

MINI-GRANTS

Awarded monthly: Up to \$500 awarded for a single classroom. At the elementary level - up to \$2,100 awarded for a grade level. At the secondary level - up to \$2,500 awarded for programs that include all students in a grade level or a department.

Churchill Junior High School - *Bringing “Mayhem” Into the Room: Mayhem Poets Performance Follow Up & Poetry Workshop*

Celine Clark, Miriam Berrotte-Francis, Elizabeth Kaplan, Stephanie Greene, Kathy Merton, Daniel Pfeiffer, Kristen Rice, Edie Weinstein, Alyssa Yang

Mayhem Poets are a New Jersey-based “slam poetry” trio who met while studying together at Rutgers University. This grant provides an opportunity for students who, through a previous grant, attended a performance of the group to extend their learning by providing the means to meet with the poets in a workshop setting at school.

East Brunswick High School - *Animal Assisted Therapy: Use of Therapy Dogs for Relay for Life Event* **Sara Iorillo**

In recent years, the use of therapy dogs in a school setting has become more prevalent to assist students with their mental health and anxiety. Grant funds will cover the expenses associated with the presence of therapy dogs during the *Relay for Life* event to enhance the overall experience and well-being of participants.

East Brunswick High School - *Liar in a Crowded Theater* **Marc Mondry and Dr. Daniel Moran**

Grant Funds will allow for the purchase of 30 copies of the book *Liar in a Crowded Theater: Freedom of Speech in a World of Misinformation* by noted attorney, scholar, professor at the United States Naval Academy, and EBHS graduate, Jeff Kosseff. The book examines the ways in which the First Amendment has been used and misused and, ultimately, how governments should (and should not) address issues of misinformation, disinformation, and outright lies. The book will be used to close out the school year with AP IPLE students and their year-long study of the Constitution and the complexities of arguments surrounding the forty-five words of the First Amendment.

Churchill Junior High School - *Integrating Board Games into the Curriculum* **Kristen Ferrara, Patrick Woerner, Karen Fordham, and Ashley Fuzak**

This grant will supply the funding for the purchase of nine copies each of two games, *Trekking* and *Pandemic*. This will allow 9th grade history teachers to steer away from technology at times throughout the curriculum to provide students with a learning experience that will engage them in historical concepts in a different and fun way. The inclusion of strategic board games throughout the curriculum continues to be supported by the district and the EBEF based on previously successful efforts across departments.

Central Elementary School - *Novel Effect for Read Alouds* **Alyssa Jacob**

Grant funds will allow for the purchase of *Novel Effect*, an app that can be paired with over 1,000 books. The iPhone app brings books alive, providing sound effects, music, and more as the teacher reads aloud. During a weeklong trial, students were fully engaged and excited to listen; they felt confident asking questions and were able to better participate in class discussions. Reluctant readers expressed that reading was their favorite part of the day. Books that are compatible with both the app and the curriculum will also be purchased.

Bowne-Munro, Central, Chittick, Frost, Irwin, Lawrence Brook, Memorial, and Warnsdorfer Elementary Schools – *Deer Ant Natalie: EB Alum Author*

Elizabeth Soder

Ten copies of the book, *Deer Ant Natalie*, written by EB and Rutgers Alum, Carey Dean Potash, will be purchased. Carey attended Lawrence Brook Elementary School and he credits his teachers for the passion he has for words and stories. His book uses humor to explore and educate students on the use of homophones.

Churchill Junior High School – *Meaningful Play for MLLs*

Elizabeth Stankiewicz

This grant will supply the funding for the purchase of popular games to be used as a way for multi-language learners (MLLs) to gain communication skills during counseling sessions. Many MLLs coming to the district struggle with the transition to a new language and culture. This can lead to feelings of isolation. They often have difficulty expressing themselves. Play therapy has proven to be an effective intervention for promoting language development and social skills among MLLs.

Lawrence Brook Elementary School – *Unraveling Mysteries through Diversity and Inclusion*

Tara Corcoran-Clark, Meredith Ascher, Alissa Pagano, Amanda Davino, and Melissa Tavares

Grant funds will allow the third grade team to jump start the mystery unit. Students will become reading sleuths thanks to the purchase of a variety of materials like secret agent name tags, detective hats, invisible ink pens, notebooks, and even detective cases, all to help them keep all their mystery materials organized. Appropriately leveled mystery books will also be purchased so that all students can be included in this unit of study that is designed to teach them to make predictions and draw inferences as they piece together clues and draw conclusions from story details.

East Brunswick High School High School – *Outdoor Firing Event*

Ashley Hanania

The goal of this grant is to update and add to the protective gear needed for the Ceramic Workshop class's annual "Outdoor Firing Event". This will allow more students to be actively involved in this unique learning experience. The EBEF is proud to have supported the first such event more than a decade ago.

Churchill Junior High School – *Harmonious Horizons: Elevating the CJHS Pops Concert Experience Through Updated Repertoire*

Sarah Franchino, Jamie DeSiena, Mary O'Mara, Susan Meuse

Thanks to a generous EBEF grant in 2011, the CJHS Orchestra program held the inaugural *CJHS Pops Concert* involving 135 orchestra students. In the intervening years, the Orchestra program has shown extremely high retention rates, due in part to the excitement of students looking forward to the yearly

Pops Concert. The Pops Concert has evolved from an orchestra-only event to a massive combined Chorus and Orchestra extravaganza. Moving forward, the vision is for the CJHS Pops Concert to be a comprehensive event encompassing students from the Band, Orchestra, and Choir programs, thus uniting the entire CJHS music department. Securing supplementary funding beyond the standard yearly music budget is imperative to acquire an ample supply of copyright-legal music for the extensive number of students involved. It is noteworthy that teachers gathered input from students on current popular songs and their preferences for future Pops Concert performances prior to submitting their request for funding.

Churchill Junior High School – *Calm Down Corner*

JeanMarie Rinaldi

This grant will provide support for special needs students with anxiety and emotional regulation issues in all three grade levels at CJHS. A three-tiered cart will be purchased along with a variety of resources for students to use when they need to calm their bodies and get control of their emotions. The cart will be housed in a corner of the child study team's office space to ensure its availability to both students and team members.

Memorial Elementary School - *Cari's Mega Value Card Pack and TPT Gift Card*

Nicole De Marco

The goal for this grant is to increase engagement, draw attention to appropriate mouth formations, and promote speech sound development. Decks of cards that provide multi-sensory cues and to prompt students will be purchased with grant funds. A Teacher Pay Teacher gift card will be used to purchase additional materials to complement the card packs.

Churchill Junior High School and East Brunswick High School – *Promoting AI Literacy and Academic Integrity: CJHS and EBHS AI Use Scale Magnets*

Dr. Herb Peluzzo

As Generative AI (GenAI) technologies become increasingly ubiquitous in education, there is a growing need for clear guidelines and visual cues to help students navigate the ethical and practical implications of GenAI use in their academic work. This grant will provide a magnet for each classroom that displays the district's "AI Use Scale". This research-based AI Use Scale was customized and developed for CJHS and EBHS secondary schools by the AI Working Groups and Supervisor of Educational Technology. This AI Use Scale promotes the ethical and responsible use of AI tools by students at CJHS and EBHS and provides each teacher with a tool to clearly communicate to students the importance of academic integrity and the appropriate level of AI use for specific assessments in all of their classes.

Churchill Junior High School – *Fatal Vision Goggles*

Daniel Giudice

This grant will provide a helpful resource to supplement the health education curriculum. The goggles, that will be purchased with grant funds, will provide students with a hands-on visual experience of the harmful effects of drugs and alcohol and how these substances can impair their judgement and reaction time within the safety of the classroom. Teachers will receive training that includes the physiological and psychological effects of substance use, how to guide students through the activities, and how to engage students in reflective discussions afterward.

Hammarskjold Upper Elementary School – *Stools for Small Groups***Danielle Liguori**

Frequently two teachers are providing small group instruction to two clusters of students at the same time. The stools that will be purchased with grant funds will make it possible for both teachers to work more efficiently; having two stools available in each of three classrooms will make it possible for five students to sit around the table instead of only four.

Central Elementary School - *Weekly Theme Books and Crafts***Samantha Berman**

Grant funds will allow for the purchase of books and hands on materials to enhance the theme-based units in the kindergarten curriculum for students in a self-contained special ed classroom. The goal of this project is to use hands-on learning and active learning strategies to promote deeper learning and engagement related to the various monthly themes based on seasons, holidays, and any other topics related to the month.

Warnsdorfer Elementary School – *Little Spot of SEL***Jessica Burch/Iman Shah (ICR), Annmarie Kurdes, Jennifer Traversone, and Callie Hamilton**

This project will be implemented during whole class lessons and will enhance the social emotional learning (SEL) curriculum for grade 3 students. Grant funds will provide the means for the purchase of the SPOT Social Emotional Learning Resources including books with accompanying activity sheets, feelings posters, activity cards, and more.

Chittick Elementary School – *Challenge Accepted***Tatianna McBride**

The goal of this grant is to build a sense of school-wide community and provide a means for students to embrace Chittick's school theme, *Challenge Accepted*. As part of this school-wide initiative, students will be creating their own avatar. The avatars will represent their individual character traits. Funding provided through this grant will allow for the purchase of a Cricut Machine for each grade level with which teachers and students will have the opportunity to build their avatars, and, as they level up, their avatars will evolve.

Memorial Elementary School – *Language and Literacy***Roseann Bracco**

Grant funds will allow for the purchase of an assortment of games and materials designed to be used by teachers, literacy coaches, reading specialists, parents, speech-language pathologists and other specialists to support language arts instruction. The materials combine real-life literacy skill building with fun activities.

Irwin Elementary School – *Explore the World in 2nd Grade***Patricia Colaizzi, Rochelle Rosen, Krystal Weeks, and Alexis Horn**

Second grade classes will receive a variety of hands-on materials that will support and enhance teaching and learning in social studies, science, and language arts during non-fiction reading and writing units. Lab coats, microscopes and model insects, globes, compasses, and cards with flags of countries around

the world are some examples of materials that students will have at their fingertips to help them understand how the world's geography, cultures, and environments interact and influence each other. All materials are non-consumable, so they will be able to be utilized for years to come.

Churchill Junior High School School – *Kwame Alexander Author Study with Jason Alexander*
Celine Clark

Grant funds will pay for a virtual author visit. After reading books by Jason Reynolds & Kwame Alexander and working on their own storytelling, students will be able to listen to the two authors speak on craft and how they use it in their own writing. This meeting with the authors will allow students to see the process and power of writing and enable them to shape their own perceptions of what is possible.

Lawrence Brook Elementary School – *Bright Books, Bold Writers*

Tara Corcoran Clark, Gabriella Montoya, Meredith Ascher, Alissa Pagano, and Melissa Sheaffer

This grant will provide 3rd grade struggling readers the opportunity to read lots of decodable, engaging, age-appropriate, and colorfully illustrated books at their skill level. Students will read the texts, while the teacher gives feedback and support. With respect to writing, dyslexic and basic skills students often have difficulty writing on regular lined paper. To address this need, raised-line paper, slanted boards, pencil grips, highlighter tape, and colored overlay strips will be purchased.

Note: With the approval of this grant the EBEF celebrated having given \$3,000,000 to enhance and enrich the education for East Brunswick Public School students since its inception!

Chittick Elementary School – *Chittick Special Needs*

Kathryn Mannon

Grant funds will be used to purchase individual percussion kits, movement scarves, and wrist scrunchie ribbon streamers. Music making is a perfect fit for children with special needs. It engages and appeals to many of their sensory strengths and needs. Scarves and ribbons will be used to show understanding of concepts such as fast and slow, soft and loud. Students will be able to express themselves through music and movement.

Frost Elementary School – *Reading A-Z Subscription*

Alexandra Pisano

A one-year subscription for Reading A-Z will be purchased with grant funds. This tool will be useful for all in-class and pull-out resource teachers as well as general education teachers who have basic skills students, increasing their ability to differentiate student instruction based on their levels. This will be implemented in center rotations during the language arts block, providing students with opportunities to read accurately with fluency, at appropriate rates, and with expression when provided with a passage on their independent reading levels.

East Brunswick High School – *ELL Online Assessments*

Maria Gorman

Funds will make possible the purchase a premium subscription for Freckle.com, an educational platform designed to support differentiated learning. The premium plan will specifically help the teacher support students who are English Language Learners performing below grade level in reading. The platform

offers engaging, standards-based resources across multiple subjects, including language arts, mathematics, history, and science.

Chittick Elementary School – *Phonics FUN for Firsties*

Nicole Paster, Samantha Wiseman, Meghan Shanahan, Stefani McGowan

A variety of hands-on phonics games and materials to use during small group, partner, and independent work will be purchased with grant funds. These materials will support struggling emergent readers as they progress from learning letters and sounds to more advanced phonics skills.

Frost Elementary School – *We are Preparing for College*

Nyree Delgado, Kelly Kraemer

The goal of this project is to provide a hands-on experience for 4th grade students in the area of science and engineering practices. It will also expose 4th grade students to Rutgers graduate students who will not only provide instruction but will also give insight into their college major and experience. The Science Explorer program will visit each 4th grade classroom where, for 90 minutes, students will receive instruction with the program entitled, *The Great Plankton Race*.

Central Elementary School – *Flexible Seating for Enhanced Student Engagement and Well-being*

Nicole Gruber and Erin Butler

The goal of this project is to increase student engagement and focus, promote physical health and movement, and foster an inclusive and supportive learning environment within in-class support and resource room settings where students have varied needs and learning styles. Funding will provide the means to acquire 20 “seats”, four each of five different design options.

Churchill Junior High School – *Bringing Shakespeare to Life*

Natasha Ciuffo, Mitchell Pollok, and Elizabeth Soder

This grant will provide 8th grade English Honors students with the opportunity to see Shakespeare come to life in the form of a live performance on campus. In addition, it will impart a cross-curricular connection to the arts as students get the opportunity to interact with actors after the performance and learn not only about the play but also the stagecraft involved in producing the performance.

Central Elementary School – *Calm & Cool in Kindergarten*

Allison Pimentel

Central’s youngest students, both general and special education learners, will benefit from this project. It will further enhance the nurturing environment that has been created in their classrooms, helping them to develop critical social-emotional skills. This project not only aligns with the goal to educate the whole child, it also enhances the curriculum by providing practical tools and guided lessons to help children understand and manage their emotions, fostering a more empathetic and inclusive culture. The *Little Spot of Feelings* resources will be purchased with the funds provided.

Warnsdorfer Elementary School – *Listen up! Adventures in Audiobooks*

Rachel Solomon, Laura Petriello, Jenna Ciancimino, Iman Shah, and Nicole Illaria

The goal of this grant is to support basic skills, multi-language learners and special education students in 3rd and 4th grade by providing them with audiobooks at grade appropriate levels. With grant funds a

variety of handpicked *Playaway Wonderbooks* will be purchased. They are physical books that look just like the usual book a student would choose from their classroom library. The difference is that these books have an audio player permanently attached to the inside cover. No separate device or Wi-Fi access is ever needed! Students can just press play and start reading!

Warnsdorfer Elementary School – *Project Read AI*

Iman Shah and Taylor Felicetta

The goal of this grant is to foster a more inclusive and effective learning environment by offering individualized instruction, enhancing engagement, improving literacy skills, tracking student progress, and nurturing a love for reading in both special and general education classrooms. Grant funds will cover the cost of a school-wide *Decodable Generator License*. Built by teachers and AI experts from Stanford, the program allows teachers to create decodable books based on a student's exact reading level and previous errors. The AI tutor gives live feedback and encouragement to students as they read out loud. This combination gives teachers the ability to teach reading to each child in his/her class one-on-one.

Warnsdorfer Elementary School - *Busy Hands are Happy Hands*

Michele Reisbord, Sharon Taborda, Lise Noppenberger, and Kerry Smith

The goal of this grant is to offer kindergarten students a unique way to learn basic math and reading skills using their senses. Grant funds will allow for the purchase of materials for teachers to create sensory bins based on the season and/or skills that the students will be practicing. Students will be using the sensory bins during various times of the school day, primarily during reading, math, or play centers.

Chittick Elementary School - *Empowering Preschoolers Through Sensory Support*

Emma Perone

The goal of this grant is to create a classroom that better supports sensory regulation for students with special needs, thus allowing them to thrive both academically and socially. A variety of sensory tools and resources will be purchased with grant funds. Providing tools and resources to meet students' sensory needs can significantly enhance their ability to regulate emotions, focus on tasks, and build positive relationships with peers and teachers.

Central Elementary School - *Purposeful Play*

Allison Pimentel

Kindergarteners, develop and learn through play. New furniture and dolls for an existing dollhouse and a train set will be purchased for students to use during creative playtime. As they play with their friends, students in this ICS classroom will develop language skills and learn how to share. They will have lots of opportunity to practice being patient problem solvers as they role play scenarios in a lower scaffolded environment.

East Brunswick High School – *Speech-language Material*

Michelle Cieslak

Students, ages 15-21, receiving speech-language services at the high school will benefit from this grant. The materials purchased with the funds being provided will be utilized during speech-language sessions that occur within the classroom setting for a more natural approach to therapy. This model is less

restrictive, generalizes skills that might otherwise be taught in the therapy room and provides a model for other adults in the room to know what strategies to reinforce.

Central Elementary School - *Instructional Tools for Teaching*

Samantha Berman

Grant funds will be used to purchase a variety of sensory materials, manipulatives and books that will be used specifically for daily intensive teaching time throughout the school year. During this time teachers and paraprofessionals work individually with students to help them progress towards their individual academic and social-emotional goals. Examples of these goals include but are not limited to are counting with one-to-one correspondence, sorting colors, and building stamina for independent reading.

Churchill Junior High School – *Extra, Extra, Read & Write All About It!*

Celine Clark, Elizabeth Kaplan, Stephanie Greene, Kristen Rice, and Alyssa Yang

This grant will provide teachers with easy access to the NYT Learning Network where there is a vast network of standards aligned lesson plans and resources available to them; all CJHS students will have access to current non-fiction texts and quality journalism. Non-fiction text is a key component of the English curriculum, and this access will promote student's ability to closely read, analyze, and write about current events that impact their lives. Included in the grant request were enthusiastic statements supporting and looking forward to this access from teachers in all areas of the curriculum.

Central Elementary School – *Phonics Fun for Future Readers*

Katie Fabiano, Allison Pimentel, Kathleen Vargas, and Stephanie LoNigro

The goal of this project is to provide our kindergarten students with high-quality phonics materials that will help them develop critical early reading skills. Phonics is a foundational component of reading instruction, and research has consistently shown that early exposure to phonics instruction significantly improves reading fluency and comprehension in the long term.