



**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 five years, about 250 grants were awarded totaling nearly \$200,000. This year, 53 grants were awarded.

### **2004-2005 Grant Winners**

**Academy of Accelerated Learning**  
**James Gross, Bao Xiong, and Charles Davison**  
**“Water for Survival” – \$745**

The Water for Survival project will help 30 third grade students gain a deeper understanding of the water cycle and weather concepts. They will be able to apply this knowledge to their lives and know how to preserve our most natural resource: water. More than half of the student participants are English language learners. The students will be engaged in hands-on experiments with water and weather and will take a field trip to a Milwaukee Water Works water purification plant.

**Bradley School of Technology and Trade**  
**Gerald Salaty**  
**“Construction Electric” - \$750**

Senior students in Electric Shop at Bradley Tech will plan, coordinate, and carry out a Construction Career Fair for 350 students to network, obtain career information, job contacts, and other technical education experiences. The class will also recruit students from the junior class to assist in facilitating the career fair to gain experience in order to organize the event for next year.

**Audubon Middle School**  
**Barbara Darby**  
**“Center for Success” – \$750**

The Center for Success project will provide an opportunity for approximately 70 students to receive individual tutoring help tailored to their specific learning needs. Students with the lowest grade point averages will be recruited to participate in a tutoring class offered one hour daily for 9 weeks. Funds will be used to purchase materials and resources for the center.

**Brown Street Academy**  
**Mark Samman**  
**“Let’s Go to Hollywood!” – \$750**

Let’s go to Hollywood is a creative writing program for all students in grades 3-5 which supplements the school’s Multiple Intelligence and Comprehensive Literacy efforts. Students will learn to improve their writing by developing stories using storylines, characters and dialogue.

*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.*

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).

**Browning Elementary School  
Jennifer Roberts and Lisa Martin  
“Teaching and Learning Cooperatively” \$750**

This project will enhance the school's Teaching and Learning Cooperatively Project by initiating a character education curriculum. Through teaching and learning cooperatively, teachers, students and parents will learn about and demonstrate social and emotional skills in order to improve student achievement. This project demonstrates the importance of a positive, caring, and safe learning environment and will help families create a supportive and stimulating environment at home.

**Burbank Elementary School  
Thomas Klawien  
“Let’s Get Working!” – \$750**

The “Let’s Get Working” project will provide enhanced in-school and community-based learning experiences for autistic students in grades 1-7. Activities will focus on vocational and recreational skills, as well as life skills for independent living and community participation.

**Carleton Elementary School  
Sherrelia M. King and Diane Johnson  
“Africa Dance Imani” – \$750**

First grade through fifth grade students will prepare, and perform various styles of African-American dance movements. This program will be integrated in the African-American history program where students will conduct a dance created from the knowledge they acquire from research, technology, and hands-on training. Students will perform at parent nights, family fun events, and other occasions.

**Carson Academy of Science  
Carrie Strohl and Jennifer Wensel  
“Milwaukee Then and Now” – \$620**

Milwaukee Then and Now is an integrated, interactive study of community geography and history. The activities include reading, language arts, technology, and art curricular connections that correlate to the MPS Learning Targets. The final experience expands the students’ learning with a field trip touring Milwaukee’s downtown and lakefront.

**Cass Street School  
David Dulmes and David Kahn-Pettigrew  
“From Goo to Glue, Discovering States of Matter” – \$730**

Students in grade 3 will learn about the different properties of and changes in matter, magnetism, and electricity through hands-on experiments and observations. They will create and/or observe slimes and instant snow, static and solar electricity, and magnetic fields. The experiments will cover several science units, learning targets and state standards.

**City Wide Deaf/Hard of Hearing Program,  
Cheryl A. Albers – “Meet and Greet” – \$735**

Deaf and hard of hearing students from ages 5 to 18 from 6 schools will meet for a day of social interaction and relationship building through physical activity and a shared meal. Students will use this shared activity as a basis for writing activities. Student writing will be compiled, published and distributed.

**Clarke Street School  
Stefanie Miller-Ahmed and Carolyn Davis  
“Little School on the Prairie” – \$535**

Students in kindergarten through grade 7 will create a prairie with wildflowers. The project will provide hands-on learning experiences as well as beautify and unite the neighborhood. Students will conduct research about various plants and prairies, which will be incorporated into school-wide science fair projects. Students will learn about gardening tools and how to use them properly.

**Clement Avenue School  
Barbara Silvernail, Kris Carstens,  
Cynthia Plennes, and Pamela Kotecki  
“Family Adventure Bag” – \$750**

The purpose of this project is to enrich and improve the home/school connection. Family Adventure bags will be created consisting of literacy, science and math activities centered on a theme. These take-home bags will be filled with books, games, puzzles, math activities, and parent friendly mini-lessons.

**Congress Extended Year-Round School  
Jennifer Price, Jaime King, and  
Kristina Taylor  
“Weather Wizard Family Activities” - \$750**

The Weather Wizard will consist of 10 activity kits that kindergarten students will take home monthly according to the seasons. The bags will consist of either a trade book or reproducible book, along with a correlating activity that is aligned with the MPS science learning targets. This program will expose students to a wide variety of weather related science activities, provide opportunities for family involvement, and promote a life-long appreciation of science for students.

**Cooper Elementary School  
Molly Follmer, Carol George, Mary Widen,  
and Erik Conner  
“Harlem Renaissance Project” – \$750**

The Harlem Renaissance Project will be a part of a rich, multicultural, cross-curricular teaching unit for 80 grade 6 and 7 students. Through dance, art, music, and literature, students will research, explore, experience, and re-create the artistic contributions of African Americans to American History from the end of WWI to the 1930's.

**Custer High School  
Barbara Riebau  
“Resource Renaissance” – \$750**

The Resource Renaissance project will update the school's social studies audio-visual resources to create meaningful learning experiences for students. Video, map collections, and other resources will be enhanced covering civics, economics, U.S. history, world history, world cultures, geography, contemporary world affairs, and African-American studies.

**Doerfler Community School  
Barbara McDonald and Edith Denison  
“Add More Sparc!” - \$750**

Add More Sparc! is a combined reading and writing project designed to broaden the connection between home and school for students in grades 2-4. Students will be able to take home a special bag filled with a variety of materials that will encourage families to spend more quality time together while experiencing the joy of reading and writing.

**Eighty-first Street School  
Mark E. Foreman  
“West African Drum and Dance Ensemble”  
\$750**

The Drum and Dance Ensemble has 10 drummers and 6 dancers in grades 4-8 grade, which practices after school twice a week. The rhythms and dance choreography are derived primarily from West Africa, but students are encouraged to develop their own expressions as well. Drummers and dancers learn to compose and choreograph compositions. The program enhances students' self-esteem and reinforces cooperation and hard work.

**Elm Creative Arts School  
Melissa Browning  
“Standard Based Learning Centers” – \$750**

Supplemental materials and resources will be used to create standards-based learning centers within this second grade classroom across all subject areas. The project's goal is to educate and involve students in a learning style that will coach them to take responsibility for their learning.

**Fairview Elementary School  
Laura Yale and Wendy Novak  
“Looking at our World with Art Eyes” – \$750**

Thirty first grade students in a full inclusion classroom will have the opportunity to incorporate the study of artists and the visual arts into the curricular areas of mathematics, science, and social studies. The use of literature, posters, prints, videos, and field trips to Art Museums will be integral components of this project. Students will share their acquired information through art projects, use of digital photography and writing activities.

**Fernwood Montessori School  
Sarah Chukka  
“Historical Roots of Mathematics”– \$750**

In this cross-curricular project, 25 first through third grade students will study the development and history of mathematics and geometry. The children will see that human beings are natural mathematicians and will discover the role that mathematics plays in their lives. Finally, the children will explore their own roles as mathematicians and will create a timeline and play to explain the history of mathematics for other students.

**Fifty-third Street School  
Lisa Wood and Laretta Waters  
“The Milwaukee Project” – \$750**

Forty-nine third grade students will be involved in a cross-curricular project that incorporates social studies and language arts. Students will learn about the history of Milwaukee through visiting “The Streets of Old Milwaukee” at the Milwaukee Public Museum, taking a tour of historic Milwaukee, and learning about the events that led to the development of Milwaukee. As a final project, students will research and write about a person, place, or event that has had a profound impact on our city.

**Forest Home Avenue School  
Anne Piojda  
“Good News at Forest Home Ave.” – \$750**

Third grade students will practice their reading and writing skills while learning techniques of being good citizens and developing skills of kindness and respect for others. Through this community-service project, students will write letters, make friendship cards, and address envelopes to elders in nursing homes and to children at Children’s Hospital in Milwaukee.

**Fritsche Middle School  
Dorothy L. Schuller and Susan O’Brien  
“Math/Literacy Festival” – \$750**

Sixth, seventh, and eight grade students will participate in a Math/Literacy festival. This project will emphasize and showcase the strong connection between literacy and mathematics, reinforce math topics through literature, and use writing to explore and assess mathematics concepts. Math-based literature sets will be created for every math classroom. The entire student body and families will be engaged in activities scheduled in conjunction with the week of parent conferences in March.

**Gaenslen School –Rachel J. Fenwick  
“Read a Tree” – \$750**

Sixth grade students will work together in small teams to produce a hand-made paper personal journal using a step-by-step process. Through integrated literacy and science activities, students will research trees as a natural resource, learn about recycling, and use recycled paper to make their own hand-made paper journals.

**Gaenslen School  
Ashod Vartanian  
“Project Hammer and Nails” – \$750**

“Project Hammer and Nails” is an intervention program for middle school students focusing on project-based learning. The program uses woodworking as a vehicle to integrate reading, writing, and math into real life projects. Emphasis is also placed on improving interpersonal skills, communication skills, and problems solving skills. The goal is to have students develop a positive attitude and create a connection between school and success.

**Granville Elementary School  
Margaret Genske  
“Classroom Art Project” – \$640**

The Classroom Art Project will provide first grade students with art materials and resources that will expose them to a variety of art mediums. Students will be provided art experiences including the use of clay, watercolors, tempera and acrylic paints, oil pastels, collage, and printing. As a culminating activity, the class will go on a field trip to the Milwaukee Art Museum.

**Hampton Elementary School  
Amelia Emmerich  
“Getting from Here to There and  
Everywhere” – \$750**

To enhance the social studies and language for learning curriculum, students in kindergarten and first grade will be provided with several field trip opportunities. A visit to the airport, a trip on the Iroquois boat on Lake Michigan, taking public transportation, and many other activities will increase students' knowledge about cities and transportation.

**Happy Hill School –Mary Ventresco  
“Improved Speech and Language 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. Take home materials will further help integrate the skills learned in the classroom with the child’s home environment.

**Hawley Environmental School**

**Amy Fare**  
**“Hawley’s Tomato Garden” – \$750**

Kindergarten through fifth grade students will study, create, and maintain a tomato garden through this cross-curricular project. Families will also be engaged by growing a tomato plant at home. The project includes hands-on science activities, creative writing lessons, researching information, and math skills. Students will keep a journal about the garden including data, writing, and drawing. Updates about the garden will be published in the school newsletter.

**Kilmer South High School**  
**Deneice Campbell and Dominique Smith**  
**“Childcare Licensing Program” – \$750**

High school seniors will participate in an innovative program that helps students earn a childcare license prior to graduation. A pilot cohort of students will complete an intensive state-approved childcare program provided through the Wisconsin Early Childhood Association. Students will explore, interpret, and evaluate childcare rules and regulations. In addition, they will review and design age appropriate materials and lessons. Upon completion, they will be equipped with a childcare license and valuable skills that can be used to launch a career in childcare.

**Lancaster Elementary School**  
**Brenda Scharping and Kelly McMahon**  
**“Good Touch / Bad Touch” - \$600**

Sixty kindergarten students will be instructed on the differences between good and bad touches and words. Through pictures, puppet plays, role-play, and classroom practice, the children will learn what type of touches and words are hurtful and what to do if they are exposed to such behavior from adults or children.

**Lincoln Avenue School**  
**June Litkowski, Monica Czyzewski, and**  
**Debra Bruno – “Traits of Writing” – \$750**

Students in a full inclusion 5th grade class will work with students in a full inclusion 1st grade class on the Six Traits of Writing. Together the classes will form mentor partners who will work together as a tutor/buddy pair.

**Lowell Elementary School**  
**Yesenia Bordas-Murphy**

**“Thematic Integration Through the Use of Literature in Reading and Writing Across the Curriculum” – \$705**

Supplemental materials and resources will be used to expose 5th grade students to different writing styles to improve their reading and writing skills across the curriculum. Students will learn how all the subjects they are studying are interconnected, strengthen their oral and written skills by completing a research project, and take responsibility for their own learning.

**Manitoba School**  
**Christine Swannell**  
**“Listening / Recording Center” –\$750**

Third grade students will exhibit improved receptive, expressive, and oral language skills by listening to accomplished readers and authors reading books in a listening center. They will also be able to record their own voices in an oral reading of short stories or chapters to improve their own skills and evaluate their own performance.

**Maple Tree Elementary School**  
**Robin Booth and Jessica Wondra**  
**“Listen and Learn for Success” – \$750**

Supplemental materials and resources will be used to create an in-classroom interactive listening and learning center. Students will work with specific tools and/or teacher-made materials to strengthen their reading skills. Each student will have an individualized plan that will be updated as skills are mastered. Students will work independently, with a partner or in a group depending on the activity.

**Milwaukee Education Center Middle School**  
**Odell Ball**  
**“Project Math” – \$750**

Project Math is a comprehensive computer math lab program developed to address the academic needs of 300 grade 6-8 students at MEC. This project promotes critical thinking skills and seeks to dramatically improve the math test scores for all of the participants.

**Milwaukee French Immersion School**  
**Jane E. Nickodem**  
**“Parent-Student Write Night” – \$630**

Parent-Student “Write Night” will provide 100 third, fourth, and fifth grade students and their parents with important materials, information, knowledge, and skills relating to the process of writing, writers workshops, and the assessment of writing. The purpose of “Write Night” is not only to motivate students to become eager and skilled writers, but also to assist families in supporting the school’s efforts to foster the development of superior writing skills in all students.

**Milwaukee School of Languages  
Patrick Jones  
“Biological Inquiry” – \$700**

Students in grade 9 and 10 Biology and grade 12 AP Biology will participate in hands-on, inquiry-based laboratory experiments. The activities will develop students' critical reasoning and problem-solving skills. Students will observe, question, illustrate, and summarize observations and results of the experiments.

**Milwaukee School of Languages  
Carole Kincaid, Guy Dayen, and  
Donald Johnson  
“Exploring World Music” – \$750**

In conjunction with the Festival of Nations program, music students will enhance their language study by exploring and performing music of diverse cultures. Funds will be used to purchase music packs, ethnic musical instruments, and props for the stage. Working together, students integrate language study, art, and music into a comprehensive cultural project with performances. Students will take field trips to perform at other MPS elementary schools and in the community.

**Milwaukee Sign Language School  
Deborah Tillman  
“African American Voices in U.S. History”  
\$750**

Fifth grade students will analyze the experiences and contributions of African Americans through U.S. history using literature circles. Students will participate in in-depth group discussions, explore historical events through different perspectives, and build comprehension and vocabulary skills.

**Neeskara Elementary School  
Jerry Cigliana and Anne Desotelle**

**“Bringing Background to the Forefront”  
\$750**

Second grade students will deepen their understanding of science and social studies concepts and strengthen comprehension skills. The project will engage students through a series of videos, discussions, simulations, and games directly related to grade level content and the MPS Learning Targets.

**Pierce Elementary School  
Katie Fitzpatrick  
“Wild About Wildlife” – \$750**

Third and fourth grade students will learn to become stewards of the planet. Project activities will help instill in them a love and appreciation of nature. In addition to classroom and take-home activities, students will participate in field trips to the Kettle Moraine State Forest, Audubon Society, Humane Society (wildlife section), and Havenwoods.

**Project Stay Senior Institute  
Cathleen Hunt  
“Stock Market Simulation Participation”  
\$600**

This project offers economic literacy to at-risk students through the participation in the Wisconsin Stock Market Simulation. Student teams will invest a hypothetical \$100,000 in stocks and compete for the best portfolio performance. The project is offered by the Wisconsin Council on Economic Education and endorsed by the Wisconsin Department of Financial Institutions. Activities are aligned with state academic standards.

**Pulaski High School  
Kevin Schenk  
“Transportation Career Fair” – \$750**

Junior students in Auto Shop will assist in planning, coordinating, and carrying out a Transportation Career Fair for 300 high school students to network with area transportation and related industries, obtain career information, job contacts and other technical education experiences. Middle School students will be invited to attend in order to promote the auto program at Pulaski High School.

**Riley Elementary School  
Greta Plicka, Mary Saindon, Cheryl Nelson,  
and Ned Sucevich -**

**“Jumanji Family Safari” – \$750**

Third grade students and their parents will participate in a four-session jungle adventure based on the book and movie “Jumanji.” This after-school program is designed to encourage family literacy and to promote reading and research skills. Families will have the opportunity to use the Internet and students will learn skills to develop a proficient research paper.

**Riverside University High School  
Cheryl Brenner and Larry Burns  
“Patterns in Polygons” – \$700**

The project will enhance student understanding of geometric concepts using a hands-on, constructivist approach in teaching the lesson as part of the Core-Plus Mathematics Project. About 120 students will “experience” geometry using two-way kaleidoscope mirrors, Miras, and compasses. The equipment for this lesson will be used again, reaching about 450 students each subsequent year.

**Sherman Multicultural Arts School  
Marti Anderson  
“Developing the Foundations for Printing”  
\$750**

Young Children with special needs will engage in a variety of individual, small group, and large group activities to develop the fine motor and perceptual motor skills that are prerequisites to successful handwriting skills. Games, art projects, puzzles, and mazes are just a few of the enjoyable and challenging activities that will be used for skill building. Exploration plus play equals maximum learning.

**Stuart Elementary School  
Marianne Soldavini and Robin Shepich  
“Milwaukee Memories” – \$750**

Twenty-five English as a Second Language and regular education students from third and fourth grade will go on field trips to explore places in Milwaukee. Students will gain knowledge about the city and attain background knowledge in social studies and science topics. Students will publish a group memory book with photos and essays about their experiences.

**Tippecanoe School for the Arts & Humanities  
Sara Lovas**

**“Sewing in Science” – \$650**

“Sewing in Science” will make sewing fun and exciting while educational and beneficial for sixth through eighth graders. Students will develop necessary lifelong skills as they learn how to sew. The students will sew stuffed animals as part of a cross-curricular unit of study on Animals (grade 6), adaptations (grade 7), and water and electricity (grade 8).

**Trowbridge Elementary School  
Jane Wisniewski  
“Science in the Park” - \$750**

This is a school-wide activity for all students in grades K4 through grade 7. Eight learning centers will be set up in South Shore Park, which is near the school. Students will experience hands-on activities related to physical science, earth and environmental science, and life science. Learning centers will include lake/water study, sand/shoreline, art in nature, lakeshore habitats, animals and insects, nature poetry, birds of the park, and plants and trees. The project will be repeated yearly.

**Twenty-first Street School  
Jayne E. Jaskolski  
“Family Connection Literacy” - \$750**

The “Family Connection Literacy” project will develop two cross-curricular units to improve literacy skills and the love of reading fabulous and exciting books. Students will be able to take home a book connection packet that will contain activities the families can complete together. Activities involve science math, art, language, and speech. Each unit will end with a culminating family night that will highlight the material learned. It will include sharing a meal together, doing a related activity, and providing a book for each child to take home.

**Whitman Elementary School  
Erica Mucino**

**“Wildcat Chitchat” - \$750**

Wildcat Chitchat is a school newspaper that will be researched, written, edited, and published by fourth grade students. Different genres of writing will be incorporated into the newspaper. Students will apply for jobs in various departments and go through the entire interview process using a portfolio that contains samples of their work. The main objectives are to enhance reading and writing skills while preparing and editing articles.

**Wisconsin Conservatory of Lifelong Learning  
Michelle Markiewicz**

**“Vending for Academic Success” - \$750**

Seventeen first through sixth grade students with special educational needs will establish a vending machine business. This project will allow students to learn, improve, and increase math and writing skills. An opportunity for community etiquette, public relations, and business management will be offered to the students on a weekly basis and provide a self-sustaining educational activity for years to come.