

Funding Your AAPT Experience: A Guide for K–12 Teachers

Attending an AAPT National Meeting is an incredible opportunity for K–12 teachers to connect with peers, explore innovative teaching strategies, and deepen their understanding of physics education. We recognize, however, that funding travel and registration can be a challenge. This **Funding Toolkit** is designed to help educators identify and secure financial support to attend AAPT National Meetings. Inside, you'll find tips for applying for district funds, talking with your principal about funding, and templates for letters requesting funding to your administration and local business owners with a stake in STEM education in your community, and suggestions—making it easier for every teacher to access the professional growth and community AAPT offers.

Dear [Administrator's Name],

I hope this message finds you well. I am writing to request financial support to attend the American Association of Physics Teachers National Meeting, a national professional development opportunity that will take place from [Start Date] to [End Date] in [Location]. This conference will greatly enhance my teaching skills and contribute to my ability to better serve our students and school community.

The total cost of attending the conference is [Amount], which includes registration, travel, lodging, and meals. While attending a national conference requires additional resources, the depth and breadth of content-specific professional development offered makes this an especially valuable investment.

Content-specific professional development is essential for physics and science educators because it equips teachers with strategies tailored to these subjects. Attending this conference will allow me to learn the latest research-based teaching methods, clarify complex concepts for students, design engaging and accurate lessons, and better prepare students for higher-level science and STEM pathways. These skills cannot be fully gained through general or local workshops alone.

In addition, the conference provides opportunities to collaborate with peers and experts from across the country, bringing back innovative strategies and best practices to share with colleagues, further amplifying the benefit to our school community.

Here are my specific goals for attending this conference:

- [Goal 1: for example, "Learn new strategies for differentiated instruction."]
- [Goal 2: for example, "Gain insights into current trends in educational technology."]
- [Goal 3: for example, "Collaborate with peers and experts in the field to enhance my professional network."]

Thank you for considering this request. I am happy to provide any additional information or documentation as needed. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

[Your Position]

Dear [Administrator's Name],

I hope this message finds you well. I am writing to request financial support to attend the American Association of Physics Teachers National Meeting, a local professional development opportunity that will take place from [Start Date] to [End Date] here in [City]. This conference will greatly enhance my teaching skills and contribute to my ability to better serve our students and school community.

One of the key advantages of this conference being held locally is that it is far more affordable than traveling to a national event. The total cost of attending the conference is [Amount], which includes [list any specific costs such as registration, materials, etc.], without the additional expenses of travel, lodging, and meals that would be required if the conference were held out of town.

While general professional development is always beneficial, content-specific opportunities like this one are essential. Physics and science education present unique challenges for students, and specialized training equips me with strategies tailored to these subjects. This ensures I can explain complex concepts more clearly, design engaging and accurate lessons, and better prepare students for success in higher-level science and STEM pathways.

In addition, many of the sessions will highlight research-based practices and approaches that help all students succeed. I will also be able to bring back strategies to share with colleagues, amplifying the impact of this opportunity across our school community.

Here are my specific goals for attending this conference:

- [Goal 1: for example, "Learn new strategies for differentiated instruction."]
- [Goal 2: for example, "Gain insights into current trends in educational technology."]
- [Goal 3: for example, "Collaborate with peers and experts in the field to enhance my professional network."]

Thank you for considering this request. I am happy to provide any additional information or documentation as needed. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

[Your Position]

Dear [Administrator's Name],

I hope this message finds you well. I am writing to request financial support to attend the American Association of Physics Teachers National Meeting, which will take place from [Start Date] to [End Date] in [Location]. I am honored to share that I have been **accepted to present at the conference**, providing a unique opportunity to showcase the innovative work happening in our district to a national audience. Attending as a presenter allows me to represent our district's commitment to high-quality science education and share successful strategies with educators across the country.

The total cost of attending the conference is [Amount], which includes registration, travel, lodging, and meals. While attending a national conference requires additional resources, the depth and breadth of content-specific professional development offered makes this an especially valuable investment.

Content-specific professional development is essential for physics and science educators because it equips teachers with strategies uniquely tailored to these subjects. Attending this conference will allow me to learn the latest research-based teaching methods, clarify complex concepts for students, design engaging and accurate lessons, and better prepare students for higher-level science and STEM pathways—skills that cannot be fully gained through general or district-wide workshops alone.

In addition, presenting at the conference provides opportunities to collaborate with peers and experts from across the country, bringing back innovative strategies and best practices to share with colleagues, further amplifying the benefit to our district. By representing our district on a national platform, I hope to highlight the excellence of our programs while bringing back actionable ideas to enhance classroom instruction locally.

Here are my specific goals for attending this conference:

- [Goal 1: for example, "Learn new strategies for differentiated instruction."]
- [Goal 2: for example, "Gain insights into current trends in educational technology."]
- [Goal 3: for example, "Collaborate with peers and experts in the field to enhance my professional network."]

Thank you for considering this request. I am happy to provide any additional information or documentation as needed. I look forward to your response and to the opportunity to represent our district on the national stage.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

[Your Position]

Dear [Business Owner's Name],

I hope this letter finds you well. My name is [Your Name], and I am a physics teacher at [School Name], located here in [City]. I am reaching out to ask for your financial support for an important professional development opportunity that will not only enhance my teaching abilities that directly benefit the students who will one day become part of the local workforce—potentially even at your business.

I have the opportunity to attend the American Association of Physics Teachers National Meeting, which will take place from [Start Date] to [End Date] in [Location]. This conference focuses on innovative teaching techniques that bring students relevant and authentic experiences for students in our community at [School Name]. The goal of this conference is to help teachers gain valuable knowledge that will allow us to better prepare students for the challenges and opportunities they will face in the workforce.

Better-prepared teachers lead to better-prepared students, and well-prepared students are key to the success of local businesses like yours. The skills and knowledge I will acquire at the conference will directly enhance the quality of education I provide, ensuring that my students are equipped with the critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaborative skills they need to thrive in today's workforce. As a community, we all benefit when our educational system supports the development of future leaders, skilled workers, and responsible citizens.

I am seeking sponsorship of [Amount] to cover the cost of attending this conference, which includes [breakdown of costs such as registration, travel, lodging, etc.]. Your support would not only help me grow as an educator but would also play a part in fostering a stronger, more vibrant workforce for our community.

I would be more than happy to provide additional details about the conference or discuss how your sponsorship will be recognized. I truly believe that your investment in my professional development will have a lasting impact on the students who will one day contribute to the success of your business.

Thank you for considering this request. I look forward to the possibility of partnering with you to help create a brighter future for our students and our community.

Sincerely,
[Your Name]
[Your Position]

Dear [Business Owner's Name],

I hope this letter finds you well. My name is [Your Name], and I am a physics teacher at [School Name], located here in [City]. I am reaching out to ask for your financial support for an important professional development opportunity that will directly benefit the students who may one day become part of the local workforce—potentially even at your business.

I have the opportunity to attend the American Association of Physics Teachers National Meeting, which will take place from [Start Date] to [End Date] here in [City]. This local conference focuses on innovative, content-specific teaching techniques that provide students with relevant and authentic experiences in physics and science. While district professional development offers valuable general strategies, content-specific PD like this conference equips teachers with methods uniquely tailored to the subject, allowing for deeper understanding and more effective instruction.

One of the key advantages of this local conference is its affordability. The total cost of attending is [Amount], which includes [breakdown of costs such as registration, materials, etc.], without the additional expenses of travel, lodging, and meals that a national conference would require. This makes it an especially cost-effective opportunity for both my professional growth and the benefit of our students.

Better-prepared teachers lead to better-prepared students, and well-prepared students are key to the success of local businesses like yours. The skills and knowledge I will acquire at the conference will directly enhance the quality of education I provide, ensuring that my students develop critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaborative skills that are essential for today's workforce.

I am seeking sponsorship of [Amount] to support my attendance. Your investment would not only help me grow as an educator but also contribute to fostering a stronger, more capable workforce for our community.

I would be happy to provide additional details about the conference or discuss how your sponsorship will be recognized. I truly believe your support for content-specific professional development will have a lasting impact on the students who will one day contribute to the success of your business.

Thank you for considering this request. I look forward to the possibility of partnering with you to create a brighter future for our students and our community.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

[Your Position]

Script for Talking with Your Principal

Opening the Conversation

- *"I wanted to ask about a professional learning opportunity that's coming up soon — the American Association of Physics Teachers National Meeting. It's being held here in [City] from [Start Date] to [End Date]."*

If you are presenting...

- *"I've also been [accepted or invited] to present at the conference, which means our school will be recognized on a national stage for the work we're doing."*
- *"Presenting also gives me access to additional networking and leadership opportunities that I can bring back here."*

If the conference is local...

- *"This conference doesn't usually happen locally, so it's a rare chance to attend without the big costs of travel and lodging."*
- *"The total cost would just be [Amount] for registration, parking etc."*

Highlight Subject-Specific PD

- *"I know general PD is valuable, but physics presents unique challenges for students and teachers. This conference focuses on strategies that help us explain tough concepts more clearly and make lessons more engaging."*
- *"It would give me new ways to help students succeed in physics and **better prepare** them for STEM pathways."*

Broader Impact for the School

- *"Many sessions are grounded in research-based practices that benefit diverse groups of learners."*

Script for Talking with Your Principal

- *“I plan to share what I learn with our science team so the investment supports more than just my classroom.”*

Your Specific Goals

- *“My goals for attending include:
 - Learning new strategies for differentiated instruction,
 - Exploring current trends in science education technology, and
 - Building connections with other physics educators to bring back new resources and ideas.”*

Making the Ask

- *“Would it be possible for the school to support me in attending? The total cost of attendance would be [amount] this would include [registration, travel, lodging...].”*

Closing

- *“Thank you for considering this — I think it is a valuable opportunity to both represent our school on the national stage and bring national-level professional development back to our school.”*

Tips and Tricks to Making and AAPT National Meeting More Affordable

1. Registration Savings

- **Early Bird Discounts:** Register as early as possible to take advantage of lower rates. As the conference approaches, prices go up.
- **Get Involved:** AAPT has travel funds available for members in leadership positions such as community chairs, section representatives and members on the Board of Directors
- **Student or Member Discounts:** If you're a student, a K-12 Teacher or a retired teacher, there are discounts available.
- **Apply for awards and grants:** AAPT has several awards and grants available for K-12 educators that include funding to attend a national meeting.

2. Travel on a Budget

- **Book Travel Early:** Book travel early and look at different forms of travel such as train, bus, airplane or even a roadtrip with some teacher friends.
- **Take advantage of AAPT National Meetings in your area:** There is no cheaper travel than not traveling! If there is an AAPT meeting in your local area, be sure to take that opportunity to engage at a lower cost.

3. Cut Hotel Costs

- **Share a Room:** Split a hotel with a friend or colleague.
- **Use the Group Rate:** AAPT has secured a group rate at the conference hotel. Be sure to book your accommodations under that rate.
- **Book Early:** Hotels near the venue fill up fast—secure a cheaper rate by booking early.

4. Save on Food & Drinks

- **Leverage Free Meals:** Take advantage of included breakfasts, networking events, and vendor receptions.
- **Grocery Stores Over Restaurants:** Buy or order snacks, drinks, and simple meals at local grocery stores instead of eating out.
- **Find the more affordable restaurants:** Consider using food delivery platforms or walking to nearby restaurants instead of eating meals at the hotel

5. Reduce Local Transportation Costs

- **Use Public Transit:** Instead of taxis or ride-shares, check if buses or subways are an option.



Tips and Tricks to Making and AAPT National Meeting More Affordable

- **Carpool or Share Rides:** If multiple attendees are going to the same place, share a ride.

6. Seek Financial Assistance

- **School or District Sponsorship:** Ask your administration if they can cover part or all of your expenses. Use the template available in the Funding Toolkit.
- **Local Business Sponsorship:** Ask a local business if they can cover part or all of your expenses. Use the template available in the Funding Toolkit.

7. Plan Ahead & Budget Wisely

- **Make a Budget:** List all expected costs and look for ways to cut unnecessary expenses.
- **Use Conference Apps & Social Media:** Follow official conference pages for last-minute discounts or giveaways.
- **Network & Connect:** Partner with others to split costs on hotels, rides, or even meals.



Tips for Framing Your Conversation or Application District Funding

1. If filling out an application for funding, read the guidelines carefully

- Check what types of expenses are eligible (registration, travel, lodging, substitute coverage, etc.).
- If applying, double-check deadlines and required attachments (agenda, budget breakdown, acceptance letter if presenting).

2. Connect to District Priorities

- Use the district's mission or strategic plan language (equity, STEM pathways, college/career readiness).
- Frame your request as advancing school or district goals, not just personal growth.
- In conversation: *"This supports our district's focus on equity in STEM and preparing students for next-level opportunities."*

3. Be Specific and Concrete

- Break down the costs (e.g., *Registration, travel, lodging, parking*)
- Highlight specific conference sessions or strands that connect to your teaching goals. Set 3–4 measurable goals (e.g., *"Implement two new differentiated instruction strategies next semester."*).

4. Show Broader Impact

1. Emphasize how your learning will be shared (department meeting, PD session, resource folder).
2. If presenting, stress the visibility this brings to the district.
3. *Explain how you will learn specific strategies that meet the needs of ALL students.*

5. Demonstrate Cost-Effectiveness

- If the event is local, emphasize the savings compared to out-of-town travel.
- Note if you're seeking other funding or willing to cover part of the cost.

Tips for Framing Your Conversation or Application District Funding

6. Keep It Professional and Positive

- Frame the request as an **investment in students and the school community**.
- Be concise and organized — use bullet points in applications, and clear talking points in conversation.

7. Include Supporting Materials (if applicable)

- Application: attach the conference program, budget, and acceptance letter if presenting.
- Conversation: have these documents ready in case the administrator asks.

8. Follow Up

- Application: check in before the deadline to confirm materials are complete.
- Conversation: ask what the next step is (form, approval, budget request).
- After approval, thank your administrator and commit to sharing outcomes.