

District 58 Education Foundation approves nearly \$20,000 in grants to schools

The District 58 Education Foundation is giving away nearly \$20,000 in grants this school year. Staff were encouraged to apply for mini-grants (\$500 or less) and maxi grants of \$500 or more to enhance curriculum or technology innovations, including staff development. The committee received a total of 17 requests from nine schools, including 12 maxi grant requests and five mini grant requests.

Grants were awarded to the following projects and schools; the applicant's name(s) is in parentheses.

- Virtual frog dissection program, which provides an alternative and/or supplement to an authentic dissection; O'Neill Middle School (Sarah Pinkus, Janette Syverson)
- Interactive white boards, which help teachers in creating a teaching environment where students are engaged, motivated and eager to learn; O'Neill, Highland and Herrick (Kelly Messineo, Kristen Olsen, Charlene Franks, Connie Hodson, Cheryl Varis)
- Literacy Road Trip: Audio book "backpacks," which aim to boost student reading fluency and comprehension by motivating families to use audio books during weekend excursions, family trips and other family-oriented activities; Fairmount (Melissa Swallows, Jennifer Pope)
- Digital camera for the Newspaper Club, which will allow club members to incorporate photographs into their product and gain technology experience; Pierce Downer (Beth Kamano, Kelly DeMarco)
- Graphic novels for the LRC, which will introduce the genre to students in the Reading Room and get more reluctant readers hooked on reading, boosting student progress in reading; Indian Trail (Julie Bianchin, Amy Gasaway, Laura Paynic, Dina Vlosak)
- ANNA Plan/Passport to Reading resources, a research-based teaching method that increases student reading achievement by providing a framework for small-group reading instruction; Fairmount School (Melissa Swallows, Jennifer Pope)
- Site license for Career Cruising, an interactive career resource which helps students plan for their future; Herrick Middle School (Danice McGrath, Julie Quinlan, Julie Ekman, Steve Gross)
- WeatherBug staff training, which will provide staff development for use of the WeatherBug station at Whittier and allow fourth-grade teachers at participating schools incorporate the technology into the existing curriculum; Whittier (Linda Welch)

- Flip Mino video recorders, which are compact versions of a video recorder that will aid in recording various activities and events, motivating children to boost their skills and improve; Kingsley School (Maureen Chmel, Elizabeth Levy)
- Take-home phonics bags, which will contain various resources and activities for students to bring home weekly to encourage a meaningful learning connection between home and school, and provide additional practice with phonics activities; Indian Trail (Beth Hatlen)
- Elements of Reading Vocabulary, which will empower the classroom with rich, robust vocabulary words on a regular basis, assisting students in becoming better readers, writers and speakers; El Sierra (Diane Claver)
- One-Minute Reader, which supplements the Read Naturally program with checkout materials to boost students' fluency; Henry Puffer and El Sierra (Lucille Carney and Todd McDaniel)

**This year's grant review committee included Laura Crawford (committee chair), Debbie Drews, Tana Williams, Meg Van Dyke, Deb Kimminau, Paul Zaander and Jennie Waldorf.*