What is the Strong Start Initiative?
Strong Start is the District 279 Foundation's program to welcome the newest educators in Osseo Area Schools by helping them set up their very first classrooms. New teachers often spend hundreds of dollars of their own money on supplies, books, and materials before their first paycheck arrives. Strong Start helps cover those costs so our newest teachers can focus on what matters most: their scholars.

What happened to the Reading is Fun 5K?
For more than a decade, the Reading is Fun 5K brought our community together to support media centers across Osseo Area Schools, and we're deeply grateful to everyone who ran, walked, volunteered, and gave over the years. After that successful run, the Foundation chose to channel that same energy into a new opportunity. Strong Start carries the mission forward, investing directly in the educators who bring learning to life in every classroom.

I supported the Reading is Fun 5K. How can I stay involved?
We'd love to have you with us for this next chapter. Beyond giving, you can help by sharing Strong Start with your network and spreading the word about what it means to welcome a new teacher well.

Why focus on brand new educators?
Nationally, teachers spend an average of $895 out of pocket to outfit their classrooms, and that burden often falls hardest on those just starting out, before they've received a single paycheck. A welcoming, well-equipped classroom shapes a student's entire first impression of school. By supporting new educators at the very start, Strong Start helps set both teachers and scholars up to thrive.

Who receives support through Strong Start?
Strong Start is designed to support brand new educators across Osseo Area Schools as they begin their careers in the district. The program is a welcome to the profession, not a needs-based award, so it isn't about singling anyone out. It's about our whole community coming alongside every new teacher to say, we're glad you're here.

How do teachers receive the support?
The Foundation coordinates directly with the district to identify eligible new educators and grants will be distributed at the New Licensed Staff Workshop on Aug 24.

What can the funds be used for?
Support is intended for classroom setup such as supplemental books, supplies to enhance learning materials and established curriculum, and the small touches that make a room feel welcoming and ready for scholars.

How much has the Foundation committed?
The District 279 Foundation has committed $20,000 to support brand new educators in Osseo Area Schools this fall.

Can I direct my gift to a specific teacher or school?
To keep the program fair and to protect the privacy of our educators, gifts support the initiative as a whole rather than a specific individual. Pooling contributions this way ensures every eligible new teacher receives a consistent, equitable welcome.

How can I contribute?
You can give directly through the District 279 Foundation website at: https://www.district279foundation.org/strongstart. Every dollar helps relieve the out-of-pocket burden for a new educator and helps create a classroom that inspires and prepares scholars this fall.

Is my donation tax-deductible?
The District 279 Foundation is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, and contributions are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.