



2025-2026 GPSTEAM Grants Awarded to GPPSS

For the 2025–2026 school year, the GP STEAAM Foundation is proud to award over \$156,000 in grant funding supporting more than 20 innovative programs across the Grosse Pointe Public School System. These grants impact every grade level, serve all buildings, and align with district priorities in STEAAM education, arts integration, career and technical education (CTE), equity of access, and whole-child development.

Through these investments, GP STEAAM expands hands-on learning opportunities, strengthens career pathways, removes financial barriers to participation, and supports safe, modern learning environments. From early childhood sensory equipment to advanced robotics, AI programming, skilled trades, and global competitions, these grants ensure that GPPSS students actively engage in meaningful, future-focused learning experiences.

1. Detroit Tigers Class Outside Series - STEAM - Defer \$3,000, Kerby \$1,500, Maire \$3,000

These grants will allow Defer, Kerby and Maire to continue their tradition of taking their 4th graders to Comerica Park for the purpose of creating an opportunity to learn about careers in the fields of STEAM in athletics in a fun and exciting atmosphere.

Submitted for Defer - Jane Nugent and the 4th grade Team

Submitted for Kerby - Kristin Remillet, Megan Brown and Katy Vernier

Submitted for Maire - Caelin Micks and Karen Frakes

2. 360 Robot Lab - Pierce Middle School \$1,000

360 Robot Lab is Pierce Middle School's after school robotics program where students design, build, and program robots for the FIRST Tech Challenge. Members gain hands-on experience in coding, mechanical design, and competition strategy while learning to work as a team. This grant will allow the club to purchase the necessary robot parts, electronics, and tools that will help the students get competition ready.

Submitted by Joshua Wools and Zhou Wang

3. E Bikes - Girls Cross Country/Track - Grosse Pointe South \$5,670

Bicycles are used extensively by the Girls Cross Country coaches to both train and supervise the girls while they run through the neighborhoods. This grant provides the funding for the purchase of three e-bikes for the coaches involved in South cross country

and track. The E-bikes would provide the coaches the ability to stay in contact with all student-athletes (as many as 50-100 at a time during each season).

Submitted by Steve Zaranek and Assistant Coaches Leo Lamberti and Shawn McNamara

4. “The Outsiders” Field Trip - Pierce Middle School \$3,750

“The Outsiders” is a core novel that all 7th graders read at Pierce Middle School. This grant will provide the opportunity for Pierce’s 7th-grade students to visit the Fisher Theater in Detroit to watch the Broadway rendition of “The Outsiders”. Bringing the novel to life through the arts provides students with a powerful opportunity to see that the themes and concepts explored in literature extend beyond the printed page

Submitted by Andrea Doherty, Sarah Duffield and Brian McDonald

5. Update Early Childhood Sensory Equipment - Barnes \$4,456

In order to better support the holistic development of all children in the Barnes Special Education Program, especially those with diverse sensory needs, the sensory equipment needs to be updated. This grant will allow the Barnes team to improve and add to the current collection of equipment. With the new equipment, the team foresees improvement in gross motor skills as well as improved social and emotional well being.

Submitted by Susan Black and the Barnes Special Education Team

6. Drone Club - Parcells Middle School \$5,699

This grant will provide the funds to begin a Drone Club at Parcells Middle School. The monies will be used to purchase CoDrone EDU Classroom 18 Pack along with Professional Development. This will support hands-on STEM, STEAM, and CTE learning at the middle school level. Students will use drones to explore flight principles, engineering, coding, and design thinking through both classroom lessons and a new after-school Drone Club. This initiative aligns with district goals of expanding CTE opportunities, supporting career readiness, and building a pathway to aviation and aeronautics programs in partnership with the Wayne RESA Consortium of Aeronautics and Aviation Educators.

Submitted by Andrea Gruenwald and Walt Charuba

7. STEAM-Powered Girls: Tools and Resources for GP's All-Girls Robotics Team - GP South, GP North, Brownell MS, Parcells MS, Pierce Middle School \$5,000

This funding for the middle and high school all-girls robotics team, the Botmasterz, will allow them to acquire essential tools and resources for the upcoming competition season. The team will use the grant to purchase new robot parts and tools in order to build robots to compete in the 2025-2026 games. Additionally, the plan will also include supplies for the teams' competition pits, to improve their on-site operations, and the procurement of a Cricut machine. The Cricut machine will enable the team to independently create their required robot number decals, providing a long-term, cost-effective solution compared to annual vendor purchases. Lastly, the request includes funding for off-season competition fees so the teams can participate fully in events throughout the year. The support is

crucial for fostering an all-girls environment where students can build confidence, technical skills, and teamwork in the fields of science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics (STEAM)

Submitted by Sherry Betcher and Jane Plieth

**8. Updated Sanding and Dust Collecting Equipment - Grosse Pointe South
\$1,250**

GP South's Innovation Class currently relies on a single small desktop sander that is undersized for the variety and volume of student projects. The requested funds will allow the purchase of a floor-standing belt and disc sander with a dedicated portable dust collection system on a mobile base. This will ensure student safety, efficiency, and quality craftsmanship. This upgrade will significantly improve material finishing processes, reduce airborne particulates, and create a safer, cleaner, and more professional workspace for students.

Submitted by Brent Revello

9. 3D Printer - Pierce Middle School - \$1,000

The number of students selecting the innovation classes at Pierce Middle School are increasing. This grant will provide the funding to purchase a new 3D printer. This printer will be used for Innovation and Design as well as Digital Art projects. Students will use tinkercad to prototype their models and these files directly link to the 3D printer.

Submitted by Jane Plieth

10. Destination Imagination Finals - Grosse Pointe South and Pierce Middle School - \$7,000

For more than a decade, Grosse Pointe has had many successful DI teams. These teams have routinely qualified for the state tournament with multiple teams heading to the Global Finals where they compete against teams from across the nation and the world. This year Pierce will have 2 teams who are looking forward to competing with a goal of making it to the Global Finals. Grosse Pointe South 9th grade team is looking forward to the challenge in the High School Division. The requested funds will help fund the three Destination Imagination teams to pay for the registration cost of Global Finals.

Submitted by Courtney Dykstra

11. Early Elementary Mathematical Book Study - GP District Curriculum Office - \$1,500

This is the first of two grants awarded to the Grosse Pointe Curriculum Department. This grant will allow the District's Math COSA to hold a Counting Collections Book Study. As the Elementary Math Subcommittee worked through the learning phase of the review cycle, one area that many teachers were interested in was using more Number Sense routines in their classroom. This practice includes a variety of options but one that was of great interest to our Y5, Kindergarten and First Grade teachers was the practice of Counting Collections. The funds from this grant will be used to purchase books and additional needed materials.

Submitted by Courtney Dykstra

12. Updated Air Rockets - Grosse Pointe South - \$2,200

This grant will allow the Physics teachers at Grosse Pointe South to update the air rockets for projectile labs. These new and updated air rockets will replace the current discontinued one. Students will now be able to change the initial velocity and the launch angle. The new rockets will also create opportunities for more advanced and accurate calculations on projectiles and forces.

Submitted by Troy Hernandez and Todd Hecker

13. Michigan Thespian Festival - Grosse Pointe North - \$1,500

The Michigan Thespian Festival is the state's largest annual high school theatre event, organized by the Michigan Educational Theatre Association. Over 1,500 students and directors attend for two days of concentrated learning and performance. This grant will cover the registration fees for students from Grosse Pointe North. Their activities will include selecting from over 50 specialized workshops led by college faculty and industry professionals in areas like acting techniques, choreography, stage combat, and vocal performance. On the technical side, students will engage in sessions on Lighting Design, Sound Technology, Stage Management, and Scenic Engineering. In addition, all attendees will view multiple high-quality mainstage and one-act student performances and have the opportunity to participate in the Thespian Excellence Awards where they will receive professional, adjudicated feedback on their artistic or technical portfolios.

Submitted by Scott Sowers and Anna Fleury

14. AI Summer Camp - GP District Curriculum Department - \$25,000

This is the second year for GPSTEAM supporting this district wide AI Camp. GPPSS will partner with InspiritAI, an organization founded and led by doctoral students from MIT and Stanford, to host a two-week, 30-hour AI project-building program for middle and high school students. Through hands-on instruction, students will explore fundamental AI concepts and apply them to real-world challenges, fostering critical thinking, creativity, and technical proficiency. The program cost is \$1,500 per student, which may present a financial barrier for some families. This grant will allow the district to offer the camp to middle or high school students for a more reasonable cost of \$500. GPPSS will partner with InspiritAI, an organization founded and led by doctoral students from MIT and Stanford, to host a two-week, 30-hour AI project-building program for middle and high school students. Through hands-on instruction, students will explore fundamental AI concepts and apply them to real-world challenges, fostering critical thinking, creativity, and technical proficiency.

Submitted by Holli McNally and Dr Sara Delgado

15. Support for Family and Consumer Science Classes - Brownell Middle School - \$10,000

One of the more popular elective areas, offered at Brownell Middle School, are the Family and Consumer Science classes. Currently, 201 students are enrolled in all of the Life Skills classes with 145 enrolled for next semester. That would be approximately half of the Brownell population. This grant will allow Brownell to replace and repair the

sewing machines and purchase additional materials. It will also support the exploration of new needlework projects such as punch needle and crochet. The additional funding will allow for the expansion of the culinary offerings.

Submitted by Dr. Taylor Barczyk

16. Outdoor Obstacle Course - Pierce Middle School - \$20,000

Pierce Middle School students, staff, and the Pierce PTO, in collaboration with the District have created a vision for a permanent outdoor obstacle course that will serve as both a vibrant school resource and a community gathering space. This project emerges from strong student input and community momentum. Students have already helped design the school's first playground, demonstrating that when given voice, they become deeply invested in shaping their environment. Building on this enthusiasm, the obstacle course represents the next step in transforming the Pierce field into a dynamic, inclusive space that meets the diverse needs of middle schoolers. Designed for both school-day use and community access, the course will stand as a lasting symbol of collaboration — a field built by and for students, families, and the greater Grosse Pointe community. The GP STEAM Foundation will be joining that partnership by awarding to Pierce Middle School a grant totaling \$20, 000 that will bring Pierce closer to their goal for summertime installation for use come Fall 2026.

Submitted by Principal Sara Dirkse and PTO President Lauren Nowicki

17. Gearheads - Rebuild and Upgrade - GPN, GPS, Parcells - \$20,000

The Gearheads have secured two milling machines from General Motors. Although usable, these machines are in need of some maintenance. This grant will allow the combined robotics team to secure the supplies and consumables needed to perform the overdue maintenance on the Bridgeport Series II special vertical knee mill. The grant will also support an upgrade to the Computer Numerical Control on that milling machine. The last part that is covered with this grant is the replacement of the x and y axis rotary encoders on the Bridgeport mill. We, GPSTEAM, have been a proud supporter of this group and we are pleased to award this grant to them.

Submitted by Jeffrey Santrock and Matthew Rigotti

18. Culinary Class Field Trip - Grosse Pointe South - \$15,000

Culinary students from Grosse Pointe South High School have an opportunity to participate in a national level culinary competition called "Cook Around the World" at Walt Disney World in Orlando Florida. At this event, students will be applying STEAM principles — science in cooking techniques and food chemistry, technology in modern kitchen tools, engineering in workflow and recipe design, art in presentation and creativity, and math in measurements and scaling recipes - while competing in a professional environment. The grant will help support students in meeting their financial responsibilities for this once in a lifetime opportunity. This experience aligns with CTE career pathways, preparing students for culinary, hospitality, and STEAM-related professions.

Submitted by Andrea Gruenwald and Nikolas Lopez

19. STEAM Assemblies - Defer, Ferry, Kerby, Maire, Mason, Monteith, Richard - \$15,000

At a previous Board of Education meeting, Ferry Elementary Principal Jodie Randazzo shared her school's experience with the Mobile Education STEAM Assembly during the 24-25 school year. The assembly was so impactful and well received by students and staff that Ms. Randazzo took the initiative to submit a grant request to expand this opportunity to all seven Grosse Pointe elementary schools. GPSTEAM is proud to once again award funding for the Mobile Education STEAM Assembly. Unlike last year, when the grant supported a single school, this year's grant will provide the same high quality STEAM learning experience to students across all seven Grosse Pointe elementary schools.

Submitted by Jodie Randazzo on behalf of herself, Dr. Lisa Rheaume, Nicole Filiccia, Dr. John Kernan, Katy Vernier, Dr. Shellyann Keelean and Anita Hassan

20. InStat Hockey Software - Grosse Pointe South - \$3,500

Hockey is a sport that requires extraordinary skill, demanding split-second strategy, rapid decision-making, and physical resilience—all while skating at speeds of up to 20 mph, controlling the puck, and preparing for impact from opponents. Beyond physical skills, hockey sharpens strategic thinking, teamwork, and leadership. It fosters collaboration and problem-solving under pressure. This grant will allow the Grosse Pointe South Hockey team to acquire InStat which is a comprehensive analysis and scouting software. The software is under the Hudl umbrella which the Grosse Pointe Schools already use. This technology will support the coaches and players in analysis of games, opponents and individual skill development.

Submitted by GP South HS Hockey Assistant Captain Will Gryzenia