



**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.

Grants are for up to \$750 each. This is the sixth year of the program. Over this period, about 300 grants have been awarded totaling nearly \$237,000. This year, 51 grants were awarded.

The Teacher EXCEL Grant program is supported by:

- ❖ A grant from the TRIFECTA Foundation which was established by Mark Tauscher of the Green Bay Packers to support education and literacy of children in Wisconsin. TRIFECTA is an acronym for *Tauscher's Reading Initiative For Every Child To Achieve*.
- ❖ Generous donations of MPS employees through the annual Employee Combined Giving Campaign. Employees may designate their contribution to the MPS Foundation.
- ❖ Contributions made in memory of Ann Shansky, who was an elementary teacher in MPS for 34 years. Ms. 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 [kirchhcx@mail.milwaukee.k12.wi.us](mailto:kirchhcx@mail.milwaukee.k12.wi.us)  
Visit the MPS Foundation website: [www.mpsfoundation.net](http://www.mpsfoundation.net)

## 2005-2006 Grant Winners

**Audubon Technology & Communication Center  
Celinda Dyer & Jennifer Fax  
“Equal Opportunity Reading” – \$750**

*Equal Opportunity Reading* is a project to obtain non-fiction and higher-level trade books for the classroom library for 128 seventh grade students. The project will increase access to reading materials and help close the reading achievement gap.

**Bradley Technology and Trade High School  
Robin Morgan  
“Graphic Silk Screen” - \$750**

This funded project will allow about 100 eleventh and twelfth grade communications students to utilize the silk screen and textile design equipment to produce various textile projects. Students will be able to transfer their theoretical knowledge of screen printing from lectures and coursework to hands-on application of knowledge through silk screen production.

**Bay View High School  
Todd Feiter & Gail Germanson  
“Very Special Arts” - \$700**

The aim of this project is to develop and expand the role that art can play in the life of the school's cognitively disabled students who have great artistic talents and abilities. Students will be involved in creating pieces of art, such as note cards and posters, as well as packaging them for sale. The school will display the creations in the school's art display case. Students will also visit the Milwaukee Art Museum.

**Bradley Technology and Trade High School  
Paul Fix  
“Creative Touch Photography” - \$750**

Senior multimedia students will operate as professional photographers to the school. They will improve their technical, business, and artistic skill while rendering important services to the school community. This experience will aid those aiming at post secondary education and vocations in the multimedia field.

**Brown Street Academy  
Todd Hartwig  
“Moving into the Digital Age” – \$700**

Students at Brown Street Academy will create unique and personalized literacy projects reflecting their future real world experiences using iLife Apple software and a digital camcorder. Presentations will connect across the curriculum including science, social studies, and language arts projects and activities. The initial projects would involve the school's spring Science Fair in which students will develop multi-media presentations.

**Burbank Elementary School  
Linda Van Lanen  
“Take-Home Literacy Bags” – \$750**

Thirty first grade students will take home literacy bags containing fiction and nonfiction books, songs, poems, hands-on educational activities and/or games that they can share and complete with their family. The bags will extend language arts, math, science, and social studies curriculum beyond the limits of the classroom. These bags are not intended to replace other homework or reading activities but will supplement and enhance the basic curriculum while providing additional opportunities to practice and acquire skills and knowledge.

**Dr. Benjamin Carson Academy of Science  
Patti Blair & Rhona Schnoll  
“Enhanced Guided Reading” – \$750**

The *Enhanced Guided Reading* project will provide supplementary classroom materials and provide two field trip experiences to 30 first grade students and will encourage families to become more involved with their children's reading at home. To improve student access to reading material at home, the students will apply for a library card and take a field trip to the local public library. A second field trip will be to a local nonprofit literacy agency where students will be able to select donated books to take home and keep. Families will be encouraged to continue to return to the public library and the nonprofit agency to access reading material during the school year and summer. The project will also provide materials for the classroom's Literacy Center, which includes a listening center, word center, writing center, independent reading center and computer center.

**Cass Street Elementary School  
David Dulmes & David Kahn-Pettigrew  
“Taking Flight: On the Wings of Birds,  
Airplanes, & Rockets” - \$750**

The purpose of this project is to provide students the opportunity to learn about flight. Students will discover the properties of air and the principles of flight as well as use various models to experiment with thrust, lift, drag, and gravity. Students will be involved with hands-on activities, conduct experiments using the scientific processes of questioning, predicting, experimenting, collecting and displaying data, and reaching a conclusion. Literacy components are integrated in project activities.

**Clarke Street Elementary School  
Stefanie Miller-Ahmed & Janelle Herro  
“Elementary Reading,  
My Dear Watson” – \$550**

Fifty-five third and fourth grade students will read chapter books about young detectives and complete study guides. When they are familiar with the genre of mysteries, the students will write their own mysteries. The culminating activity will involve students solving a mystery by using fingerprints, composite sketches, and their detective notebooks. They will also solve mysteries on the computer.

**Community High School  
Joel McElrone  
“Recreation of the Amazon River” – \$750**

Special education high school students will recreate a section of the Amazon River by constructing a terrarium complete with plants and fish indigenous to the Amazon River and in the process learn how animals fill various niches with the river. The students will create and observe this project, devising a timeline for growth and adaptation of the life forms involved in the project. The project will help students make connections using life forms and ecology from another part of the world to illustrate how different, yet alike, our worlds are.

**Custer High School  
Sharon Kolade  
“Geometry Authors” – \$750**

Approximately 125 tenth grade students will create and write children’s books focusing on geometric concepts with illustrations. The project will integrate reading, writing, geometry, and art. The theme of the books will focus on positive messages about how to deal with issues facing children and teens today. The student authors will read their books to students at an elementary school and books will be donated to the memory project for northern Uganda children.

**Dover Street School  
Mary Healy & Kim Johnson  
“Under the Sea” – \$750**

Approximately 30 students from a self-contained special education classroom (K-5<sup>th</sup> grades) and a second grade inclusion classroom will have the opportunity to explore “under the sea” to develop knowledge and understanding about sea animals and their habitats learning the fundamentals of reading through the content area of science. Without getting wet, the students will participate in the Very Special Arts Artist in Residence Program which will reinforce reading and science concepts introduced in the classroom through music and dance using the “sea” theme. At the end of the science unit, students will perform a short program of dance, music, and visual arts for the entire school for the purpose of demonstrating their learned motor movements and sharing their knowledge about sea animals and their habitats.

**Elm Creative Arts School  
Kathy Beck  
“Underwater Extravaganza” - \$730**

Eighty first grade students will take a fascinating journey through our underwater world. The students will dive into literature to investigate the habitats of plants and animals that live in the oceans as well as experience hands-on activities related to the oceans. The arts will be integrated into this unit as the students take their acquired knowledge and perform a musical for the entire school body, parents, and others about our underwater world.

**Fairview Charter School  
Danielle Hassforth  
“Creating I-Movies and Power Point  
Presentations across the Sixth Grade” – \$750**

This project will allow the sixth grade students of Fairview to produce a variety of original multi-media presentations. The students will burn their presentations onto CD’s, videos, and DVD’s, which will be available for students in lower grades to use as teaching tools and references for student learning. The project will allow students the opportunity to learn about technology and the curriculum in a unique and creative way. Literacy skills will be enhanced through the creation of presentations across the curriculum with an emphasis on social studies and science.

**Fernwood Montessori School  
Julie Buckholt  
“The Magnificent Microscopic World”– \$750**

Fernwood will establish a classroom microscope station in which seventh and eighth grade students can view prepared slides. During the spring Semester, students will meet with a biology professor at Alverno College to learn how to prepare microscope slides from plant and animal materials. With this new information, students will create slides of plant and animal cells to study under the microscope. Students will become acquainted with real world applications of scientific principals, increase their observation and record keeping skills, maintain a log of their work and develop written reports.

**LaEscuela Fratney  
Tina Garcia  
“Books in a Bag for K4”– \$750**

*Books in a Bag for K4* will support the home / school connection for families. Students will take home weekly books in a bag in a language spoken at home, such as English or Spanish. These take-home books will increase the number and variety of books available to parents and encourage families to read books at home together. The project will emphasize the importance of reading daily creating lifelong readers with parent modeling and continued teacher support.

**Fritsche Middle School**  
**Sandra Wiesen-Johnson & Virginia Lawton**  
**“Math Isn’t a Curse” – \$620**

The project will expose all sixth grade students to interrelationships between math, reading, writing, and problem solving. Students will experience first hand the usefulness of mathematics in all areas of work through a *Math on the Job Fair* with parents offering expertise about their jobs and its math use. The end result will be reduction of the anxiety often associated with math.

**Garland Elementary School**  
**Amy Onderak**  
**“On Wisconsin!” – \$750**

Fourth grade students will be involved in a cross-curricular project that incorporates social studies, writing, language arts, and technology. With a focus on the learning targets and state standards, the students will learn about the history of Wisconsin through visiting Old World Wisconsin in Eagle and also by taking a trip to the State Capitol building in Madison. As a continuing project, students will use the Internet and other sources to research a report about a person, place, or event that has had a profound impact on our state. The school will have a “Wisconsin Day” celebration where their multi-media presentation will be presented to parents and other members of the learning community.

**Grant Elementary School**  
**Ann Tesch & Sue Cira**  
**“Wonderful Winter” – \$750**

*Wonderful Winter* is a cross-curricular winter unit that reinforces academic, social and physical objectives. The students will participate in ice skating lessons where they will expand their fine and gross motor skills. In the classroom, the students will conduct experiments related to motion and graph, analyze, and compare U.S. Speed Skating times recorded at the 2006 Winter Olympics. The activity will create awareness of current events as the students read newspaper articles to gain needed information. Ice skating lessons will enrich and reinforce the children's knowledge of healthy living.

**Hampton Elementary School**  
**Tequila S. Kurth**  
**“Community Co-Authors” - \$750**

This project, in support of the school’s educational plan, involves improving the reading/language arts skills of fifth grade students by offering a variety of lessons and hosting several events that will get families involved with their children’s education. Parents will be asked to “co-author” a children’s book, assisting students in writing original stories. The books will be bound and ready for publishing, and parents and students will share their stories with other students at the school, as well as with the community via public readings at local bookstores. A final honorary program will be held at the school to recognize the efforts of all.

**Happy Hill Elementary School**  
**Linda Witzeman**  
**“Making Math Meaningful” – \$750**

*Making Math Meaningful* will introduce and reinforce the vital mathematical strands of numbers and operations, algebra, geometry, measurement, data analysis, and problem solving and reasoning to kindergarten students through the use of Big Books for Math. Learning activities will be sent home, along with books that correlate to the ones used in class to connect and continue the school learning experience at home.

**Hartford University School**  
**Helen Kalili**  
**“What Community Means & What Impact Do I Have on Our Community?” – \$750**

Students in grades three through eight will explore and carefully consider their home and school communities and the effects these communities can, will, and do have upon the students. Photographs will be taking of the communities and the photos will be developed and displayed throughout the school building. Students will write expository pieces explaining their findings related to community, and they will read and learn about the communities of others. Parents and community members will be welcomed to participate in this project.

**Humboldt Park School  
Jane Suminski  
“Up on the Roof” – \$750**

*Up on the Roof* will provide sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students the opportunity to utilize positive environmental practices including managing water, improving air quality, moderating building temperatures, and creating habitats for birds, bees, and butterflies within the school setting. Students will participate in constructing garden beds from children’s swimming pools. They will select appropriate plants and then plant and care for them. Students will share the findings of their research to school and community members of a local church on the use of rooftop gardens, rain gardens and rain barrels as a means to reduce excess water in the sewer system.

**Lincoln Avenue Elementary School  
Monica Czyzewski  
“Family Night Delight” - \$750**

*Family Night Delight* is a project that will bring together students, their caregivers, and community members in order to emphasize the importance of reading and writing and promote inquiry-based science and math. 100 first grade families will be invited to family nights once a month to spend time learning about math and science content and skills through activity centers, small group, and large group activities. The activities will encourage cooperation, problem-solving, decision making and critical thinking skills.

**Lincoln Avenue Elementary School  
Peggy Dillman & Michelle Weisse  
“Performing Arts Appreciation” – \$750**

Third graders will be exposed to various forms of the performing arts by being given the opportunity to attend a play, an opera, and the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra. Docents and performers from these venues will be invited to visit the classroom prior to the field trips to prepare students to enjoy and learn from the performance. After each performance, students will do reflective writing activities to enhance and extend the experience beyond the field trips itself.

**Lincoln Center of the Arts Middle School  
Dagmar B. Heck  
“Let’s Cook” - \$750**

*Let’s Cook* will introduce 22 sixth grade special needs students to different ethnic groups and cultures while learning professional food preparation practices and the value of good nutrition. Through hands-on experiences, students will learn about the safe handling and preparation of foods, the reading of recipes, cost-effective shopping, and the nutritional value of the recipes’ ingredients. The project will integrate language arts, math, social studies, and science.

**Lincoln Center of the Arts Middle School  
Robert Cunningham  
“Reading Buddies” –\$750**

*Reading Buddies* will enhance students’ reading abilities, writing skills, general comprehension, and interpersonal communications. The middle school students will serve as mentors and reading buddies to younger students at a nearby elementary school.

**Lloyd Street Global Education School  
Pamela Wiemer & Denise Smith  
“Super Summer Readers” – \$750**

*Super Summer Readers* offers students and parents activities and materials to help maintain and/or improve reading and writing skills during the summer of 2006. Students will receive work packets and other necessary supplies to complete over the summer. Through the use of fiction and nonfiction books, students will build background knowledge and understanding of the world around them. Goals connected to the learning targets will be set for the students and incentives will be provided to students who participate.

**Lowell Elementary School  
Angela Dembinski & Diane Piedt  
“Leap into Learning” – \$720**

The purpose of this project is to help English as a Second Language kindergarten students increase their English vocabulary and English academic skills. The project will also help parents whose native language is not English. A LeapPad, book, and activities will be sent home weekly with the students. Fifth grade students will demonstrate to kindergarten students how to use the materials.

**Maple Tree Elementary School  
Dennis Herbst & Christie Mulligan  
“Keepers of the Culture” – \$650**

Third grade students will be reintroduced to the stories, music, art, and pride of the African culture. This history will be learned through reading, Internet research, and performing African fables. Students will work with the art and music specialists to create authentic costumes, learn simple drumming, chants, handclapping games, and create scenery. Students will perform the fables in play form at a culminating event. The project will build student self-confidence and improve reading and comprehension skills.

**Milwaukee Academy of Aviation,  
Science, & Technology  
Dawn Marie Blurton  
“Researching Aviation” – \$750**

*Researching Aviation* is an English language arts and journalism project to encourage and enrich the school’s ninth grade learning experience through the development of a school-wide publication. The project will strengthen students' research and writing skills using 21st century web-based research tools. The publication will present aviation history, prominent aviation pioneers, and relevant topics for further study within the school environment.

**Milwaukee Education Center Middle School  
Gwendolyn F. Sutton  
“Trailblazers and Change-makers” - \$715**

Seventh grade students will research the accomplishments of individuals from diverse cultures who excelled in their fields and effected social change in America. This project integrates reading, language arts, social studies, and communications skills. Students will research, write and produce their own bio-drama, written in first person, applying effective written and oral language skills to communicate a powerful message.

**Milwaukee French Immersion School  
Jane E. Nickodem & Jill Mulhern  
“Using the Power of Children’s Literature in  
the Teaching of Writing” - \$740**

This program will allow Milwaukee French Immersion School to acquire a collection of picture books to read to the children regularly in order to share the richness of exemplary children’s literature and encourage independent reading. The books will also be used to improve students’ writing using “Writer’s Workshop” through which the students will be taught the *Six Traits of Writing*.

**Milwaukee School of Languages  
Bryon Hancock  
“Density” – \$565**

Ninth grade students will conduct two laboratory assignments using mass and density laboratory equipment. Students will use metric math, prepare a hypothesis, construct lab procedures, test the hypothesis, and draw and defend their conclusions. Students will analyze lab findings and write a comparative analysis demonstrating their understanding of density, mass, and weight.

**Milwaukee Spanish Immersion School  
Margaret Fischer & Victoria Miller  
“Island Creations” - \$530**

This cross-curricular project for third grade students integrates literacy, social studies, and science. Using modeling clay of different colors, students will create a physical relief map of an island. Students will then create a paper map of their island and write a persuasive essay on why people should visit their island. They will present the essays orally and show both the three and two-dimensional maps they created. The student presentations will be videotaped.

**Morgandale Elementary School  
Andrea Payan  
“Walking to a Healthy Lifestyle” – \$720**

Students will learn about walking as a way to build a healthy lifestyle through a project that uses pedometers to support increased walking. The students will log their steps, write about their experience and attempt to persuade their schoolmates to adopt walking as a healthy choice through a persuasive essay.

**Samuel Morse Middle School  
Tamera L. Ellis & Edwina Gholston  
“Taking it to the Streets” – \$750**

The *Taking it to the Streets* project provides extra-curricular volunteer activities for 50 middle school sixth and eighth grade students. Students will develop a positive work ethic, improve their self-image, and learn the value of providing services to others. Eighth grade students will provide tutoring and mentoring for the sixth graders in the program. Each month students will visit Lutheran Manor Nursing Home and read to the residents as well as volunteer at various non-profit agencies. Students will track their hours of service.

**Neeskara Elementary School  
Julie Benning  
“Milwaukee Mania” – \$750**

Sixty-five third grade students will experience the sights and sounds of Milwaukee focusing on two of the social studies learning targets. Through field trips around Milwaukee, students will learn about the people, architecture, and historical and cultural events that led to the city's development. Students will write about their experiences and learning, which will be compiled to create a non-fiction book on Milwaukee.

**Project STAY Senior Institute  
Cathleen Hunt & Erin Witty  
“Economic Literacy” - \$720**

This project builds economic literacy through hands-on group learning, including participation in the Stock Market Simulation competition. Student teams will invest a hypothetical \$100,000 in stocks and compete for the best portfolio performance. Students will be responsible for daily and weekly activities, including learning to read the stock tables in the business section of the newspaper, actively using the Internet and other technology related sources, in class problem-solving activities, and the necessity to work in cooperative groups.

**Pulaski High School  
Kevin Schenk & Marc Prather  
“Transportation Career Fair -  
Leadership Development” - \$750**

The senior auto shop class will lead the planning and operation of a Transportation Career Fair for 300 high school students to network, obtain career information, job contacts, and other technical education experiences. The auto program will be promoted to middle school students who will be invited to attend the career fair at Pulaski High School. Adults working with this project will focus on leadership development to make this a sustained, student driven project. Staff will help the senior auto students train the junior auto students on the tasks involved in coordinating this event to maintain project leadership.

**Ronald Reagan College Preparatory  
High School  
Ryan Jay Wilson  
“Finding Biology” - \$ 750**

*Finding Biology* will help students create meaningful understanding of abstract biological phenomena. Through the construction, observation and maintenance of a saltwater reef aquarium, students will have a concrete example of the concepts they are learning in the classroom. Activities will include the collection, analysis, application, and evaluation of data. Students will conduct research, keep an observation notebook, make predictions and inferences, and write a paper on their findings.

**Riley Elementary School  
Susan Plewa, Sara Rolf,  
Kathy Gordon, & Maryann Grzesiak  
“Family Library Safari” - \$ 750**

The *Family Library Safari* is designed to bring school families and teachers together to enjoy stories and activities from some of the best authors of children's literature. Families will be invited to monthly evening sessions focused on literacy activities and families will respond to the stories with activities such as *Readers' Theater*, poetry writing, puppet making, graphing, cultural celebrations, musical expression, and game design. Take-home packets with books and other materials will be available for families to use at home.

**Riverside University High School  
Jeffery J. Anderson  
“Literacy Enhancement  
Bound for Success” - \$750**

The creative writing of eleventh and twelfth grade students will be published, bound and available for the entire school community. The expertise of 14 national writing project instructors will be used to emulate best practices and engage students in this literary endeavor across all content areas. Parents will also be encouraged to contribute writing samples for publication.

**Riverside University High School  
Eitan Benzaquen  
“Technological Gains” - \$750**

Teachers of special needs students in self-contained classes will use updated technology to modify lessons they receive from core content teachers, make necessary accommodations, and then deliver it to students in a timely manner more closely aligned to the regular education classrooms. Use of a multimedia projector will allow teachers to spend less time reconfiguring the content and students will remain abreast with their regular education classmates. The projector will be particularly useful in the English classroom for communications and writing lessons.

**Sherman Multicultural Arts School  
Marti Anderson  
“Animal Adventures” - \$ 750**

Young children with special education needs will participate in a variety of in-classroom activities to develop their oral communication skills, motor skills, and creative thinking skills. The active learning experiences will be structured within an animal thematic unit with a special focus on the animals of Africa. Several of these activities will be joint activities with the regular education kindergarten classes, including a field trip to the zoo.

**Stuart Elementary  
Marianne Soldavini & Heather Gruber  
“Milwaukee Memories” - \$750**

Thirty-two English as a Second Language and regular education students from third, fourth, and fifth grade will go on field trips to explore places in Milwaukee. These trips will help the students gain knowledge about our city and expand their background knowledge in social studies and science topics. They will write essays about their experiences and what they have learned, which will be compiled in a group memory book.

**Thirty-Fifth Street Elementary School  
Anthony Perkins  
“The Wild, Wild West of Reading” - \$750**

Third grade students will be engaged in an integrated social studies and language arts thematic unit focusing on 19th century western United States. Supplemental material used in this thematic unit will include poetry, western songs, maps, class sets of chapter books, trade books, videos, and hands on activities. The unit will culminate with a dramatic performance wherein the students will act out a drama about pioneer or western life before an all-school audience.

**Twenty-First Street Elementary School  
Jayne E. Jaskolski  
“Cross Curricular Literacy Project” – \$750**

A variety of supplemental classroom materials will be used in this early childhood special needs classroom to strengthen the development of critical pre-emergent literacy skills of these young children. Cross-curricular activities will include language activities, pre-writing skills, use of technology, and music.

**Vieau Elementary School  
Mary Thundercloud  
“Clay Connections” - \$750**

Twenty-nine eighth grade students will express their artistic individuality by designing and creating two and three dimensional clay sculptures. Through this project, the students will utilize their imaginations and develop their own individual style and enjoyment of art. The students will also develop an appreciation for the aesthetic beauty of art and become aware of the amount of work needed to complete a project. *Clay Connections* will integrate reading and social studies in this art project.

**Zablocki Elementary School  
Kelly A. Shannon  
“Cache Me If You Can” - \$750**

Zablocki School families will learn about geocaching, a relatively new activity that combines hiking, treasure hunting, and the Global Positioning System (GPS). The purpose is to share this technology so families may discover another way to enjoy the out-of-doors together. The initial activity will take place on a weekend and then families will be able to check out GPS devices for a weekend at a time for future family adventures.

**Wisconsin Conservatory of Lifelong Learning  
Char Harteau & Katie Bollman  
“Supporting Connecting  
Courtrooms to Classrooms” - \$ 750**

This project will extend and expand the activities of a joint project with the Milwaukee County Court System in which students learn about federal and state laws, county government, the legislative, executive and judicial branches, and explore and research the law and legal process. The project will include parent/guardian participation in field trips to the Milwaukee County Courthouse, the State Capitol building in Madison, Marquette Law School and another MPS school where students will produce a mock trial. The project integrates learning in the areas of reading, social studies, oral communications, and writing.