



2023-24 Competitive Grant Recipients

\$500/ \$1,000/ \$2,000 grants

Sewing in the Art & STEAM Classrooms submitted by Molly Hooper, Int. Prep Academy Middle School and Amy Lozar, South Side Elementary. 300 students will be introduced to various sewing techniques, ranging from hand sewing/embroidering to machine sewing to adding accents to their creations. Students will utilize mathematical thinking through the pattern-making and creation process as measurement and spatial reasoning are continually used in a good sewing project, as are geometry and multiplication.

Mirrors, Windows, and Doors in Literacy submitted by Liz Ester Ham Lee, Int. Prep Academy and Jaclyn Turner, Edison Middle School. This grant allows access to texts that provide culturally and linguistically diverse for students in both schools. Texts that reflect the student demographics that are relative to their own lives increases student understanding of their lives, community, and the world.

Central & Centennial High School Chess Club Goes Next Level submitted by Aaron Hong, Central High School and Alex Slifer, Centennial High School. Chess offers the students an excellent tool to learn skills such as critical thinking, strategic planning, and sportsmanship. This grant allows the Central and Centennial Clubs to collaborate and build a model for running a flourishing chess program and attract students from diverse backgrounds, as well as adopting chess in diverse classroom settings.

Mixed Media Identity Journals submitted by Rusty Clevenger and Janice Knight from Urbana Middle School. Funds will be used to purchase quality collage materials and tools for hundreds of students to create a personal visual narrative using multiple collage processes in a mixed media journal. Students will be involved with every aspect of planning, creating, and presenting their journals.

Coding Robots submitted by Mindy Dyson and Itamar Kaplansky of South Side Elementary. Students will use their creativity and a hands-on approach to build a robot with the capabilities of connecting to technology to perform specific tasks. Older students and younger students will partner up to build and program/code their robots.

Barkstall Sensory Room submitted by Carrie Hopkins from Barkstall Elementary. Funds will be used to sensory support items for special needs students at Barkstall.

All the Feels! Supporting Students Through SEL submitted by Alexis Gatses and Sherena Small of Stratton Elementary. This grant funds the purchase of the “Teach Your Dragon” book series that cover different topics of student wellness in a kid-friendly and engaging way. The books seek to help students referred by their teacher who are struggling to stay on task due to a difficult issue they are facing at home.

Universal Words for All Kids submitted by Michele Hall and Heidi Hackett of Urbana Early Childhood. Funds will be used to make adaptive, multi-sensory books targeting specific disabilities by making books to target students' specific needs; including blindness, physical impairments, autism, and hearing impairments.

5th Grade Buddy Celebration Fieldtrip submitted by Steve Keepes-England of Bottenfield Elementary. Each month throughout the year 5th grade students meet with Kindergarten students to work on different skills such as literacy, math and science. This project will be a way for both grades to celebrate their success from the year.

Leonardo Comes to Leal submitted by Margaret Kinnamon and Cara Maurizi from Leal Elementary. In preparation of students attending a performance of Leonardo The Terrible Monster at Krannert students will study the text from the book and create their own Leonardo puppet and then perform a short reflection piece with their puppets.

Reading In Our Own Language submitted by Kayla Leitschuh and Rachid Cherif from Franklin STEAM Academy. This project supports ESL/Spanish speaking students in reaching their literacy goals by providing books that align to core reading units that are in a language that many of our students are more confident in, boosting literacy skills in both languages.

BOOSTing Our Students Reading submitted by Kristine Scheu and Beth Boothe from Barkstall Elementary. This grant supports students using the online learning program BOOST which guides students through engaging interactive learning games by providing noise canceling headsets.

Functional Play and Engagement submitted by Rachel Taylor and Amanda Peacock from Champaign Early Childhood Center. This grant will purchase cause and effect toys which increase engagement, exploration, and play with a variety of toys. These toys help build foundational play skills which are a prerequisite skill to higher-order thinking and socialization.

Communication and Connection Through Speech and Music submitted by Meagan Tipton of Barkstall Elementary. Funds will purchase developmentally appropriate, yet rigorous, music making and speech and language equipment for a self-contained classroom of students with limited verbal speech and non-verbal students.

500 Palabras Nuevas submitted by Rebekah Hoffman from Dr. Williams Elementary. Funds will be used to purchase 122 copies of a bilingual picture dictionary for 4-5 grade dual language students.

Illuminated Clay Letter Design submitted by Madison Borup from Edison Middle School. Funds will be used to purchase clay and tools for cutting as students will learn clay slab-building techniques as they design their own 3D clay letter.

Explore MORE Cloth of the African Continent submitted by Grant Thomas from Barkstall Elementary. Funds will be used to purchase three pieces of traditional cloth from Ghana and Kenya. These pieces would be used to help 1st grade students learn about Kitenge Cloth, Adinkra Cloth, and Kente Cloth, and the cultures of each.

Mission: Audifonos submitted by Bianca Espinosa-Speta first grade teacher at Int. Prep Academy. Funds will be used to purchase headphones for students who cannot engage in learning activities without them.

Introducing Spikeball! submitted by Tim Bicknell of Kenwood Elementary. Funds will be used to purchase additional spikeball sets so more students can participate without sitting out during class.

First Friday Concert Series submitted by Abby Crull from South Side Elementary. First Friday Concert Series will feature student performers and student/family audience. Students can request to participate and prepare for any First Friday concert, where they will perform for peers and families; sing, rap, dance, jokes, poetry, instruments, jump rope, theatre, hula hoop, art, sports, etc. Funds will be used to purchase microphones, and additional materials to support performances.

Cricut Art submitted by Julia Colombo from Centennial. Funds would be used to purchase the Cricut Maker 3 + Essentials Bundle which allows art students to work via a STEAM process, to create a wide variety of two- and three-dimensional works.

One fish, two fish, red fish, blue fish: STEAM & SEL submitted by Londa Neely from Urbana Early Childhood Center. Funds will be used to purchase a small classroom aquarium with fish and learning materials so children can learn about aquatic life while caring for a pet in their own classroom.

Learning with a Calm Mind submitted by Rachel Daly from Yankee Ridge Elementary. Funds will be used to purchase sensory calming devices and supports for 5th grade general education students.

Creating Polyglot Chefs submitted by Lucy Kebler from Westview Elementary. Funds will be used to purchase a variety of multi-lingual cook books for students to check them out and experiment with recipes at home with their families

Growing Readers submitted by Tori Harvey from Dr. King Elementary. Funds will be used to purchase multiple copies of books from a series entitled The King School Series. This series represents students from various cultural backgrounds.

UHS Loophole Printing submitted by Brandon Birkhead from Urbana High. The funds will be used to help fund printing cost for the UHS Loophole Literary Magazine. The UHS publication Loophole provides a chance for students to submit and showcase their art (written or visual), to the students at UHS. The members of the Loophole staff also gain valuable experience in publication and editing.

Weather and Biodiversity submitted by Joan Jach from Urbana High. This project will give all students enrolled in agriculture classes the opportunity to gather data, make observations, analyze data they collected and come up with conclusions and ideas about how weather and climate change might affect biodiversity. Funds will be used to purchase a weather station, microscopes, magnifying glasses, and inset identification books.

Dive Deeper into Writing submitted by Jenna Ko from Westview Elementary. This project will support ESL and foreign multilingual students in honoring their own cultural heritage while they are learning English. Students will select a hero from their culture. Students will research and develop their writing to be compiled into a book copy of their work.

Yankee Ridge School Garden Materials submitted by Hannah Gibes from Yankee Ridge Elementary. Students will be involved in planning their garden and researching what vegetables and plants will grow well in the light and climate of the Yankee Ridge School Garden. Funds will be used to purchase trowels, gloves, and seed starter sets.

K-5 Library Makes and Takes submitted by Katherine Krusell from Barkstall Elementary. This project will support the purchase of books and materials to extend the learning in library activities. All 400 students will be able to participate in a library “make and take” activity.

Stop Motion Webcams submitted by Whitney Huber from Int. Prep Academy. Funds will be used to purchase stop motion webcams to enable IPA 6th graders to work on our stop motion animation unit by using good quality, moveable, and flexible webcams rather than laptop cameras only.

Equitable Opportunities for learning submitted by Karla Schroeder and Jalisa Huckabee from Dr. King Elementary. Funds will be used to support all students with opportunities to use different tools needed for successful learning. Flexible seating, headphones, and classroom books will enrich and supplement the learning of every single student.

Hands on Learning with Anatomy submitted by Terri-Lynn Milinkovic from Barkstall Elementary. Funds will be used to purchase human models of the skeletal system, digestive system, and muscular system.

Visibility Means Independence submitted by Amanda Crow from Carrie Busey Elementary. Funds will be used to purchase display items to allow for the rearrangement of library materials to be front facing. Front facing titles create more interest in checking out books.

Half-cap ceremony for Centennial submitted by Jessica Hutchison from Centennial. Funds will be used support a Half Cap Ceremony for all sophomore students on track to graduate at Centennial.

La Biblioteque Francaise submitted by Jamie Schrader from Central. Funds will be used to purchase fiction and non-fiction books in French to support the French libraries for French students at Central.

Sensory Letters and Numbers submitted by Lauren Whitehouse from Champaign Early Childhood Center. Funds will be used to purchase learning cards to practice counting by being able to visually see and feel each number. Students learn their letters by being able to see and feel each letter of the alphabet.

Science Enrichment- Space submitted by Sarah Lehl from Dr. Howard Elementary. Funds will be used to purchase materials for students to extend their study of the sky and constellations unit.

Authors in the Wild submitted by Aleah Mathews from Dr. King Elementary. Students will begin the project by completing an in-school writers' assignment. Funds will be used to purchase tickets to see Leonardo: A wonderful show about a terrible monster. After the performance, students will prepare for their own stories including costumes, set design, scripts, and lighting.

Memories You Can Hold submitted by Les Kutz from Dr. Williams Elementary. Funds will be used to purchase a mini digital/film hybrid camera to be used across a wide variety of projects ranging from collage, to digital art, to creating class scrapbooks. This photography project is designed to empower students to not only capture memories and document artworks, but to choose how they use their images, and to potentially create new artworks in doing so.

