

## MINI-GRANT PROGRAM FOR 2008 - 09

The Interschool Council Mini-Grant Program was able to fully or partially fund 24 outstanding projects for the coming school year. A total of \$8,856 was awarded in mini-grants.

Funding for the grants comes from the very generous contributions of the district's ten HSAs, and wouldn't be possible without their ongoing, strong support.

The review committee (Jeannie Hollander, Anne Horn, Colleen Kunz, Laura Rothrock, Mary Broach, and Steve Barbato, Acting Director of Curriculum) was very impressed with the proposals received, and the creativity and breadth of projects.

Below is a summary of the the 24 mini-grant projects for 2008-09:

1. At Belmont Hills, Alessandra Caroulis will purchase a library of recorded books to be used by over 70 first graders. Listening to books on CD provides individualized reading time and effectively reaches the needs of all learners.
2. Barbara Johnson and her colleagues will work with 80 4th graders at Belmont Hills using GPS technology in a high tech treasure hunt, incorporating critical thinking skills, science, math and social studies. Called "educaching," this project will capture the excitement generated by the hunt while actively involving students in learning.
3. The Belmont Hills kindergarten team of Colleen Holmes, Maria Perna-Elias, Elizabeth Folgia, and Mary Pat McFarland will implement a second year of Lyrics to Literacy, using high quality supplemental music materials to enhance early literacy skills. This project was launched with a mini-grant last year, and now will be expanded to include the second kindergarten classroom.
4. Renewed funding was also awarded to the Dream Flags Project, which encourages students to share poetry. Last year, our district had 2,000 student poetry flags displayed at the Kimmel Center. Now, the goal is to broaden the project to include the district's middle and high schools. This project is being implemented by a number of teachers, including Mary Pat McFarland, Cathy Kaufman, Caroline Swan, Connie Major, Meghan Brolly, Margie Caplan, Edie Lewis, Maureen Gold, Peggy Doyle, Kevin Bray, Jen Welby, Brett Maguire, and Sandra Caroulis.
5. At Gladwyne Elementary School, Leigh Ann Meloy will incorporate African-American books into learning support classes in 2nd, 3rd and 4th grades. The books will feature strong African American characters and story lines, and will be integrated into the reading curriculum throughout the school year.
6. Also at Gladwyne, Kim Cipolla will use new teaching materials and literature in her classes for children with learning disabilities. The materials focus on developing greater social skills and improving peer interactions.
7. Sarah Pendergast will use new social language theories to work with speech and language therapy students at Cynwyd, Gladwyne, and Penn Valley. The project will focus on social and expressive language, as well as other means of communication.
8. At Merion Elementary, Debbie Miller will combine physical fitness with active learning for her 3rd grade class, through tools like floor mats for learning math facts, and K'NEX sets for studying geometry. The supplies can potentially be shared with 2nd through 4th grades in the future.
9. Myra Rios and Madeleine Antonelli at Merion will conduct an after-school Spanish Art Club for 2nd and 3rd graders that will combine art, social studies and Spanish. Children will be presented with a history of artistic expression from three distinct cultures, and will create their own works by painting, sculpting, and weaving.
10. In December, Sherryl Feliciani and Chris Vaccaro will bring author Dan Gutman to visit Penn Valley's 400 students. Through a series of presentations, he will show students how a book is created from start to finish, and go through "a day in the life of an author."
11. Chris Vaccaro will combine science, nature and community service through the 5th Grade Garden at Penn Valley. A modest irrigation system will help sustain the garden when school is not in session. In caring for their plants, children will learn to be good stewards of the land and understand how their actions affect the natural environment.

12. At Penn Wynne, Sandra Yozviak will build students' self-confidence through theater. Her third grade class will perform the play, titled "This is Only a Test," and students will be involved in every aspect of producing the show, from learning lines of dialogue, to costume and set design.
13. Karen Nemeth will bring author Trinka Hakes Noble to Penn Wynne in January. Ms. Noble will make a series of presentations about the writing process to kindergarten through 5th grade, with an emphasis on style, technique and finding one's voice.
14. Also at Penn Wynne, Lisa Bair and Dana Hwang will launch an Environmental Club for 4th and 5th graders, to help students create initiatives in their community and understand local and global concerns. Students will assume the roles of researchers and scientists, and will collaborate with the Lower Merion Green Council and Penn Wynne Green.
15. At Bala Cynwyd Middle School, librarian Kelly Anne McDermott will make history come alive through an innovative picture book collection. The visual stimuli in picture books appeal to reluctant readers and support the social studies curriculum in an enjoyable way.
16. The library at Bala Cynwyd will add to its collection of graphic novels, which also appeal to visual learners. Graphic novels offer sophisticated topics for discussion such as the accomplishments of Rosa Parks or historical perspectives on the Alamo, and help to support differentiated instruction.
17. Kelly Anne McDermott will also add to the listening library at Bala Cynwyd. A new collection of popular audio books will make reading a pleasure for more students, and will be incorporated into reading clubs and Advisory.
18. At Welsh Valley Middle School, Cheryl Langdon will increase the number of students served through the Mentor Program. The program matches students with a caring adult role model, and especially aims to serve students who don't have a support system at home.
19. At Harriton High School, Jason Fritz will create a classroom environment that is culturally inclusive and values diversity. He will use texts and lesson plans, and audio-visual enrichment , and will consult with the district's Cultural Proficiency Cadre in designing his project.
20. Christine Kiley will work with her 9th grade biology students at Harriton on Vermiculture, or worm composting. She will explore the many educational connections provided by the hands-on lab experience of composting, especially during the ecology unit in the spring.
21. At Lower Merion High School, Christina Bridges will start to build a collection of student-recommended books. The books will offer varied reading levels and subject matter, and will appeal to struggling and resistant readers.
22. Also at Lower Merion, Anmarie Roy will create a lending library in her 10th and 11th grade English classroom, to support an assignment that awards points when students read novels recommended by their peers. Having the library in the classroom will encourage reading and save students from having to buy or find the books outside of school.
23. Jim Keenan, Steve Murray, and John Grace at Lower Merion will create a book club by having a collection of outside reading books available in their classrooms. The goal is to make it very easy for students to pick up a book and discuss it with others.
24. Working with special education students from Harriton and Lower Merion, Donna Monturo will assist in the transition from school to work. A simulated office site will help teach employability skills such as appropriate dress, behavior, work habits and communication. Local businesses will provide students with clerical work to complete on site.