



## **Spring 2026 IMPACT Grants**

The Champaign Urbana Schools Foundation (CUSF) awarded 16 IMPACT Grants to teachers across Champaign and Urbana to support innovative classroom projects that inspire creativity, enhance learning, and promote hands-on experiences. These grants empower educators to bring their ideas to life—benefiting students through opportunities that enrich their education in meaningful and lasting ways.

***The Active Workspace Initiative: Enhancing Focus through Ergonomic Movement*** submitted by Mia Escobar, Edison Middle School. Standing desks and resistance movement bands to reduce sedentary behavior and improve cognitive engagement.

***Book Rescue: A Second Chance for Well-Loved Books*** submitted by Amanda Crow, Carrie Busey Elementary. A machine designed to re-glue the spines of damaged books will help keep popular books circulating and reading engagement up instead of sitting on the repair cart.

***Social Interactions for Children with Autism*** submitted by Lekeisha Hall, Dr. King Elementary. Students with Autism will have cooperative play toys that offer meaningful, hands-on experiences that foster turn-taking, joint attention, problem-solving, and collaboration.

***Bucket Wars*** submitted by Annie Pickelsimer-Barton, Leal Elementary. Supplies will facilitate P.E. activities such as Bucket Wars. This aerobic activity allows every student to engage and participate at the same time with many variations of the game.

***Decodable Readers for Kindergarten Students*** submitted by Lisa Ferguson, Dr. King Elementary. Students get excited to read books they can decode themselves using the skills they have learned.

***Fiber Arts, Baskets, and More!*** Submitted by Whitney Huber, Int. Prep Academy Middle School. Fiber Arts and basketry materials will provide choice for a 3D container design project for students.

***Fourth Grade Yankee Ridge Tower Garden*** submitted by Hannah Romanchuk and Gaizka Uriarte, Yankee Ridge MLL School. A classroom Tower Garden allow students observe a

plant's growing cycle. Instruction includes reading, writing, science and math extension activities. Students also have the opportunity to harvest and eat the produce.

***Basketballs*** submitted by Hector Lugo and David Dunlap, Yankee Ridge MLL School. All students will have new basketballs to help develop balance, coordination, and upper-body strength in an engaging way through basketball games/activities during P.E. class.

***CJRS Posters and Binding*** submitted by Jay Hooper and Matt Hopkins, Centennial High School. Centennial and Central students in AP Statistics will have the opportunity to display the research they submitted to the “Champaign Journal of Research and Statistics” in the form of posters highlighting their research.

***Sensory Walk for K–5 Students*** submitted by Jazmine Summerville and Erica Davis, Dr. Williams Elementary. A Sensory Walk will provide a structured, movement-based pathway to support students’ social-emotional wellness, self-regulation, and focus.

***Reduce and Reuse*** submitted by Kathy Stein and Zach Jepsen, Gerber School. This grant will purchase a Chomp Saw that allows students to safely and accurately cut cardboard for various projects, such as models of landmarks in specific countries.

***Bring Jim Gill to Champaign Urbana*** submitted by Katie Madigan, Urbana Early Childhood and Tara Keener, Champaign Early Childhood. Nationally recognized early childhood author, musician, and child development specialist, Jim Gill, known for his interactive musical performances that promote early literacy, play, and family engagement for multiple concerts at both schools and in the community.

***Preparing for Loss and other needs of SEL*** submitted by Kristine Scheu and Sophia Behrensmeyer, Barkstall Elementary. This grant supports books and craft supplies that social workers will use when working with students experiencing grief

***MTSS Sensory Closet*** submitted by MaKayla Smith, Champaign Early Childhood and Sherena Small, Stratton Academy of the Arts. This grant will support a school wide “Sensory Lending Library” a collection of evidence-informed sensory tools to promote regulation, focus, and participation in classroom learning.

***UHS Theatre Power Tools*** submitted by Melissa Burke-Marquart and Cindy Howie, Urbana High School. A new safer power drill and battery pack will allow students to work on set construction in theater productions at UHS. Students will be taught valuable skills while being part of a theatre production crew.

***Constructing Ceramic Vessels*** submitted by Rusty Clevenger and Mynette Kretz, Urbana 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Center. This hands on project will have students designing and creating the construction of a utilitarian ceramic vessel. Students will engage in peer collaboration during production to both research, plan, and problem solve their design.