

EDUCATION MINNESOTA  
**FOUNDATION**



*For excellence in teaching and learning*

## **Grant Programs**

*2009 Classroom, ESP and Affinity Grants*



## Classroom

### Wendy Ballou

*Minneapolis*

#### Sign Language for Families

**\$2,543**

Hearing-impaired early childhood students and families will learn to use sign language as a bridge for their bilingual environment. By learning signing, students will improve their verbal language skills. The classroom teacher will record DVDs and provide them to families with targeted vocabulary goals. Family interviews and surveys will provide baseline data for goals. Post testing will provide data for assessing effectiveness of this approach and student improvements.

### Kathy Belsheim

*Cambridge-Isanti*

#### Real Men Read

**\$840**

An after-school reading club for boys by boys and about boys is likely to motivate these students to read. By having opportunities to increase reading awareness and appreciation, these students can expect to see improved reading test scores. Continually increasing enrollments in this book club will provide one basis for evaluating its success.

### Cassie Bjerke-Armstrong

*Bloomington*

#### WEB – Where Everyone Belongs

**\$3,000**

WEB is a student-centered leadership and mentoring transition program for middle school. Eighth-graders will develop mentor skills to help sixth-graders transition into middle school by using one-on-one connections. School culture and climate are expected to improve. Teachers will collect and analyze suspension rates, discipline referrals, attendance rates, as well as academic performance.

### Vicki Bowe

*Moorhead*

#### Math, Science and Literacy

#### Discovery Nights

**\$3,000**

Collaboration between teachers and families in ABE and ECFE programs can provide essential strategies for young learners. Children and their parents/family members will participate in discovery nights to learn strategies for home; some of the intended practices include exploring numbers, encouraging questioning, making observations about nature and using materials to enhance sensory experiences. Initial parent

surveys will guide teachers in providing essential strategies and materials for six activities during two Discovery Nights.

### Matthew Braaten

*Cambridge-Isanti*

#### Student Response Devices

**\$1,600**

To improve student-teacher interactions and enhance immediate feedback opportunities, personal student response systems will be used at the middle school level. Organized by the technology coordinator with an emphasis on increasing the available strategies for all staff, this project will enhance data collection and be used across grades.

### Scott Buschena

*Chaska*

#### Interest and Career Exploration for Middle School

**\$1,728**

With an increasingly diverse population, these middle school teachers see the need to make more extensive connections between school and career possibilities for students. Providing students with the skills necessary for postsecondary education as well as making coursework relevant to possible careers will begin in sixth grade and make use of the Minnesota Career Information System Junior program. Pre- and post-testing on knowledge of career options and surveys of the impact of this program will be used to analyze effectiveness.

### Teresa Davison

*Southern Plains Education Cooperative*

#### Tackling Technology With Teens

**\$2,911**

Alternative Learning Center teachers, students and community senior citizens will come together to improve technology and social skills. Guiding relationships and mutual respect by teaching and learning from each other will have measureable benefits – students will earn credits and demonstrate technical proficiency.

### Ann Egyhazi

*St. Paul*

#### Mirrors and Windows

**\$2,990**

A collaboration by this early childhood teacher, Amaze nonprofit organization and the Family Diversity Project will provide multi-cultural, anti-bias materials to enhance the school environment for children from non traditional families. The goal is to help all children recognize

and respect differences, increase comfort and confidence levels with differences, and decrease negative behavior. Pre- and post-surveys of teachers and parents will be used to assess impact on students.

### Christine Elzenga

*Southwest Star Concept*

#### Learning to Give

**\$2,997**

“Volunteerism” will become part of the curriculum for high school students and approached as a local, state and global issue. A variety of well-researched topics and field trips will help students understand the concept of altruism as they learn about issues and concerns from their local area to global needs. Through their research and activities, students will improve their communications, responsible behaviors and decision-making skills. Students will be surveyed before their volunteerism work and asked for feedback to improve the experience for future classes.

### Elizabeth Erickson

*Albert Lea*

#### Social Skills for ASD Students

**\$1,585**

Middle school students with autism spectrum disorders will have opportunities to practice their social communications skills in a variety of community settings. Individual student goals will be set and reviewed through Individual Education Plans and monitored for progress throughout a series of field trips planned with student assistance.

### Joan Flygare

*Anoka Hennepin*

#### Dance Dance Revolution (DDR)

**\$3,000**

Music as a motivator is behind this project to enhance physical activity for K-5 students. DDR promotes health and wellness and when used at this elementary school there is an expectation that academic achievement can be positively affected. Cardiac monitoring will be used to assess the effectiveness of the fitness exercises. Overall evaluation of the project will come from fitness testing and student input.

### Kjersti Gilthvedt

*Hopkins*

#### Delta Place Library

**\$3,000**

Collaborations between teaching and therapy staff will be integral to supporting this project's goals for special

needs students. Using literature and film to encourage thematic analysis and study life experiences can bring self awareness and personal growth toward treatment goals. Student products, time spent reading and MAP scores will be used to analyze student progress.

### **Megan Gonzalez**

*Burnsville*

#### **Increasing Family Involvement for ESL Students**

**\$3,000**

The goals of the Family Literacy Nights, Bilingual Lending Library and Take Home Activity Bags are twofold: 1) create connections between families and school, increasing parental involvement in their children's education, and 2) improve student reading, vocabulary and fluency through additional, at-home practice. Four different measures of student proficiency will be used (IPT, SOLOM, TEAE and DRA) throughout the year to assess student progress in literacy and language skills.

### **Stacy Grant**

*Osseo*

#### **Operation ROAR**

**\$3,000**

The "Read Out Loud and Repeat" program will provide high interest and readability that motivates students and adds structure to guided reading. With trained volunteers, students will practice oral reading skills in one-on-one sessions. Progress assessment will include DIBELS fluency scores and DRA results.

### **Carol Hazard**

*Cambridge-Isanti*

#### **GRINS**

**\$1,982**

The Growing Reading Initiative in Students program is designed for middle school students to enhance reading enjoyment, increase reading time and improve MCA scores. Providing an enriched reading environment with additional materials, a Web site about reading, book clubs and field trips will be part of this effort. MCAs, NWEA, Gates-MacGinitie and teacher evaluations will be used to evaluate students' skills and interests.

### **Amy Jordan**

*Cambridge-Isanti*

#### **Bridge Backpacks**

**\$3,000**

Special education students transitioning from early childhood programs to

elementary school will enjoy activities meant to close gaps between home and school. Their backpacks will contain activity materials for practicing at home. Parent/family engagement will be actively recruited and surveyed about their involvement and their child's progress.

### **Melissa Jordan**

*Elk River*

#### **Elder's Wisdom, Children's Song**

**\$3,000**

With a changing, diverse student population, elementary teachers want to create culturally competent learners and learning environments. One way to do this is by using music to develop a "sense of place" for the children and community elders from representative cultures. Students will work with an artist-in-residence, learning oral histories that honor and represent community elders in song and quilt art. Various adult participants will evaluate this program based on student performance.

### **Peggy Ann Locke, Ph.D.**

*Bloomington*

#### **Walking the Butterfly**

**\$2,890**

With increased numbers of students identified in the autism spectrum, new strategies for teaching and encouraging self-regulation social skills and appropriate behavior patterns are needed. A walkable labyrinth called the Butterfly Peace Path shows promise for teaching and learning conflict resolution with calming effects. A portable "finger labyrinth" will also be assessed for effectiveness. Surveys immediately following the practice will be used to assess impact and effectiveness.

### **Amanda Lutz**

*Burnsville*

#### **Real Reading**

**\$2,737**

Elementary teachers will build a library for their students based on thematic units of diversity, relevance, prior knowledge, friendship and family issues. Improving reading comprehension by relating more directly to student need and interest is expected to have a positive impact on MCA reading scores. MCA and NWEA data will be assessed and compared for previous and current students.

### **Dorothy Mattson**

*Fridley*

#### **Little Hands-on Letters**

**\$1,188**

Not all children with visual and auditory processing challenges receive special services to develop and augment their hands-on learning. This project's goal is to help develop legible handwriting with the Handwriting Without Tears program. Materials used in this program are appropriate for all students to take home and will be made available to teachers to use in early intervention strategies. Data collection and sharing is an important component of this project.

### **Dianna Morrison**

*Cass Lake*

#### **iPods in the Classroom**

**\$3,000**

Motivating students with iPod technology in daily lessons is expected to make learning vocabulary and project completion much more effective for middle school students. Podcasts will expand classroom learning and engage students with varied learning styles. Student participation and progress will be surveyed and rubrics for technology use in the classroom will be designed to measure student proficiency.

### **Catherine Nachbar**

*Duluth*

#### **Random Acts of Kindness**

**\$663**

Implementing a service learning project by partnering with a local nonprofit will provide opportunities for high school students to learn about the systemic issues surrounding poverty and homelessness. Students will visit Life House and create Random Acts of Kindness kits for homeless youth, based on research they will do. To evaluate this project's impact, students will complete pre- and post-assessments including a written reflection.

### Donna Ohlgren

*Osseo*

**Think, Click, Feedback**

**\$1,500**

An interactive feedback system will be “tested” in science and social studies classes at this elementary school. Guided by the media specialist, teachers will use the Student Response System (aka “clickers”) to look for increased student participation in the classroom. This technology facilitates data collection about student performance and that aspect of the project will be monitored.

### Jeri Popma

*Dawson-Boyd*

**M & Ms: Manipulating Math**

**\$2,978**

Using lesson study groups to assess the effectiveness of their math program, these elementary teachers intend to increase and enhance the use of manipulatives to improve student understanding and raise test scores via Numbers and Operations. MCA, NWEA and RIT scores will be used to analyze this project’s impact.

### Tanja Putman

*Burnsville*

**Home Connection**

**\$2,930**

Students struggling with literacy skills and English language will benefit from early, broad-based interventions. Literacy bags can make a bridge between home and school and close the gaps between students from highly literate environments and those who are not. Kindergarten students will practice activities in literacy centers prior to taking the activities home, which will provide a way to monitor student use and student progress. Literacy inventory scores will also be monitored to gauge this project’s success.

### Chris Reano

*Bloomington*

**Arts in Autism**

**\$3,000**

Autistic students will use the arts to engage in cooperative group activities and nurture self-expression, social interactions and positive group participation. As they work with professionals from “Upstream Arts” in theater, poetry, visual arts and dance, they will build confidence, develop communication skills and have opportunities to act out real-life situations. IEPs provide baseline information about each student and will be used to assess this project’s progress.

### Denise Reeser

*Brainerd*

**Wet and Wild Learning**

**\$3,000**

Career-oriented programs remain vitally important for at-risk and special needs learners. Students will learn by doing in this agriculture-based class, learning about and practicing with aquaculture systems. Teachers and students will work with DNR Fisheries staff and biologists learning about field research and managing natural systems, water ecology and more. Education will include the new state science test scores and career planning.

### Mickie Spurgin

*Red Lake Falls*

**Care and Share**

**\$1,389**

Improving reading scores through increased reading involvement is the key to this literacy program. By facilitating reading at home and involving parents in more literacy-based activities, this project will help K-2 students take reading beyond the school day. Appropriate texts, parent training and expert speakers for parent nights will provide the basics for enhanced parent-child interactions. Parent surveys and standardized testing (NWEA, DIBELS, AIMS) analysis will be used to measure progress. Teacher satisfaction with the program will also be monitored.

### Amanda Struxness

*Minneapolis*

**Video Models to Improving Student Performance**

**\$3,000**

This project will provide a new approach using video modeling to teach foundational preprinting and printing skills. Students will be given direct instruction and opportunities to practice so that repetition in letter formation will decrease the amount of working memory dedicated and increase available memory for focus on foundational reading and math skills. Student writing skills will be monitored on a quarterly basis with adjustments as necessary.

### Kristin Tietje

*Southern Plains Education Cooperative*  
**Using SMART Board Technology for ASD**

**\$2,400**

Social skills, reading, math, language and physical education components will be integrated into the day for special needs autism spectrum students with the

use of SMARTBoard technologies. By providing visual, kinesthetic, auditory and hands-on learning opportunities for all lessons, this project will help students’ learning environment become responsive to their individual needs. Weekly data collection related to students’ IEPs is monitored with a data management system allowing teachers, paraprofessionals and families to plot progress.

### Kristin Tuel

*Fergus Falls*

**Stitch and Nutrition**

**\$2,950**

High school students at risk of not graduating have identified the serving, nutrition and cooking class as one of their favorites. This Area Learning Center’s teachers have created a hands-on project specifically for their students. By mastering these life skills and demonstrating their completed project at an open house, students will gain real life skills and are likely to increase interest and attendance toward successful graduation goals. Surveys to trace progress and uncover learning styles will be used, and student evaluations will be used to track program success and make future modifications.

### Heidi vanderHagen

*Hutchinson*

**Monarchs in the Classroom**

**\$1,565**

This project is a hands-on opportunity for students to connect conservation and preservation with how all living things act as a system. With the help of monarch butterflies, students will use inquiry methods as they raise, observe and connect their efforts to the natural world. Pre- and post-testing will provide a baseline for comparisons of this year’s students (before and after raising monarchs) to next year’s students.

### Kelli Waalk-Gilbertson, Ph.D.

*Osseo*

**Oriole Gardens**

**\$3,000**

Special education students will have the opportunity to engage in a hands-on science-based activity that will use reading and math skills as well. Students will research a nature center approach for creating and enjoying an oriole (school mascot) garden. IEP goals measured against a rubric will rate each student’s participation and proficiency levels.

## Educational Support Professionals *(awarded April and November 2008)*

### Jeanne Bakke

*Minneapolis*

Positive School Climate

**\$1,000**

A first step to creating a positive school climate will be to build positive relationships among students and staff across many cultures. Twenty educational support professionals will train together in a pilot program from the Search Institute, focusing on Eklund's How was Your Day at School? As the staff trains and identifies the components of positive school climate, they will use a variety of measurements to gauge the effectiveness of their strategies, including student attendance, graduation rates and participation in extra-curricular activities.

### Linda Case

*Minneapolis*

National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals

**\$1,000**

The Keys of Wisdom--The Power of Teams is the theme for the 2009 conference of the National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals, and early childhood programs will be the focus for parents, paraprofessionals and children. Learning to work and share as a contributing member of a team for the purpose of modeling this behavior for children is the intended outcome; sharing the information with parents and colleagues will be a significant part of this grant coordinator's effort.

### Pamela Ellison

*St. Paul*

PACT Program

**\$1,000**

Training for ESPs in CPR certification, classroom support, math techniques for tutoring and various software programs will be made available for student contact-specific topics. By surveying their staff, these ESP colleagues have determined their needs at the high school and how best to meet them. By working together with teaching staff, they will offer a full day of professional development opportunities. Follow-up surveys will be used to gauge the impact of these sessions on ESPs and make the case for more pertinent professional development.

### Robert Lindberg

*Minneapolis*

CPR/First Aid Training

**\$980**

Child care assistants and site coordinators for the Minneapolis Kids program will obtain their CPR and first aid certification through this grant. Fourteen ESPs on this team will be able to attend, enhancing their confidence and improving their ability to cope with emergencies with the children in their care.

### John Lipke, Pam Mikkelsen, Dale Pomeroy, Gale Theroux

*McLeod West, Prior Lake/Savage,  
Minneapolis, Osseo*

NEA Representative Assembly

**\$1,000**

ESP leaders from four different locals will provide team coverage at the NEA Representative Assembly in Washington, D.C. The team will focus on bringing back skills and knowledge regarding effective meeting and listening strategies, leadership, advocacy for ESPs and presentation possibilities. While in Washington, they will also tap into the available services for ESPs with the AFT. Upon their return, they will coordinate their learning into a joint effort to inform other locals about their experience.

### Mary Malicki

*Minneapolis*

Multi-sensory Handwriting

**\$1,000**

Using video technology to learn new writing skill strategies, trained ESPs will be able to help students meet specific IEP goals. The multi-sensory handwriting program addresses students with developmental delays, special education needs and behavioral difficulties. This coordinator expects improvement for students by working with teachers and ESPs, providing consistent strategies and support.

### Patsy Okolie

*Minneapolis*

Physical Health Disorder

**\$1,000**

Working with at-risk students with physical and health disabilities requires special skills. Learning about the biomedical aspects of developmental disabilities will improve on-the-job performance and allow this ESP coordinator to enhance team problem-solving with colleagues as well as increase understanding and awareness of student behaviors and needs.

### Irene Pederson

*St. Paul*

National Interpreter Certification

**\$575**

Improved signing skills are recognized by achieving certification as a National Interpreter. Preparing for the exam is the focus of this grant. It will provide the coordinator with the opportunity to work one-on-one with a mentor, review and analyze skills, and rehearse for the exam itself. She will share her signing skills with colleagues and model them daily for students.

### Karen Piepho

*Osseo*

Reading Intervention Program

**\$479**

The Read Naturally program training DVDs will be incorporated into a staff development opportunity for 10 to 15 ESPs to help students with specific reading deficiencies. The ESPs will be able to network within the district with their new skills and better assist students and teaching staff.

### Susan Summer

*United South Central*

Rotate

**\$1,000**

Using video technology to learn new writing sHandling aggressive, autistic or behaviorally challenged students requires ESPs to acquire special skills. Some students respond positively to a rotation of personnel; the benefits to staff include knowing that timely intervals in the assignment are predictable. Student handling skills are part of the training by a consultant and will be continuously practiced in the classroom.

### Christine Wuensch

*Minneapolis*

Developmental Movement for Staff and Students

**\$1,000**

By participating with special education students who are learning to make their own mind-body connections, ESPs will create new connections between staff and students. From their personal enlightenments in staff development activities to adaptations in the physical education classes, this program promises to connect and benefit all the participants. Surveys and student feedback will become a part of staff professional development plan meetings and discussions.

## 2007-08 Affinity Grants

The Foundation for Excellence in Teaching and Learning also includes the Affinity program — opportunities for nonprofit organizations to partner with us to bring high-quality professional development and instructional materials to our members. Twice a year (November and April), the Board considers applications. Preference is given to organizations that are nonprofit, charitable organizations or professional associations and to programs that have a broad, general appeal — working toward our mission of promoting vision, best practices and achievement. During this past year, the Foundation was proud to provide assistance to these organizations and programs:

### Edugeeks

Star Challenge Summer Tourney

**\$3,500**

### Minnesota Children's Museum

Hands-On Content Workshops

**\$12,500**

### Minnesota Humanities Center

Multicultural Literature Series

**\$5,000**

### Minnesota International Center

International Classroom Connection

**\$5,000**

### Minnesota Public Radio

Sound Learning

**\$2,500**

### Mixed Blood Theatre

Educational Touring Program

**\$5,000**

### Pro-Choice Resources

The Birds & Bees Project

**\$11,000**

### St. Paul Labor Studies & Resource Center

Trade in a Box

**\$5,000**

### The Minnesota Opera

Triple Play

**\$5,000**

### University of Minnesota

Labor's Turning Point

**\$5,000**

In Da Tradition

**\$5,000**

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