Fostering Bright Futures

2025-2026
Teacher Mini Grant Recipients

★ Sensory Smart Classroom: Rhythm, Movement & Multi-Sensory Learning ★

Teacher: Elizabeth Adams, Prospect Park

Funds Awarded: $1,000

Provide a brief summary of what you would like to do and share how your students' educational experiences will be enhanced academically and/or socially.

The Sensory Smart Classroom: Rhythm, Movement & Multi-Sensory Learning project will provide students with hands-on, multi-sensory experiences that support academic, cognitive, and social-emotional growth. Yoga Ball Drumming and other gross motor activities will help students develop coordination, attention, and self-regulation while engaging in functional academics such as literacy and math. Certification in the Interactive Metronome program will allow the teacher to implement evidence-based rhythm and timing exercises to further improve focus, motor skills, and processing speed. Through these strategies, students will benefit from increased engagement, improved regulation, and greater opportunities for collaboration, communication, and social interaction with peers.

How will these funds help you deliver an innovative approach to teaching in your classroom or supporting the current district curriculum?

These funds will allow me to implement an innovative, multi-sensory approach that integrates rhythm, movement, and sensory regulation directly into instruction. Yoga Ball Drumming and other gross motor activities provide students with proprioceptive and vestibular input, enhancing attention, coordination, and engagement. Certification in the Interactive Metronome program will provide evidence-based strategies to improve timing, focus, and cognitive processing. By combining these tools with functional academic instruction, students will actively engage with literacy, math, and social-emotional learning in a hands-on, meaningful way. This approach enhances the district curriculum by promoting skill development through movement, sensory integration, and individualized support.

★ Create and Connect ★

Team: Elizabeth Becker and Sarah Sokolowski, Norwood School

Funds Awarded: $500

Provide a brief summary of what you would like to do and share how your students' educational experiences will be enhanced academically and/or socially.

The overall goal is to provide an activity after school to foster community building by creating and collaborating with peers. It would be a safe place for interaction and creativity. While boosting self-confidence and social interactions. Skills gained from inclusion in "create and connect" activities will be transferable to daily peer interactions, leading to a more prosocial school climate.

How will these funds help you deliver an innovative approach to teaching in your classroom or supporting the current district curriculum?

The funds would be used to support social and emotional development through teamwork, increasing self-confidence, and community building within the middle school.

★ English Language Learners Classroom Library★

Teacher: Annie Dampf, Norwood School

Funds Awarded: $300

Provide a brief summary of what you would like to do and share how your students' educational experiences will be enhanced academically and/or socially.

I would like to build a library with books for my multi-lingual learners, particularly those who are newcomers or emerging English language learners, that has age and lexile-appropriate books in both English and other languages. I plan to purchase books in my middle-school students' native languages that are used in their English classes, along with books that students could check out for entertainment. I want to focus also on books written in English that are appropriate for pre-teens and teens to read, but with a lexile level that is appropriate to their ability. My hope is that

my students will develop a love for reading because there will be appealing, age-appropriate options available to them in both their native tongue and in English.

How will these funds help you deliver an innovative approach to teaching in your classroom or supporting the current district curriculum?

By purchasing translated novels used in the Middle School classrooms, students will feel more connected to the curriculum because they will be able to understand the nuance in the writing. The other books will enable me to encourage the "20 minutes of reading per night" recommended by educators by providing a wide variety and style of books that are accessible to students who are still learning the language.

★ Science Table ★

Teacher: Wendy King, Prospect Park

Funds Awarded: $280

Provide a brief summary of what you would like to do and share how your students' educational experiences will be enhanced academically and/or socially.

I would like to use this table in Science and Morphology. With this table, I can change the elevation so students can better see what I'm displaying. Having a place to gather in the classroom will allow me a better small group space.

How will these funds help you deliver an innovative approach to teaching in your classroom or supporting the current district curriculum?

Many times I need to demonstrate a science activity and have to use a student desk. A dedicated table would give me a place to keep the experiment set up for all 3 of my classes, without reassembling. In addition, having a whiteboard topped table like the one I'm requesting will help facilitate small group instruction during Morphology. Students can write directly on the table top, allowing me to see their thinking.

★ Bucs Buddies: Glenolden Initiatives Funding ★

Team: Ed Kloss, Megan Fremont, Madison Iskenian, Lorraine Lonergan

Funds Awarded: $1,000

Provide a brief summary of what you would like to do and share how your students' educational experiences will be enhanced academically and/or socially.

After collaborating with the Autistic Support Teachers and Special Education Team at Glenolden, we are excited to launch a morning snack and coffee cart run by our students. This initiative will provide a service to the school community while giving students meaningful opportunities to develop social skills, soft skills, budgeting, and teamwork. Grant funds will be used to purchase the necessary equipment, including a cart, coffee makers, cups, lids, and snacks. After the initial setup, the program is designed to become self-sustaining through sales, allowing students to see firsthand how planning, responsibility, and collaboration can support ongoing success. Additional funds awarded will go toward enhancing student experiences at seasonal events, such as our inaugural fall and winter festivals. Activities like pumpkin decorating in the fall and holiday cookie baking and decorating in the winter will provide students with opportunities to celebrate together, strengthen social connections, and build a sense of pride and belonging in the Glenolden community. By participating in this program, students will not only gain practical skills but also become more engaged, visible, and valued members of our school.

How will these funds help you deliver an innovative approach to teaching in your classroom or supporting the current district curriculum?

These funds will help us implement an innovative, student-led program that goes beyond traditional classroom instruction by blending practical life skills with positive social-emotional learning. By running a morning snack and coffee cart, students will develop teamwork, budgeting, customer service, and communication skills in a real-world context-skills that complement the academic and social-emotional goals of the district curriculum. The program also provides a platform for inclusive collaboration between general education students and students receiving specialized support. Funding will help reinforce the district's commitment to equity and inclusion. Additional funding for seasonal events, such as fall and winter festivals, allow students to take leadership roles in planning and executing community activities. These activities will promote problem-solving, creativity, and engagement across multiple grade levels. This approach is innovative because it integrates experiential learning, service to the school community, and cross-grade collaboration in a way that traditional classroom activities cannot. Students gain hands-on experience while reinforcing

academic skills like math (through budgeting), reading (through communication and signage), and social studies (through planning events), all while building confidence, empathy, and social connections.

★ STEM Classroom Materials – Snap Circuit Kits, Dash Robots, Chomp Saw ★

Team: Christiana Laky, Prospect Park; Stephanie Eisenman, Norwood School; Michael Van Wyk, Glenolden School

Funds Awarded: $600 ea.

Provide a brief summary of what you would like to do and share how your students' educational experiences will be enhanced academically and/or socially.

A Snap Circuit kit enhances learning by making abstract concepts about circuits and electricity concrete, visual, and engaging. Instead of just reading about how electricity flows or looking at diagrams in a textbook, students can physically build working circuits by snapping the color-coded pieces together. This hands-on approach helps them understand how components like switches, resistors, batteries, and lightbulbs interact in real time. Dash robots enhance learning by turning coding and robotics into an exciting, hands-on experience. Instead of just writing lines of code on a screen, students can see their programming come to life as Dash moves, lights up, makes sounds, and responds to commands. This immediate feedback helps learners understand the direct connection between the code they write and the robot's behavior.

How will these funds help you deliver an innovative approach to teaching in your classroom or supporting the current district curriculum?

Because the pieces are easy to assemble by following directions, learners can experiment freely without fear of mistakes, encouraging exploration and problem solving.

They can quickly see the cause-and-effect relationship of their choices--like what happens when a switch is open versus closed, or how adding a resistor changes the brightness of a bulb. The kit also adds an element of fun and creativity by letting students build projects such as alarms, fans, or even simple radios. This playful experimentation keeps them engaged while reinforcing key STEM skills like critical thinking, logical sequencing, and design. Ultimately, Snap Circuits make electricity and circuits accessible and exciting, giving students a strong foundation in science and engineering concepts through discovery. The robots are designed to be interactive, making complex STEM concepts like sequencing, loops, and events easy to grasp at any grade level. Through challenges and creative projects, students practice problem-solving, critical thinking, and persistence, all while having fun. Because Dash can be programmed with beginner-friendly block coding and later extended into more advanced coding languages, it meets students where they are and grows with them. It also supports collaborative learning, as students often work in pairs or teams to brainstorm, test, and refine their robot's actions--building communication and teamwork skills alongside technical ones. By combining play, creativity, and real-world applications of coding and robotics, Dash robots make abstract concepts tangible, engaging, and memorable, sparking curiosity and confidence in STEM.

★ Learning Support Interactive Tables ★

Teacher: Judith McDevitt, Tinicum School

Funds Awarded: $500

Provide a brief summary of what you would like to do and share how your students' educational experiences will be enhanced academically and/or socially.

A whiteboard U-table will let middle school students stay engaged during reading and encoding interventions by writing and blending sounds directly on the surface for immediate feedback. This interactive setup strengthens decoding and spelling skills, boosting academic growth. Sitting together in a U-shape also encourages peer interaction and cooperative learning, helping students build confidence and social skills while supporting one another's progress.

How will these funds help you deliver an innovative approach to teaching in your classroom or supporting the current district curriculum?

These funds will allow me to add a whiteboard U-table that makes reading and encoding lessons more interactive and hands-on. Students can write, erase, and practice sounds and words in real time while I provide immediate feedback, aligning with our district's literacy curriculum. The flexible setup supports small-group instruction and peer collaboration, creating an innovative, student-centered environment that strengthens both academic skills and social development.

★ Real World Language Experiences ★

Team: Christine Spellacy, Prospect Park; Mary Beth Barnes, Glenolden; Anne Dampf, Norwood; Andrea Ricevuto, Kindergarten Academy; Christa Tait, Glenolden

Funds Awarded: $1,000

Provide a brief summary of what you would like to do and share how your students' educational experiences will be enhanced academically and/or socially.

The EL team would like the opportunity to expose our ELL students to places in the area that their families and themselves don't know about it. These trips would also give the students an opportunity to practice English outside of the classroom to help prepare them to be able to communicate outside of a school setting.

How will these funds help you deliver an innovative approach to teaching in your classroom or supporting the current district curriculum?

These field trips will allow our students to expand their knowledge of English outside of the classroom. They will provide opportunities to enhance their listening, speaking, reading and writing skills outside of the classroom. These trips will also expand their vocabulary and background knowledge, which will help them be successful in their core content classes. After each trip, the students will complete a writing activity.

★ Traveling Exhibit: Salvador Dali ★

Teacher: Jess Vazquez, IHS

Funds Awarded: $560

Provide a brief summary of what you would like to do and share how your students' educational experiences will be enhanced academically and/or socially.

This engaging, immersive presentation will spark curiosity and encourage critical thinking, as students consider Dali's contributions to art and culture while debating whether he was a master showman, a true genius, or perhaps both. Funding will cover the full rental cost of the exhibit, including shipping, handling, and return shipping. This unique opportunity will be utilized by students in all of our World Language classes, as well as our art classes and several history classes. By supporting this project, the grant will help us provide our students with meaningful exposure to the world of surrealism, foster creativity, and expand their appreciation of the arts beyond the classroom.

How will these funds help you deliver an innovative approach to teaching in your classroom or supporting the current district curriculum?

Bringing the Salvador Dali traveling art exhibit into our school will allow us to deliver an innovative approach to teaching by transforming part of the building into an immersive gallery space. Rather than viewing small images in a textbook or on a screen, students will encounter Dali's surrealist works at a dramatic scale, sparking curiosity, discussion, and deeper engagement. Bringing this exhibit to lnterboro supports our district curriculum by encouraging critical thinking, integrating cross-curricular learning and fostering creativity and inquiry-based learning.