



**Milwaukee Public Schools  
FOUNDATION, INC.**

## **Teacher EXCEL Grants**

*“Excellence in the Classroom” Teacher Mini-Grant Program*

The Milwaukee Public Schools Foundation, Inc. sponsors a mini-grant program for teachers to fund creative classroom projects or activities that enrich student learning experiences. Over the last three years, about 150 grants were awarded totaling more than \$100,000. This year, 53 grants were awarded.

### **2003-2004 Grant Winners**

**Academy of Accelerated Learning – Linda Gaspardo and Chris Kronschnabel – “Immigration: Exploring Our Diversity” – \$750**

Fifth grade students will explore the immigrant roots of Milwaukee and their own neighborhoods. An appreciation for diversity will be strengthened through a photography project, Historical Milwaukee Tour, and supplemental reading materials.

**Audubon Middle School – Heather Schulz  
“Bowling for Numbers” - \$750**

Forty students, with special education needs will participate in the project focused on improving math skills, social and interpersonal skills, athletic skills, as well as providing students with a community experience. Student participants will broadcast their activities (and the bowling results) via the school’s television station to share their experiences with the entire school.

**Audubon Middle School – Mary Christison  
“News-2-You” – \$300**

The News-2-You” project will enhance the reading comprehension, language arts, and career education skills of middle school age students with special education needs. Students will be engaged in a variety of learning activities provided in a weekly online newsletter subscription. One of the activities involves learning skills related to cooking, including reading recipes, shopping for groceries, measuring ingredients and cooking, and then eating items prepared.

**Bell Accelerated Academy – Barbara Hickling –  
“Literacy Circles in Literacy Hour” – \$750**

Seventh and eighth grade students will participate in literature circles, reading books of their choice. The project encompasses all of the components of the MPS comprehensive literacy framework. Funds will be used to purchase supplementary books and materials to increase students’ reading scores and help foster a lifetime love for reading.

*The **Teacher EXCEL Grant** program is funded mainly through contributions from MPS employees to the Milwaukee Public Schools Foundation, Inc., as a part of the MPS Employees’ Combined Giving Campaign. The grant program is also supported through contributions made to the MPS Foundation to a special fund established in memory of Ann Shansky, who was an elementary school teacher in MPS for 34 years. Mrs. Shansky was an advocate of early childhood education and dedicated her life’s work to education and development of children. The MPS Foundation is also grateful for the support received from GE Medical Systems Information Technologies.*

If you have any questions, call Kathleen Kirchhoff at 475-8853 or by e-mail [KIRCHHKX@mail.milwaukee.k12.wi.us](mailto:KIRCHHKX@mail.milwaukee.k12.wi.us).

**Bradley Technical High School – Joshua Putnam**  
**“Transportation” – \$750**

Thirty ninth through eleventh grade special education students will participate in a three-week thematic unit on transportation. Students will design, manufacture and test an electric vehicle. In addition, students will visit a manufacturing facility to experience a “real world” parallel of the project.

**Brown Street Academy – Kristine Kowalski and Todd Hartwig**  
**“Let’s Sea!” – \$715**

Second grade students will participate in a thematic teaching unit revolving around oceanic exploration. Through various hands-on activities, multimedia presentations, interactive software, exposure to current literature and periodicals, students will acquire science content and develop critical thinking skills such as, problem solving, cause and effect relationships, and deductive reasoning. Students will visit the Humphrey IMAX Dome Theater to see *Whales* as a culminating activity.

**Browning Elementary School – Mary Steckel and Cindy Clay –**  
**“Enhancing Learning and Literacy in the Classroom” – \$750**

The project goal is to create a sound-rich learning environment to enhance listening, language, and literacy in a kindergarten classroom through amplification of the teacher’s voice. Success will be measured by Reading Readiness Test scores and by tracking the learning of the alphabet, assessing development of phonemic awareness, as well as sound symbol relationships and other literacy skills.

**Burdick School – Erica Mucino**  
**“Project R.E.A.D” – \$750**

Project R.E.A.D. – Reaching Enhanced Achievement Daily – will empower first grade students to acquire literacy skills through the use of appropriately leveled reading materials used to motivate and inspire learners. The project consists of shared reading of big books and guided reading using sets of leveled trade books. Students will experience a variety of instructional approaches to meet divergent and developing learning styles.

**Cass Street School – David Dulmes and David Kahn-Pettigrew**  
**“The Little Engineer That Could” – \$730**

Third grade students will learn the basics of simple and complex machines, energy, motion, and forces through building models and scientific experimentation. Students will build models according to pre-designed plans and conduct experiments using the models. Among the machines the children will build are wheels, axles, screws, wedges, inclined planes, pulleys, levers and gear systems. An example of an experiment will be to calculate the difference in the force needed to move an object up inclined planes of differing angles.

**Clemens School – Jeralynn Peterson – “Leap Into Reading” – \$715**

First grade students will have the opportunity to use developmentally appropriate interactive books and educational games at home to reinforce the skills taught in the classroom. The take home activities will motivate students to want to read and provide parents with the materials and support they need to become more active at home in helping to develop their child’s reading ability.

**Clement Avenue School – William Machtel –**  
**“The Study of Flight by Kite Making” – \$750**

Third grade students will learn the basic principles needed to create flight. The project involves reading and research skills, descriptive writing of procedures, the use and understanding of standard and metric measurement, knowledge of present and ancient art history of kites, and science experimenting with changing variables to succeed in making high flying kites. Students will visit Veterans Park at the lakefront to test fly their kites.

**Cooper Elementary School – Erik Conner and Molly Aschauer-Follmer – “El Club Español” – \$750**

Sixth grade students will participate in El Club Español, involving Spanish language learning activities and rich cultural awareness activities. Students will meet once a week and will be introduced to foreign language instruction and engaged in a number of enriching activities, including music, dance, customs, traditions, and food. Students will visit the United Community Center and host guest student performers from other schools.

**Custer High School – Peter Iselin and Barbara Riebau – “Integrating Technology and Creativity in the Geometry Classroom” – \$750**

About 145 geometry students will supplement classroom instruction with the “Geometer’s Sketchpad” computer program. Students will experience geometry through use of an interactive and discovery-based program that promotes students’ visualization of geometric concepts taking their new knowledge beyond the textbook. Students will demonstrate what they have learned in discussions and written assessments.

**Dover Street School – Mary Healy and Mollie Jo Latin-Kasper – “Self Esteem Development Under the Stars” – \$750**

Twenty-five regular and special education students will participate in team building games, skits, canoeing, a wagon ride, horseback riding, sing-alongs, telling “ghost” stories and domestic jobs during an overnight camp experience at the YMCA Triangle “Y” Ranch. The cognitive, social, emotional and physical well being of the children will be nurtured through these activities to develop their self-esteem in a beautiful nature setting.

**Eighth Street School, Project Stay – Linda J. Port – “Theater Partnership” – \$750**

Twenty students from this alternative high school will participate in a partnership with the Chamber Theater. Students will read the play prior to attending a production and participate in a workshop with visiting actors. Students will also research jazz and the work of Duke Ellington and have a professional music experience at a Stackner Cabaret performance. Students will write reviews and other project-based essays after these experiences.

**Elm Creative Arts Schools – Melissa Browning – “Multi-Intelligence Literacy Centers” - \$750**

Learning center kits will be developed for second grade students to enrich current curriculum in reading, science, and social studies focusing on the Multiple Intelligences approach to learning. Kits will include books of all levels, academic learning games, and curriculum enriching activities to reinforce academic standards in all subject areas.

**Fairview Elementary School – Laura Yale and Wendy Novak – “Learning to Read and Reading to Learn” – \$750**

Thirty first grade students in a full inclusion classroom will have the opportunity to choose and read high interest, leveled books in the following genre: fiction, nonfiction, poetry and biographies in the curricular areas of science and social studies. Students will share their acquired information in a variety of writing activities. Students will use graphic organizers to write, edit and publish their own works for home use and the classroom library.

**Fernwood Montessori School – Carla Langhus – “We’ve Got the Beat” – \$750**

First, second, and third grade students will explore historical and cultural aspects of rhythm and rhythm instruments and create a timeline of rhythms and cultures. Through lessons with rhythm instruments, they will learn music notation, interact with the rhythms of language, literature, poetry and music and perform in solo and ensemble groups.

**La Escuela Fratney – Jennifer Riveros and Sara Lizdas – “Discover Family” – \$710**

Spanish-dominant kindergarten students will participate in the Discovery Packs program to strengthen the link between home and school. Each week, students will select a cross-curricular thematic pack to take home. Students and their families will explore the materials together, reinforcing the skills and knowledge learned at school.

**Fritsche Middle School – Michelle Wade and Sheila Yarrington – “World At War Museum” – \$750**

This cross-curricular project will allow 385 seventh grade students to demonstrate in-depth understanding of World War II and the Holocaust. Knowledge will be gained through student facilitated literature circles, research papers, multimedia presentations, and project-based learning experiences. Students will create museum exhibits and design a square for a Holocaust memory quilt.

**Grand Avenue Middle School \_ Mark Jung –  
“Global Art Exposure” – \$750**

The school will establish a thematic based rotating display of multicultural art throughout student accessible areas to include the halls and commons. The prints for display will be selected within the arts and social studies classes as research activities and prepared for mounting as graphics projects. The art will serve as accessible resources to support instruction in language arts, social studies, art, and other areas.

**Grant School – Margaret Reynolds –  
“Places Everyone!” – \$750**

Seventy-five students from all grade levels will be directly involved in the comedy musical production of the play, “Unhappily Ever After.” Students will be directed and taught all aspects of theater production by a professional community theater director. Students will be in the cast, will be in charge of tickets, publicity, seating, and many back stage responsibilities. Practices will be held after school. The play will be performed for the entire school community.

**Hampton Elementary School – Amelia  
Emmerich – “Learning from the Past” – \$750**

This cross-curricular project is an extension of the first grade social studies and Investigations math series. Students will design their own quilt squares using a computer program and construct the square from the paper pattern. Students will learn how classes were conducted in the past, how the community was part of the school, and how the students’ and teachers’ lives were different. Students will make slates out of masonite board and black chalkboard paint and one day will be set aside where all work in the class will be conducted using only the slates. Students will visit Old World Wisconsin.

**Happy Hill School – Mary Mazzulla –  
“Operation Improved Speech Through  
Literature” – \$750**

Through the use of rich literature and related materials, special education students in an early childhood speech and language classroom will engage in learning through thematic units. These units will encourage vocabulary building, pre-reading skills, and self-expression through group discussions. Take home materials will help integrate the skills learned in the classroom with the child’s home environment.

**Hartford University School – Robin Squier –  
“Urban Ornithologists” – \$700**

Fourth grade students conduct an in-depth study of urban ecology, walking a transect weekly to spot, identify and record different avian species. The data will be analyzed to determine limiting factors within the environment. Through this project, students will experience authentic field research and share results with the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology.

**Hawley Road Environmental School – Kim  
McSorley and LeeAnne Chappelle –  
“Bedtime Books” – \$750**

Thirty kindergarten students will participate in a home literacy program that will increase students’ reading levels and high frequency word awareness. Students will be sent home with quality, developmentally appropriate books to read nightly with a family member. After reading the book, students fill out a “book report.” Students receive a sticker to place on his/her Bedtime Book Chart. Once the child completes his/her chart by reading 20 books, they are rewarded with a book of their own to keep which they can create or add to their home library.

**Hi-Mount Elementary School – Lori Salinsky  
and Michael Coffey –  
“Student Newsletter” – \$750**

Third grade students will extend an ongoing relationship with a *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* journalist through publishing a newsletter. Students will research, write, and edit stories for the publication and be responsible for photographs and layout and design. Students will participate in a tour at the paper hosted by their partner journalist.

**Honey Creek Elementary School – Jeffrey  
Milani and Kim Islas – “Madison Experience”  
– \$750**

This fourth grade project will enhance students’ understanding of Wisconsin culture, heritage and government. Students will visit Madison and tour the state capitol and visit a fourth generation family-owned company focusing on the areas of history, civics, and government. Students will research and write a paper about their experiences.

**Kluge Elementary School – Patricia Winter –  
“The Solar System is Out of this World!” –  
\$750**

Second grade students will increase their understanding of the solar system through enhanced classroom library materials and a visit to the Milwaukee Recreation Planetarium at Hamilton High School. Students will research an earth science topic and prepare and give an oral presentation on their topic.

**Lincoln Center of the Arts – Elyse Roman –  
“KIT Days (Keep In Touch)” – \$750**

KIT Days is a summer component of the Best Friends program. It promotes self-respect and character building through positive structured activities. It also promotes the message of abstinence through guided discussions. Structured activities include a day at the zoo, helping with a homeless shelter, pizza night, swimming, afternoon at the YMCA, bowling, and a book club. The program will serve 15-20 girls from the Best Friends program who would benefit most from having a summer mentor.

**Lloyd Street School – Kay Zupko and Sylvia  
Llanas– “Global Art Projects” – \$750**

This project will integrate more hands-on art projects during the academic subject matter time for first grade students. Projects are cross-curricular, including social studies, art, math, language arts, and science. Engaging and creative projects are planned in alignment with specific learning targets. A few examples are: India: Students will make their own raksha (bracelet) and a divali lamp (clay pot). China: Students will create a Chinese scroll and an opera mask. African-American: Students will build structures to make a city neighborhood. Africa: Students will create a pattern in math and duplicate it into a Kente cloth sash.

**Lloyd Street School – Phyllis Bankier –  
“Successfully Improving Reading” – \$750**

Project will increase reading levels of students in kindergarten through fifth grade by supplementing their curriculum with two software programs. *Simon Sounds it Out* engages students with an animated, personal tutor that presents skill-building activities to maintain students’ interest. *Start to Finish Books* are high interest, age-appropriate stories for students who are more than two grades below reading.

**Longfellow Elementary School – Marilyn  
McKnight and Beatriz Angeles –  
“Great Books for Great Learning” – \$750**

Sixty bilingual third and fourth grade students will participate in the research-based Junior Great Books Read Aloud Program. The program integrates reading, writing, and shared inquiry discussion activities with rich, multicultural literature to improve students’ reading comprehension, vocabulary, writing and critical thinking skills as well as increase interest in and appreciation for fine children’s literature.

**MacDowell Montessori School – Tim Souers  
and Kathy Hubing – “Excel Science  
Experiments” – \$750**

This project will create seven new easy-to-read early childhood science books complete with simple illustrations along with hands-on materials that will be placed in 25 kindergarten classrooms in the six MPS Montessori schools. These books focus on the specific science learning targets developed by teachers last year. Topics include: Wind Power I and II, Which is Heavier?, Color Mix, Surface Tension, Electricity I and Electric circuits II. Students will be able to successfully carry out a basic science experiment and answer the question at the end of each book, “What happens?”

**Maple Tree Elementary School  
Amy Taylor and Christie Mulligan  
“The Art of Science Through the Eyes of  
Children” – \$750**

This is a cross-curricular project for 50-fourth grade students involving activities in science, math, reading and writing. Students will conduct simple science experiments using microscopes. Visual results will be documented using art supplies to create a large format work of art. Students will also document what they see and draw through writing exercises and learn to measure and hang art in the “Hall of Natural Science,” a space in the school designated for this purpose.

**Milwaukee Education Center Middle School –  
Jeannie M. Loberg – “Karaoke Kickoff!”  
\$700**

The purpose of this project is to increase reading skills of cognitively disabled sixth through eighth grade students with pre-kindergarten to grade 1 reading level abilities. Students will be engaged in exciting fun-filled, cooperative learning experiences. A karaoke machine will be used by students to read word-by-word prompts to music as well as to sing along to familiar tunes while reading words on the screen. Students will research music Internet sites from around the world, write a one paragraph essay expressing their favorite song choices, describe careers in the music industry, and make a class presentation on their work.

**Milwaukee French Immersion School  
Christiane Wood  
“Learning to Read in French” –\$750**

This project will enrich and support the learning of sixty kindergarten students as they learn to read in French. Few parents are fluent French speakers and are sometimes discouraged by their inability to help their child learn to read in a second language. Children will be able to take home a Leap Pad with a French book to share their learning and language experiences with their families.

**Milwaukee School of Languages  
Sherry Pelgrin and Jennifer Schlegel  
“A Step From Heaven” – \$750**

About 150 ninth graders will be provided with a common learning experience through literature. All incoming ninth graders will be provided with a book during Freshman Orientation in August. Students will be expected to read the novel, A Step From Heaven, prior to the start of the school year to create an intentional high achievement norm for the students. Students will participate in class discussions, write essays, and make presentations in both English and foreign language classes around the themes of the novel.

**Neeskara Elementary School  
Reina Ingram Estes  
“Backpacks To Go” – \$750**

Eighty English language learners in kindergarten through grade five will be provided with take home backpacks filled with educational supplies and activities to reinforce skills in math, writing, listening, vocabulary, and reading. The project will aid in breaking down barriers that keep non-English speaking parents from getting more actively involved in their child’s education and help increase the parent’s own literacy in English as they work with their children.

**Pierce Elementary School  
Katie Fitzpatrick  
“Rock Hounds and Pebble Pups” – \$725**

Seventy-five second graders and 125 fourth graders will investigate rocks and geological land formations in connection with a thematic unit in geology. Students will perform laboratory experiments, categorize rocks according to their characteristics, learn how rocks are formed, and make fossil imprints. Students will visit a rock quarry and a state park as a part of the project.

**Pulaski High School – Ming Yon Blackwell  
“Celtic Mania” – \$735**

Thirty-five high school students will be introduced to the native art of Great Britain and Ireland and learn that Celtic motifs took careful geometric and mathematical skill. Students will learn to use geometric and mathematical skills to create studies of Celtic art and use their own adaptations to create new art forms. Students will also study animal forms (zoomorphics) to incorporate into their art pieces.

**Sherman Multicultural Arts School  
Sarah Richardson and Maureen Dardis –  
“Integrated Farm Unit” – \$750**

This project supports an integrated farm unit for two all-day four-year-old kindergarten classes serving about 50 students. It is a cross-curricular project focusing on math, science, language, art, and music activities. Students will be introduced to the animals that live on a farm and have many hands-on learning experiences. Activities include hatching duck or chicken eggs in the classroom and conclude with a trip to a farm.

**Sherman Multicultural Arts School  
Brenda DePriest  
“Sensational Plants” – \$750**

Second grade students will participate in a thematic unit revolving the exploration of plant life. Activities involve reading and language arts, science, social studies, and math. Students will learn about plants in a creative, cooperative learning environment that emphasizes thinking, speaking, reading, and writing. Students will visit the museum and the domes in Milwaukee.

**Silver Spring Elementary School  
Thomas Brown  
“Reading and Writing with Children –  
Parents as Partners” – \$750**

Third grade students will use children’s literature to read and create stories to support their reading and writing achievement. Students will create a piece of writing each week and their work will be published in a booklet. Students will present their work in class and read it to their kindergarten buddy partners. Parents will be informed of the project and encouraged to participate.

**South Division High School – Lori Ramirez  
and Risa Berg Iskandarsjach – “Great Stories  
Make Great Families” – \$750**

This project will support a literacy program for teen parents and their children. Monthly sessions are held during the lunch hours and each has a thematic focus. At each session, students receive a book to develop a personal library of children’s books at home, engage in small group discussion circles, and learn to dramatically read a bedtime story. The project demonstrates the importance of early literacy and also helps to improve students’ reading skills.

**Story School – Cynthia Frankowiak Wytch  
and Sue Russell  
“T.E.E.N.S. – Teens with Educational,  
Emotional, and Nutritional Skills” – \$750**

Seventh and eighth grade students will participate in an expanded after-school tutoring program focused on life skills and study skills. As a part of this project, students will attend tutoring sessions twice a week, study and discuss the 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens, participate in two hours of after school guided homework time each week, and take turns preparing nutritional snacks. Students will also videotape a two-minute segment highlighting a study skill that will air on the in-school news program to be viewed by all grades.

**Thirty-fifth Street School – Danielle Zivney  
“Animal World” – \$750**

Third grade students will study in-depth the traits that make up various classifications of animals. By utilizing living animals, research projects, hands-on laboratory activities, leveled reading, social justice projects, students will learn about various types of animal life cycles, behaviors, habitats, food, and what it takes to care for them. Students will visit the Milwaukee County Zoo and adopt an endangered animal.

**Tippecanoe School for the Arts and  
Humanities – Sara Lovas  
“A Medieval Adventure” – \$500**

Sixth grade students will go on a Medieval Adventure to learn about and experience life in the Middle Ages. Through extensive study, research, art, and opera writing, students will develop an understanding of the Medieval Era. This is a cross-curricular six-week unit to broaden student knowledge in the humanities and the arts. For example, students will work on map making, legend writing, logic skills, building model castles with working drawbridges, and more. The project will culminate with a Medieval Feast complete with costumes, skits, and music.

**Trowbridge School of Discovery and  
Technology  
Karen Rinka and Jennifer O’Connor  
“Cross Grade Drama” – \$525**

Fifteen second grade and 24 fifth grade students will prepare, practice and perform the traditional Cinderella play for the school and their community partner, St. Ann Center for Intergenerational Care. Students will develop writing and oral reading skills, literature appreciation, play components, multicultural awareness, listening skills, cooperative learning, and compare and contrast story elements.

**Twenty-first Street School – Jayne Jaskolski  
“Early Literacy Literature Kits” – \$750**

This project creates literature kits for early childhood and kindergarten students to be used in the classroom and taken home. Kits will include a fabulous children’s book with props, puppets and/or audiotapes to be used to enhance a rich literature experience for students and their families. To enhance the home and school experience, a parent workshop will be offered in the evening to demonstrate how to use the kits the children will be bringing home.

**Wisconsin Avenue School – Maria Porn  
“I Can Read with My Eyes Shut Club” – \$750**

Thirty fourth grade students will participate in this in-classroom club to motivate students to read for pleasure while increasing fluency, comprehension, and confidence. Students will be required to read a book from the multicultural, high-interest library each month, will present oral reports, complete written reviews, and track reading minutes on a log. The project will culminate with a Book Sharing Party during the last presentations.

**Wisconsin Conservatory of Lifelong Learning  
Mary Owen-Tresp  
“Supplies A La Cart” – \$750**

Seventeen fifth and sixth grade special education students will participate in a school supply business. It will allow students to purchase and sell school supplies from a cart by going room to room in the school two days per week. Learning experiences for students will include counting, making change, and maintaining inventory of supplies. Students will learn how to take public transportation, how to shop wisely and comparison shop. Social skills will be emphasized as well as speaking in front of strangers and peers.

**Zablocki Elementary School – Deborah  
Ciepluch  
“Electronic Activity Center” – \$750**

First grade students with special education needs and students with limited English proficiency will participate in an electronic activity center using Leap Pad and Geo Safari learning tools. Key components include animated storybooks, interactive flip books, alphabet recognition and sounds programs, phonics lab, and phonemic awareness activities. The center will build skills needed for reading success and promote independence for the students.