



2024-25 Competitive Grant Recipients

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

Pickleball in P.E. submitted by Tim Bicknell, P.E., Kenwood. Four hundred students will develop paddle/racket skills and knowledge that can be used not only in pickleball, but other sports like table tennis, badminton, and tennis.

Creative Currency: Empowering Student Artists with Sticker Sales submitted by Julia Colombo, art teacher at Centennial High School. This grant will purchase a sticker vending machine to display and sell original stickers of artwork created by art students. This project fosters creativity, sense of artistic identity, support for classmates as they promote each other's work, and engagement with the entire Centennial population. The sticker machine will be in the cafeteria where all students can use it.

Crochet Club submitted by Bethany Cunningham, library media specialist at Yankee Ridge in Urbana. This grant will help teach 3rd-5th graders how to crochet during their recess time when the weather turns chilly. Through this activity, students will learn an important hands-on skill steeped in centuries of history. Students will also learn a practical way to calm their bodies and open the door for projects that will give back to the community.

Advancing Music Literacy submitted by Brandon Douglas, music teacher from Dr. Williams in Urbana. Funds will purchase five basic electronic piano keyboards, ten sets of quality headphones, five audio splitters, and simple piano books for students to use and have classroom lessons to begin learning some keyboard basics. These items will allow for more students to be exposed to the piano and develop an even greater understanding of music.

Foam Clay submitted by Melissa Farley, art teacher at Bottenfield in Champaign. Students will be given the opportunity to experience modeling with foam clay by

engaging with the entire artistic process, including learning about concept, planning/sketching, building, refining, and critiquing.

CKLA Novel Study Books and Materials submitted by Lisa Ferguson, Interventionist Teacher at Thomas Paine in Urbana. This grant will provide Novel Studies, which are an additional resource they would like to use for their students who are above grade level, to challenge them in comprehension, writing, and critical thinking skills.

Roundnet aka Spikeball submitted by Gonzalo Roque Ferrando, P.E. teacher at Urbana Middle School. This grant will purchase the equipment needed to introduce Roundnet as a new unit. Roundnet can be played by people of various skill levels and physical abilities, making it an inclusive sport that encourages participation from everyone.

Tap Dance Residency submitted by Samuel Hanson, dance and drama teacher at Thomas Paine in Urbana. This grant will bring Tanya Picard, a highly regarded tap dance teacher with over 20 years of experience performing and teaching professionally to the school. She will work with 5th grade students every day for one week from 8:30a-11a, as well as two after-school sessions with teachers.

Hydroponics Growing Power! submitted by Tori Harvey, curriculum implementation teacher at M.L. King in Urbana. Funds will be used to purchase a Hydroponics Growing System. Students will be responsible for deciding what foods they would like to grow and eat, monitoring the growth of the food, and promoting healthy eating.

Sewing for All submitted by Deb Heater, at Gerber School in Urbana. Students will learn to make basic pillowcases, lounge pants and a quilt for themselves. Completing the projects will give students the satisfaction of knowing they CAN do it.

To Linus with Love submitted by Heather High, middle school teacher at ACTIONS/Restore in Champaign. This grant will provide materials so students can plan out, cut and tie blankets to be gifted to the community shelter or school. Students will have to explain the reasoning behind the gift. The blankets will provide warmth emotionally and physically with an emphasis on letting people know they are loved and important.

Half Cap Ceremony for Centennial's Rising Juniors - Class of 2026 submitted by Jessica Hutchison, English teacher and instructional coach at Centennial High

School in Champaign. Centennial's Half Cap Ceremony is an opportunity to recognize all sophomores on track to graduate. This grant will pay for a custom printed vinyl banner, "Class of 2027" t-shirts, and light refreshments.

Replacing Dry Erase Boards with Re-Writing Tablets submitted by Sarah Iehl, 5th grade teacher at Dr. Howard in Champaign. This grant will purchase Re-Write Writing Tablets which allows students to put a piece of paper in the tablet, just like with dry erase sleeves. These writing tablets work the same way as dry erase boards and sleeves, but without needing the marker and eraser.

Cooking Instruction submitted by Robert Jacobs, special education teacher at Urbana Middle School. This class will focus on recipes students can follow, practice daily over a week, and make independently at home. Students will purchase shopping materials and ingredients directly from a local grocery store, a skill that will also be used in their personal life.

Nous Aimons Lire! Expanding Bilingual Literacy Through Popular French Books submitted by Anna Kebler, teacher librarian at Stratton Academy of the Arts in Champaign. This grant will purchase the popular Dork Diaries series in French, which will expand the number of students reading and challenge many. This series will motivate some to push beyond their comfort level and abilities in French, and others in English. Shared book series can encourage a sense of belonging, even when language barriers are present.

Gundam Building Club submitted by Vincent Kim, 6th grade ELA teacher at Franklin Middle School in Champaign. The Gundam Building Club is a yearlong project where students master the art of building Gundam Model Kits. Gundam is a famous Japanese brand of snap tight robot model kits. Learning how to build these model kits will encourage students to master skills that most schools don't put into curriculums: precision, attention to detail, and lots and lots of patience.

Button Up for Some Fun submitted by Katherine Krusell, library media specialist at Barkstall in Champaign. This grant would purchase a Button Making Machine and supplies as a way for students to express themselves and make literacy more fun! Students could use the machine to show off what they've been reading, create "I am" buttons, create magnets as family gifts and use in conjunction with school-wide events.

Classroom Novels & Library submitted by Peter Kuppler, 4th grade teacher at South Side in Champaign. Funds will be used to purchase classroom sets of novels: Matilda by Roald Dahl, Hatchet by Gary Paulsen, Magic Tree House: Revolutionary War on Wednesday by Mary Pope Osborne, Sherlock Holmes: The Adventure of the Final Problem by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and Wishtree by Katherine Applegate.

iPads for Ideas! submitted by Lisa Nguyen, enrichment teacher at Westview in Champaign. Students will use the iPads to record videos for PBIS monthly themes, positive recognitions, and create podcasts for their Westview YouTube Channel. Additionally, they have many newcomer students who do not speak English yet, so the iPads will be used as a portable translator for students and staff as well.

Glaze Away! submitted by Emily Pawlicki, art teacher at BTW in Champaign. This grant will provide students with glazes to utilize on their clay pieces, as well as brushes to apply them with. Providing students with additional ways to not only decorate their sculptures but also make them food safe so they could be utilitarian will be very exciting!

A Sensory Corner/ Reading Nook for MLL students with Special Needs submitted by Ana Plazolles, ESL teacher at Carrie Busey in Champaign. This grant will fund a sensory corner that will provide students with sensory mats, LED lights, flexible and comfortable seating, sensory toys, and appropriate books, among other supports.

Daffodils submitted by Sandi Roegman, PreK teacher at Garden Hills in Champaign. In this project, PreK students will engage in an exploration of flowers, nature, and seasons as they work together to plant and tend daffodil bulbs. Through hands-on learning with their classmates, students will observe the bulbs as they grow into plants in the spring. As the project culminates, students will pot an individual daffodil to bring home.

Linear Air Track submitted by Brian Rosten, 8th grade science teacher at Franklin Middle School in Champaign. This project will allow science educators at Franklin STEAM Academy to teach kinematics (physics of movement) principles without involving complicated math. The machine allows students to observe elastic and inelastic collisions in a frictionless environment.

Bottenfield Bots submitted by Jules Thorstenson, Enrichment/STEM K-5 teacher at Bottenfield in Champaign. This grant will fund two Sphero coding robots. This

project not only equips students with technical skills but fosters critical thinking, problem-solving, and creativity, key components for success in the 21st century.

IPA's Fiber Arts Club: Funding to be Fabulous Learners submitted by Susanna Torres, middle school teacher at IPA in Champaign. This grant funds yarn and crochet hooks for the Fiber Arts Club. Kids are not only learning how to knit and crochet; they are learning new vocabulary in both languages, math skills, problem-solving, and being given opportunities to be endlessly creative.

The Wild Robot submitted by Tara Satterlee, 1st grade teacher at Bottenfield in Champaign. This grant will fund a class trip to the movie theater to see "The Wild Robot," a novel they explore each year with great enthusiasm. The text features various narratives that resonate with students, including that of a robot discovering human emotions, a gosling facing rejection from its flock, and the importance of animal relationships that promote community cohesion despite differences.

Constructing Ceramic Vessels submitted by Janice Knight and Rusty Clevenger, art teachers at Urbana Middle School. Teachers will obtain clay, glaze, and tools for the use of multiple classes and hundreds of students to research, design, and create ceramic vessels. Clay will be used to teach students the science behind constructing a utilitarian ceramic vessel that survives over time based on design.

It's an SAIG thing! Heather Payne and Corinne Herges, school social workers at Urbana Early Childhood School are establishing a developmentally appropriate Social Academic Instructional Group (SAIG) curriculum that fits the needs of their district's youngest learners. SAIGs are created to help specific students learn appropriate behaviors in a small group setting with their peers. They will be using their grant funding to purchase books, manipulatives, games, and other items needed to access instruction that will help them succeed in school and life.

Yankee Ridge School Garden submitted by Hannah Gibes, tier 1 interventionist and Florence Mathieu, 1st grade French dual language teacher at Yankee Ridge in Urbana. This grant will go toward a Tower Garden in which students can grow plants all year round. indoors. It will also purchase Crop Science and Food Science Curriculum for K-2 and 3-5 classrooms that aligns with Illinois State Science Standards, buy seeds, seed beds and seedlings for the growing season next year.

Spanish Books Are Important Too! submitted by Stacey Voelker, librarian, and Tania Madrigal, bilingual teacher, from Champaign Early Childhood Center. This would update their school library to include Spanish titles. Each week, students come to the library and choose a book to take home to read with their families. Students will show ownership of their learning when they get to choose their own special book from those that are offered.

Classroom Core Boards submitted by Michelle Hall and Quinn Robinson, speech language-pathologists at Urbana Early Childhood School. This grant will purchase durable large core boards in each classroom to give students the ability to communicate with their peers and teachers. These boards will teach students core vocabulary to use in all settings.

Hydroponics submitted by Kathleen Stein and Deb Heater, teachers at Gerber in Urbana. Students will build, plant, monitor, care for and harvest products that can be used in culturally diverse recipes. This grant will purchase Growneer systems, hydroponics nutrients and seeds to enrich their stem experiences along with responsibility and job skills.

Kindergarten & 5th Grade Buddy Celebration Field Trip submitted by Steve Keepes-England, Kindergarten teacher, and Racheal Dimock, 5th grade teacher at Bottenfield in Champaign. Throughout the school year the kindergarten class works with the 5th graders on various projects ranging from literacy (reading buddies) to math and STEAM projects. This grant will provide a celebration field trip for all of the hard work the students have done. They will go to Parkland Community College to look at the campus and watch a show at the planetarium.

Read Together, Grow Together submitted by Sunny McMurry, 5th grade teacher, and Stacy Baby, 1st grade teacher, at Robeson Elementary in Champaign. Each have students with very limited to no English due to their recent arrival in the United States in their classes. In order to increase their engagement, this grant will purchase a refurbished iPad that has the capacity for Google translate to read or speak aloud during their interactions with their reading buddies. These funds will also help celebrate a year of reading buddies through the purchase of a book for students - of THEIR choice!-to take home for the summer.

Bringing Jazz to Life: Using Performance to Bring Jazz History to the Modern Jazz Student submitted by Stacey Peterik and Darren Hicks, Urbana High School band teachers. This grant will partially cover the cost of bringing Terrell Stafford (Director of Jazz Studies at Boyer college of Music at Temple University, and clinician for Jazz

at Lincoln Center) to Urbana to do a two day residency in the middle and high school. Mr. Stafford will also visit Franklin and Jefferson Middle Schools and Central High School in Champaign.

Translators for Students Nicole Owens and Elodia (Maria) Guerrero, multi-language learning teachers at BTW in Champaign, will be purchasing Pocketalk Voice Translators so that newcomers can interact with their peers, teachers and more fully participate in their education. These translators will not only help the students, but can also help with communication with parents and families at conferences and will help the whole school.

The Rhythm of Play submitted by Meghan Gentry, school social worker, and Brittany Booth, speech pathologist, at Bottenfield in Champaign. This grant will purchase a drum they can keep in their office space, along with additional musical items, books for units, and play/activity materials. They believe that children are most engaged when performing play-based activities.

Research Materials for Andragogical Development submitted by Felix Cardoso and Diana Vines, teachers at Urbana Adult Education. This grant will fund supplies so students can present and create art projects that are relevant to their homework, culture, and the USD116 curriculum. They will host open-house events, such as Hispanic Heritage Month and Black History Month Poster Competitions to showcase students' finished products.

1st Grade Field Experiences submitted by Valerie Willetts and Susie Myers, 1st grade teachers at M.L. King in Urbana. This grant will fund field trips to Anita Purves Nature Center, Prairie Fruits Farm and Creamery, Parkland Planetarium and the Spurlock Museum.

Books for Bottenfield! submitted by Katelyn Shamhart, 1st grade teacher and Morgan Williams, literacy interventionist, at Bottenfield in Champaign. This grant will fund decodable books that incorporate science, children of all colors, children with all abilities, and words aligned with the rules they currently teach in Amplify. The books are also in color and approach early literacy with familiar content for the most struggling readers.

Today a Reader Tomorrow a Leader- Decodable Books for Older Students submitted by Ashley Daly and Stacie Guido, reading interventionists at Barkstall in Champaign. This grant will purchase a series of catch-up readers that include engaging stories and pictures for upper elementary students. The stories align

with the phonics curriculum used for small group learning and move at a pace more practical for their 3-5th grade students.

Culturally Responsive Literacy Project submitted by Katelynn Edmonds and Jami Tanner, multi-language learner teachers at Barkstall in Champaign. This grant will provide books for the school library to 70 ELL students who speak over 20 different languages school wide. They want students, especially newcomers from other countries, to walk into the school library and see their language and culture represented in their new home.

Meeting Sensory Needs for All submitted by Erica Davis, school social worker, and Les Kutz, art teacher at Dr. Williams in Urbana. With the funding of this project, students will gain access to emotional regulation and sensory tools throughout the school community to help them reach their highest potential academically. Students will check out noise canceling headphones, calming tools, and flexible seating.

Birds of Prey Presentation submitted by David Finn, STEM teacher and Elizabeth Wheatman, science teacher at Jefferson Middle School in Champaign. This grant will pay for a visit from the Illinois Raptor Center out of Decatur. Students will get to see different birds of prey, learn about conservation, wildlife rehabilitation and the diversity of animals that live around Champaign-Urbana.

River Walk Beautification Project Tara Starling, Centennial High School's art teacher, will be partnering with Central High School's art teacher, Carol Lynn Comparetto, and Sholem Aquatic Center on a beautification project for the lazy river. Ceramics students, National Art Honor Society, Art Club, AP Art students, & some others will be receiving a group of tiles to glaze and paint various underwater & water related creatures/plant life. They will then have to collaborate with students that have neighboring tiles to make sure it is consistent and flows well. In April of 2025, all the tiles will be given to Sholem and half will be installed. The other half will be installed in April of 2026. The goal is for this project to stay up for 8 years.

Digital Design Technology Accessories submitted by Kameron Phanrana, art teacher at Central High School, and Farwah Ariq, art teacher at Centennial High School in Champaign. Students will have hands-on experience with digital design technology such as drawing tablets, mice and Apple MacBook accessories. These tools will allow students to diversify their techniques and skills across multiple projects in Digital Art, Photography, and Graphic Design, and will also allow

students better access to current, industry-standard technology so they can feel comfortable taking on more advanced digital-based projects.