of Education. Much of this information should be available through your state's (or its Department of Education's) website.

Please note that for many of these programs, school districts, or Local Education Agencies (LEA), must be the applicant rather than individual schools. You will most likely need to advocate for the inclusion of a STARLAB purchase as part of a larger school improvement project.

The information on federal funding programs provided below is current as of 2008, and will be updated periodically. Many governmental programs must be reauthorized by Congress on a yearly basis, so it is best to double-check the status of these programs with your state's Department of Education before developing a project and proposal.

U.S. Department of Education Programs

The U.S. Department of Education includes a number of offices that administer grant programs for K-12 schools and institutions of higher education. The grant programs highlighted here represent some of the more likely opportunities for funding a STARLAB purchase, but other grant programs do exist that may work for your particular school. Try to keep current with federal grants by periodically browsing through the Department of Education

website. Although pursuing federal funds is a slow process, patience and persistence can be very rewarding!

For general information about the Department of Education, go to: <http://www.ed.gov/index.jhtml>

For information about grants and contracts, go to: <http://www.ed.gov/fund/landing.jhtml?src=rt>

For the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, go to: <http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osee/index.html?src=oc>

For the Office of Innovation and Improvement, go to: <http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oii/index.html?src=oc>

Improving Teacher Quality State Formula Grants (Title II, Part A)

The purpose of this program is to increase student achievement through comprehensive district initiatives that focus on the preparation, training, recruitment, and retention of highly qualified teachers and principals. For more information go to: <http://www.ed.gov/programs/teacherqual/index.html>

Mathematics and Science Partnerships (Title II, Part B)

This program is intended to increase the academic achievement of students in mathematics and science by enhancing the content knowledge and teaching skills of classroom teachers. Partnerships between high-need school districts and the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) faculty in institutions of higher education are at the core of these improvement efforts. Other partners may include state education agencies, public charter schools or other public schools, businesses, and nonprofit or for-profit organizations concerned with mathematics and science education. For more information go to: <http://www.ed-msp.net/do/Welcome>

Innovative Programs (Title V, Part A)

This state-administered formula grant program is

designed to improve student academic achievement and the quality of education for all students. Funding may be used for the following purposes: 1) to support local education reform efforts; 2) to provide funding to enable State Education Agencies and Local Education Agencies to implement promising education reform programs and school improvement programs that rely on scientifically based research; 3) to provide a continuing source of innovation and education improvement, including support programs that provide library services and instructional and media materials; 4) to meet the education needs of all students, including at-risk youths; and 5) to develop and implement education programs to improve school, student, and teacher performance, including professional development activities and class-size reduction programs. Funded programs must be: 1) tied to promoting challenging academic achievement standards; 2) used to improve student academic achievement; and 3) part of an overall education reform strategy. For more information, go to: <http://www.ed.gov/programs/innovative/index.html>.

21st Century Community Learning Centers

A number of school districts have funded STARLABs through the 21st Century Community Learning Center program. This program supports the creation of community learning centers that provide academic enrichment opportunities during non-school hours for children, particularly students who attend high-poverty and low-performing schools. The program helps students meet state and local student standards in core academic subjects, such as reading and math; offers students a broad array of enrichment activities that can complement their regular academic programs; and offers literacy and other educational services to the families of participating children. For more information, go to: <http://www.ed.gov/programs/21stcclc/index.html>. For a state-by-state list of contacts for this program, go to: <http://www.ed.gov/programs/21stcclc/contacts.html#state>

Federal Funds — Part Two

National Science Foundation (NSF)

In addition to the Department of Education, other

government agencies offer grants to schools, museums, and other non-profit organizations. The National Science Foundation (NSF) is just one of the federal agencies that may offer funding for a STARLAB. NSF is an independent federal agency whose mission is “to promote the progress of science; to advance the national health, prosperity, and welfare; to secure the national defense...” With an annual budget of about \$6.06 billion, NSF is the funding source for approximately 20% of all federally supported basic research conducted by America’s colleges and universities. In many fields such as mathematics, computer science and the social sciences, NSF is the major source of federal backing. For an overview of all NSF funding opportunities, go to: <http://www.nsf.gov/funding/aboutfunding.jsp>.

For specific information on funding opportunities for K-12 educators, go to: http://www.nsf.gov/funding/education.jsp?fund_type=4. This page links to information about the following programs, that provide either direct (i.e., from NSF) or indirect (i.e., from an awardee institution) funding for students at this level or identify programs that focus on educational developments for this group such as curricula development, training or retention.

- Advanced Technological Education
- Arctic Research Opportunities
- Cross-Directorate Activities
- Dynamics of Coupled Natural and Human Systems
- Informal Science Education
- Innovative Technology Experiences for Students and Teachers
- National Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Education Digital Library
- Presidential Awards for Excellence in Science, Mathematics and Engineering Mentoring
- Robert Noyce Teacher Scholarship Program
- Undergraduate Research Collaboratives

By clicking on any of the program titles from the website, you can access program information, grant deadlines, and application materials.

11 State Funds

State Funds

A school district in New York was able to purchase a STARLAB with the help of a state senator, who advocated for the program in the legislature and was able to secure the necessary funding. This successful approach began when a Gifted & Talented Program coordinator wrote a letter to her local representative asking if money could be found. The representative responded by asking for more information about the STARLAB and, once he saw how worthwhile it was, he recommended to his counterpart in the state senate (who had more clout than he) that this project be pursued. The state senator then took it on and, before long, the money was made available to the school.

Other STARLAB users report that it is not uncommon for legislators in their states to have discretion over a certain amount of funding to be spent in each legislator's home district.

The First Step

Work through your district superintendent to get his or her endorsement of this approach. Have your superintendent sign a letter (prepared by you) to a local legislator inquiring about funding. The superintendent may already know which legislator has most clout or is most sympathetic to educational issues. Then follow up yourself with the legislator's office to see if further information is needed, and to ask when a decision will be made. Keep calling and asking — politely but persistently — where the request stands. Legislators respond to “squeaky wheels.”

12 Collaboration

Collaboration

Many institutions have been able to acquire STARLABs by pooling their resources and purchasing a single unit for shared use. Sometimes a number of schools within a district will pool their funds and then share the STARLAB on a rotating basis. In cases where a state has a regional education agency, the districts within its jurisdiction will sometimes pool their funds. In other instances, the collaboration has been among disparate kinds of institutions — for instance, a community college working with one or more school districts to buy and use a STARLAB together.

One of the most unusual partnerships we've seen was created in Binghamton, New York: 12 school districts, an observatory, local industries and the Board of Cooperative Education Services (BOCES) collaborated to form the Boome-Delaware-Tioga BOCES/Kopernik Regional Science Center. The Science Center was in its early stages of development when a teacher, who had seen a STARLAB in use elsewhere, proposed at a meeting that a STARLAB be included in the plans. The teacher then arranged for a demonstration to the group of superintendents who were working together to create the Science Center. The demonstration sold them on the idea, and the suggestion to buy one on a shared basis appealed to their budget-consciousness. First one STARLAB and then a second one was purchased with funds contributed by each school district. The Science Center arranges for advanced teacher training by astronomers from the observatory, and helps the teachers develop new curriculum ideas.

The sources of funding for collaborative STARLAB purchases are as varied as they are for individual STARLAB purchases. See the other chapters of this guide for ideas.

The First Step

Think about who you know in other schools, school districts, or institutions, and talk with them about

the possibility of working together. Use conventions, workshops, field trips, science fairs, etc. as an opportunity to meet potential collaborators.

13 Other Creative Solutions

Other Creative Solutions

One STARLAB user in Michigan is a teacher in a district with 21 schools. The approach he took was to make up a contract for rental of the future STARLAB which he was intending to purchase. He priced the rental at \$375 per week, and quickly sold so many weeks that he collected enough advance payment to purchase a deluxe STARLAB system.

Another STARLAB user, this one from Pennsylvania, combined Chapter II funds for the purchase of the STARLAB equipment (note: these are now called Title VI) with Title II Eisenhower funds for the costs of ongoing teacher training and maintenance. This combined approach has resulted in six STARLABs being acquired over several years in a single district.

Another multiple-source funding story is that of a Missouri elementary science coordinator, who started with \$1,800 which he won through the NSF's Presidential Award program. He used this as leverage to talk the district into matching it with another \$1,800, pointing out that this amounted to just \$100 from each of the 18 elementary schools in the district. He then went to the city-wide PTA and, after a convincing presentation, the PTA added \$2,400 — or \$200 each from 12 schools. This put his total at \$6,000 — still not enough. So he approached an amateur astronomer in his community, who had earlier expressed his interest in the project, and after hearing what each of the other groups had done, the astronomer agreed to donate the remaining sum.

14 Basic Tips on Writing Proposals

Basic Tips on Writing Proposals

- Always give your first-draft proposal to someone else to read. It is often impossible for those of us who know what we're trying to say to determine whether it makes sense to an uninitiated reader.
- Strive for short, direct sentences. This allows your ideas to come through without becoming garbled. Simple sentence structure is far more effective than long, complex clauses.
- Read grant guidelines carefully for insight into the funder's goals. Translate your ideas into terms of how STARLAB will achieve their aims, not just yours. Spell this out explicitly in your proposal.
- Always include numbers of students who will benefit. Remember to multiply the class numbers by the long life of the STARLAB. If it will be used by a whole district, demonstrate the large numbers of students involved.

Many funders ask you to describe how you plan to evaluate the project for which you are requesting a grant. This emphasis on evaluation is a growing trend. What they want to know is how you will measure whether or not the STARLAB achieves your goals. Finding ways to quantify the STARLAB's impact is the key to this question. Possible answers include:

- We will keep precise records on both the number of individual students who use the STARLAB and the number of separate STARLAB-based class sessions held. We will track these numbers year by year and analyze the changes. Our goal is to have [n] student-uses of the STARLAB in its first year (multiply # of students by # of STARLAB lessons).
- We will use pre-tests and post-tests to gauge the STARLAB's effectiveness as a teaching tool. Where possible, we will compare these results to those of past years.

- We will send out [x] flyers to teachers and hold [y] teacher-training sessions in the first year of the STARLAB's use. Our goal is to have [n1] teachers use the STARLAB in its first year, [n2] in the second year, and [n3] in the third.
- We will survey teachers after they use the STARLAB, asking whether they felt it made an impact on their teaching effectiveness and on their students' enthusiasm.
- Before submitting any of these promises as part of your proposal, give careful thought to your ability to follow through on it. If you accept the funder's money, you are honor-bound to carry out your promised evaluation steps.
- Use subheadings, bullets, and blank lines between paragraphs to break up long stretches of text, to make the proposal more "readable."
- Be sure you make it easy for the funder to contact you. Don't bury your phone number deep in the text — put it clearly on a cover page. If, like many teachers, you are hard to reach by phone during working hours, give an e-mail address or give a phone number of an administrative office and then thoroughly brief the people who are liable to answer the call, so that they know what's going on and will be certain to give the funder a courteous, helpful response. If this is in doubt, consider giving your home number, assuming you have an answering machine there. (If you go this route, state that the number you are providing is an answering machine, and that you will return the call the following business day.)
- If possible, include (as an attachment) a letter of endorsement from a well-recognized authority figure, written on that person's business stationery. Make it easy for him/her by drafting the letter yourself and then ask the heavy-hitter to consider signing a letter "along these lines." Nine out of ten times, the person will reproduce

your draft verbatim. If the endorser is personally involved with your school/institution, add a line explaining the connection — for instance, “I sent my own children to [xyz school] and can say with conviction that I know of no place more worthy of the kind of investment you are now considering.”

- Pay attention to whatever page-length limit the funder might specify in his/her guidelines. If no limit is given and you’re unsure whether your proposal is the “right” length, just be sure it addresses all the points listed below.

15 Sample Proposal Format

Sample Proposal Format

If the funder has no particular format that he/she asks you to follow, and you are at a loss as to how to organize your proposal, try this structure:

1. Cover page — A proposal to [xyz funder] from [your institution]. Date. Contact name (you!), phone number and/or e-mail.
2. Cover letter — one page letter on official letterhead, signed by your CEO. This letter:
 - a. states the purpose of the proposal [to enable your institution to purchase a STARLAB, a flexible, effective educational tool],
 - b. briefly mentions why you think it will interest [xyz funder],
 - c. states how much money you are seeking and asks the funder for consideration of a grant of all or part of that amount,
 - d. urges the funder to contact you if they have any questions or would like additional information, and
 - e. closes with an action line, such as “Our staff will contact you next week to follow up. Meanwhile, I thank you for your consideration.”
3. Two- to four-page proposal, organized into sections with the following headings:
 - a. Introduction — puts the project into the larger context by explaining how important science is to our children’s education and to the future workforce. If possible, include quotes from curriculum guidelines or evidence that test scores need improvement.
 - b. Project description — states that your institution is working to acquire a STARLAB in order to improve its science teaching ability. Gives a clear explanation of what the STARLAB is and how it will be used.
 - c. Benefits to the funder — describes the ways a grant can help the funder attract publicity and gain community goodwill.
 - d. Funding need — clearly states the full costs of the project and includes direct language such as “[name of your institution] requests consideration of a grant in the amount of [\$xx,xxx] from [name of funder] to make this purchase possible.”
 - e. Conclusion — briefly recaps the idea that the project will have a strong, positive impact on the education of young people and for this reason, a grant is an excellent investment in our children’s future.
4. Attachments, such as a letter of endorsement, STARLAB color brochures, articles, etc.

Whenever possible, seek a face-to-face meeting before submitting your proposal. Before leaving the meeting, ask whether and how much they will give. You can then phrase your proposal in much more personal and positive terms, using wording like, “Thank you for your enthusiasm at our meeting the other day. It was great meeting you, and wonderful to hear that [xyz institution] will consider a grant in the amount of [\$xx,xxx] to enable the abc school to purchase a STARLAB Portable Planetarium. As you requested, I am providing this letter to formalize our request . . .”

16 Resources

Internet Resources Featuring Useful Grant Information

Just click on the title to go to the website.

Click Grant Alert!

A service of the Michigan RESA's Grants and Planning Department. Provides brief descriptions of grants available from a variety of sources across the U.S. for K-12 schools.

Click The Foundation Center

A comprehensive source of information about opportunities from private foundations.

Click National Science Teachers Association

An excellent source for information on a number of grants available to science teachers, including Toyota TAPESTRY grants, federal funding opportunities, and more.

Click National Science Foundation

Lists grants and funding opportunities and discusses proposal preparation. Provides many links to other funding sources.

Click Chronicle of Philanthropy

A monthly publication with information on private funding.

Click Massachusetts Department of Education

Competitive and noncompetitive state and federal grants.

Click Office of Elementary and Secondary Education

8 program offices provide assistance to state and lo-

cal education agencies for maintenance and improvement of both public and private K-12 education.

Click U.S. Department of Education

The latest information on federal grant programs, including the No Child Left Behind Act.

Click Grant Resources

Includes some of the better known and most reliable resources on grant funding.

Click U.S. Department of Education

Answers all the details of “What should I know about ED grants?”

Click Columbia Education Center

Offers a variety of resource pages and information for educational grant seekers.

Additional Resources

Click Available free online from Learning Technologies. You'll find:

- An additional corporate funding booklets.
- Flyers, price lists, FAQs on STARLAB and Digital STARLAB.
- Standards correlations to STARLAB curriculum and STARLAB Cylinders.
- Survey results, articles, correlations, etc.

Wrap-up

We hope you find the information in this booklet, as well as the additional free support materials that we offer, useful to you in your funding quest. Please contact Learning Technologies, Inc. and/or your **local sales representative** for any additional questions you may have. Good luck!