



## 2017 – 2018 Teacher Grants

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### **Clear Springs Elementary School**

#### **Language T-Ability**

**Lead Teacher/Staff: Diana Ortiz**

**Summary:** Enhancing the implementation of Istation, a new District enrichment program for student growth in our Spanish Immersion classrooms. Using whole-group and small-group tools, the program allows for regular assessment and growth measurement to better support their language ability. The grant funds headphones, to be used with district iPads and software, to increase listening, comprehension and vocabulary.

**Awarded: \$500**

#### **Calming Kits**

**Lead Teacher/Staff: Amy Horning**

**Summary:** Equipment for calming kits, including books, liquid timers, stress balls, small fidgets plus bean bags and pillows, to assist students experiencing anxiety to calm down. In conjunction with classroom lessons on anxiety and calming strategies, this grant will elevate students' understanding of their stress and anxiety, and give them concrete ways to reduce anxiety when in class.

**Awarded: \$1,500**

**Weather Station- Hands on Science Tools****Lead Teacher/Staff: Dawn Johnson**

**Summary:** With this grant, fifth grade students will use a variety of scientific tools daily in a year-round weather station. This cross-curricular project involves all subjects including STEM experiences and promotes inquiry through using a variety of authentic scientific tools to collect, analyze, and share data. Students will have real life experiences discovering the changing short- and long-term weather patterns.

**Awarded: \$1,698**

**Next Steps for the Minnetonka/Ghana Connection****Lead Teacher/Staff: Delette Lemon**

**Summary:** For three school years, students have connected with schools, students and staff from Awutu Mannkessim, Ghana. The grant provides reliable internet services for Awutu-Mannkessim. With reliable connectivity, students can have consistent Skype sessions, develop a Minnetonka/Ghana YouTube website and help Awutu to develop an early childhood center.

**Awarded: \$1,750 from the Nick Duff Multi-Cultural Fund**

**Deephaven Elementary School****Digital Downloads****Lead Teacher/Staff: Jennifer Peters**

**Summary:** This grant supports daily Guided Reading instruction to support comprehension, vocabulary, fluency, accuracy, fix-up strategies, predicting, visualizing, questioning and more. Using e-reader downloads on a district iPad allows for better access to texts and flexible downloads "on the go" as student needs change.

**Awarded: \$450**

**STEM Bins for Kindergarten****Lead Teacher/Staff: Lizzy Maus**

**Summary:** Bins with STEM materials, including linking cubes, dominoes, a variety of bricks, pipe cleaners, craft sticks, hook & look circles, playing dough and more, provide kindergarten students opportunities to develop STEM skills through day-to-day learning and play. With these materials, students work on real-world problems, to practice working together, and to let their creativity shine.

**Awarded: \$500**

**Engaged Pedaling Power****Lead Teacher/Staff: Jennissa Schommer**

**Summary:** A five-person pedal table for first grade allows for student movement during the day including small group lessons of guided math and reading. Pedaling enhances kinesthetic learning, meets sensory needs of individual students, and focuses students on small group lessons by activating their lower body muscles at the same time activating their brains.

**Awarded: \$5,100**

**Excelsior Elementary School****Chinese Folk Song and Dance****Lead Teacher/Staff: Hsin-Yi Liu**

**Summary:** First grade students will deepen their knowledge of Chinese culture by learning traditional folk songs and dances. Student learning will be reflected in two performances during the school year, where students will present in the performances and be recognized by school administration and their parents.

**Awarded: \$1,000**

**Special Ed Tools****Lead Teacher/Staff: Liz Myer**

**Summary:** This grant provides special education students with designated space for sensory breaks, calming activities, and personalized learning/work space with fewer distractions. The space will feature materials for students with anxiety/sensory needs, alternative seating options for students to regulate their bodies and a calming serene ambiance separated from distractions.

**Awarded: \$1,548****Broaden the Bookshelves****Lead Teacher/Staff: Tim Ketel**

**Summary:** This grant will provide a well-stocked classroom library for all fifth grade classrooms. Books feature characters with a diversity of cultures, genders, religions, socioeconomic statuses, races, and abilities/disabilities. It also includes a range of graphic novels to better support reluctant and struggling readers.

**Awarded: \$2,788****Groveland Elementary School****Students and Elders Learning Together****Lead Teacher/Staff: Sara Lovelace and Patricia Cespedes-Schueller**

**Summary:** Mrs. Lovelace's second grade English learners and Mrs. Cespedes-Schueller's first grade Spanish learners will engage in learning through the value of service, leadership and philanthropy. They will develop an ongoing relationship with a local senior citizen center to empower our students with responsibility, empathy and life skills and learn the value that senior citizens bring to our community.

**Awarded: \$400****My Memory Book- Scrapbooking Through the Year****Lead Teacher/Staff: Tara Sweeney**

**Summary:** This grant provides special education learners the opportunity to create a scrapbook from the school year experiences, including field trips, class parties, presentations, academic progress and more. Students affected by this grant have limited communication abilities compared to their same-age peers and have difficulty communicating to their families what they did at school. This would allow for students to have a book showing their experiences throughout the school year to look back on and discuss with others.

**Awarded: \$500****Kindergarten Aero Gardens****Lead Teacher/Staff: Pam Wertjes**

**Summary:** Aero gardens provide kindergarteners a hands-on experience where they learn about planting, growing, caring for and eating fruits and vegetables. The gardens enhance science curriculum, including the study of living vs. non-living items and plant growth cycles. They also connect to health lessons in healthy eating.

**Awarded: \$1,260****Ride and Read****Lead Teacher/Staff: Rachel Studnicka**

**Summary:** Expanding on Groveland's Green-Fit-Fun initiative, the grant provides commercial quality recumbent stationary exercise bikes. Students can read while they cycle to stimulate and enhance cognitive development.

**Awarded: \$2,160**

## **Minnewashta Elementary School**

### **Virtual Field Trips**

**Lead Teacher/Staff: Heather Baker and Joy Curran**

**Summary:** Virtual reality technology allows students to experience places in the world in virtual trips to places like museums, underwater, and outer space. Educational apps, Google Expeditions and virtual reality headsets give students a 3-D perspective as if they were really there experiencing the location interactively.

**Awarded: \$1,750**

### **ScreenFlex Mobile Art Displays**

**Lead Teacher/Staff: Christin Congdon**

**Summary:** Mobile art displays provide safe, accessible, large art-designated display space. Students learn proper art curation techniques, allowing students to select, preserve, and maintain a collection of artwork throughout the year. They will make their own artwork, decide on how best to format the display grids, how best to hang their artwork, and be able to move the artwork around the school and share with the community.

**Awarded: \$1,870**

### **Books are Alive! Reading is Fun!**

**Lead Teacher/Staff: Sofia Cerritos**

**Summary:** Fostering reading, growing science knowledge and increasing independent student reading time, the grant provides BooksARalive book sets in both English and Spanish classrooms with an interdisciplinary content that promotes reading and increases science vocabulary.

**Awarded: \$2,170**

## **Scenic Heights Elementary School**

### **Advanced Calming Kits for Students**

**Lead Teacher/Staff: Qingling Mendenhall**

**Summary:** Helping students to self-soothe and reclaim control of their emotions, so they can get back to work as soon as possible, the Advanced Calming Kit is an enriched version of the “De-Stress Kit” that piloted at Scenic Heights this year. The calming kits contain anti-stress balls, fidget toys, hand therapy putty, stress relief balls and a variety of de-stressing books.

**Awarded: \$168**

### **Unforgettable First Day of School**

**Lead Teacher/Staff: Qingling Mendenhall**

**Summary:** All Scenic Heights 3rd graders, including Chinese immersion, Navigator and English, can participate in exciting science activities during the first week of school. Student engagement will increase with multi-sensory, innovative and highly engaging science activities. Students will build relationships, community and collaboration starting on the first day of school.

**Awarded: \$320**

### **SACHIKO – Finding Peace: An Author Visit**

**Lead Teacher/Staff: Melinda Barry**

**Summary:** Caren Stelson is the award winning author of SACHIKO: A Nagasaki Bomb Survivor Story, published in 2016. Caren will bring global real world learning into our classrooms as she shares SACHIKO's story with children. She will talk about the writing process, cultural exchange and how SACHIKO found peace, sharing her perspective as the

daughter of a WWII soldier stationed overseas and the impact the bombing of Nagasaki had on the world.

***Awarded: \$900 from the Nick Duff Multi-Cultural Fund***

### **Hydroponic Tower Garden in the Classroom**

**Lead Teacher/Staff: Qingling Mendenhall**

**Summary:** A tower garden will bring the 3rd grade science unit to life and deepen learning. Students will learn about hydroponic planting in deeper integrated curriculum with engineering, science, math, language arts and health.

***Awarded: \$1,130***

## **Multiple Schools**

### **Speaking and Listening Stations**

**Schools: Clear Springs, Groveland, Minnewashta, Scenic Heights and Minnetonka Middle School West**

**Lead Teacher/Staff: Deb Jensen**

**Summary:** Assisting students receiving speech and language services, this grant provides speaking/listening stations with a good microphone and headphone for independent practice of newly acquired sounds. Students will be more engaged and will improve their self-analysis and self-correcting abilities, putting them on a faster track to meeting their goals and objectives.

***Awarded: \$308***

### **Collaborative Math/Science Board Games**

**Schools: Excelsior and Scenic Heights**

**Lead Teacher/Staff: Ali Wachutka**

**Summary:** Board games to support science & math content areas, critical thinking skills and collaboration skills. Navigator students in 2<sup>nd</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> grades will benefit from increased student engagement and expanded learning opportunities. Games include Prime Climb, Xtronaut, Hit the Habitat Trail, Periodic Table card game and Primepak.

***Awarded: \$1,000***

### **Chinese Folklore and Folkgame for Library Resource**

**Schools: Excelsior and Scenic Heights**

**Lead Teacher/Staff: Hsin-Yi Liu**

**Summary:** Elementary students in both English and Chinese classes will explore, engage and experiment in real culture using traditional Chinese folklore and folkgame tools. The native folklore and folkgames, such as shuttlecock, yo-yos, bamboo clappers, go game sets, beyblades chess, jump ropes, and other traditional games integrate Chinese language and studies into the curriculum for students.

***Awarded: \$2,720 from the Nick Duff Multi-Cultural Fund***

### **Reflex Math – The Importance of Fact Fluency for Successful Mathematicians**

**Schools: Clear Springs, Deephaven, Excelsior and Scenic Heights**

**Lead Teacher/Staff: Kimberly Ewen**

**Summary:** This grant provides Reflex Math to students who qualify for Title 1 or RtI support with the goal of developing math fact fluency-- automatic, effortless recall of basic math facts in addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. Students can build fluency with Reflex Math on an iPad or computer anywhere there is an internet connection -- at school or at home. Students enjoy the learning process due to the highly motivational games.

***Awarded: \$3,500***

## Minnetonka Middle School East

### **Deck Crew: School Climate Improved by Students**

**Lead Teacher/Staff: Bev Antilley**

**Summary:** This grant funds a Where Everybody Belongs (WEB) program to support a new school climate/mentoring initiative at MME called "Deck Crew." WEB is a middle school orientation and transition program that welcomes 6th/7th graders throughout the first year of their middle school experience and trains mentors from 8th grade to be Deck Crew Leaders. As positive role models, Deck Crew Leaders are mentors and student leaders who guide the 6th/7th graders to discover what it takes to be successful during the transition to middle school and help facilitate 6th/7th grade success.

**Awarded: \$2,995**

## Minnetonka Middle School West

### **Elements Kit**

**Lead Teacher/Staff: Lena Pivec**

**Summary:** This grant provides funding for the Introduction to the Elements Kits to support teaching of the Periodic Table in 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades. Kits include interactive displays of twelve different elements, including an element sample, the sources for that element and common industrial uses. Grant funds also include a display case for viewing for all students in the Media Center.

**Awarded: \$866**

### **Tedx Conference**

**Lead Teacher/Staff: Lisa Lewis**

**Summary:** In conjunction with their *Long Walk to Water* unit, an interdisciplinary unit with Social Studies, Science, and Language Arts, this grant will provide seventh graders access to a Tedx conference as the culminating activity. TED talks are an innovative way to spread ideas, innovation, and global discussion. At a TEDx conference event, TEDTalks video and live speakers combine to spark deep discussion and connection in a small group.

**Awarded: \$1,000**

### **Gallery Display of Student Art in School**

**Lead Teacher/Staff: Emily Swagel**

**Summary:** Funding from this grant provides an organized system to exhibit their artistic pieces at MMW. Changeable display frames and cases will allow the exhibited art to remain fresh and current throughout the school year, showcasing a variety of student artistic pieces.

**Awarded: \$2,947 from the Minnetonka Alumni Association Fine Arts Fund**

## Minnetonka High School

### **Drone On**

**Lead Teacher/Staff: David Surver**

**Summary:** A refurbished DJI300 drone provides a real world application to help students see math in action. Students learn about rotational speed, trigonometry, the law of sine and cosines, and more in a unique and memorable way. The drone can also be used for news videos at the high school.

**Awarded: \$623**

**Tonka Serves****Lead Teacher/Staff: Michelle Seets**

**Summary:** Supporting a year-long leadership, service and motivational training program for student leaders from the 18 service-related clubs at MHS. The program will feature speakers, leadership development and student reflection, giving students the opportunity to learn and develop leadership skills. At the end of the year, students will be able to demonstrate a measurable impact resulting from their work commitment.

**Awarded: \$1,500 from the Youth Citizenship Endowment Fund**

**Yoga for All****Lead Teacher/Staff: Alison Terrell**

**Summary:** Staffing for an inclusive and convenient weekly after-school yoga class for students and staff in the Black Box Theatre at MHS. Participants will learn yoga and breathing techniques, stretches and exercises to strengthen the body and help deal with the stresses of everyday life.

**Awarded: \$2,185**

**Social Skills Through Improv****Lead Teacher/Staff: Kelly Kautz**

**Summary:** New experiences and social situations can be a challenge for students with Autism Spectrum Disorders. This grant funds improvisational classes for students to increase their ability to navigate social situations and build skills such as listening, reciprocal conversation, accepting the ideas of others and building on them, taking the point of view of another, working as a team and placing the group goal above the individual goal in a safe and fun environment.

**Awarded: \$3,200**

**All Schools****Design for Learning****Lead Teacher/Staff: Nicole Snedden**

**Summary:** The Design for Learning district-wide innovation project empowers Minnetonka students, staff, and community to transform teaching and learning through the design of the learning environment. Now in the second year of fund allocation, Design for Learning promotes the exploration of physical spaces and how we utilize them for learning.

**Awarded: \$ 10,000**

**Early Childhood and Family Education****Puzzles for Preschoolers****Lead Teacher/Staff: Ashley Peterson**

**Summary:** Real-life picture puzzles for all students in the 3/4s and 4/5s classes to increase spatial awareness and develop a deeper understanding of these themes and topics, such as a variety of jobs, different families, the life cycle of specific insects and plants, real life science pictures, plus alphabet letters and beginning sounds.

**Awarded: \$818**