



2024-2025

Educator Initiative Grant Recipients

Sports Courts for ALL!

Jeannie Lei, Adaptive Programs

I am seeking a grant of \$1,072.81 to provide "SPORTS COURTS", an instructional text and specialized sports equipment from the American Printing House for the Blind (APH) for students who are Deafblind, blind and/or visually impaired (low vision). My initiative aims to enhance accessibility and participation in sports in order to foster inclusivity, physical fitness, and social engagement for this underserved group of students. Oftentimes, sports are deemed unsafe or inappropriate for Students with Deafblindness, Visual Impairments and Blindness to participate.

This funding will be used to acquire the "SPORTS COURTS" Kit, adaptive equipment, and a text about encouraging student participation and teaching how to modify activities to support teachers and coaches. "SPORTS COURTS" is an instructional kit designed to familiarize Deafblindness, blindness and low vision students with a variety of sports through the use of interactive and tactile maps and manipulatives so that they become oriented with the layout of different sports.

My ultimate anticipated outcome is to have students with Deafblindness, blindness, and low vision become passionate about a sport that could lead them to the Paralympics! However, I would also be happy if our students became more active and engaged with their peers in gym activities. Also, I would love it if these tools help motivate students to get active and try new sports outside of school.

Dream On - STEAM On

T. Suzanne Saba, Antelope Ridge Elementary School

This elementary school no longer has a Technology or STEM class, and this impacts all of the students at this school. In order to further all the students creativity and innovation, I am implementing a new type of teaching and learning for the students in the art room called TAB - Teaching for Artistic Behaviors and including a STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art and math) emphasis for all students to explore. A TAB art classroom asks the students "The Art Classroom is their Studio...what will you create?".

TAB Art classrooms are well organized studio environments with clearly delineated expectations. There will be choices of various workspaces, art media, and tools available for the students to access and arrange independently to initiate exploration in their art and creativity!

With TAB, the students are in charge of their learning making decisions based on their artistic styles, while enhancing exploration. All students benefit from this STEAM based TAB art classroom which is an inclusive environment building on students strengths as learners in a creative and innovative way.

Entrepreneur Kids Club: Student Business

Brian Sachs, Antelope Ridge Elementary School

For the second year, my fourth and fifth graders will continue to gain the in-person opportunity to use their creativity and learn about the building blocks to create their own businesses. We will approach this club using the Engineering and Design process. At the same time, teams of students will come up with a business plan, tap into their artistic abilities, learn from professional entrepreneurs within our community, and create their own business. Using this style/process, students will have the chance to connect STEM, with Financial Literacy and emotional creativity. Learning these skills can help students understand success and learn from not succeeding. This club teaches real-life skills and encourages

students to continue their success in the classroom. I continue to be asked from students, " Why do I need to learn math or science or economics." This club is going to help students answer that question for themselves, through their own experiences and newly gained knowledge. This club continues to be needed because it provides students with one more opportunity to display their talents and teach them about different aspects to business, and how businesses are run.

Our fourth and fifth graders will use a variety of materials to design, candles, keychains, jewelry, games, coasters, bookmarks, models, etc. They will become entrepreneurs, who learn how to grow during challenges and continue to reach further when they succeed. Last years Entrepreneur Kids Club inspired so many students, so much that we have 85-90 fourth and fifth grade students who have signed up to be in the club. Partnering with Cherry Creek Schools Foundation and applying for this grant will assist my students in having the upfront funds to start off their businesses. Every year, I make the promise to always do anything I can to help my students succeed. I know that this club is another way to continue that promise.

Planning and Problem Solving

Noa Baumgarten, Antelope Ridge Elementary School

We, as the Occupational Therapist, School Social Worker, and Special Intervention ILC teacher, seek to provide inquiry-based small group experiences for our moderate and severe needs 4th and 5th grade students.

Students approaching middle school benefit from opportunities to explore with their hands and problem solve in preparation for increasing academic demands and to foster critical thinking and problem solving abilities. Students also have the opportunity to work collaboratively and build community with peers and supporting adults, and this will serve them in their future academic and professional careers and beyond. Through these challenging tasks, students will have the opportunity to practice self-regulation skills during periods of frustration within the small group setting.

In previous years we have seen the benefits of using a science-based curriculum to build on classroom learning and provide additional learning opportunities for moderate and severe needs students. We anticipate that students who participate in our planning and problem solving group will demonstrate increased problem solving skills, confidence, mental flexibility, and grit. Students will also be familiar with following the scientific method, and will understand the importance of respecting peers' ideas, asking for help, and not giving up.

The Landing Zone

Anita Turner-Corwin, Antelope Ridge Elementary School

The Landing is a Positive Behavioral Intervention System and Social Emotional Learning platform for the students of Antelope Ridge Elementary. The Landing at ANR is inspired by the Loft regulation room at Independence Elementary. The Landing will function as ANR's regulation area and the launching center for several community-building events and projects. The community-building projects includes our Lunch Leaders (LL) program, Family Game Night, and the Landing Regulation Room.

Lunch Leaders (LL): Our 3rd, 4th and 5th grade students are acting as mentors to the Kindergarten, 1st and 2nd grade students during lunch and recess. The LL program is intended to increase student safety and enjoyment during lunch and recess. The older students coach the younger students in peer engagement and conflict resolution. As a result, they are more aware of their role in peer conflict with their classmates in other settings employing their resolution skills to avoid flare-ups among their friends.

The LL students are required to fill out an application explaining why they want to be a LL. The students are selected to work in small groups (6 to 8 older students per grade) to play and eat with their younger community members. The sessions last for two weeks. The older students participate in a specially designed training to help them understand their role and the expectations for LL. We allow students to volunteer again if they would like. At the end of their two week session, the students are celebrated with a donut party and processing meeting. The students share their glows and grows from their period of service. This information is used to refine the program and update the training for future volunteers. To promote the LL program, volunteers are asked to help with morning announcements and other leadership roles. They will also be honored at our HERD Celebration Assemblies when parents and other community members are in attendance.

Family Game Night (FGN): We welcome ANR families to attend a game night at our school to talk about how playing games with our students helps them practice both their academic and SEL skills. All families who participate gather in the library to talk about emotional regulation and the SEL curriculum presented at ANR. We also promote our other Landing programs. After this presentation, families will transition to one of several areas of the school to participate in games grouped around certain set of skills. Families return to the library at the end of the night to participate in a drawing. Their ticket for entry into the drawing is a 4-question slip where they identify themselves, talk about a new skill they learned and how they will use that knowledge in the future at home.

Landing Regulation Room: One of the most important functions of the Landing is to act as a regulation space for students who have difficulty engaging in their academic goals. These students are asked to participate in a Zones of Regulation small group to learn skills around recognizing and independently selecting an appropriate regulation tool for their circumstances. This model is directly fashioned after the Loft at Independence Elementary. Teachers and other learning professionals can refer students to the Loft. The teacher, student and other professionals work together to establish a plan for regulation for each student. The plan is specifically designed for each student and their needs. The Landing has gathered very favorable data from this program and we hope to duplicate their success.

Wonder Bins

Megan Koopman, Antelope Ridge Elementary School

Moving away from a pre-made knowledge, the innovative mindset allows our learners to construct their own knowledge by creating and interacting with physical objects. Renovated learning through hands-on Wonder Tubs will allow students to build a culture of creativity, innovation and discovery that will provide students with real-world challenges.

Brainball- Learning through Play!

Xeng Vue, Arrowhead Elementary School

Brainball- Learning through Play is a physical education cross-curricular system that emphasizes on math, reading, and writing improvement. In addition, not only does it help with improvement of math, reading, and writing scores; this curricular-system also improves and provide physical benefits in gross and fine motor skills, cooperative, and cognitive learning.

Brainball is an engaging and fun innovative way to incorporate learning into a Physical Education setting that will help students not only to be physically active and develop their fine and gross motor skills, but also help students to learn about classroom content in a exciting way that will keep them motivated to continue to improve their learning. With this being said, I'm inspired to apply for this grant because I would like to help find a fun, innovative, and exciting teaching strategy to help all students of different

backgrounds at Arrowhead to make strides and improve on their academics. This grant is needed because all students deserve the best in terms of providing proper academic support in order to bring out and help them realize their fullest potential. Students will realize growth and improvements upon their academics with this system while having fun and students will find new ways that will help them learn. With this grant, I'm hoping to help make an academic impact within our school by bringing a cross-curricular system to engage and provide another support system to help our students learn and help our school improve academically.

Empowering Communication for Change Grant

Yuliya Caruso, Arrowhead Elementary School

Students with speech difficulties often face significant barriers to effectively communicate throughout their day, which can impact their social interactions, academic performance, and emotional well-being. With the requested materials, I hope to provide engaging and effective supports in the areas of speech and language to help students grow their communication. By investing in these therapy materials as well as speech assessments, we aim to help determine appropriate goals and to create a more stimulating learning environment that fosters language development and boosts confidence in our young communicators. The hope is to empower our students to achieve their communication goals in an organized and meaningful way that is effective and impactful in their lives. Ultimately, we hope to bridge the gap between therapy and everyday communication, ensuring that every child has the opportunity to express themselves fully and intelligibly as well as connect with their peers and teachers.

Bell Brew Coffee Cart

Caitlin Anderson, Belleview Elementary School

My name is Caitlin Anderson. I am the School Occupational Therapist at Belleview Elementary. I am applying for this grant along with our ILC Director (Colleen Rodocker) on behalf of our SPED team. We are applying to this grant to gain the funds we need to start "Bell Brew Coffee Cart." We would like to create Bell Brew Coffee Cart to provide students who receive Special Education (primarily students in the ILC program) with a functional, real life activity to work on academic, executive functioning, fine motor, and social skills. Programs such as Bitty & Beau (nationwide coffee shop) & Brewability (local pizza restaurant/brewery) also contributed to our inspiration. Seeing young adults happy, thriving, and successfully working at these places shows our team how important it is that we provide them with opportunities to learn those skills early on. Study after study has shown the importance of real-life activities having a greater impact than simulated activities. Our students will benefit from working on these pre-requisite skills in a fun and engaging program rather than through abstract worksheets and pretend items. Our students need to be engaged and excited to learn effectively. They need hands-on practice to be able to master skills. With the Bell Brew Coffee Cart, students would have a weekly opportunity to work on skills in a fun, engaging, and comfortable learning environment. Without student engagement in lessons and without opportunities for growth, we cannot expect our students to gain these skills at the rate that they could with a real and engaging activity.

GoZen Curriculum

Kathleen Stuart, Belleview Elementary School

We would like to request funding for 10 school licenses for the GoZen program, an innovative educational tool designed to enhance social-emotional learning (SEL) for students. Our 4th and 5th grade teachers are seeking SEL materials that students find exciting and applicable. The GoZen program offers a comprehensive curriculum that targets key emotional and social skills, which are particularly crucial for older elementary students as they navigate increasingly complex social environments. We piloted this program in one fourth grade classroom during the previous school year with great success

with student engagement.

Our objective is to implement the GoZen program at Belleview to provide older elementary students with valuable skills in managing emotions, building resilience, and fostering positive relationships. As the peer leaders in our school, they will model these skills to our younger students. By securing 10 licenses, we aim to support all eight classrooms and equip them with the tools necessary for their personal and academic growth. The additional two licenses are for the mental health team to support both grade levels with implementation.

Beginning Readers for Older Students

Kelsey Gardner, Buffalo Trail Elementary School

This grant proposal seeks to provide high-interest, low-level decodable readers from High Noon Books to support older elementary students who are beginning or emergent readers. These books are carefully aligned with phonics principles and the Science of Reading framework, making them an essential resource for students who struggle with foundational literacy skills.

What I hope to achieve: My aim is to create an engaging and supportive reading environment for students who face challenges in reading fluency and comprehension. By incorporating decodable readers that cater to their developmental level, I hope to build confidence, improve literacy skills, and foster a love for reading.

Why it is needed: Many older elementary students struggle to find age-appropriate reading materials that meet their developmental needs. The majority of texts available to them are either too difficult or not engaging enough, which can lead to frustration and disinterest in reading. These decodable readers fill a critical gap by offering content that is both accessible and engaging for struggling readers.

What inspired me to apply: I was inspired to apply by the noticeable gap in resources for older elementary students who are still developing foundational literacy skills. While these students have the cognitive ability to engage with higher-level content, their reading abilities often lag behind. I believe that targeted support using materials grounded in the Science of Reading will make a meaningful difference. I have individually purchased one small set of these readers and have seen significant improvement and increased interest from some of my students that struggle the most.

Anticipated outcome: If successful, I anticipate improved reading fluency, confidence, and engagement in our struggling readers. I expect to see measurable improvements in reading assessments, along with greater enthusiasm for independent reading. Ultimately, this initiative will help close the literacy gap for older students, setting them on a path toward academic success.

Celebrating our uniqueness!

Anna Esgro, Buffalo Trail Elementary School

My goal is to provide writing, drawing, and growth mindset supplies that support my culturally diverse classroom. This would include crayons and markers that represent different skin tones, as well as executive functioning resources and materials that show a variety of backgrounds, such as different skin tones, different family support systems, and a variety of caregivers.

Kindergarteners enter school with a vast variety of backgrounds and experiences. For some, it could be their first exposure to interacting with others who are different, and for some, it is their first exposure to structure and a safe, reliable environment.

I want to provide an environment where students feel seen and represented throughout each day of learning. Having materials that represent a variety of backgrounds, living situations and culture will support a nurturing community where each each feels seen and heard.

The reason I am applying for this grant is because I deeply value each child that I teach. Feeling welcome and included is paramount for learning progression to occur.

The anticipated outcome is that each student in my class feels that they belong, that where they come from is to be celebrated and that their individual home environment is important and welcome. With the tools provided, they will say things like "that family looks like my family" or "I live with my grandparents just like the characters in the story" and they will be able to find drawing utensils that match their own skin tone when we are illustrating our stories during writing time.

Construction Creations

Kim Casali, Buffalo Trail Elementary School

I want to create an opportunity for my STEM classes to learn about, utilize and create with construction tools. Last year I was given the opportunity through district STEM days to visit my feeder middle schools and learn about how as an elementary STEM teacher I can help prepare students to engage in MS STEM. The number of MS students taking STEM classes, especially girls has not been increasing. Another thing I learned is that most students cannot read a tape measure or ruler. In reflecting on this visit, I thought I could help bridge the gap and support readiness for middle school by providing construction opportunities at elementary level to engage students with saws, drills, hammers, measuring and basic building skills. In May, I applied for a grant from the Burns/McDonnell Foundation for construction tables for my STEM workshop. I was awarded \$4940.00 to purchase the tables. The tables were the first step in my inspiration to create opportunities for construction at Buffalo Trail. In order to really allow students construction exposure, I need the support of CCSF to purchase tools and supplies. It is my hope with these construction supplies, I will be able to give the students at Buffalo Trail, the opportunity to experience: cutting, sawing, screw/nail connecting, and measuring. I am hopeful this exposure will help increase the number of students participating in MS STEM, including more girls, and potentially more students finding construction as an interest to pursue in their Pathway of Purpose.

Flexible Learning for Diverse Learners

Molly Aschenbrenner, Buffalo Trail Elementary School

Kids need to move. A lot. 4th grade bodies were never meant to sit still, in one place, and absorb information that a teacher dispenses for hours on end. And yet, that is exactly what standard classroom furniture asks of our students. As a fourth-grade teacher, I am constantly asking students to keep their chairs flat on the floor. I do this for their safety. The traditional classroom chairs are not meant to be balanced on or tipped or rocked. They are built to be flat on the ground and sat in. For students that need to move, the traditional classroom chairs can be hazardous. I have at least one student each day fall off of a traditional chair because they are balancing on the end or rocking or tipping the chair. By making wobble stools available to students, we are enabling students to move around safely and in a way that is not a disruption to the rest of the class.

I was inspired to ask for the wobble stools because students are requesting more than my two current stools for alternative seating. I only have two, so students argue about who gets to sit in them each day. By providing my classroom with 10 more stools, I can reach more students who learn better while being able to wobble. Furthermore, I can repeat this year after year as wobble stools are non-consumable classroom items.

Inclusive Innovation: Assistive Tech for Every Need

Jordan Walton, Buffalo Trail Elementary School

Assistive technology, particularly switch toys, plays a crucial role in enhancing communication and accessibility for students with severe needs, fostering a more inclusive and supportive educational environment. Switch toys are designed to be user-friendly and adaptable, allowing students with limited motor skills to engage in interactive activities and communicate effectively. By providing these students with tools that cater to their unique needs, we not only promote their personal growth but also create a more equitable school community where every student has the opportunity to participate and thrive. The integration of assistive technology into classroom settings can transform the learning experience, breaking down barriers that previously hindered students' ability to interact and learn.

My goal in applying for this grant is to expand the availability of switch toys and other assistive technologies in our school, ensuring that every student with severe needs has access to the tools they require for effective communication and participation. This initiative is inspired by witnessing the profound impact that such technology has on students' engagement and confidence. By securing this grant, we anticipate a significant improvement in student interactions, academic performance, and overall well-being. Successful implementation will result in a more inclusive educational environment where all students are empowered to contribute and succeed, fostering a stronger, more connected school community.

Sensory Play and Exploration for Independence

Camila Gonzalez, Buffalo Trail Elementary School

Buffalo Trail Elementary School's Speech and Occupational Therapy departments are seeking funding for a Sensory Play and Exploration Project. This initiative aims to support 16 students ages Kindergarten to fifth grade with severe needs by enhancing their developmental skills through sensory activities like science experiments and cooking groups. The project's objective is to improve fine motor, language, executive functioning, and play skills, thereby increasing their independence and daily functioning. The need for this project arises from the current lack of resources, which limits the effectiveness of sensory activities. The funding will help acquire specialized materials for a sensory-rich learning environment, directly benefiting the 16 students in the severe needs program.

'Storybook Adventures: Fostering Social-Emotional Growth through Play'

Kara Collins, Buffalo Trail Elementary School

What you hope to achieve:

The primary goal of the "Storybook Adventures/Storybook Workshop" class is to foster literacy, creativity, and social-emotional development in kindergarten students through a multidisciplinary approach. By integrating storytelling, art projects and imaginative play, we aim to engage students in meaningful play that enhances their cognitive, social, and emotional skills. Specifically, the project seeks to:

Improve students' literacy, including language, vocabulary, and comprehension skills.

Foster creativity and self-expression through pretend play and make believe in addition to creative projects.

Build social-emotional skills such as empathy, teamwork, and emotional resilience.

Support whole-child development by engaging students' cognitive, physical, emotional, and social capacities.

Why it is needed:

Many students face challenges in traditional classroom settings, especially in areas like literacy and social-emotional learning. Kindergarten is a crucial time for developing these foundational skills, and current educational approaches may not fully engage all learners, particularly those with diverse needs or learning styles. Dr. Stuart Brown's research emphasizes the role of play in promoting brain development, creativity, and resilience, yet many classrooms don't leverage play to its full potential or have the time with the ongoing demand of rigorous teaching. By integrating the arts with literacy instruction, this project addresses the gap in current approaches by offering a playful, hands-on way for students to build vital skills while enjoying the process.

What inspired you to apply:

The inspiration for this grant application stems from the transformative power of play-based learning as highlighted in Dr. Stuart Brown's research. His work on the cognitive and emotional benefits of play has influenced many educators to rethink how young children learn best. Observing how storytelling and play can captivate and engage young learners further solidified the need for an integrated approach. Applying for this grant offers an opportunity to bring these research-backed ideas to life in the classroom and create an enriching environment that nurtures not just academic but also emotional and creative growth.

The anticipated outcome, including what will be different or better if you are successful:

If successful, this project will create a dynamic, inclusive classroom environment where students can thrive both academically and socially. We anticipate the following outcomes:

Improved Literacy: Students will demonstrate stronger language, comprehension, and vocabulary skills through storytelling and thematic play related activities.

Enhanced Creativity: Children will gain confidence in expressing themselves through different mediums, including visual arts, and dramatization.

Stronger Social-Emotional Skills: By working together in collaborative play, students will develop empathy, teamwork, and emotional awareness.

Increased Engagement: Students who may struggle in traditional settings will have the chance to engage with learning in new, playful ways, making them more invested in their education.

The Differentiated Math Classroom

Erin Angelo, Buffalo Trail Elementary School

Through this grant opportunity, about 225 students at Buffalo Trail Elementary School will receive better differentiated instruction in the gifted cluster group classrooms by increasing their access to several resources designed to add challenge, and spark interest and curiosity in math. Students will have access to Illuminations, a standards-based resource for learning mathematics, including online interactive tools. They will also be able to use Make Math Moments, an online resource designed to engage students in deep conceptual mathematics learning tasks, including problem based investigations. Additionally, students will be able to view and interact with video lessons, projects, and investigations designed to promote thinking skills using the subscription based online resources called Byrdseed TV. Students will be able to use materials from Beast Academy, designed to learn math concepts and develop problem solving skills using higher order reasoning. In addition to components designed specifically for students, these resources include instructional support for teachers, resulting in better delivery of differentiated instruction.

A last resource that would help differentiate math problem solving instruction is the Continental Mathematics League. The students in grade levels 2 - 5 are invited to participate in 3-5 math "meets" per year, in which they answer 5 unique math problems. Students are even able to compete in the grade

level above their current grade. The top six scorers in each grade level are entered in the national team contest.

These resources are needed to better differentiate math instruction for our students. Each student has varied learning needs. They differ in learning styles, readiness, and interests. When instruction is differentiated, and aligned with student needs, student engagement increases, and their performance in the classroom and achievement improve. As a teacher of neurodiverse students, one of my roles in the school building is to support regular classroom teachers by coplanning and coteaching with them to help meet the needs of all students, so students can access the curriculum in ways that are meaningful and effective. These resources provide me with additional lessons and learning activities that the regular classroom teacher and I can use to differentiate math content. I was inspired to apply for this grant because I have noticed that these students need something different to keep them motivated and engaged in learning.

The anticipated outcome of using these materials is to have better engagement from students doing math, better conceptual understanding of math for students, better perseverance towards challenging math problems, more confidence with rigorous math problem solving skills, and higher student achievement.

Wind Turbine Design

Sherry Groegor-Godwin, Campus Middle School

The objective of this grant is to offer students hands-on inquiry-based laboratory experiences, enabling them to take an active role in their learning. By designing wind turbines, students will deepen their understanding of renewable energy and explore wind as a clean, reliable, and sustainable power source. This experience will not only enhance their grasp of the science behind wind turbines but also provide them with practical skills in engineering, problem-solving, and environmental stewardship. By actively engaging in the design process, students will develop a comprehensive understanding of how renewable energy technologies can address real-world challenges and contribute to a more sustainable future. Integrating real-world scientific investigations is a critical component of effective education, as it fosters deeper student engagement by connecting theoretical concepts to practical, everyday applications. As a dedicated educator, my primary goal is to ignite curiosity and cultivate a passion for learning by making meaningful connections between classroom lessons and real-world experiences. I believe that education is most impactful when students can see how the material applies to their lives and future aspirations. By creating an environment that emphasizes active, hands-on learning, I strive to empower students to think critically, solve complex problems, and apply their knowledge in practical ways, equipping them with the skills needed to excel in both academic and professional contexts.

As an 7th grade science teacher, I am inspired to apply for this grant to provide my students with the resources and experiences that can help shape potential career paths in science and other STEM-related fields. This grant will support all students in my classroom by offering valuable opportunities to explore science and STEM while developing 21st-century skills and knowledge that will position them for long-term success in their future careers.

A Gathering Place for Canyon Creek

Kara Taylor, Canyon Creek Elementary School

We are seeking to transform the library at Canyon Creek into a warm and inviting gathering space that encourages both students and teachers to spend time there beyond the classroom setting. The recent departure of our librarian and the subsequent clearance of the library have left the space with only

books on shelves, rendering it cold and unwelcoming. Previously, the library was a vibrant and engaging environment, but it has now become stark and impersonal. We are committed to restoring its vitality.

With the support of this grant, we aim to create a space where meaningful relationships can flourish among students and staff, fostering an atmosphere conducive to growth and success. Our goal is to make the library an inclusive place where all students are inspired to linger and where their passion for reading can thrive. This would include meeting the sensory needs of students, especially those in our large ILC and AN programs. This investment in our library is intended to demonstrate our commitment to our school community, ensuring that both students and staff feel recognized and valued. Currently, the library's condition suggests a lack of regard for our community, and we are dedicated to changing that perception through this revitalization effort.

A Gathering Spot for Canyon Creek

Cecelia Magro, Canyon Creek Elementary School

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Gathering Place For Canyon Creek

Kristy Craun, Canyon Creek Elementary School

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We want to create a space where all the students feel welcomed and encouraged to be a part of. We would like to have each student represented within this space with a mural of sorts to show the faces of Canyon. We would also like to see this space as a place to feel proud of when we are gathered for staff meetings, PTO meetings, PASS meetings, and other community events.

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Traditional Clay Patterned Vessels

Amanda Arlington, Canyon Creek Elementary School

I would like to show students traditional clay vessels from around the world. We would study shape, purpose and methods of fabrication. Students would then create their own patterns on a vessel according to visual art elements that are important to them. In this manner students would be able to study how traditional societies use and make clay earthenware and why they decorate the clay earthenware with the symbols they do. It would broaden students' horizons by showing them that art in traditional societies serves as a way to collect and disseminate narratives and stories.

This project is needed because students have not had exposure to traditional narrative symbol making in my class. This project would serve to provide them with a context for why and how traditional societies make functional pottery to help keep track of their culture and lineage. This would be part of a global citizen study that would provide students greater understanding of art from around the world.

I am inspired to apply because I want to find new ways to reach students with interesting projects I could not otherwise offer due to funding constraints.

English 11 Dystopian Unit Choice Book Library

Christina Nelson, Cherokee Trail High School

At Cherokee Trail High School, one of our primary focuses for developing curriculum is to incorporate personal choice novels that are centered around spotlighting all voices and perspectives. We are developing a dystopian unit that will allow students to choose from high-interest novels that are grade-level, age-appropriate, and diverse. We are supplementing the literary bookshelf with text that will help students develop critical thinking skills around identifying and empathizing with social evils, examining real fears, predicting the future, developing social and intellectual awareness, understanding the importance of literary lenses, and making real-world connections to current events. Through personal choice units, our goal is that students will learn about unlearning their own biases, and recognizing their individual purpose and position in the world.

Inclusive Literacy: Empowering Struggling Readers Through Graphic Novels for Equity and Engagement

Chloe Draper, Cherokee Trail High School

My goal is simple: I want my students to experience book love. Inspired by the incredible work of Penny Kittle, I am dedicated to creating a classroom that feels welcoming, engaging, vibrant, and supportive—a place where every student can grow in their reading identity. I believe that graphic novels can unlock the door to reading for students who have struggled to connect with traditional books. These visually rich stories provide a unique way to engage all readers, especially those who may not yet see themselves as readers.

This project is needed because many students are still searching for that spark—the book that changes everything for them. In a world where technology is King, I want to ignite joy and hope around reading. By introducing graphic novels, I hope to create more opportunities for every student to find a story that resonates. The anticipated outcome is that students will not only improve their reading skills but will also develop a genuine love for books. If successful, this initiative will foster a classroom culture where reading is accessible, enjoyable, and empowering for all, just like Penny Kittle.

Sports Medicine @ Cherokee Trail Grant

Elizabeth Creamer, Cherokee Trail High School

The sports Sports Medicine course at Cherokee Trail high school has experienced a tremendous amount of growth in the past five years. Current class enrollment is higher than ever with 14 sections of 32 students each. The hope is to allow all students the ability to work in smaller groups for hands-on experiences within the curriculum. One of the hands-on experiences is learning the skills associated with "Stop the Bleed". Within this unit students are exposed to direct teacher instruction and teacher demonstrations. Currently the classes have to share two manikin legs when practicing "Stop the Bleed" skills. These manikins allow for real-world applications, promoting students to practice life saving skills. During a semester over 300 students are CPR/AED and First Aid/Stop the Bleed certified. With the current supplies, the student to manikin ratio is 32:2. We are requesting an additional 8 manikin legs allowing students to have a 4:1 ratio. This change will improve the student's experience, as well as foster the learning environment for more hands-on and practical skill assessments.

In addition to enhancing student based learning, teachers and staff will also benefit from the leg manikins. Each year teachers, coaches, and staff members will be able to use them while completing their CPR/AED and First Aid/Stop the Bleed certifications.

Stop the Bleed Kits

Ashley Nance, Cherokee Trail High School

Our Sports Medicine Class has exploded over the past 4 years going from 7 sections to 14 Sections all with at least 30 kids per section. We currently have 4 teachers teaching sports medicine and do not have enough supplies to support our growth. We currently have 2 Stop the Bleed Legs which have been well used and hard to give students the quality hand on experience and practice with a 30:2 kid to leg ratio. By getting more Stop the Bleed legs we hope that students will get the hands-on experience and practice they deserve to learn this life saving skill. We certify over 300 students a semester in CPR/AED First aid and Stop the Bleed every semester and hope that they can truly get the hands-on experience they deserve while learning these skills. With a total of 8 legs it would allow each table to have a leg and all practice the skills at one time. Right now it is more of a teacher demonstration.

We also certify teachers (that want to be Stop the Bleed Certified) at the start of the year that want it. We look at the red bags and teach how to use one in them if something were to happen. With more Stop the Bleed Legs the training would be efficient and effectively

Summit of Strength

Cally Macosko-Jones, Cherokee Trail High School

We seek funding to support an immersive team-building and leadership development experience for AVID students through an adventure course. Our goal is to empower these students with essential skills in collaboration, problem-solving, and leadership that will serve them in their academic journeys in high school and college and in their future careers. This initiative is crucial because many of our AVID students face unique challenges, including limited access to enrichment opportunities that foster personal growth beyond the classroom.

The adventure course provides a hands-on, dynamic environment where students can build confidence, develop resilience, and strengthen their interpersonal skills, all of which are critical for their success in higher education and beyond. The inspiration for this proposal comes from witnessing the

transformative impact of experiential learning on students' attitudes and behaviors.

By providing this opportunity, we aim to bridge the gap between academic knowledge and real-world application, helping students realize their potential as future leaders.

If successful, this program will create a lasting impact by equipping students with the tools to thrive in diverse, challenging environments. We anticipate a noticeable improvement in their confidence, teamwork, and leadership abilities, which will positively influence their academic performance and prepare them for leadership roles in their communities.

Making Albums

Seth Geltman, Cherry Creek Academy

Making Albums

In 2019, our school was fortunate enough to receive a grant for our proposal "Schoolhouse Rock: By Kids." The instruments we purchased with that grant have been integral to our class success. We use them in a class called ALITA (Autonomous Learning in the Arts). ALITA is an opportunity for students to engage in small group projects, calling on their own creativity, critical thinking, and collaborative skills. The instruments purchased with our 2019 grant funds included guitars, basses, and violins. In this era of pervasive computer and high-tech devices, our kids have found these instruments to be a kind of refuge, a highly interactive and 'organic' way to exchange ideas and explore their imaginations. It has also highlighted the long-term benefits of developing patience and craftsmanship through music-making.

The inspiration for making this application comes from my students. It's been amazing to see their dedication to this art and craft of music-making that goes back so many centuries.

Since they have become increasingly proficient at playing instruments, we'd like to take the next step: developing their skills in music production through student-recorded albums. These would be collections of students' original songs, music from their curriculum, and tunes they enjoy, captured in an album format that students and families would enjoy for decades to come. By incorporating recording technology into their learning process, we can offer them a fuller understanding of how music is created and shared beyond live performance, giving them practical experience in both performance and production.

We'd like to maintain a 'minimal-screen' musical culture with recording. To this end, we're seeking funding for a TASCAM DP-24SD Digital Portastudio. This device has many features in common with analog recording devices of the past, while having the capability of 'computerized' modern digital audio workstations. It has very little screen presence and offers the tactile satisfaction and challenge of sliding levers and knobs that one would find in a professional recording studio.

We'd also like to outfit the studio with monitors, pop filters for microphones, cables, and acoustic wall treatment.

Cherry Creek Link

Diane Friedericks, Cherry Creek Elevation

Through this grant, our goal is to create a supportive and engaging learning environment that enhances the social-emotional learning skills of at-risk and vulnerable students in the Cherry Creek Link program. This initiative is crucial because many students, especially those facing emotional, social, or academic

challenges, struggle to regulate their emotions and stay focused in traditional classrooms. With rising stress and anxiety, providing tools that support Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) is essential. Sensory items like sound machines, thinking putty, and fidgets help students calm down, reduce anxiety, and channel energy positively, while puzzles and a garden fountain promote mindfulness and focus. Additionally, creating beads offers a creative, hands-on activity for self-expression and will be used as a reward system to celebrate both small and big achievements, fostering positive behavior and a sense of accomplishment. These resources will help students better manage their emotions, focus, and engage more effectively. By creating a calm, supportive space, students will feel safe and empowered to participate, leading to improved academic performance and well-being. This initiative meets the growing need for emotional support in schools, particularly among the at-risk student population, helping students develop the skills needed to thrive in and out of the classroom. Throughout the first weeks of the Link program, the staff has participated in numerous professional development opportunities, many of which have emphasized the positive affects of social-emotional learning for students. Having the necessary supplies to help support the social-emotional learning among our students will only increase their growth and success throughout the program. The Link teachers and staff are passionate about creating an inclusive and supportive space where all students can thrive, and this grant offers a meaningful way to help achieve that goal. If successful, the anticipated outcome of this initiative is improvement in students' ability to manage their emotions, focus on tasks, and engage more actively in learning. We expect to see reduced stress and anxiety among students, leading to a more positive and supportive classroom. Students will be better equipped to handle challenges, stay focused, and develop stronger social-emotional skills. Additionally, the reward system, such as creating beads, will foster a sense of achievement, encouraging positive behavior and participation. Overall, students will experience greater academic success and enhanced well-being, laying the foundation for continued growth both in and outside the classroom.

Enhancing Educational Outcomes for At-Risk and Vulnerable Students

Kyle Senger, Cherry Creek Elevation

-Through this grant, we aim to achieve a significant improvement in student focus and engagement, the ability to access STEM and text-to-speech tools, leading to better academic outcomes and improved social-emotional development for at-risk and vulnerable students.

-This initiative is crucial because at-risk and vulnerable students often encounter significant barriers to academic success, including emotional, social, and environmental challenges. One growing issue is the distraction caused by cell phones, which further hinders their ability to focus in the classroom. Traditional approaches may not fully address their unique needs, resulting in disengagement and lower academic performance. To counter this, we propose using cell phone lock pouches to minimize distractions and Bluetooth headphones to help students concentrate in learning environments and access STEM resources and text-to-speech tools. By creating a focused, supportive space that prioritizes social-emotional learning (SEL) and individualized attention, we aim to improve their well-being, foster engagement, and unlock their potential for success.

-My motivation to apply for this grant stems from my experiences with at-risk and vulnerable students, who often face challenges that traditional education systems fail to address. I've seen how, with the right support and resources, these students can thrive both academically and emotionally. I've heard that similar initiatives have been successful in receiving grant approval, which further encourages me to pursue this opportunity to make a meaningful difference in their lives.

-If successful, this initiative will foster a more focused and supportive learning environment for at-risk

and vulnerable students. By minimizing distractions through cell phone lock pouches and equipping students with Bluetooth headphones that facilitate the use of text-to-speech and STEM tools, we anticipate enhanced student engagement, improved academic performance, and greater social-emotional well-being. Students will be more attentive and present in class, enabling them to absorb and apply the material more effectively. Additionally, by cultivating a sense of safety and inclusivity, we expect students to participate more actively and feel valued within the classroom community. Ultimately, this project aims to bridge the gap for students who typically struggle in traditional educational settings, equipping them with the resources they need to thrive both academically and in their everyday lives.

School Spirit #1.24-25.KS

Diann Mazingo, Cherry Creek Elevation

Through this grant, we aim to achieve a significant improvement in student focus and engagement, leading to better academic outcomes and improved social-emotional development for at-risk and vulnerable students. Our Educator Initiative Grant proposal seeks to create a welcoming and inclusive school environment for at-risk youth by providing school-branded gear such as rugs, t-shirts, pens, water bottles, stickers and banners. These items will foster a sense of belonging, encouraging students to view the school as their second home, which is essential for their emotional and academic success.

This initiative is crucial because at-risk and vulnerable students often encounter significant barriers to academic success, including emotional, social, and environmental challenges. One barrier is school connectedness. We would like to develop school pride so students feel welcomed in space and feel a sense of belonging and ownership of the space.

My motivation to apply for this grant stems from my experiences with at-risk and vulnerable students, who often face challenges that traditional education systems fail to address. I've seen how, with the right support and resources, these students can thrive both academically and emotionally. Many at-risk youth do not feel as though they belong nor do they feel a sense of pride in their school. Cherry Creek Link is currently part of the Cherry Creek Elevation space. Understandably so, all of the decor/signage is Cherry Creek Elevation. We would like to buy rugs, banners, and other materials (t-shirts, water bottles, pens, stickers, etc.) with the Cherry Creek Link logo in order to help students feel as though the space is also theirs and that they are just "renting" Elevation space. Our experiences working with at-risk youth have shown us that when students feel more connected to their school, they are more likely to thrive both socially and academically. We were inspired to apply for this grant after seeing how small gestures—like personalized t-shirts or school banners—can significantly enhance students' sense of identity and pride in their school.

If successful, this initiative will create a more inclusive and welcoming school environment. Students will feel valued and recognized as important members of the school community. We anticipate improved student engagement, increased school attendance, and a more positive school culture overall. The visible changes to the school environment will signal to students that they are part of something bigger, creating a lasting impact on their educational journey.

CPR Mannequin

Tyson Allen, Cherry Creek High School

Why Getting CPR Mannequins Would Be Beneficial for Health Class:

Incorporating CPR mannequins into our health curriculum would provide our students with hands-on, practical experience essential for mastering lifesaving skills. Learning CPR is not only a critical component of our health education but also a vital life skill that can make a significant difference in emergency situations. By having access to CPR mannequins, students will gain the confidence and proficiency needed to perform CPR effectively. I am certified to teach CPR through American Red Cross and would like to gain these resources to certify students.

Inspiration for Applying to the Grant:

My inspiration to apply for this grant stems from a deep commitment to ensuring that our students are equipped with practical, life-saving skills. I want my students to not only learn about CPR but also to practice it in a realistic setting. The grant opportunity presented a chance to bring this crucial resource into our classroom and elevate our health education program.

Anticipated Outcome:

If successful in securing this grant, the integration of CPR mannequins into our curriculum will yield several positive outcomes:

Enhanced Skill Acquisition: Students will have the opportunity to practice CPR techniques in a hands-on environment, which is crucial for developing muscle memory and confidence. This practical experience will make them more adept at responding effectively in real-life emergency situations.

Increased CPR Certification Rates: With the aid of CPR mannequins, we aim to certify more students in CPR. Certification not only empowers them with a critical skill but also boosts their confidence and preparedness in emergency scenarios.

Improved Learning Engagement: Engaging students with interactive and practical tools like CPR mannequins makes learning more dynamic and impactful. This approach helps to keep students motivated and invested in their education.

In summary, the acquisition of CPR mannequins will significantly enhance our health education program, providing students with the practical experience necessary to master CPR. This grant represents a crucial step towards achieving our goal of certifying students and empowering them with essential life-saving skills.

Empowering Students With Their Strengths

David Rowe, Cherry Creek High School

In Bruins Academic Center 10 (BAC 10), we are working with students who have struggled to find academic and personal success at Cherry Creek High School. When students can identify and utilize their individual strengths, they are much more likely to thrive in a competitive academic environment. The education experts at Gallup have created a sustainable, outcome-driven strengths program for students that we have found can empower students in BAC 10.

We believe that the Gallup Strengths program can support our students in overcoming challenges,

achieving goals, and moving toward a purpose that will help them succeed in high school and beyond.

Because they have struggled academically, many of our students do not yet recognize their individual strengths and talents. While there are other programs that help students discover and uncover their strengths, we have found the Gallup Strengths program to be the most enlightening and useful to our students. We were honored to receive a CCSF grant for our students last year, and our students' response was so overwhelmingly positive that we were inspired to apply again this year.

'Not Board' Ski and Board Wax Shop-Cherry Creek HS

Brady Goode, Cherry Creek High School

Our initiative seeks to establish a ski and snowboard wax shop where high school students with learning, social-emotional, and cognitive disabilities will learn to tune and wax skis and snowboards. The goal is to provide these students with hands-on experience that not only develops their technical skills but also fosters a responsible work ethic, crucial for real-world success.

This program is needed because students with learning, social-emotional, and cognitive disabilities often face barriers in acquiring practical skills and workplace habits that are essential for future employment. Traditional classroom settings do not always cater to these needs, making it crucial to offer alternative, skill-based learning environments.

Inspired by the belief that all students deserve the opportunity to succeed and contribute meaningfully to their communities, this project aims to empower students by connecting them to a tangible and rewarding activity. It also draws on the understanding that engaging in such practical work can significantly boost their confidence, self-esteem, and sense of responsibility.

The anticipated outcome of this initiative is a transformative fully inclusive learning experience for the students. If successful, these students will not only gain specific trade skills but also develop a stronger work ethic, improve their social interactions, and increase their readiness for post-secondary employment opportunities. This program will create a positive impact by better preparing students for life beyond high school, equipping them with the skills and confidence they need to succeed.

Portable Offline Language Translators

Noah Zepelin, Cherry Creek High School

I have seen (as have many of my colleagues) a large increase in the number of students -- particularly in my CP US History 11-12 classes -- who are very recent arrivals to the USA, and who are far from fluent in English. While many of them do have smartphones and/or school-issued computers that are effective at translating text, the unfortunate reality is that many of these students then use those same devices to simply copy answers from Google, ChatGPT etc... On numerous occasions last school year, it was abundantly clear that these students simply felt too overwhelmed and could not resist the temptation, for example, to simply "ask" ChatGPT "Why was Alexander Hamilton important to early US history?" rather than merely translating the question, as they were supposed to do.

To state the obvious, many of my fluent English speakers also will succumb to the temptation to use AI, which is why I have gone to fully banning technology in my classroom most of the time. However, for equity purposes, I would like to help my foreign language speakers access the texts that they are assigned to read. Hence, this request.

A Community of Writers

Thessa Burbules, Cimarron Elementary School

At Cimarron Elementary, we are all about elevating community, growth, and joy. Through a writing program with Student Treasures, our 3rd graders will be engage in an opportunity to publish their stories in real life! This will bring them joy. In addition, students will get to see their growth in writing from year to year through their personal published class book. To promote community, this grant will allow for ALL families to purchase a copy of their child's published pieces. Through this positive experience, our students will become confident writer's, increase their motivation as a writer, and share their accomplishment with family and friends.

Drums for a World Music Drumming Ensemble, Part 1

Jessica Bird, Cottonwood Creek Elementary School

What I hope to achieve: Through this grant opportunity, over 500 students at Cottonwood Creek Elementary would be able to interact with quality musical instruments in a collaborative and culturally explorative way. Because these Remo Tubano Drums are built to be tunable and have replaceable parts, they will last decades and will therefore impact thousands of Cherry Creek students over time. With access to these drums, our youngest students will be able to experience unison and two-part instrumental music in an accessible way, and they will continue to benefit from them all the way through their time in elementary school. Intermediate and upper elementary students will experience a variety of musical genres, including drum ensembles from Africa and Latin America. They will also be able to accompany music selections from other parts of the world. With these drums, students will also be able to engage in social-emotional learning and synthesize their own music through recuperative drum circles and improvisation.

Why it is needed: Students should have access to varied experiences through which they can see themselves as musicians and members of their musical community. Percussion instruments and drums, in particular, are accessible to all students and help to develop an inner sense of rhythm, which can also aid students in other areas of their lives (such as sports and nonverbal communication). In addition, when a student gets to play an instrument on which they feel successful, they feel a sense of ownership and pride in the music they're creating. Because Remo built these particular drums as a medium to explore world music, they will help to open up a variety of instrumental music opportunities from different countries, enabling students to appreciate their own cultures and others cultures through music performance. This will help students to experience a variety of styles of music that they can't perform with just their voices, bodies, or the instruments currently available to them. In addition, the primary music cultures from which these instruments are inspired are community-based and recuperative, which will affect students' whole well-being. In addition, built-in differentiated parts in drum ensembles will allow all students to be equally involved as a part of the musical ensemble, regardless of their current level of performance ability. In addition to supplementing my current music curriculum, having these drums will allow me to utilize my training in World Music Drumming to bring a brand new experience to my students.

What inspired me to apply: I was inspired to apply for this grant because these long-lasting, quality musical instruments are expensive and I cannot purchase them with my limited school budget. Because I teach the entire school population and would use these drums with all grade levels for years to come, this is the perfect project for this grant to impact a large number of Cherry Creek students. I applied last year and received three drums and one book of drum ensembles but am hoping to get more instruments in order to be able to do more at one time with a class full of students.

Outcome & what will be different or better: This project is important because it will affect the whole

child through music and even has the potential to change students' relationship with music, their image of themselves as musicians, and their contributions as musical collaborators in their school community. Elementary students at Cottonwood Creek really enjoy playing drums and have benefited greatly from what we've already been able to do with the tubanos granted to us last year. These are quality-made drums inspired by Latin and African music traditions and created specifically for the classroom. They have accompanying curriculums in which I am trained and intend to pursue even further training this next summer. However, we are still limited in what we can do because we need more of these drums in order to accomplish certain musical goals and a fuller drum ensemble experience for class sizes of 24-30 students. My goal is to eventually have at least a half class set (15) of these drums at Cottonwood Creek in order to offer better ensemble playing opportunities for our students. I believe that's the minimum needed to optimize the drumming experience based on the curricular resources and training I have available to me.

Habits of Happy Kids

Natalie Morris, Cottonwood Creek Elementary School

Proposal: Provide every classroom at Cottonwood Creek Elementary School with a copy of The 7 Habits of Happy Kids by Sean Covey, a set of Ready to Read supplemental books, and visuals to correlate with each Habit.

Cottonwood Creek's Student Leadership team will be using The 7 Habits of Happy Kids (based on Stephen Covey's The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People) to guide our work this year and in the future. Our 25 student leaders in 3rd, 4th, and 5th grades will learn about the habits during our Student Leadership meetings and will design projects and/or tasks relating to each one. They will then share their knowledge with the students in their homeroom classes and in their kindergarten, first, and second-grade "buddy classes" using the stories in The 7 Habits of Happy Kids book and their student-created projects. Our hope is to build a common language throughout the building and embed the 7 Habits into our culture at Cottonwood. Having a copy of The 7 Habits of Happy Kids book and supplemental resources in each classroom would help to make this hope a reality. As the 7 Habits become second nature to not only our Student Leaders but to our entire Cottonwood Creek student body, we hope to build a community of learners who work proactively with a growth mindset, think of others as they build strong relationships with peers and adults in the building, and contribute to a positive school learning environment where all are valued and respected. The 7 Habits are: Be Proactive, Begin with the End in Mind, Put First Things First, Think Win-Win, Seek First to Understand Then to Be Understood, Synergize, & Sharpen the Saw.

Physical education grant

Jason Mondragon, Cottonwood Creek Elementary School

Hello and thank you for your consideration,

I am in need of new climbing ropes (four) for my school as my old ropes that are original to the have deteriorated to the point they are no longer safe or usable for my classes. The rope material is fraying and causes splinter in the children's hands. My children love to climb and I use them all the time throughout the year however I am at a point where i can no longer use them. I decided to apply for this grant in hopes that I can get four new climbing ropes for my school. Rope climbing in physical education (PE) offers several benefits:

Upper Body Strength: Rope climbing primarily works the muscles in the arms, shoulders, and back. It helps build significant upper body strength, which is essential for many physical activities.

Grip Strength: The exercise requires a strong grip, improving hand and forearm strength, which is beneficial for other sports and daily tasks.

Core Stability: Climbing a rope engages the core muscles as they help stabilize the body during the climb. This contributes to better overall balance and coordination.

Coordination and Motor Skills: The activity demands coordination between the hands, arms, legs, and feet, improving overall motor skills and body awareness.

Endurance: Rope climbing challenges cardiovascular endurance, especially when done repetitively or over extended periods.

Mental Toughness and Confidence: Successfully climbing a rope can boost confidence and mental toughness as it requires determination and focus to reach the top.

Versatility and Challenge: It can be adapted for different fitness levels, making it a versatile exercise in PE classes. Teachers can modify the activity to make it easier or more challenging, depending on the students' abilities.

Engagement and Fun: Rope climbing is often seen as a fun and engaging activity, encouraging students to participate and enjoy physical education.

Support for Kindies

Megan Schultz, Cottonwood Creek Elementary School

This is my first year of creating a calm down corner, and I want to have supplies for my kindergarten kids to be able to use to help them calm down and get themselves in a good space to be able to come back and join our group to learn. Our mental health team is requiring us to have a calm down corner since the need for it seems to be increasing for kids. We have found that kids now need that space to be able to identify their feelings and find ways to reset. I am hoping that by having different sensory objects for my calm down corner, the kids will be able to find what works for them to get reset.

In kindergarten, we do centers everyday to be able to give the kids time to learn to work together, share, and have time to be creative. I want to be able to provide some new STEM centers that will get them excited and increase their ability to problem solve and work together. The centers I have now are okay, but I want to be able to offer new STEM activities to support the STEM class we have in our school as well as the goals from the district.

3D Printing our way to the future!

Jessica Goncalves, Coyote Hills Elementary School

I am excited to write this grant proposal in hopes of elevating our STEM classroom with the addition of a bambu lab P1S 3D printer and filament. This printer will enable students to engage in hands-on, experiential learning that promotes creativity, problem solving, and critical thinking skills. The 3D printer will be integrated into curriculum across multiple subjects, particularly in science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics. This 3D printer will provide students with the opportunity to bring their ideas to life and better understand complex concepts.

STEM is brand new to our school this year, and I am finding ways to make our students prepared for the pathway of technology, design, engineering and spark their creativity. As education is constantly evolving, there is a growing need to equip students with 21st century skills such as innovation, design thinking and technological fluency. Traditional teaching methods often limit opportunity for hands-on learning and fail to engage students in critical thinking and problem-solving activities. By adding the bambu lab 3D printer to our classroom, I aim to bridge this gap and offer interactive learning experience that fosters creativity and helps students grasp abstract concepts through practical application. 3D printing and design has been proven to enhance student engagement and achievement, particularly in STEM education. Acquiring the bambu lab 3D printer will allow more students to design and print with ease. Students of all design abilities will be utilizing this printer. From my youngest students at only five years old, to my advanced design students. This printer will allow my advanced students to create more difficult projects and use multiple colors of filament. They have previously not been able to create at this level.

Block the Noise, Increase the Fun!

Bridget Lovett, Coyote Hills Elementary School

Block the Noise, Increase the Fun!

Schools are loud & no child should miss out because they can't tolerate the noise!!

This project helps our special needs population to be able to tolerate busier school environments. For many of our kiddos, the playground, lunch room, gymnasium, music room, assemblies and sometimes even the classrooms are too much noise and way over stimulating. With their dysregulated nervous systems, the noise and busyness can cause our special needs population to act out in ways that make it difficult to participate in the general education system. By law, our special education children are guaranteed the least restricted environment. Imagine, the High School Mascot comes by for a visit and our kids need to sit out in the hallway. No bueno!

It stinks when children cannot be a part of the fun! The supplies I am requesting can help. The noise cancelling headphones have technology that allow the student to still hear the main conversation/presentation but block out the extra noise. The fidgets, chewies and movement seats provide strategies to help our children to calm their nervous system so that they are in a better place to be part of the action! All of the items requested are clinically shown to help children with special needs to be able to regulate their nervous systems so that they can fully participate in school.

Now imagine, a child wears the headphones, uses a fidget, chews on his chewy necklace and smiles along with the rest of the class as the mascot does a double cartwheel in assembly! AWESOME!

We appreciate your support SO much and hope that this project inspires you as it does us!

Thank you!

Growing Food, Growing Community

Kirk Johnson, Coyote Hills Elementary School

I am looking to start an indoor gardening club at Coyote Hills, following in the footsteps of the Green Bronx Machine. Through the club, I hope to engage students in hands-on activities involving the cultivation and care of plants, as well as building cooking and nutrition skills by using the food we grow to prepare fresh and healthy recipes.

A program like this is needed because food is health. Teaching students about how to grow and prepare their own healthy food and the science behind it will give them vital skills that will last a lifetime while educating them about food insecurity and its impacts on the community at large.

I was inspired to apply by John Olander, a friend and community organizer. John is working to create a broad community initiative to empower people through giving them the skills to grow and prepare their own healthy food and to use those opportunities to foster community. It was a third grade at Coyote Hills, however, who convinced me I needed to apply. She was so excited at the prospect of starting this club, she was literally vibrating.

By the end of the school year, I want the students to walk away with practical skills and knowledge that will make an immediate impact in their lives. Whether they start to cook more at home, make healthier choices in what they eat (and encourage the people they care about to do the same) or just feel successful because they grew food for themselves and others, I hope that students will leave more confident and curious about food, health and sustainability, all while getting high quality Next Generation Science Standards-aligned STEM instruction.

Arts and Culture

Caitlin Cantor, Creekside Elementary School

My proposal seeks funding to provide art supplies for a unique project where 5th graders will sew stuffed animals based on drawings created by younger students. This project aims to foster creativity, collaboration, and hands-on learning through art and design.

The need for this grant arises from limited access to quality art materials, which would allow students to fully engage in this imaginative and educational experience. By combining sewing and illustration, students will enhance their creative thinking, fine motor skills, and sense of accomplishment.

This project was inspired by the idea of connecting students across grade levels in a meaningful way, where older students bring younger children's drawings to life. The anticipated outcome is that students will develop not only their artistic and technical skills but also a sense of pride in working together to create tangible, unique pieces. If successful, this project will strengthen students' creativity, confidence, and collaboration.

Enhancing Creative and Scientific Exploration in the Preschool Classroom

Ragya EL Kassaby, Creekside Elementary School

Project Description:

We are seeking funding to enrich our classroom with materials that support hands-on interactive learning experiences. The requested resources will help enhance creativity scientific exploration and encourage cultural awareness. Additionally, these materials will introduce diversity, science, and geography concepts in a playful and developmentally appropriate manner.

What We Hope to Achieve: We'd like the children to engage in hands-on activities. The materials requested will support these activities such as painting, crafting, and scientific exploration, enriching their learning experiences and encouraging their growth.

Additionally, some resources will be used to highlight classroom diversity and provide geographic and cultural lessons, broadening students' understanding of the world while others will integrate science into creative play, such as the Shrinky Dinks and magnifying pendants. These projects will provide a well-rounded experience, offering students various ways to learn and grow.

Why It Is Needed:

Young children benefit immensely from hands-on, interactive learning experiences. Currently, our preschool lacks some of the tools and materials needed to fully support creative expression and

scientific inquiry. This grant will bridge the gap, providing resources that are crucial for a well-rounded early education experience.

What Inspired Us to Apply:

Inspired by the desire to offer our students a more stimulating learning environment, we saw the need to invest in materials that would enhance their educational journey. The prospect of integrating diverse resources into our curriculum motivated us to seek funding through this grant.

Anticipated Outcome:

If successful, our classroom will feature a range of new materials that will transform the way our students interact with their learning environment. The integration of art supplies, educational kits, and scientific tools will make our classroom more engaging and interactive, fostering a love for learning and discovery. We anticipate that these improvements will lead to increased student enthusiasm, enhanced creative skills, and a deeper understanding of some scientific concepts.

ILC Adaptive Furniture

James Estes, Creekside Elementary School

Here at Creekside Elementary School, we were thrilled to bring back an Integrated Learning Center (ILC) program last school year. This type of programming allows us to meet the needs of some of our students with more severe needs and unique disabilities. This year, our ILC program has grown with four new Kindergarten friends. As we are getting to know them and their school needs, we have had to be flexible and rethink/redesign our ILC classroom to best support these kids.

One of our current needs is for more adaptive seating - several of our Kindergarten friends do not yet have the core strength and gross motor skills to balance themselves in chairs, stools, or movement-based seating (e.g., wobble stools) and also have a hard time sustaining a seated position when we go to carpet time. We are hoping to acquire funding to purchase seating that is more appropriate for these kids, specifically Cube chairs. These chairs are lower to the ground and provide additional body support so that our kids are less likely to fall out of their seats and so that they can put more of their energy into engaging in classroom activities as opposed to focusing on just trying to stay in a chair.

Social Emotional Learning and Coping Skills and Strategies

Jenifer Tyndall, Creekside Elementary School

This Grant proposal seeks to equip our Elementary School Social Work office with essential social-emotional tools and coping resources to support students in need. I aim to create a more emotionally resilient student body by providing tailored interventions that address anxiety, stress, trauma, and other emotional challenges that hinder academic success and overall well-being.

This initiative is crucial as our team have observed an increasing number of students struggling with emotional regulation and coping skills, leading to behavioral issues and academic difficulties. These challenges have been exacerbated by recent societal stressors, making it imperative to provide students with the resources they need to thrive both emotionally and academically.

The inspiration to apply for this grant comes from our commitment to fostering a supportive and inclusive school environment where every student has the opportunity to succeed. We have seen firsthand the positive impact of social-emotional learning and coping strategies in students' lives and believe that expanding access to these resources will further enhance their development.

If successful, this initiative will result in a significant positive shift in our school environment. Students will be better equipped to manage their emotions, leading to improved behavior, stronger academic performance, and a more supportive school community. Ultimately, we anticipate a reduction in

behavioral incidents and an increase in students' overall well-being, setting them on a path toward long-term success.

A Sensory Sensitive Learning Environment

Katherine Merwin, Dakota Valley Elementary School

As an occupational therapist, I work with students with sensory differences, especially regarding sound. While my room has a lot of positives, it, unfortunately, has cement walls that cause lots of noise to bounce around and distract and/or overwhelm my students. Environments with negative acoustics subject us to feelings of stress and fatigue and do not feel safe, especially for those already more sensory-sensitive. Being right next to the gym does not help this. The plain walls also feel a bit sterile rather than inviting and beautiful. So, I would like to acquire sound-dampening felt tiles from Felt Right to place on the walls as dimensional wall art to help mitigate the issues with negative acoustics. Felt Right tiles are customizable, so I can also bring color, warmth, and coziness to the space. As a bonus for classroom organization, Felt Right tiles are designed for easy cleaning and are durable enough to be pinned to display classroom art countless times.

The primary purpose of this project is to improve the safety and well-being of my students and myself so we can focus on our tasks and be our best. It is estimated that in my classroom, with bare, cement walls, sound waves bounce back and forth roughly 60 times a single second. Being adjacent to the gym adds additional negative acoustics. This reflected noise distorts the direct sound and drastically diminishes our listening ability. Felt Right sound-dampening tiles have a Noise Reduction Coefficient (NRC) of 0.35, comparable to one-inch thick polyurethane foam (a common sound-dampening material). This means the felt tiles absorb up to 35 percent of reflected sound and can help improve the overall acoustic experience. Many of my students have sensory sensitivities to these negative acoustics. I have tried mitigating effects such as a white noise machine and a door draft underneath the door. These strategies have not successfully reduced the stress and distractibility because you can still hear the noise bouncing off the walls.

Additionally, the plain cement walls are not very inviting visually. I have tried posters and other art, but these are challenging to keep secured to the walls. As an added benefit, I could pin some of my classroom visuals and art to the tiles easily, and they could be repinned countless times. In the Felt Right studio, I have been able to customize designs that would make my classroom more visually appealing and improve visual organization.

Inclusive Life Skills

Jacquelyn Swackhamer, Dakota Valley Elementary School

As an occupational therapist in the school setting, all of the students I work with have disabilities with needs that range from mild to severe. These students are protected by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, also known as IDEA. The IDEA ensures that children with disabilities receive a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) that meets their unique needs. The law mandates that special education and related services be provided in the least restrictive environment possible through Individualized Education Programs, also known as IEPs. The IEP ensures that students with disabilities receive personalized educational services to address their specific needs while outlining measurable goals, accommodations, modifications, and services necessary for their academic and developmental progress. The target population for this grant project is elementary school students at Dakota Valley with developmental disabilities and severe needs. These children are 23.4 times more likely to have substantial activities of daily living limitations than their peers (Blanco-Martínez et al., 2020), exhibiting poor performance and less participation. This is because these students struggle with independence in activities of daily living, performance, and participation in their school and home environments. These

challenges widen the participation gap between students with severe needs and typically developing peers. Research has found many benefits in teaching individuals with disabilities life skills, including improved independence, participation, and performance. Studies have shown that when teaching life skills, improvements are made in problem-solving, future planning, emotional intelligence, decision-making, critical thinking, relationships, job responsibilities, coping skills, and self-confidence while also reducing aggression. By applying for the items requested through this grant, I plan to provide group opportunities for our students in the integrated learning classroom (ILC) to learn life skills, including cooking activities, which involve proper handwashing, setting up a space, eating and cleaning up, with direct intervention provided for them to be successful. These skills will improve their problem-solving, decision-making, relationships with peers, self-confidence, engagement in activities, and skills that can help them succeed.

References:

Blanco-Martínez, N., Delgado-Lobete, L., Montes-Montes, R., Ruiz-Pérez, N., Ruiz-Pérez, M., & Santos-del-Riego, S. (2020). Participation in everyday activities of children with and without neurodevelopmental disorders: A cross-sectional study in Spain. *Children*, 7(10), 157. <https://doi.org/10.3390/children7100157>

Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004, 20 U.S.C. § 1400 et seq. (2004).
Reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

Strum & Grow: Guitar Grant

Emma Graul, Dakota Valley Elementary School

Strum and Grow aims to introduce elementary students to the joy of music through guitar education. I plan provide young learners with access to instruments, instruction, and performance opportunities, fostering creativity, self-expression, and confidence. Music education, particularly instrumental training, is often underfunded in schools, leaving many students without the chance to explore musical talents. This program addresses the gap by offering hands-on guitar lessons, especially for students who may not have the means to access private music education. Inspired by the transformative impact music can have on students' academic performance, social skills, and emotional well-being, I applied for this grant to cultivate a love for music at an early age. If successful, the outcome will be a well-rounded, engaging program that enhances students' musical skills, enriches their school experience, and helps build a strong foundation for future learning. By giving students this opportunity, we aim to create a positive and lasting impact on their education and personal development.

Were Off To See The Wizard

Alicia Sherman, Dakota Valley Elementary School

We Are Off to See The Wizard! Dakota Valley is in its 2nd year of Theatre and were back again to let students shine in our Fall Musical: The Wizard of Oz! The funds are needed to help produce a play where student feel empowered by costumes, sets, makeup, and the materials we need to perform the play for the entire school but 3 additional shows for the public. We want to give our 3-5th graders the ability to not only sing, dance, and act, or stage craft, but collaborate, build their social emotional skills, create friendships through their love of performance. Theatre has been a love of all three teachers, (Ms. Goodman, Ms. Graul, and Ms. Sherman) since we were children and the difference it has made in our lives only helped us recognize the value for our students in Dakota Valley. We hope to build children's ability to read and analyze a script and emotions, while growing their focus, perseverance, and confidence in themselves and others. This would also inspire those who may or may not feel

marginalized, a place to stand out and feel like school is where they can radiate and show off to their friends, family, and teachers at Dakota Valley. With a year of drama club behind us and over 15 years of theatre between us, we can share with the Dakota Valley family as well as to the community how amazing Dakota Valley is and amazing place to learn and grow.

SEL and Regulation Support for Universal Preschool Program

Kasey Craig, District Wide Preschool

One of my major goals as a Universal Preschool Social Worker is to foster a nurturing environment in our preschool where children develop strong social and emotional skills. These include; self-regulation, emotion recognition and positive peer interactions. This grant is needed to support adding additional resources at the five sites I work within. Resources such as the Little Spot of Emotions book series, regulation tools (stress balls, breathing balls, sensory jars) and classroom social-emotional books and activity guides for teachers. These tools and resources will be used to support foundational social and emotional skill development that students will hopefully take with them into kindergarten and their future lives. I was inspired to apply after observing an increase in dysregulation and stress in my students, especially in homes that were highly impacted during the Covid years. If successful, I anticipate these resources and tools will support in helping students create more independent ways of navigating stress, peer conflict and moments of dysregulation - so they can feel empowered to take on the challenges of their world knowing they have the skills and tools to face both the great days and the more difficult.

Accessible Auditory Graphics for Students with Visual Impairments and Blindness

Sasmita Bisoi, District Wide Special Populations

The Tactonom Reader is a groundbreaking device that significantly enhances educational opportunities for students with visual impairments or blindness. This innovative technology enables independent access to graphical learning content, bridging a critical gap in their educational experience and bringing greater equity of access to sighted peers.

Importance of Access

For visually impaired students, understanding graphical information has long been a major challenge. Traditionally, these students have relied heavily on sighted assistance to interpret visual content, severely limiting their autonomy in learning. The disparity in access to graphical information is stark - while sighted students encounter approximately 25,000 graphics throughout their school years, visually impaired students typically interact with fewer than 100. This vast difference underscores the urgent need for tools like the Tactonom Reader. Further, because tactile graphics for students with visual impairments are typically larger, they require students to reference braille labels on other pages. Students have described this as asking their sighted peers to have their image labels across the room from their textbooks. Equal access and ease of access is not being afforded. As educators that work to support students with visual impairments, we must work to improve access for our students.

How the Tactonom Reader Works

The Tactonom Reader combines tactile exploration with audio explanations. As students move their fingers across tactile graphics placed on the device, a camera detects their finger position, and the system provides verbal explanations of the elements being touched. This seamless integration of touch and audio enables students to comprehend complex graphical content independently. The files for many Tactonom Graphics are available online for free, and custom ones can be produced by the vision department staff.

Benefits for Academic Access

Independent Learning

The Tactonom Reader empowers visually impaired students to work autonomously with graphical

information. This independence is crucial for developing self-confidence and reducing reliance on constant assistance, preparing students for future academic and professional challenges.

Equal Participation

With the Tactonom Reader, visually impaired students can participate in lessons on an equal basis with their sighted peers. They can access the same content, fostering inclusive education and ensuring they don't miss out on critical visual information in their studies.

Comprehensive Understanding

The device allows for unlimited information to be associated with each aspect of a graphic. Unlike traditional Braille graphics with limited space for explanations, the Tactonom Reader can provide extensive details, enabling a deeper understanding of complex subjects.

Interactive Learning

The Tactonom Reader offers interactive features such as acoustic finger guidance and question-answer sessions. These capabilities deepen students' engagement with the material and enhance their learning experience.

Diverse Content Access

Students can explore a wide range of graphical content, including maps, mathematical illustrations, infographics, and tables. This broad access opens up new areas of study and career possibilities that may have previously seemed inaccessible.

Flexibility in Learning Pace

The device allows students to review and deepen their understanding of materials at their own pace. This flexibility is crucial for effective learning, as it enables students to spend more time on challenging concepts when needed.

Broader Impact

The Tactonom Reader not only improves academic access but also prepares visually impaired students for greater independence in their future lives. By providing access to graphical information in fields like geography, science, and mathematics, it expands their career prospects and enhances their ability to navigate the world independently.

Moreover, the device's compatibility with various tactile graphic formats, including Braille printing and 3D printing, ensures versatility in its application across different subjects and learning environments.

In conclusion, the Tactonom Reader represents a significant leap forward in inclusive education technology. By providing visually impaired students with independent access to graphical information, it levels the playing field, enhances their learning experience, and opens up new possibilities for academic and personal growth. This technology is not just an educational tool; it's a gateway to a more inclusive and equitable educational landscape for visually impaired students.

Cherry Creek Schools Foundation EIG

Kaele Way, District Wide Special Populations

I am hoping to obtain grant funds to purchase fidgets and sensory items that can be brought with me all over the district as a floater school psychologist. As a floater school psychologist, I go to several different buildings throughout a year. The fidgets and sensory items available from one building to the next can greatly vary. I'm hoping that by carrying my own tools, I'll be able to better assist the students I will support; either through special education designated mental health minutes or general education students needing additional support. I was inspired to apply to this grant because I think these funds, used for this purpose, could assist so many students, given the scope of my work.

AP Env Science Interactive Labs

Sandra Mikesell, Eaglecrest High School

This grant will allow my students to complete several labs that are very closely aligned with the College Board curriculum. Pivot Interactives is a high quality virtual lab resource. The platform has over 30 labs, with excellent data collection and graphing functions, that allow students to experience labs that we do not have the equipment or time to complete in the classroom. Furthermore, I plan to purchase 14 Brainy Briny in a Beaker Bag with 2-Algae Beads and Microplastics Add On. This kit is designed to provide an engaging series of lab experiences that teach and model the following AP Environmental concepts; photosynthesis and respiration, energy exchange across trophic levels, population dynamics such as carrying capacity, eutrophication, lethal dose (LD50), and microplastics and bioaccumulation.

This is my first year teaching AP Environmental Science. At my AP Summer Institute, several teachers remarked on how effective both PIVOT and Brainy Briny kits are at teaching students the AP science practices of designing and analyzing scientific experiments, analyzing and interpreting data, applying quantitative methods, and proposing and justifying environmental solutions. I hope that this grant allows me to provide a high quality, incredibly engaging curriculum to my students.

If I am funded, my hope is that my students will retain much more of the AP Environmental Science essential course knowledge, giving them greater success on the test. These labs will allow me to spiral my curriculum, providing my students with exposure to fundamental course concepts in a variety of ways, and increasing the likelihood that they will retain the knowledge.

Social-Emotional supports

Jillian Rains, Eaglecrest High School

We are hoping to use the funding to encourage independent use of coping strategies for all students, targeting students in affective education classes, our resource room, and in the wellness center. In the academic setting, students are often required to use coping strategies on their own without the support of an adult. Many times, our students struggle with getting started. We are hoping that by providing them easy access and a safe space to use the tools given, students will be more likely to self-regulate without the support of an adult.

As part of the mental health team at our school, we see students regularly who would benefit from the ability to independently regulate through the use of school appropriate coping tools.

By providing coping tools that can be used independently, we are hoping our students will recognize that it doesn't always require support from an adult to regulate, refocus, and move forward with their day with minimal interruption

Accomplishing Artistic Access and Acumen at Eastridge Community Elementary School, Phase 2

Phyllis Chen, Eastridge Community Elementary School

Students are showing great growth as emerging artists and we are in need of new art supplies to grow our visual arts program. We have a big cyanotype project we are doing in partnership with Prairie

Middle School and Overland High School which we hope will inspire art teachers across our district and state when we present it at our state art teacher conference, CAEA. We are also in need of underglazes/glazes for our clay, a paper cutter, and materials for a Nature Exploration Station.

We are so grateful to have received and proud of the impact of critical funding last year to purchase sketchbooks, paper, pencils, paint, and other basic art supplies to help set the framework for a successful art program at Eastridge Community Elementary School. Student involvement in and enthusiasm for the arts skyrocketed as they got to use good quality art supplies and felt pride in their artwork and art class. The light in their eyes that erupted as they held fresh art supplies in their hands and exclaimed how WELL these supplies worked filled me with such joy as they used these supplies to make their artwork. It was obvious that the quality of the supplies they used help remove some barriers to success and made them feel valued and important. The attitude of students have completely changed from a sense of indifference to excitement when coming to art. At the same time, I'm extremely conscious that we are not done climbing this hill and that we have more work to do to provide EVERY child the opportunity children in ALL Art classes should have a chance to experience. This year, we hope to continue growing our Art program by making some more important purchases to make it possible for students to explore even more mediums such as cyanotypes (we are partnering with Prairie Middle School and Overland High School on a project for ALL levels of students, K-12), clay (initial purchase of a glaze set can be prohibitively expensive), and nature exploration stations to help students develop observation skills (this will help develop science and critical thinking skills as well). This will help students access more pathways to self expression and open more career pathways for them in visual arts.

The opportunities provided by the funds from this grant are invaluable and not achievable within the means of a regular school art budget, which is just enough to cover pencils, markers, erasers, paper, and restocking paint and other basic art supplies. I have a burning need for EVERY student to be inspired by art and to become visually literate, learning how to read images and express themselves so EVERY student has a chance to grow and express themselves and make beautiful connections to the people and world around them.

CPR / First Aid Training

Janice Skiles, Endeavor Academy

We are an Alternate Education High School, with a student body that has life challenges. I currently teach adult CPR / First Aid in the district and would love to come along students in our school community to teach them new life skills that they can use anywhere. In the 2023 / 2024 school year, our school was able to certify 8 students during a special community service day, and these students were able to use this certification to apply for Life guard jobs and baby sitting jobs at that time. We would like to continue to offer students the opportunity to learn the basics of CPR and First Aid, and receive their CPR / First Aid certification. We hope to teach this class in our Health Class and Outdoor Adventure class. Per our American Heart Association training center, our training materials will need to be updated in 2025 to reflect new best practices, and we would like to have the ability to train more students in this coming school year which requires a few more infant mannikins. This benefits our students that are currently parents, students looking to add this certification to their resume, and it may be a prerequisite for those students entering the medical field.

Endeavor Student Wellness

Beth Heed, Endeavor Academy

With this grant, I am seeking to provide students with tangible tools and materials that they can use for stress relief and emotional regulation. Many of our student are coming from backgrounds with

significant trauma and/or the students have a negative relationship with their schooling experience. Among the Sp.Ed. population, a majority of the student are diagnosed with Severe Emotional Disturbance and need to build social-emotional wellness skills.

I am hoping that with more stress management tools to share with the students, that they can take strategies with them from class to class and even when they leave the building.

If our students can better reflect on and create change for their own emotional states, it will lead to better academic results as well.

Guitar Tech Course for Technical Reading/Writing

Jaime Endlich, Endeavor Academy

*Through the Technical Writing course at Endeavor, we are promoting students' explorations into the world of music study, learning basic theory, building and maintaining instruments, and learning how to communicate effectively in an industry/hobby that utilizes highly specialized vocabulary and terminology.

*This course is designed to build students skills in reading /creating infographics and other instructional tools as well as writing and speaking about music/instruments competently and confidently. In addition to those vital skills, students will work collaboratively to build and repair guitars, as well as find and evaluate resources for valid and helpful information.

*The main reason I am applying is that so many reluctant learners find it difficult to connect to our traditional English course curricula, so incorporating a hands-on project-based approach that utilizes their other tech skills and sharing that knowledge with peers is highly motivating, and they can earn an English credit, as well.

*The outcome is a boost in a student's writing and reading skills, and an improved graduation rate as students earn those credits in an alternative classroom environment.

Books and Material so All can Access

Kedra Schattinger, Falcon Creek Middle School

My educator initiative grant proposal focuses on acquiring high quality, inclusive, educational books and materials tailored for GT, multilingual students, special education (SPED) students, and other special populations in my school. I aim to build a resource library that supports the diverse learning needs of these students by offering new and current titles that linguistically, culturally relevant, rigorous, and adaptive.

I hope to create to an environment where all students, regardless of language proficiency or learning differences, have access to their grade-level literature and educational content that supports their growth, fosters inclusions, and promotes academic success. These resources will also aid teachers in delivering differentiated instruction more effectively.

This initiative is crucial because many students from multilingual and special populations often lack access to materials that reflect their unique learning needs. Without these resources, it can be difficult to engage them fully, which can hinder their academic and social-emotional development. Our current budget costs are supporting three new courses added to our department.

Books and materials so all can access! (Team)

Antoinette Bell, Falcon Creek Middle School

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As an educator, I have witnessed firsthand the challenges faced by students who do not fit into traditional learning models. My passion for creating equitable learning opportunities for all students inspired me to seek funding to enhance the available resources.

If successful, this project will improve literacy skills, greater engagement, and increase confidence among multilingual, special education, and GT students. It will also create a more inclusive classroom environment where students feel represented and supported. Ultimately, this initiative will better prepare students for academic success, contribute to closing achievement gaps, and supports our district's Literacy goals.

Calming Corner & Flexible Seating

Edi Munoz, Falcon Creek Middle School

The purpose of my grant request is to implement a Calming Corner and flexible seating in my classroom to support the emotional and academic well-being of my students. The Calming Corner will be a dedicated space where students can go to de-stress and regulate their emotions. It will include calming activities, sensory tools, comfortable pillows, weighted lap blankets, breathing and mindfulness posters, fidgets, sensory bubble tubes, and a comfy rug. This will make for an inviting environment for my students, who often come to class feeling exhausted and emotionally dysregulated. Flexible seating options will provide students the choice to select seating arrangements that best suit their learning styles and needs, including options like cushioned floor seating, adjustable chairs, and seat cushions. We will use the seat cushions for our weekly circle-up time as well.

The need for this initiative arises from the increasing recognition of the impact of emotional regulation and physical comfort on academic performance. Many students face stress and anxiety that can hinder their ability to learn effectively. Additionally, traditional seating arrangements don't often accommodate diverse learning preferences and can negatively affect student engagement and comfort. The inspiration to apply for this grant comes from my commitment to creating an inclusive and supportive learning environment in my SEL Advisory class called Step Up To Success. By providing students with tools and spaces that promote emotional well-being and physical comfort, we aim to foster a more engaging and supportive educational experience.

BricQ Motion Essential Physical Science Lego Kits

Kate Pollick, Fox Hollow Elementary School

Dear Cherry Creek Schools Foundation,

I am writing to request funding for an initiative designed to enhance STEM engagement and foster creativity among students. Fox Hollow is committed to transforming STEM learning experiences by integrating hands-on activities with cutting-edge educational tools. I would like to purchase LEGO® BricQ Motion Essentials sets to supplement my STEM curriculum.

STEM education is critical for preparing students to navigate and contribute to a rapidly evolving technological world. However, many students face challenges engaging with abstract STEM concepts. LEGO® bricks are known for their ability to inspire creativity and problem-solving skills in students of all ages. By combining these versatile tools with my STEM instruction, I aim to create a dynamic and interactive learning environment that encourages exploration, experimentation, and innovation.

I am new to my position and at this time we have bins of legos that will be great for supplementing, but we do not have sets. I hope to design and implement curriculum modules that integrate LEGO® BricQ Motion Essentials building activities with core STEM concepts, providing students with practical, hands-on experience. Examples are building a device to block the wind for 2nd graders who study wind erosion and 4th graders will build a spring launcher and car to explore push and pull forces and the effect of friction.

The integration of LEGO® BricQ Motion Essentials into our STEM programs will not only make learning more engaging but also help bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and real-world application. This approach aligns with my goal to equip students with the skills and confidence needed to pursue STEM careers and contribute to innovative solutions in their future endeavors.

I am requesting a grant of \$1200 to support this initiative. Your generous contribution will directly impact the quality of STEM education I can provide and help me reach my objective of inspiring the next generation of innovators and problem-solvers.

Thank you for considering my request. I appreciate your support in advancing STEM education.

Sincerely,
Kate Pollick

Cooking for Independence

Felice Vanden Oever, Fox Hollow Elementary School

My goal is for my ILC students to be able to follow a simple visual recipe to prepare a basic snack and/or meal. Many of my students have food aversions to certain foods, have medical conditions that impact their diet or are fatally allergic to certain foods. By being able to learn the basic life skill of cooking this will allow my students the ability to guide and direct their own independence and self-sufficiency as they matriculate into adulthood. Additionally, many of my students are non-verbal and use an AAC device for communication, but purchasing visual recipes that are compatible with their communication devices so that all students will be able to participate whether they are verbal or not. Some key points of the ILC cooking groups are as follows.

Key Points:

Kitchen safety: Proper hand washing and safe handling of utensils

Following a visual recipe: Understanding and using picture-based instructions
Basic food preparation skills: Spreading, pouring, and assembling ingredients
Kitchen tool identification: Recognizing and using common kitchen tools (e.g., spoon, plate, knife)
Sensory exploration: Encouraging students to smell, touch, and taste ingredients (considering allergies and aversions)

Empowering Future Heroes: Community Helper Toys for Our Students

Hannah Hunter, Fox Hollow Elementary School

This proposal seeks funding to implement a program that utilizes community helper toys to support the emotional and social development of children, particularly those with autism, in our educational environment. The project aims to reduce anxiety associated with encounters with healthcare professionals and emergency responders, promote awareness of health and safety roles, and facilitate the practice of essential social skills.

Our primary goal is to create a safe and engaging space where children can explore various community roles through imaginative play. By doing so, we hope to:

- Alleviate anxiety related to interactions with figures such as doctors and nurses.
- Foster understanding of the significance of health and safety roles in their communities.
- Encourage the development of social skills in a controlled, supportive environment.

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to significant disruptions in social interactions for many children, especially those with autism. The restrictions have limited their opportunities to engage with peers and community figures, creating challenges in social reintegration. Community helper toys serve as a vital resource to help children re-establish these connections and develop essential communication skills. The inspiration for this grant proposal arose from witnessing the challenges faced by children during the pandemic and the need for innovative approaches to support their emotional and cognitive growth. The transformative power of imaginative play, combined with the therapeutic benefits of role-playing, highlighted the potential of community helper toys to make a meaningful impact.

If successful, this initiative will lead to:

- A noticeable reduction in anxiety among children when interacting with healthcare professionals and emergency responders.
- Improved understanding of community roles, contributing to a safer and more informed environment for children.
- Enhanced social skills, enabling children to express gratitude, ask for help, and engage in meaningful interactions with peers and adults.
- Greater emotional resilience as children learn to process their feelings and develop coping strategies through imaginative play.
- In summary, the introduction of community helper toys will not only support the emotional and cognitive development of children with autism but also foster a sense of security and connection within their communities, ultimately leading to a more inclusive and supportive environment.

Student Voice Committee

Jill Gladu, Fox Hollow Elementary School

We would like to form a Student Voice Committee at Fox Hollow. We would like students from various backgrounds of social economics, various races, and varying experience to be able to have the opportunity to be on this committee and reap the benefits of being part of a club without worrying about transportation (it will be built into the school day with monthly meeting and more opportunities

to lead and support our school and students. Additionally, with the help of this grant there will be no fees for materials.

Students in this club will get a t-shirt to help advertise and celebrate their membership of this special team for fourth and fifth graders. They will also have materials for activities like making posters, leading assemblies, as well as celebrations at the end of each semester.

Two Music Events for Deaf & Hard of Hearing Students

Virgilene Mills, Fox Hollow Elementary School

Students with hearing loss, deaf/hard of hearing (D/HH) listening with cochlear implants, hearing aids and bone anchored hearing aids, are often assumed to not be able to enjoy music. However, research shows that music can be very enjoyable for these students. The grant would support helping the D/HH students with the understanding that music can be an important aspect of their lives to enhance literacy, communication in both American Sign language (ASL), Conceptually Accurate Signed English (CASE), listening and spoken language (LSL) and social-emotional skills through two experiences with music.

- 1) Feel The Beat dance studio, a local non-profit that has a vibrotactile bone conduction floor. The Feel the Beat experience with a dance instructor using American Sign Language, would expose the D/HH students to "feeling" the music through the vibrotactile floor and also experience the music with access through their hearing aids, cochlear implants (CIs) and bone-anchored hearing aids (BAHAs).
- 2) An evening presentation by two Music Therapists for the students with hearing loss, of all grades K-12 along with their parents/guardians. The Music Therapists will demonstrate the importance of music for engagement of the brain. The teacher of the deaf/hard of hearing will also present about the importance of music for communication with ASL, Conceptually Accurate Sign Language (CASE) and listening and spoken language as well as social emotional development. Music engages all aspects of the brain so can also enhance literacy skills.

My inspiration comes from personal experience with hearing loss using cochlear implants and the importance of having access to speech and music for social emotional skills and communication with loved ones. Also, I have seen the joy on D/HH students' facial expressions when experiencing music on the school campus as well as the well documented research of the benefits of music, especially for students with hearing loss. Please see links below.

Why and how music can be used to rehabilitate and develop speech and language skills in hearing-impaired children - ScienceDirect

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0378595518301783>

"...musical activities may increase involvement in music, and all studies showing significant results show improvements of musical skills, music or speech perception or cognitive aspects with musical activities; none of them report negative effects. Music may have positive consequences for the lives of children with hearing impairments." Given that music is shown to improve speech perception (oral language) and oral language is foundational to literacy skills, the Feel the Beat experience could be very beneficial for the students in the D/HH program.

How the Brain Processes Music for Those With Hearing Loss | Discover Magazine

<https://www.discovermagazine.com/mind/how-the-brain-processes-music-for-those-with-hearing-loss>

"Scientists are finding that because various song components are processed in different parts of the brain, music can be used to help people with hearing loss improve their speech and language skills in a therapeutic setting."

What you hope to achieve: Through the funding of 1) a field trip to the Feel the Beat Dance Studio will provide enjoyment of music combined with the movement of dance on a vibrotactile floor that is not available on their school campuses. and 2) an evening event with Music Therapists for both parents/guardians, students from throughout the Cherry Creek School District with hearing loss using hearing aids, CIs and BAHAs can have enjoyment of music to enjoy as a family to enhance language and social emotional skills.

Also given that hearing loss is a low-incidence population, these students do not often meet other students with hearing loss. Bringing these elementary and middle school students together from the D/HH programs for the Feel the Beat Dance Studio experience will allow the elementary students to have role models in the middle school students. The middle school students in turn could experience a boost in their self-esteem from being role models with the elementary age students. In addition, offering an opportunity for students of all grade levels from PreK-grade 12 at the evening event with parents/guardians and DHH students will provide exposure to many students of all ages outside of their typical school day for social-emotional support in dealing with hearing loss regardless of hearing loss treatment option (hearing aids, CIs &/or BAHAs) or mode of language (ASL, Conceptually Accurate Signed English or listening and spoken language.)

Why is it needed: Two events 1) Exposing DHH students to a vibrotactile floor in a dance studio could be very beneficial in expanding the students' musical experiences in support of language skills in LSL, CASE and ASL. During a field trip to the Feel the Beat Dance Studio, DHH students will experience positive social-emotional interactions with others who are also navigating life with hearing loss. 2) Providing support to families with students with hearing loss through a presentation by two Music Therapists provides parents/guardians, teachers of the deaf and hard of hearing along with students with hearing loss with the same information in understanding music's positive impact on the brain.

What inspired you to apply: Given that students with hearing loss, even with hearing aids, CIs, BAHAs and assistive listening technology, experience a smaller speech bubble or put another way, have less access to typical language models than students who have full access with typical hearing, I have a passion for exposing my D/HH students to a variety of life experiences. The funding of the Two Music Events for Deaf & Hard of Hearing Students grant would extend life experiences at the Feel the Beat dance studio and the music presentation by the two music therapists beyond the walls of the classroom. The anticipated outcome, including what will be different or better if you are successful: Once experienced, students will be encouraged to write about their Feel the Beat experience and also the presentation with the two Music Therapists. Using pictures and videos of these events will support their language skills to then transfer in writing about these personal experiences. Writing drafts with a focus on language development through the use of the rubric contained in the RACE strategy (Restate, Answer, Cite, and Explain) and thinking maps will support students' literacy skills.

The Perfect Blend Coffee Cart

Eva Zimmerman, Fox Ridge Middle School

The Fox Ridge ILC coffee cart creates an authentic situation for the ILC students to practice and develop social skills. By participating in this routine, students are able to practice taking orders, take part in money exchanges, and learn job organization skills while being a valued member of the Fox Ridge community. We have a successful coffee cart business at Fox Ridge, but we are looking to expand our offerings to staff and provide more learning opportunities for students. Currently, our students deliver basic coffee and treats to staff members, but we would like to expand on this set up and deepen these learning opportunities. We would like for our ILC students to learn how to read a work schedule and

have shifts working in the Coffee Shop and learn how to prepare more elaborate beverages and treats using recipes with visual supports. My team and I are always trying to find ways to create authentic learning opportunities at Fox Ridge that will help our students develop life skills that will serve them for their future in education and post-secondary.

Audio-Enabled Books for All Readers

Kate Enthoven, Heritage Elementary School

I am applying for audio-enabled books, specifically Wonderbooks by Playaway Products to add to the library at Heritage Elementary School. Every Wonderbook is a print book with a ready-to-play audiobook inside. The permanently attached audio reader transforms an ordinary print book into an all-in-one read along. Children simply push a button to listen and read along, no need for computers or tablets (headphones are optional.) Audio-enabled books are great with all children, but particularly for children with special needs. I have started my audio-enabled book collection at the Heritage library with 10 books. I am looking to expand the collection of books with a variety of genres. These books are very expensive, therefore I am applying for this grant to be able to purchase more titles. Students who have difficulty reading will be able to read grade level texts with these audio-enabled books, giving all students an opportunity to read popular literature.

Drums Create Community in the Music Classroom

Madeline Ford, Heritage Elementary School

I would like to provide an engaging musical experience for my students by giving them access to more instruments. My music classroom is in need of tubano drums. I currently have four tubano drums in my classroom. By having more tubano drums in the classroom, more students can participate at a time allowing for better engagement and more collaboration. By adding more collaboration, students are engaging in social-emotional learning and community building skills.

Remo Tubano Drums were made to allow students to engage in different cultures. By adding more tubano drums into my classroom, students will have more opportunities to explore music around the world. Students will also get opportunities to appreciate their own cultures and others cultures through drum repertoire. World Music Drumming is a curriculum that uses Tubano drums to teach historical and social principles of West African, Latin and Caribbean drumming and song. It complements music programs built on National Core Arts Standards. By increasing the amount of tubanos in the classroom, I can use this curriculum to supplement the district's goal to create inclusivity and promote diversity in a fun way.

Studies have also shown that tubano drums can be communication tools. Through call and response, facilitators can ask a question such as "What are you grateful for? Or "What is your strength?" Students can tap out the syllables such as "fam-i-ly" or "kind-ness" to answer the questions. Drums can make answering questions less intimidating for shy students and can also provide a more engaging way for students who need a hands-on approach to stay focused. Through rhythm dialogue via tubanos, community is created. Every music classroom should have a sense of community to allow for creativity and exploration. Tubanos are an excellent resource to create this environment.

Participation in group drumming has been shown to lead to significant improvements in multiple domains of social-emotional behavior. By creating a circle with drums, students can face each other rather than just facing the teacher. Tubano drum circles also strengthen community through call and response. Call and response is a music technique where a facilitator plays a rhythm first and someone else will respond with their drum. This increases leadership skills, and promotes self expression,

creativity and self esteem. Students are also learning how to take turns. As a result, call and response creates a sense of community in the classroom because it increases social emotional learning opportunities.

Tubanos also improve coordination and other gross motor skills. Students gain eye-hand coordination skills when learning how to play different rhythms in the left and right hand. They also strengthen their coordination skills by learning how to play high and low on the tubano. They also gain impulse control when learning how to hit the drum to make the best sound.

Sensory Calming Break Space

Kaitlin Frankhouser, Heritage Elementary School

What I hope to achieve:

I want to create a calming space in the motor room where students can take a break to regulate their emotions and bodies. This space will offer tools like fidget toys, soft seating, and visually calming items to help students calm down, regain control, and return to their classrooms ready to focus, engage, and learn.

Why it is needed:

Many of the students I work with are neurodivergent and struggle with sustaining attention, regulating emotions, or managing physical responses. This dysregulation affects their learning and behavior, and can make it difficult for them to feel safe and successful in the classroom. A calming space will give them a safe environment to take a break and regain control, helping them return to class more regulated and ready to participate as learners.

What inspired me to apply:

I've seen how sensory tools and calming spaces support students in developing self-regulation skills. Schools that have implemented similar spaces have seen positive results. Additionally, many of the students on my caseload are showing increased difficulties with self-regulation throughout the day. I believe creating more calming spaces throughout the school will help support overall regulation and well-being for all students.

The anticipated outcome:

This space will help students develop better strategies for managing their emotions and physical responses, leading to fewer disruptions and improved engagement in the classroom. By having access to a designated calming space, students will be able to take control of their own regulation, resulting in more positive behaviors and greater ability to focus on their learning. The overall school environment will become calmer and more supportive, promoting emotional well-being and academic success for all students, especially those with ADHD, autism, trauma, or other learning differences. Teachers will also benefit from a reduction in classroom disruptions, creating a more productive and positive learning atmosphere.

Audio Books for 4th grade

Kathryn Baker, High Plains Elementary School

I am hoping to build a 4th grade library of audiobooks. 4th grade reading is an incredible opportunity to get students exploring new genres and authors with deeper meaning plots. To offer access and

opportunity to all kids, I would like to build a library of audiobooks to connect more students with middle grade complex texts. Audio books can have a profound and lasting impact on elementary students in several ways:

Here are some of the ways I hope my students gain success and growth with my audio book collection.

*Enhanced Comprehension: Audio books can help students understand stories and concepts better by providing correct pronunciation, intonation, and expression. Hearing a story read aloud can make complex ideas or unfamiliar vocabulary more accessible.

*Increased Engagement: The engaging narration of audio books can captivate students' attention more than silent reading. Enthusiastic or skilled narrators bring stories to life, making the experience more immersive and enjoyable.

*Support for Diverse Learners: Audio books are beneficial for students with different learning needs, including those with dyslexia or other reading difficulties. They allow these students to access content at their level of comprehension without the frustration of struggling through text.

*Development of Listening Skills: Listening to audio books can improve students' auditory processing and concentration skills. It helps them follow along, which is a valuable skill in both academic and social contexts.

*Modeling Fluent Reading: Audio books demonstrate fluent reading and proper pacing, which can serve as a model for students. They learn how to develop a sense of narrative flow.

*Expanded Vocabulary: Hearing new words in context helps with vocabulary acquisition. Students are exposed to a richer language through audio books, which can enhance their understanding and use of new words.

All in all, I was inspired by my own kid's reading journeys at home. We visit our nearby library a few times a month and they immediately head to audio books. I have been impressed the past couple of years that the library's audio chapter books have an incredible selection with various genres and award winning authors and books.

By integrating audiobooks into their learning routine, elementary students can enjoy a multifaceted approach to literacy that supports their educational growth and fosters a lifelong love of reading.

Empowering the Future: Renewable Energy for Hands-On STEM Learning

Karina Lozano Martin, High Plains Elementary School

The Renewable Energy Science Education Kit 2.0 aims to engage students in hands-on STEM learning focused on renewable energy technologies like solar, wind, and hydropower. I seek to enhance students' understanding of sustainability while providing my colleagues with interactive tools to bring clean energy concepts to life. This project is needed to address the lack of practical, engaging resources in renewable energy education. Inspired by the urgency of climate change, my goal is to spark interest in STEM fields and prepare students for a sustainable future. If successful, this initiative will increase student engagement and knowledge, equipping them to be future leaders in renewable energy.

Enhancing Twice-Exceptional Student Success

Rachel Lord, High Plains Elementary School

At High Plains Elementary, we are dedicated to nurturing the unique potential of our twice-exceptional (2E) students—those whose combination of remarkable talents and challenges can act as barriers to accessing the general education curriculum. As a Speech-Language Pathologist, I understand how this can create inequitable educational experiences. To maximize these students' success, they need access to a social-emotional learning framework that addresses the whole student and promotes their holistic well-being.

Twice-exceptional students often experience difficulty in having their strengths and needs acknowledged and supported simultaneously. To bridge this gap, my proposal aims to integrate social-emotional learning with targeted speech-language interventions to enhance their overall well-being and academic success. This approach supports their emotional and communication development, strengthens relationships, and enhances overall engagement.

This initiative represents an opportunity to advance our district's first program specifically designed for twice-exceptional students by highlighting the essential role of speech-language therapy within the broader framework. My expertise in language development and social-emotional learning is crucial for providing the nuanced support these students need. By applying my specialized knowledge, I will ensure that students' emotional and communicative needs are met in a comprehensive and integrated manner, demonstrating the vital role of speech therapy in addressing the complexities of twice-exceptional education.

Students will learn strategies for managing their emotional states in a practical, engaging way. Interactive activities, role-plays, and visual aids will make these concepts accessible and meaningful. Students will develop a better understanding of their physiological internal cues, such as hunger or anxiety, and acquire techniques to understand social cues and foster positive interactions with peers. Both individual and group therapy will provide opportunities for collaboration and practice in a supportive environment, enhancing their ability to build meaningful, long-lasting relationships. To assess the impact of the speech-language interventions, we will evaluate students' progress in emotional regulation and communication skills before and after the intervention. Feedback from students, teachers, special service providers, and parents will provide insights into the effectiveness of these interventions.

This project will support about 15-20 students, but we envision this proposal as a model for integrating speech-language support within broader programs for twice-exceptional students. By showcasing our approach and outcomes, we aim to extend the benefits to similar initiatives across the district and beyond. Your support through the Educator Initiative Grant will help enhance the speech-language components of this program, setting the stage for broader impact.

Social Emotional Learning: Mindfulness and Movement

Catherine Thompson, High Plains Elementary School

At High Plains Elementary, we prioritize social-emotional learning as a foundational part of our students' daily routines, complementing our existing Second Step curriculum. In alignment with this commitment, I propose integrating mindfulness and movement practices to further support our students' social-emotional and executive functioning needs. Through the Educator Initiative Grant, I aim to introduce

and integrate mindfulness and yoga activities into the daily schedule for students in grades K-5. These activities will be thoughtfully designed to cater to our diverse student population, inclusive of students with diverse learning needs, physical abilities, and language backgrounds. This project will encompass guided meditations focused on relaxation, gratitude, and positive visualization, alongside mindfulness exercises such as body scans and mindful listening. Additionally, I will incorporate adaptive yoga sessions tailored to accommodate a wide range of physical abilities.

My inspiration for this initiative stems from a profound commitment to enhancing students' emotional well-being and fostering their academic success. I am driven by a recognition of the increasing demand for interventions that promote emotional regulation and strengthen executive functioning skills among our students.

By equipping students with mindfulness tools, they develop skills that can benefit them beyond the classroom. Students will practice strategies for managing stress and improving focus. Learning techniques that students can apply independently builds their confidence in managing their emotions and stress levels and gives them a sense of control over their well-being. Which will lead to improved emotional regulation, increased focus during academic tasks, and enhanced overall well-being. The school community as a whole will benefit from a more positive and supportive environment where students are equipped with essential life skills for lifelong success.

Supporting Inclusivity

Maureen Simon, High Plains Elementary School

Our Educator Initiative Grant proposal aims to enhance inclusivity within our school by fostering communication, social-emotional development, and social skills among students. The core objective is to cultivate a school environment where every student feels valued and accepted. By addressing inclusivity from an early age, we strive to help students recognize, acknowledge, and embrace differences, thereby shaping a more accepting future society.

This initiative is essential because building inclusivity at a young age lays the groundwork for lifelong acceptance and understanding. By equipping elementary students with the skills to appreciate diversity, we are not only improving their immediate school environment but also preparing them to contribute positively to society as adults.

The inspiration behind this proposal stems from the belief that true inclusivity requires collective effort from all members of the school community—teachers, staff, and students alike. To support this vision, we plan to implement the SEA Bridges program, acquire neuro-affirming texts to facilitate discussions about various differences and disabilities, and introduce play-based toys to encourage interest-based groups.

The anticipated outcome of this grant is a more aware and supportive student body. We expect students to better recognize and appreciate each other's strengths and needs, fostering a positive and open dialogue about disabilities. This initiative will not only improve peer interactions but also create a foundation for continued inclusivity in their future interactions.

Vocational Skills in Action

Claire Patten, High Plains Elementary School

The Vocational Skills in Action program at High Plains Elementary School aims to empower kindergarten through 5th-grade students in our Integrated Learning Center (ILC) classroom by equipping them with essential vocational and life skills. The grant money will be used to support several key components of this program, each designed to enhance our students' independence and prepare them for success beyond the classroom.

A portion of the grant will be allocated to establishing and maintaining our biweekly coffee cart. This initiative provides students with hands-on experience in managing a small business, including tasks such as: purchasing supplies, operating the materials, and learning about different resources. Another significant portion of the funding will support our biweekly cooking classes, where students learn important skills related to meal preparation and kitchen safety. Expenses covered will include: cooking ingredients, kitchen supplies, and classroom supplies.

To reinforce the skills learned in the coffee cart and cooking classes, we will use grant funds to organize field trips. These excursions will expose students to real-world applications of their skills and provide: transportation costs, admission fees, and supplementary materials such as extra activities within the field trip.

Finally, a portion of the grant will be allocated to purchasing specialized materials and adaptive tools to accommodate the diverse needs of our students.

The inspiration for this proposal comes from a desire to see our students thrive as independent individuals capable of achieving success in the real world. By starting vocational training early, we can significantly impact their long-term development and confidence. The goal is to offer meaningful learning experiences that are relevant to their daily lives and future opportunities, encouraging them to rise above any limitations imposed by their disabilities.

By investing in these components, the Vocational Skills in Action program will create a dynamic learning environment where students can develop practical skills, gain confidence, and see the real-world applications of their education. Your support will be instrumental in helping us achieve these objectives and make a lasting difference in the lives of our students.

Creativity and Collaboration enhance social skills

Amanda Banfield-Vice, Highline Community Elementary School

I hope to provide the students opportunities to grow their social and emotional capacities through creative activities in the art room. I practice a TAB pedagogy based on centers and choice which promotes creativity. I also would like to give my students exposure to certain learning products they may not have been able to experience outside of school like Magnatiles, Duplo Lego's and Molotow paint markers. In addition I would like to expose the students to artists from all over the world with books they can read during art class. I also have Art Club and Lego club where I can use these materials. Students today may spend too much time on electronic devices and need hands on activities that can enhance their learning experiences as well as require a collaborative process and the need to share. Many of the students have seen paint pens online in drawing tutorials but do not have access to this material at home due to the expense, it would be a great experience for them to be able to use this tool. Many of the students at our school are english language learners and having some books about artists and art in the art room would be a way to see art and words in a visual way that can support

language learning.

I am always looking for opportunities to expose my students to new experiences that can get them excited about creating, making and doing art as well as broadening their horizons.

The anticipated outcome is enhanced social skills, experiences with materials that may not happen outside of school and exposure to new artists and art.

ELLs Can Achieve Anything

Holly Pierce, Highline Community Elementary School

As an English Language Support Specialist (ELS), my objective is to enhance students' ability to engage in English language conversations while acquiring content knowledge. In the early grades (K-2), students are expected to participate in daily classroom discussions. However, some students may have valuable ideas that they feel hesitant to share or may struggle to articulate them effectively.

To address this challenge, I propose utilizing durable, stand-up cards that are both colorful and user-friendly. Each card features sentence starters designed to facilitate conversations across four key standards-based purposes:

****Tell an Idea****

****Ask a Question****

****Build on an Idea****

****Explain My Thinking****

These cards will support students in demonstrating their learning through daily discussions. The instructional goal is to guide students from using simple language to developing more sophisticated expressions. This scaffolded approach allows students to begin with familiar language and progressively advance to more complex constructs, thereby increasing their engagement and language proficiency.

The use of these cards will be beneficial for all students, including those with ADHD, learning differences, autism, and multilingual learners. By providing these supports, I aim to ensure that every student—regardless of gender, ethnicity, or tenure at the school—can participate meaningfully in discussions.

I am motivated to apply for this grant because, while we currently possess a limited number of these materials, the funding would enable us to equip each classroom with a set. This would facilitate daily use of the cards in my absence and empower classroom teachers to integrate these tools into their instruction throughout the day, thereby building their capacity to support student language development.

ELLs Can Achieve Anything! Part 2

Jenn Bredsdorff, Highline Community Elementary School

Provide a brief description of your Educator Initiative Grant proposal that can be used for publication.

Explain the following: *

what you hope to achieve

why is it needed

what inspired you to apply

the anticipated outcome, including what will be different or better if you are successful

As an English Language Support Specialist (ELS), my objective is to enhance students' ability to engage in

English language conversations while acquiring content knowledge. In the early grades (K-2), students are expected to participate in daily classroom discussions. However, some students may have valuable ideas that they feel hesitant to share or may struggle to articulate them effectively.

To address this challenge, I propose utilizing durable, stand-up cards that are both colorful and user-friendly. Each card features sentence starters designed to facilitate conversations across four key standards-based purposes:

- ****Tell an Idea**** (black)
- ****Ask a Question**** (green)
- ****Build on an Idea**** (gray)
- ****Explain My Thinking**** (red)

These cards will support students in demonstrating their learning through daily discussions. The instructional goal is to guide students from using simple language to developing more sophisticated expressions. This scaffolded approach allows students to begin with familiar language and progressively advance to more complex constructs, thereby increasing their engagement and language proficiency.

The use of these cards will be beneficial for all students, including those with ADHD, learning differences, autism, and multilingual learners. By providing these supports, I aim to ensure that every student—regardless of gender, ethnicity, or tenure at the school—can participate meaningfully in discussions.

I am motivated to apply for this grant because, while we currently possess a limited number of these materials, the funding would enable us to equip each classroom with a complete set. This would facilitate daily use of the cards in my absence and empower classroom teachers to integrate these tools into their instruction throughout the day, thereby building their capacity to support student language development.

Enhancing Writing Proficiency For All Students Especially Multilingual Learners

Julia Franklin, Highline Community Elementary School

The goal of this grant application is to secure funding for writing supplies and materials specifically designed to support multilingual learners in improving their writing proficiency. These supplies will include express your thinking student cards, language support kits with talking chips, discussion cards and timers, colored pens, markers, sticky notes and lined note cards. The aim is to create a classroom environment that fosters confidence in writing and helps multilingual students express themselves more effectively in English. Multilingual learners face unique challenges when developing writing skills. Many struggle with vocabulary, grammar, and sentence structure as they transition between languages. Without adequate materials, they may feel overwhelmed or under-supported, which can hinder their academic growth. Having worked closely with multilingual students, I have seen firsthand the potential they possess when given the right tools. Their creativity, ideas, and unique perspectives often go untapped because of language barriers. This application was inspired by the desire to provide these students with the materials necessary to unlock their full potential and to ensure that they are given the same opportunities to thrive as their peers. By providing multilingual learners with the appropriate writing materials, the classroom environment will become more inclusive, empowering students to communicate more confidently. The anticipated outcomes include improved writing skills, greater engagement in classroom activities, and higher self-esteem as students see tangible progress in their ability to write. The purchase of these writing materials will create a more supportive and effective

learning environment, resulting in stronger writing abilities, improved academic performance, and a more positive learning experience for multilingual students.

Inspiring Creativity, Critical Thinking, and Collaboration Through STEM Theme Events

Kim Beal, Highline Community Elementary School

This grant was inspired by a session I attended at ISTE Live24, an international edtech conference that was held in Denver this past June. The presenter shared her Glow STEM school-wide event. Hearing about the success of her event and seeing the photographs led me to think about how I might implement STEM events at Highline to get students engaged in and excited about STEM.

By hosting themed STEM events, I hope to expose students across all grade levels K-5 to exciting STEM activities. This is needed for several reasons. First, unlike many other schools, Highline does not have STEM as one of the students' special area classes. There was a STEM special through the 2022-2023 school year. When students are asked now what their wishes are for their school, many respond that they wish they had STEM again because they miss it so much. Another reason exposure to STEM is needed is because participation in STEM activities develops skills that are essential in many areas of life, including creativity, problem solving, collaboration, critical thinking, curiosity, perseverance, and having a growth mindset. Additionally, many of our students' future career opportunities will in some way relate to STEM, and all careers require the essential skills listed above. Lastly, Highline has a very high percentage of multilingual learners and an extremely diverse population. Many of our students are in typically under-represented populations in STEM careers. My hope is by exposing students at the elementary level to STEM, they will be more likely to pursue STEM-related careers in the future and begin to change the disproportionality of representation in STEM careers.

The anticipated outcomes of this project are:

- Offering a minimum of three STEM events this school year: Glow STEM, Don't Lose Your Marbles, and This is Puzzling. One event will be offered as a family night.
- Building community among K-5 students through engaging STEM events.
- Increased student engagement in and excitement for STEM.
- Starting a STEM event program that will continue next year.

Cooking Group

Christi Johnson, Holly Hills Primary

The purpose of this grant is to support a weekly Friday cooking group made up of 10 severe needs special education students at Holly Hills Elementary. The grant would be used to provide the group with materials needed for completing the recipes and recipe ingredients.

The cooking group is a collaboration with the Special Education Teacher, the Speech Language Pathologist and the Occupational Therapist to provide services in a setting that allows for real-life connections. The outcome of this cooking group is not only to provide services, but to use the act of cooking to improve and develop skills and make connections that can be used in the school setting and across all settings of the students' daily lives. If successful, the cooking group is a space where students can meet and improve their Individual Educational Plan (IEP) goals, and receive the services they need. Students will also develop social and personal skills they can use across the school setting and at home.

DCPA Play

Keith Garvert, Holly Hills Primary

PLEASE NOTE This application is part 2 of an application submitted by my other teammate, Hanna Sykes.

Our kindergarten students will experience the magic of live theater by attending a performance of *We Are in a Play!* at the Denver Center for the Performing Arts. This engaging play, based on Mo Willems' beloved *Elephant and Piggie* books, will inspire a love of storytelling, enhance language development, and provide an unforgettable cultural experience for our young learners.

The purpose of this grant is to provide our kindergarten students with an enriching cultural experience by attending a live theater performance. We hope to ignite a passion for storytelling and the arts in our young learners, encouraging their imagination and creativity. This experience will also support language development by bringing beloved characters and narratives from Mo Willems' *Elephant and Piggie* series to life, reinforcing the literacy skills we cultivate in the classroom. *We also hope to achieve a sense of belonging and community within our kindergarten classrooms by purchasing a class t-shirt for each kindergartener to wear not only on this field trip, but on all future field trips this year.

This opportunity is particularly needed because many of our students may not have regular access to the arts, especially in a live theater setting. By attending this performance, students will not only enjoy a memorable outing but also connect with literature in a dynamic and interactive way.

I was inspired to apply for this grant after seeing how deeply our students connect with the *Elephant and Piggie* books during our read-aloud sessions. The characters' expressive and simple language resonates with them, making complex emotions and social situations accessible and understandable. I believe that seeing these characters on stage will deepen their engagement and bring a new dimension to their learning. *This grant is Part Two of Hanna Sykes' grant already submitted. This will allow us to fully fund the grant.

Flexible Seating for Maximized Learning

Maribel Moon, Holly Hills Primary

I hope to achieve a classroom in which the implementation of additional flexible seating will increase student engagement and focus. We currently have 2 flexible seating wobble chairs for 27 students to share. And although this is a great exercise in sharing, it is not equitable. The kids who always get the chairs, are the first ones in the classroom. I feel students who would also like to use but do not want to impose, do not ask for it. I want the kids to be able to use flexible seating if they feel they need it to enhance their learning. I notice the students are better able to stay on task and when this option is available to them. Edutopia confirms "Flexible classrooms give students a choice in what kind of learning space works best for them, and help them to work collaboratively, communicate, and engage in critical thinking." Flexible seating can also foster collaboration and teamwork among the students because they can work in different configurations.

Meeting the Basic Needs of Newcomers: Food, Clothing, and Literacy

Jessi Hickey, Holly Hills Primary

The Hollys is a vibrant community of learners welcoming new students from many countries and states. We want to help meet some of their needs by providing some healthy snack options and reusable water bottles, adding new underwear to our clothing boutique that is free to families, and adding more books in students' primary languages to classroom libraries. Our students have incredible assets, and we want to help them reach their greatest learning potential by getting them ready to confidently enter into instruction. We also want to welcome them with books showcasing their primary languages!

Placing Books in the Hands of Children

Clarissa Abeyta-Linhardt, Holly Hills Primary

I would like to have more books in the hands of my students at Holly Hills Elementary. We are a Title 1 school with many students that live below the poverty level. I am at a school with many diverse students from all over the world . Over the course of 2 years we have received over 100 immigrant students from Venezuela. Many of these students in grades 3-5 did not attend school consistently in their home country because it was not safe. These students have to work extra hard to learn English and to learn to read. I want to create opportunity for these children to have equitable access to books in order for them to practice the skills they are taught. I want books that will instill a love of reading. I want to use these resources to close their achievement gap. My students inspired me to apply. They came to my school with unique gifts and I learn from them each and every day. They are excited to learn and they want to work hard but I do not have enough books for them to practice the reading skills they are learning with me. I want to give them every opportunity for success. My anticipated outcome is kids loving and enjoying reading. I hope the outcome is that I have enough books for kids to practice and close their achievement gap and opportunity gap. If I am successful then I will have more students who are able to access learning at grade level. I am passionate about addressing the critical issue of the declining reading scores and believe that this project will contribute to positive change in my school.

Recess Equipment

Tracie Bernauer, Holly Hills Primary

Our grant proposal seeks to purchase new recess equipment to encourage collaboration, teamwork, and overall joy among our elementary students. We hope to create a more engaging and inclusive play environment where students can develop essential social skills, such as communication, cooperation, and conflict resolution, while having fun.

This initiative is needed because our current recess equipment is outdated and limited, which restricts opportunities for collaborative play and physical activity. Recognizing the importance of play in fostering social-emotional development and physical well-being, we were inspired to apply for this grant to provide our students with the resources they need to thrive both socially and emotionally.

If successful, this grant will result in a more vibrant and interactive playground environment. The anticipated outcome is that students will experience improved social skills, increased physical activity, and a greater sense of community and enjoyment during recess.

Special Populations Supports for Success Across Environment

Katrina Swatek, Holly Hills Primary

I want to continue breaking down communications barriers for students with disabilities and their supporting staff; specifically through the creation of individualized student materials that can be used across school environment- including at home. This is needed because many of our students with disabilities have limited verbal language both expressively and receptively. We often need to communicate with them using picture supports to generate oral comprehension, provide visual reminders for safety, and reduce anxiety when completing task or daily schedules with multiple steps. I've been inspired to apply for this grant because picture supports not only help students with disabilities, but they increase communication skills for everyone in the K-2 environment, particularly as MANY of our students at Holly Ridge are not native English speakers. Our anticipated outcome is the special education team's ability to continue to make individualized visual materials for students and their supporting staff. This is not a new endeavor for us, but our team consumable resources for binders, velcro, laminate pouches, label makers, etc are heavily used throughout the school year. We are not looking for a different outcome, but a continued outcome of excellence as we support our students, and their families across environments.

We are in a Play!

Hanna Sykes-Varnhagen, Holly Hills Primary

Our kindergarten students will experience the magic of live theater by attending a performance of *We Are in a Play!* at the Denver Center for the Performing Arts. This engaging play, based on Mo Willems' beloved *Elephant and Piggie* books, will inspire a love of storytelling, enhance language development, and provide an unforgettable cultural experience for our young learners.

The purpose of this grant is to provide our kindergarten students with an enriching cultural experience by attending a live theater performance. We hope to ignite a passion for storytelling and the arts in our young learners, encouraging their imagination and creativity. This experience will also support language development by bringing beloved characters and narratives from Mo Willems' *Elephant and Piggie* series to life, reinforcing the literacy skills we cultivate in the classroom.

This opportunity is particularly needed because many of our students may not have regular access to the arts, especially in a live theater setting. By attending this performance, students will not only enjoy a memorable outing but also connect with literature in a dynamic and interactive way.

I was inspired to apply for this grant after seeing how deeply our students connect with the *Elephant and Piggie* books during our read-aloud sessions. The characters' expressive and simple language resonates with them, making complex emotions and social situations accessible and understandable. I believe that seeing these characters on stage will deepen their engagement and bring a new dimension to their learning.

Community Safety

Andrew Sharpe, Horizon Middle School

As HCMS continues to grow, so does the need to enhance our security infrastructure. We have identified several areas where our current security measures require significant improvement to safeguard both students and staff. One crucial aspect of our security strategy is the ability to respond effectively in emergency situations.

Inspired by the importance of equipping individuals with life-saving skills, I pursued certification as a "Stop the Bleed" instructor. My goal is to make HCMS the first school in Cherry Creek to certify all students and staff in "Stop the Bleed" training. This program will empower our entire school community with the knowledge and skills needed to respond to severe bleeding emergencies, thereby enhancing our overall safety preparedness.

Self-Regulation Support & Small Groups

Tanya Ilela, Horizon Middle School

As a counseling department we understand and believe social emotional learning is imperative to student success. Our task is finding ways to implement it without having access to students on a daily basis. We utilize a variety of different methods to engage students in social emotional learning. This year we have identified two additional ways to support students facing social emotional challenges. We will be implementing small groups based on identified needs beginning quarter two. Additionally, we would like to support students throughout the day by supplying them with what they need to be successful.

Small groups are an effective way to address social emotional needs for middle school students who are struggling to find a sense of belonging. A benefit of small groups is that they understand they are not

alone in their thoughts and feelings as they are embarking into young adulthood. Oftentimes the two things we struggle with in education are time and funds. What inspired us to apply is we would like to use the funds to purchase a variety of different resources, connection activities and games to use as we sponsor our Breakfast and Lunch Buddy groups (requested/created by students), as well as other small groups we will run throughout the school year. These groups will address their social emotional needs, facilitate a sense of community and connection, and allow students to learn from one another.

Additionally, we currently support students with self-regulation throughout the day in a variety of ways. The counseling office staff supports students in the classroom with a variety of tools. Student can check out noise canceling headphones or take 5-minute break in designated space in our office. These are used daily! We have expanded this in 6th grade where teachers have created Calm Spaces in their classroom. Counseling supported them by providing a folder of mindful activities, fidgets, and a timer. We would like to expand our ability to support students by adding additional tools and supports. We would like to add more mindful and calming tools to our office space, continue to support teachers, as well as add more tools in our counseling space, as well as items for students to check out, for students who need movement and/or stimulation. This is not currently possible because our counseling budget is \$100 for the year.

I am experienced counselor, but new to the Cherry Creek School District. I was inspired to apply because I believe there is a great system in place at our school and I see the opportunity for our department to expand and support students in new ways. This grant will be able to provide us with the financial support to purchase items we can use to facilitate connection and success.

Supporting Newcomers Foundational Skills in English With Engaging Materials

Erin Taylor, Horizon Middle School

With this grant, I hope to give my students engaging materials to help them acquire English without feeling like the content and resources are too childish for their middle school minds and interests. It's challenging to find resources that help teach foundational literacy and math skills that are at secondary levels of interest and don't seem too primary for adolescents. My aspiring bilingual students deserve to have access to materials to help them bridge their multilingual assets and the acquisition of the English language. With these hands-on materials, I will be able to implement more project-based learning opportunities and hands-on skill building that is relevant to their life and interests as middle schoolers. My inspiration for applying for this grant is my students. We have had an influx of newcomer multilingual learners and I feel compelled to meet their needs in new ways. I see their fire to learn the English language, to feel connected to their peers and to understand curriculum, and I see their struggles and frustrations as well. They have so many assets, which don't always come to light if they are unable to express themselves and all the knowledge and power they possess. The end goal of this grant would be for my students to be actively engaged, have fun, build relationships, and feel connected and better equipped with the English language in both social and academic settings.

A chart of materials I am seeking can be found using this accessible link. This includes the rationale on how I will be using each these materials:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1bP_xyx621JVqYjVHxRwBMFsfLnWJ-1uNspAX0n7NRD4/edit?usp=sharing

Empowering Future Journalists: The K-IND News Initiative

Jamie Lee Johnston, Independence Elementary School

Our goal is to establish and support our 5th grade news group that empowers students to develop essential skills in journalism, communication, and media production. By equipping them with the necessary tools and training, we aim to foster their creativity, confidence, and understanding of current events.

In today's rapidly evolving digital world, children are increasingly exposed to media but often lack the opportunity to create content themselves. This initiative addresses the gap by providing students with hands-on experience in news production, which enhances their critical thinking, teamwork, and technological skills. Additionally, it creates a platform for students to engage with and contribute to their school community. These students are our future leaders and they are getting great experience before heading off to middle school.

The inspiration for this proposal stems from the recognition that early exposure to journalism can ignite a lifelong passion for storytelling and media literacy. Our previous instructional coach had started this amazing leadership opportunity and retired last year, so we are hoping to continue her legacy while also adjusting the club to fit this new population of 5th graders.

If successful, the K-IND News Club will transform how students interact with their educational environment. Students will gain practical skills in video production, writing, and public speaking, and they will have a voice in sharing their experiences and perspectives. This initiative will not only enhance their educational experience but also foster a stronger sense of community within the school. Ultimately, students will be more informed, confident, and equipped to tackle future challenges in their academic and personal lives. By investing in this project, we are investing in the future leaders and communicators of tomorrow, giving them the tools they need to make a meaningful impact today.

Guitar Time

Angela Howard, Independence Elementary School

Putting quality instruments in the hands of kids is one of the most powerful things we can do to foster creativity, confidence, and a sense of belonging. Students that are given the opportunity to learn instruments in elementary school are more likely to continue on a musical path for the rest of their life. It also provides an outlet for students to feel and express themselves. The guitar is an accessible instrument that can be played at any age. If we can get guitars in the hands of our students, they will be able to compose, play, and create on their own and with others. I see first hand the importance of providing resources for our students at school. Most of my students do not get the opportunity to explore music lessons or instrument playing outside of school. I hope to teach my students guitar so that they can connect with their own rich cultures and explore others. Having a foundation of guitar at the elementary school level will also prepare them to continue in guitar class in middle school.

Inclusive Coffee Cart

Amanda Castanuela, Independence Elementary School

The Inclusive Coffee Cart Program at Independence Elementary School aims to enhance student engagement and inclusivity by involving students, particularly those in special education, in operating a student-run coffee cart. This will boost self-confidence and foster social interactions among students and staff all while the students are working on their speech, language, social, and motor skills (related to their IEP goals). Inspired by a need for more hands-on, inclusive activities, the program will create a

welcoming environment where all students feel valued and connected, setting a positive example of unity and practical learning within the school community.

Reading Joy with Wonderbooks

Libby Ames, Independence Elementary School

This grant proposal is being proposed by the teacher librarians of Independence Elementary, Mission Viejo Elementary, and Ponderosa Elementary. The purpose of this grant request is to purchase Wonderbooks to be used by K-3 students. A Wonderbook is an integrated set of a picture book and matching audio to support our young and striving readers. The need for this initiative stems from the growing recognition that audiobooks with text can enhance comprehension, vocabulary, and listening skills, while making reading a more inclusive experience for all. Inspired by the desire to meet the diverse learning needs of our students, this grant will help bridge literacy gaps and provide a wider range of learning opportunities. If successful, students will have more access to literature in formats that meet their individual needs, creating a more inclusive and engaging environment that encourages every student to develop a lifelong love for reading. Each school is requesting to purchase their own copies of Wonderbooks and equipment to support the grant that will then become part of a shared collection that will rotate between the three elementary schools.

Youth Equity Learners and Leaders

Laura Mitchell, Independence Elementary School

YELL (Youth Equity Learners and Leaders) is an afterschool club for 4th graders. This will be the fourth year we are running YELL at Independence Elementary School. This program will give students an opportunity to explore cultural and racial backgrounds and have courageous conversations about direct experiences. We will provide a safe space to engage in thinking, listening, and discussion about equity and cultural diversity topics. This group will also highlight and celebrate our students' many cultures and languages. We hope that YELL club contributes to creating a welcoming and inclusive culture at Independence.

We also hope to deepen our students' and staff's conversations around race and equity. We hope to identify areas of growth in our school to create a more equitable learning environment. This program is innovative in that it is a leadership opportunity for students in fourth grade to learn about equity and create positive change in our school.

Movie Making

Staci Day, Indian Ridge Elementary School

Making video productions is a fun and exciting way for students to be able to share their thoughts and ideas with their class, school, and community. Our students already have access to a wonderful video editing software provided by the district but in order to make the process even more like a real world production some special tech tools are needed. Video production is not only something that can be practiced in Art class but it is also something that can be used in all other content areas in order to give students options for presentations that they previously did not have access to. Letting students express themselves through the art of video production with real tools not only make the process more like the real world but also makes the products they create better quality.

Calming spaces

Joo Cha, Laredo Middle School

The Laredo Middle School Mental Health team would like to create a series of calm spaces within the Counseling Center for the students of Laredo Middle School. These spaces will offer students areas to come to regulate themselves and then return to class to re-engage in learning. Many students at Laredo

experience adverse childhood experiences. Some have a history of trauma, learning and emotional disabilities, as well as mental health concerns that prevent academic and social emotional success in the school setting. These barriers, many times, lead to emotional dysregulation in the classroom. When students are dysregulated, they are not able to utilize their prefrontal cortex, where executive functioning skills occur. They are not able to verbalize their thoughts and feelings in a concrete, logical way, which can lead them to exhibit maladaptive behaviors. The calming spaces will allow students to take a break, calm their brain and body, and return to class ready to re-engage in the learning environment.

Calming spaces are designed and furnished to provide areas with minimal stimuli and access to mindfulness activities that will help students strengthen self-regulation. This in turn will lead to positive classroom behavior and achievement.

We hope by designing and providing these rooms that we are able to teach kids strategies to self-regulate, develop coping skills and minimize big outbursts that often lead to students being out of class for long periods or getting suspended. This is needed as we have more students than ever before who are struggling with regulating their bodies and emotions. Self-regulation is especially difficult for students who have a history of trauma. Many of the students we work with have a history of trauma and we hope that by having a calm down space they will be able to learn and utilize coping skills to regulate themselves. Having access to calming spaces for all students can prevent teachers from becoming overly frustrated with students, decrease out of the classroom time for students and help students learn skills they can use in all aspects of their lives. Research has shown that children who are able to better manage their thoughts, feelings, and actions are better able to succeed in social and learning environments.

Teaching a child to self-regulate in the school, will extend their abilities to self-regulate into other settings such as extracurricular activities, club sports, and home and community interactions, where a child may need to rely on these skills to avoid maladaptive trigger responses.

Calming Spaces

Yuri Kashima-Ellingson, Laredo Middle School

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Teaching a child to self-regulate in the school, will extend their abilities to self-regulate into other settings such as extracurricular activities, club sports, and home and community interactions, where a child may need to rely on these skills to avoid maladaptive trigger responses.

Listen Up! Headphones for Every Student's Success

Scott Gacon, Laredo Middle School

The goal of this initiative is to ensure that every student has access to reliable, high-quality headphones for use in the classroom. By providing headphones, we aim to eliminate barriers to learning and ensure all students can fully participate in activities that require audio, such as personalized learning, multimedia lessons, and district assessments.

Why is it needed?

Most classrooms have headphones, but they often experience wear and tear, leading to malfunctioning units that hinder student engagement and participation. Access to working headphones is essential for audio-based learning activities and district assessments like STAR and CoGAT, which provide valuable data to inform instructional practices.

What inspired you to apply?

The belief that access to working technology should not be a barrier to learning inspired us to apply for this grant. All students deserve an equal opportunity to engage in their education, and reliable headphones are a crucial part of ensuring that.

Anticipated Outcome

If successful, this grant will result in improved student focus and engagement in lessons requiring audio, as well as equitable access to technology for all students. Additionally, students will perform better on assessments such as STAR and CoGAT, as they will have the necessary tools to fully participate, contributing to a more equitable and effective learning environment.

Mental Health Matters

Devin Bolle, Laredo Middle School

My project is to focus on the mental health of my students. I teach severe needs students, they have a more difficult time understanding and processing their emotions. The books that I have chosen to include in this project will help explain to my students what their emotions are and how to process

them. It is important for my students to understand their emotions, and the little spot books do an amazing job. With my students being severe needs, they are much lower academically than their peers, these books are also more their grade level to fully help them understand their emotions. Mental health can be overlooked by my students, and I do not want to see that happening anymore. We have decided to start Mental Health Mondays, and every Monday, we will discuss something that involves mental health. With these books, I can show my students what they need to know! There are also different rewards that I have chosen for this project, we will be implementing a class store where students can purchase different fidgets, stickers, and prizes. The students will be given "pride dollars" and they can spend them on different prizes! This will help us encourage positive behavior in our room. Thank you for taking the time to read this project, I am so grateful to have the opportunity to create this project.

TBRI Trauma Informed Classroom

Cheri Van Winkle, Laredo Middle School

We would like to provide teachers and staff training for TBRI® (Trust Based Relational Interventions), through the TRBI & Trauma Informed Classrooms training. TBRI® is an attachment-based, trauma-informed intervention that is designed to meet the complex needs of children. TBRI® uses Empowering Principles to address physical needs, Connecting Principles for attachment needs, and Correcting Principles to disarm fear-based behaviors. While the intervention is based on years of attachment, sensory processing, and neuroscience research, the heartbeat of TBRI® is connection. For more information, access <https://child.tcu.edu/about-us/tbri/#sthash.Inx7PAfW.dpbs>.

Many Laredo students have experienced adverse childhood experiences, or traumas, that impacts their abilities to learn. These experiences include abuse or neglect, loss, family disruptions, violence in the community, life-threatening illnesses, etc. TBRI addresses the impact of these experiences on the brain and development, which will allow educators and professionals to provide guidance and support to all children to help them focus, calm themselves, heal, regulate and most of all, learn. Our TBRI® work will align with all five CCSD core values: relationships, engagement, growth mindset, whole wellbeing, and equity.

The goal is to equip educators with tools and strategies to help students who come from diverse backgrounds and sometimes adverse or traumatic backgrounds. TBRI teaches strategies to professionals to help provide a safe space that disarms fear, optimizes learning and facilitates healing for vulnerable children. Professionals will learn how to co-regulate, help children reset, and therefore, focus on their learning. This will produce calmer learning environments for all students in the classroom and create more equitable learning spaces. Children will benefit from this environment in the following ways: completion of more school-based assignments and tasks, self-esteem building, and a better ability to handle difficult situations as they arise.

An external benefit of teachers and staff implementing TBRI in the classroom, is the potential trickle-down effect to the parents and guardians of each child at Laredo. Ultimately, the long-term goal is to offer TBRI Caregiver Training in the community, to better assist families with their parenting challenges at home. Each new connection formed between teachers and children, as well as parents and children, will better serve the children at Laredo as a springboard for success, not only academically, but relationally, emotionally, and socially.

As a TBRI® practitioner for over 12 years, I have seen TBRI strategies promote self-efficacy in parents and professionals, improved parent/child or professional/parent interactions, higher self-esteem with children due to their successes, and relationship building of all family members. When a child

experiences safety in their internal and external environments, they are better equipped to learn, develop healthy connections, and succeed academically.

Cozy Spaces at Meadow Point

Tiffany Carlson, Meadow Point Elementary School

At Meadow Point Elementary, we understand that students can't learn if they aren't regulated. We care about our students' ability to understand and use coping skills to be ready to learn. This year, our school is engaging in a school-wide initiative to include a Cozy Space in every classroom. This space is in a quiet area of the classroom, and students self-elect to use it as needed to return to a ready-to-learn state. Each teacher is able to determine the location of the Cozy Space, and students received a short presentation during the first month of school from the mental health team to use common language around the Cozy Spaces. Each teacher takes the opportunity after a student uses the Cozy Space to problem solve and cement positive relationships between teacher and student. This grant will help provide supplies to furnish these comfy spots, including weighted plushies, soft supports, and other comfort items to help students regulate their emotions and get ready to learn.

Graphic Novels Promote Literacy at School!

Kamrin Campbell, Meadow Point Elementary School

Meadow Point is centering a school goal around literacy this year. The library can support this goal by offering books that are engaging for our students to read for fun. Graphic Novels are always a top choice for many students, even reluctant readers. Students engage with the plot and characters of graphic novels and are coming back for the sequel, or even number 10 in the series! By having a large graphic novel collection, we can encourage our students to choose reading and be excited to pick up the next in the series. I recently learned that a book vendor can assist with filling in books that may be missing from a series. I have requested a list of missing books from our graphic novel collection to help get copies on the shelves and available for our students. There are many times a student has requested a sequel to what they just read, however, it is not always easy to fulfill this request. Budgets are tight and Scholastic Dollars do not have access to all titles. By filling these gaps, we aim to provide students with uninterrupted access to the stories they are invested in and encouraging sustained reading habits and deeper engagement with literature. With this grant, we will complete many series that are popular with students and keep them engaged in reading for fun!

The Library Can Support Social Emotional Learning

Kamrin Campbell, Meadow Point Elementary School

Meadow Point has selected Social Emotional Learning (SEL) as a focus for the school year. Incorporating SEL-focused literature into our library will provide students with valuable tools to navigate their emotions, build positive relationships, and develop a strong sense of self. By having a variety of SEL books available, we aim to create a nurturing environment that supports students' overall well-being and academic success. The requested funds will enable us to purchase a range of age-appropriate books that reflect various perspectives and experiences, ensuring that every student finds relatable and impactful books. This investment will not only enrich our library but also contribute to a more emotionally supportive and inclusive school culture.

The library is a regularly used resource for both students and staff. . Our school has a mental health room that supports students throughout the day. Throughout the school year the mental health team or classroom teachers will request books from the library to share with our students regarding various SEL topics. They incorporate SEL books into their morning meetings to help support their classroom and students. As the main caretaker of the Meadow Point library, I would like to continue to provide updated and accessible SEL books to our community.

Cardiovascular Equipment Part I

Monica Anderson, Mission Viejo Elementary School

Our Educator Initiative Grant proposal aims to transform our elementary school environment by continuing to use and introduce new cardiovascular equipment to support student health, whole well-being, and academic performance. We hope to achieve more physical activity throughout the school day, brain breaks and emotional regulation strategies by having students use cardiovascular equipment such as stationary bikes. This is needed because in today's digital age, many children spend a significant amount of time on screens, leading to sedentary lifestyles and associated health issues like obesity, poor cardiovascular health, and decreased physical fitness. Physical activity is limited to short periods during recess, classroom brain breaks and once a month PE classes, leaving students with minimal opportunities for regular exercise throughout the school day. This limited physical activity can contribute to declining cardiovascular health, increased stress, and diminished academic performance. Our proposal addresses these gaps by providing essential cardiovascular equipment and integrating it into everyday school practices, ensuring that all students have access to the benefits of regular physical activity. The inspiration for this grant proposal stems from a recognition of the connection between physical health and academic success. Studies have shown that regular physical activity can enhance cognitive function, improve behavior, and reduce stress, all of which contribute to a more effective learning environment. Witnessing the challenges faced by students in underserved schools and understanding the transformative potential of physical fitness, I am motivated to develop new and creative ways that addresses these issues and promotes an approach to focus on the student's whole well-being. This proposal will significantly improve the health and academic outcomes of students by incorporating cardiovascular equipment into their daily routines. We anticipate a noticeable increase in students' physical fitness levels, improved focus and behavior in the classroom, and enhanced emotional regulation. By providing equal access to high-quality fitness resources and integrating them into the curriculum, we will create a more inclusive and supportive school environment. This will not only benefit students' physical health but also foster a positive, engaging, and equitable educational experience, ultimately leading to a more well-rounded and effective learning environment.

Reading Joy with Wonderbooks!

Karen Connors, Mission Viejo Elementary School

This grant proposal is being proposed by the teacher librarians of Independence Elementary, Mission Viejo Elementary, and Ponderosa Elementary. The purpose of this grant request is to purchase Wonderbooks to be used by K-3 students. A Wonderbook is an integrated set of a picture book and matching audio to support our young and striving readers. The need for this initiative stems from the growing recognition that audiobooks with text can enhance comprehension, vocabulary, and listening skills, while making reading a more inclusive experience for all. Inspired by the desire to meet the diverse learning needs of our students, this grant will help bridge literacy gaps and provide a wider range of learning opportunities. If successful, students will have more access to literature in formats that meet their individual needs, creating a more inclusive and engaging environment that encourages every student to develop a lifelong love for reading. Each school is requesting to purchase their own copies of Wonderbooks and equipment to support the grant that will then become part of a shared collection that will rotate between the three elementary schools.

Share your Flair

Diane Wright, Mission Viejo Elementary School

Objective: My "Share Your Flair" grant seeks to fund the purchase of a button-making machine and its components for our Mission Viejo Elementary Art program. "Share Your Flair" will enable every K-5

student to design and create their own personalized pins, allowing them to express their individual identities and values.

Purpose: This grant is essential to enhance our art curriculum by integrating a unique, hands-on, creative project that promotes self-expression and community. By providing students with the tools to design and produce their own pins, I aim to foster a greater sense of self-awareness and pride that promotes student whole well-being, relationship building, engagement and equity.

Inspiration: The inspiration for this project stems from the desire to create an inclusive environment where every student can share what is meaningful to them in a tangible and personal way. I recognize that art is a powerful medium for self-expression and believe that creating a button will not only engage students in a fun and innovative activity but also build their confidence and sense of belonging.

Anticipated Outcome: With this grant, I anticipate a transformative impact on our students. Each pin will serve as a personal statement, celebrating diverse interests and values within our school community. The project will enhance our art program by offering a new, exciting medium for creative expression. Success in this endeavor will lead to a more vibrant, connected school environment where students feel seen and valued. The hands-on experience of making their own pins will not only enrich their art education but also empower them to embrace and share their individuality.

Overall, the "Share Your Flair" grant will create a lasting, positive difference by fostering a greater sense of self and community among our students, encouraging them to take pride in who they are and what they stand for.

Ukuleles for Mountain Vista Musicians

Sarah Elrod, Mountain Vista Elementary School

Sarah Elrod, the MVE second grade team, and I are applying for this grant together. This grant will fund a class set of ukuleles, an adaptive ukulele attachment, picks, strings, tuner, and storage equipment to be used in the music room, but the learning will extend to the second grade classrooms.

With the addition of ukuleles in the music room, students will experience playing in an ensemble in a new way. We want to inspire and encourage students to continue music after they leave the music room. Teaching students how to play and sing with the ukulele, including reading chord charts and tabs, allows students to continue experimenting and playing music. These instruments will build ensemble playing and encourage connections through community. They will also support the social emotional needs of each child through music. These ukuleles will build up the music room to represent all student's interests, and will allow us to connect with more students in a unique way. At Mountain Vista, it is our goal to meet and connect with all students of all backgrounds and cultures. Ukuleles provide a new entry point into music for all students regardless of how they interact with music or opportunities to create music that they may not get outside of school.

In addition, the second grade team and I will integrate the learning about ukuleles into the classroom setting. This will include lessons around the use of the ukulele in different traditions and cultures, playing audio recordings of different ukulele music, having conversations related to how the music makes students feel, bringing awareness to the musical world around them, and inspiring musical creativity inside and outside the classroom. The second grade team, Sarah Elrod, and I will collaborate on ways to integrate ukulele lessons throughout the day and throughout the school year.

Ukuleles for Mountain Vista Musicians

Sarah Luther, Mountain Vista Elementary School

Sarah Luther, the MVE second grade team, and I are applying for this grant together. This grant will fund a class set of ukuleles, an adaptive ukulele attachment, picks, strings, tuner, and storage equipment to be used in the music room, but the learning will extend to the second grade classrooms.

With the addition of ukuleles in the music room, students will experience playing in an ensemble in a new way. We want to inspire and encourage students to continue music after they leave the music room. Teaching students how to play and sing with the ukulele, including reading chord charts and tabs, allows students to continue experimenting and playing music. These instruments will build ensemble playing and encourage connections through community. They will also support the social emotional needs of each child through music. These ukuleles will build up the music room to represent all student's interests, and will allow us to connect with more students in a unique way. At Mountain Vista, it is our goal to meet and connect with all students of all backgrounds and cultures. Ukuleles provide a new entry point into music for all students regardless of how they interact with music or opportunities to create music that they may not get outside of school.

In addition, Sarah Luther and the second grade team will integrate the learning about ukuleles into the classroom setting. This will include lessons around the use of the ukulele in different traditions and cultures, playing audio recordings of different ukulele music, having conversations related to how the music makes students feel, bringing awareness to the musical world around them, and inspiring musical creativity inside and outside the classroom. The second grade team and I will collaborate on ways to integrate ukulele lessons throughout the day and throughout the school year.

Accessible Auditory Graphics for Students with Visual Impairments and Blindness

Taryn Galow, Overland High School

The Tactonom Reader is a groundbreaking device that significantly enhances educational opportunities for students with visual impairments or blindness. This innovative technology enables independent access to graphical learning content, bridging a critical gap in their educational experience and bringing greater equity of access to sighted peers.

Importance of Access

For visually impaired students, understanding graphical information has long been a major challenge. Traditionally, these students have relied heavily on sighted assistance to interpret visual content, severely limiting their autonomy in learning. The disparity in access to graphical information is stark - while sighted students encounter approximately 25,000 graphics throughout their school years, visually impaired students typically interact with fewer than 100. This vast difference underscores the urgent need for tools like the Tactonom Reader. Further, because tactile graphics for students with visual impairments are typically larger, they require students to reference braille labels on other pages. Students have described this as asking their sighted peers to have their image labels across the room from their textbooks. Equal access and ease of access is not being afforded. As educators that work to support students with visual impairments, we must work to improve access for our students.

How the Tactonom Reader Works

The Tactonom Reader combines tactile exploration with audio explanations. As students move their fingers across tactile graphics placed on the device, a camera detects their finger position, and the system provides verbal explanations of the elements being touched. This seamless integration of touch and audio enables students to comprehend complex graphical content independently. The files for many

Tactonom Graphics are available online for free, and custom ones can be produced by the vision department staff.

Benefits for Academic Access

Independent Learning

The Tactonom Reader empowers visually impaired students to work autonomously with graphical information. This independence is crucial for developing self-confidence and reducing reliance on constant assistance, preparing students for future academic and professional challenges.

Equal Participation

With the Tactonom Reader, visually impaired students can participate in lessons on an equal basis with their sighted peers. They can access the same content, fostering inclusive education and ensuring they don't miss out on critical visual information in their studies.

Comprehensive Understanding

The device allows for unlimited information to be associated with each aspect of a graphic. Unlike traditional Braille graphics with limited space for explanations, the Tactonom Reader can provide extensive details, enabling a deeper understanding of complex subjects.

Interactive Learning

The Tactonom Reader offers interactive features such as acoustic finger guidance and question-answer sessions. These capabilities deepen students' engagement with the material and enhance their learning experience.

Diverse Content Access

Students can explore a wide range of graphical content, including maps, mathematical illustrations, infographics, and tables. This broad access opens up new areas of study and career possibilities that may have previously seemed inaccessible.

Flexibility in Learning Pace

The device allows students to review and deepen their understanding of materials at their own pace. This flexibility is crucial for effective learning, as it enables students to spend more time on challenging concepts when needed.

Broader Impact

The Tactonom Reader not only improves academic access but also prepares visually impaired students for greater independence in their future lives. By providing access to graphical information in fields like geography, science, and mathematics, it expands their career prospects and enhances their ability to navigate the world independently.

Moreover, the device's compatibility with various tactile graphic formats, including Braille printing and 3D printing, ensures versatility in its application across different subjects and learning environments.

In conclusion, the Tactonom Reader represents a significant leap forward in inclusive education technology. By providing visually impaired students with independent access to graphical information, it levels the playing field, enhances their learning experience, and opens up new possibilities for academic and personal growth. This technology is not just an educational tool; it's a gateway to a more inclusive and equitable educational landscape for visually impaired students.

Accessible Auditory Graphics for Students with Visual Impairments and Blindness

Rachel Sullivan, Overland High School

The Tactonom Reader is a groundbreaking device that significantly enhances educational opportunities for students with visual impairments or blindness. This innovative technology enables independent access to graphical learning content, bridging a critical gap in their educational experience and bringing greater equity of access to sighted peers.

Importance of Access

For visually impaired students, understanding graphical information has long been a major challenge. Traditionally, these students have relied heavily on sighted assistance to interpret visual content, severely limiting their autonomy in learning. The disparity in access to graphical information is stark - while sighted students encounter approximately 25,000 graphics throughout their school years, visually impaired students typically interact with fewer than 100. This vast difference underscores the urgent need for tools like the Tactonom Reader. Further, because tactile graphics for students with visual impairments are typically larger, they require students to reference braille labels on other pages. Students have described this as asking their sighted peers to have their image labels across the room from their textbooks. Equal access and ease of access is not being afforded. As educators that work to support students with visual impairments, we must work to improve access for our students.

How the Tactonom Reader Works

The Tactonom Reader combines tactile exploration with audio explanations. As students move their fingers across tactile graphics placed on the device, a camera detects their finger position, and the system provides verbal explanations of the elements being touched. This seamless integration of touch and audio enables students to comprehend complex graphical content independently. The files for many Tactonom Graphics are available online for free, and custom ones can be produced by the vision department staff.

Benefits for Academic Access

Independent Learning

The Tactonom Reader empowers visually impaired students to work autonomously with graphical information. This independence is crucial for developing self-confidence and reducing reliance on constant assistance, preparing students for future academic and professional challenges.

Equal Participation

With the Tactonom Reader, visually impaired students can participate in lessons on an equal basis with their sighted peers. They can access the same content, fostering inclusive education and ensuring they don't miss out on critical visual information in their studies.

Comprehensive Understanding

The device allows for unlimited information to be associated with each aspect of a graphic. Unlike traditional Braille graphics with limited space for explanations, the Tactonom Reader can provide extensive details, enabling a deeper understanding of complex subjects.

Interactive Learning

The Tactonom Reader offers interactive features such as acoustic finger guidance and question-answer sessions. These capabilities deepen students' engagement with the material and enhance their learning experience.

Diverse Content Access

Students can explore a wide range of graphical content, including maps, mathematical illustrations, infographics, and tables. This broad access opens up new areas of study and career possibilities that may have previously seemed inaccessible.

Flexibility in Learning Pace

The device allows students to review and deepen their understanding of materials at their own pace. This flexibility is crucial for effective learning, as it enables students to spend more time on challenging concepts when needed.

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AP Math Curriculum For All

Erin Blink, Overland High School

This is the first year Overland High School is offering AP Precalculus. This is actually only the second year the course has even been offered by AP. We need a new curriculum for this brand-new AP math course tailored for students who typically would not enroll in an AP math class. This course is designed to bridge the gap, providing an opportunity for these students to experience the rigor and complexity of advanced mathematics in a more accessible way. The curriculum will focus on familiarizing students with the specific wording and problem-solving techniques required in AP exams, fostering their ability to engage in deep, analytical thinking. By introducing this course, we aim to broaden the accessibility of AP-level learning and help students develop the confidence and skills necessary to succeed in advanced mathematics. With the course being so new, there aren't many teaching resources available. I would use the grant to purchase online curriculum from 2 well-known companies that specialize in providing comprehensive support for AP courses, ensuring our students have access to high-quality, AP-aligned learning materials. These companies offer very high quality daily resources for free but I would use the grant money to purchase their assessment curriculum and to purchase workbooks for each student in the course. I want my students to have the best resources available to be able to perform well throughout the course and most importantly, on the AP exam.

Building Community Through Literacy

Jodi Sanchez, Overland High School

In 2020, after 18 years of teaching, I began my Master's program in Reading, inspired by my love of teaching literacy, and in response to the urgency to increase literacy achievement and graduation rates in our learning community at Overland High School. My master's program charged me with writing a school-wide literacy plan to improve literacy outcomes for our students, and the findings inspired this

literacy initiative. After receiving my master's in Reading and obtaining my Colorado Reading Specialist endorsement (in 2022), along with the support of my principal, Ms. Sybil Booker, this school year we have begun to implement a literacy class (5 sections taught by me and another teacher) to support the growing literacy needs of our most vulnerable readers - those significantly behind grade level in reading. We are already seeing growth and success, however, providing more school-wide instruction and community engagement will create a larger impact on literacy and graduation rates. Historically, Overland has had a literacy intervention. Approximately 12 years ago, I and 4 colleagues, including reading Cris Tovani, education consultant and disciplinary literacy researcher and author, created a reading class called Intensive Reading. This class was demonstrably successful at increasing literacy for the seven years it was in existence, but it was eventually diminished due to the impacts of COVID. From 2019-2023, our students had no literacy interventions or universal literacy instruction. The Overland High School Building Community Through Literacy project aims to change this. Overland High School is a beautiful, unique school with an enrollment of approximately 2,200 students from diverse backgrounds. In fact, Overland is the most diverse high school in Colorado, boasting students from 120 nations and with over 65 languages spoken in the learning environment. Since the pandemic, our graduation and literacy rates have decreased alarmingly.

Elements of math class

Liz Kuhns, Overland High School

I am currently teaching four elements math classes at Overland. In reviewing my students IEP's, I realized that their working memory and reading ability impacted their math skills. I wanted to integrate memory games and appropriate reading text into my classroom. These skills will improve their math skills.

I was inspired to apply because Jamie Logan is my PD coach and she encouraged me to apply. Her idea's of how I can integrate literacy into my math class caused me to research more on the math brain (specifically with math disabilities).

I believe the outcomes will be improved math students.

Encouraging Play & Teamwork Through LEGO

Emily Utsler, Overland High School

Students with intellectual and cognitive disabilities often have a hard time with things like fine motor skills, learning to work together, and even just finding something to do for fun. I've used LEGO in the classroom for years, and I've personally seen the benefits of how it can get students learning to problem-solve together and showcases reasoning skills/fine motor skills. With this grant, I hope to achieve growth in fine motor skills, growth in social/communication skills, and recreational/leisure skills. My goal is to not only have the students build different sets by following instructions, but also to use their imagination in building their own structures and creations.

Sweet Blazer Cafe

Heather Rister, Overland High School

By using this grant to fund our ILC students' lunch program for the teachers, called Sweet Blazer Cafe, we can successfully teach life skills that our students will need as they continue on from high school. Students with cognitive disabilities prepare for life after high school by working on their life skills, their communication skills, and their work skills. Sweet Blazer Cafe offers the opportunity for students to take orders from teachers for their lunch, count how much of each lunch item is required, complete a budget so we can go shopping, shop for the items, prepare the lunches, and finally, serve them and practice counting money when teachers' pay for them. All of these skills are essential to our students with cognitive disabilities learning skills to help their employability after high school. It also offers a great

hands-on opportunity for students to practice cooking and preparing meals. It also offers the opportunity for students to practice their social skills by speaking with teachers to take their orders and handing the orders out when it's time to serve them.

Engaging Novel Studies

Emma Cipriani, Peakview Elementary School

Through the "Engaging Novel Studies" grant, I hope to expose 5th grade students to a variety of genres, engaging texts, and culturally diverse novels. This is needed because students often are limited in the types of books that they choose to read. This narrows the scope of books they are reading and can hinder their love for reading. Some students correlate a negative connotation to reading, simply because they haven't found the right book or the right genre to spark their passion for reading. This project also aligns with CCSD's strategic literacy plan, which states, "providing every student with authentic and rigorous learning experiences through a structured, culturally responsive, and evidence-based approach to literacy instruction." This engaging novel study will provide rigorous learning experiences by giving students the ability to discuss high-level texts, build perspective for various cultures that are different from their own, and build on our current reading curriculum by creating spiral review opportunities for reading skills.

I was inspired to apply for this grant because my class this year has started by reading a book called, "When Stars are Scattered." In this gripping graphic-novel, based on a true story, students analyzed two characters that grew up in a refugee camp in Kenya, due to the Somalian War. Students analyzed perspectives of those living in refugee camps, the effects of war on a country, women's rights in various cultures, right to education, friendship, and the meaning of home. Students each had their own book and were able to have book club discussions with their classmates, and create high-level projects to demonstrate their understanding of 5th grade reading skills.

The anticipated outcome of this project is the increase students love for reading, increase the exposure of students to a variety of genres and more opportunities for students to explore cultures that are different from their own. Finally, this also gives students in my class the opportunity to see themselves and their own culture in the characters that they read.

Teaching life skills in ILC

Michelle Strandberg, Peakview Elementary School

Our ILC at Peakview has nearly doubled in size this school year. With the ILC growth we have many young ILC students that have a need to follow directions and find purpose in following those directions. Through this grant I hope to provide our ILC students with interactive cooking lessons that would support their social emotional learning, academics and IEP goals while also teaching practical life skills.

Think, Share, Grow

Denise Guthrie, Peakview Elementary School

I will create alternate workspaces in our classrooms by purchasing personal magnetic whiteboards and magnetic manipulatives. The magnetic whiteboards will encourage more thinking, engagement, and collaboration in the classroom. The purpose of implementing a thinking classroom with whiteboards is to foster a more interactive, dynamic, and engaging learning environment for students. This innovative approach aims to enhance critical thinking, problem-solving skills, active participation, and collaboration among students. The utilization of whiteboards provides a tangible and versatile tool that allows students to visualize their thoughts, engage in real-time discussions, and actively contribute to classroom activities.

The inspiration to apply this approach comes from Peter Liljedahl's Building Thinking Classroom in Math. He conducted a 15 year study observing 14 specific mathematical practices for thinking. He was looking for the practices that generated the most thinking and consequently, increased productivity and achievement. Last year, I implemented using standing whiteboards in my classroom and the difference was almost immediate. Students were more engaged, even excited when they learned we were going to do a "board talk" that day. As the year continued, in addition to math, we successfully used the standing whiteboards in other content areas. This year, I would like to continue to use the personal whiteboards as a way for students to show their thinking while collaborating in small groups or easily move around to different areas, sharing with others while working on the move.

Accessible Auditory Graphics for Students with Visual Impairments and Blindness

Amber Rundle Kahn, Pine Ridge Elementary School

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Building connections through regulation

Robyn Wertheimer Hodas, Polton Elementary School

We are requesting funds to support our trauma-informed approach at a Title I school, focusing on supporting students who struggle with self-regulation and social connections due to pandemic disruptions and other life circumstances. Our primary needs are to equip "Safe Seats" in every classroom with timers and calming tools, and to develop structured cooperative play activities for recess. These interventions are designed to help students manage their emotions and improve their social interactions, thereby increasing their overall school success. Your support will enable us to provide these essential resources and foster a more supportive learning environment.

Empowering families to integrate literacy in the home

Kelly Bruns, Polton Elementary School

Nationally representative data suggests that approximately 40% of children are never read to by their parents and 61% of low-income homes do not have age-appropriate books for their children. At the age of 5, children who have never been read to by a caregiver will have been exposed to 300,000 words fewer than their peers. (Logan, Justice, Yumus & Chaparro-Moreno, 2019). Reading with a young child provides a space for increased exposure to vocabulary, joint engagement with an adult, and fosters growth in pre-literacy skills giving children a strong foundation for learning once they enter kindergarten.

This project originally set out to provide our families with access to age-appropriate books in the home and aid in the generalization of what the children are learning at school to another environment. Many of the books that were selected were bought in a bilingual format to support our culturally and linguistically diverse community. As an added layer, this year our project aims to supplement these books with Tonies boxes. These family-friendly speakers will allow children and families to listen to the stories together and enhance vocabulary learning with complementary songs. In early childhood, we know that incorporating songs and music into vocabulary learning is a highly effective way of solidifying knowledge through a developmentally appropriate method. (Magnussen & Sukying, 2021). This project will be achieved by implementing the Tonies boxes in the classroom with the books to teach students how to use them and introduce the story and vocabulary. Next, the boxes will be sent home to a family and they will be able to use it for 2 weeks before sending back to the school and exchanging them for a new story/song set.

We hope to increase parent and student engagement around school curriculum, lessons, and culture. This will allow caregivers access to age-appropriate materials that they can make at-home connections to school learning. We were inspired to apply because so many of our students are unable to generalize their skills across the school day into their life at home. We also hope that this generalization will support the literacy and language skills of our students leading to early academic success as students will be seeing the same materials in the general education classroom, the resource room, and at home.

Empowering families to integrate literacy in the home

Kendra Woolbright, Polton Elementary School

Nationally representative data suggests that approximately 40% of children are never read to by their parents and 61% of low-income homes do not have age-appropriate books for their children. At the age of 5, children who have never been read to by a caregiver will have been exposed to 300,000 words fewer than their peers. (Logan, Justice, Yumus & Chaparro-Moreno, 2019). Reading with a young child provides a space for increased exposure to vocabulary, joint engagement with an adult, and fosters growth in pre-literacy skills giving children a strong foundation for learning once they enter kindergarten.

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Golf Zone: Engaging Students in Golf through a Low-Tech, High-Impact Physical Education Program

James Rodgers, Polton Elementary School

This proposal seeks funding to implement a golf unit in the physical education curriculum at Polton Elementary. The unit will focus on the development of students' skills in chipping, an essential component of golf, and will include the purchase of targets and other instructional equipment. The purpose of this project is to introduce students to the sport of golf, improve hand-eye coordination, and promote lifelong physical activity. This program will cater to students of all skill levels and ages, enhancing both their physical and mental skills in a fun and engaging way.

Physical education programs play a critical role in fostering active lifestyles, and introducing students to non-traditional sports such as golf can diversify their experiences, encouraging physical activity beyond school. Many students in our community have limited exposure to golf due to financial barriers, and this program will give them the opportunity to learn the fundamentals in a supportive environment. The chipping aspect of golf, which focuses on precision and control, will help students develop fine motor skills, hand-eye coordination, and focus. By providing proper equipment, we can ensure all students have equitable access to the sport.

This grant will provide essential resources to launch a dynamic and engaging golf unit that teaches students valuable physical and cognitive skills. By focusing on chipping and target practice, we will ensure that students of all levels can participate and benefit from this introduction to golf. We look forward to fostering a love for the sport and encouraging a healthy, active lifestyle among our students.

Honoring Choice with Flexible Seating

Meredith Olugbode, Polton Elementary School

This grant will be used to buy materials to support Polton Elementary students by providing them with flexible seating options that support varying sensory needs, collaboration, and engagement. In addition, the incorporation of flexible seating in the classroom will promote student comfort within the classroom environment.

Honoring Choice with Flexible Seating

Erinn Shea, Polton Elementary School

This grant will be used to support Polton Elementary students by providing them with flexible seating options that support varying sensory needs, collaboration, and engagement. In addition, the incorporation of flexible seating in the classroom will promote student comfort within the classroom environment.

Laptop for our Team

Maureen Dreman, Polton Elementary School

As a special education teacher, I see firsthand the incredible impact that access to the right tools can have on both students and teachers. One such tool is a laptop with printing capabilities, which can be a game-changer in our classrooms. This grant will supply a moderate needs program with a laptop, which can be used for paraprofessionals to print materials to help students learn. These include visual schedules, worksheets, incentive charts, student work, progress monitoring and other materials. In addition, the paraprofessionals in our program, will use this computer to project lessons, videos, and instructions on a whiteboard which will support teaching foundational skills. Our students often don't have a great vocabulary and need to see pictures of things in order to help their comprehension. Our phones are usually unable to connect to the internet because of the many dead zones. Having access to a computer will also help with comprehension and vocabulary by utilizing it in this way. Our paraprofessionals also need a way to communicate to us about students that have behavior plans or we are collecting data on. By the time they get access to a computer, they are not getting all the details down that we necessarily need. If they have the computer with them, they can jot notes down immediately instead of trying to remember them for later. Currently, we have two classrooms and many breakout spaces in which the paraprofessionals pull small groups to work with. The teacher computer, which is typically in use by the classroom teacher, is normally unavailable to the paraprofessionals. The paraprofessionals are unable to complete their duties in a professional manner without another laptop that connects to district equipment (projectors, printers, SMARTboards, Google Docs, Images, etc.). The other items I have requested for my classroom will make it cozy and comfortable for students. The rugs will define spaces and give students an area on the floor to sit or lay down to read. My students are all struggling readers and they need the area to be conducive to reading because it is not their favorite thing to do. Many of my students have ADHD and need spaces that are defined, so they know where they can move around without distracting others. The lamp will give the room a cozy feel. The lighting in the rooms often hurt the students' eyes. They like when lamps are turned on vs. having the lights on. Anything I can do to make my room calm, cozy and conducive to learning, I am willing to do. All the supplies I am asking for will help my classroom feel like a place students want to come.

LEGO Pixel Art

Jeannette Mouland, Polton Elementary School

This innovative project engages 5th-grade students at a Title 1 school in the creation of LEGO pixel art, integrating math and problem-solving with creative expression. Focused on promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion, the project empowers all students, regardless of background or ability, to design and build their unique LEGO pixel art pieces. By fostering collaboration and celebrating the rich diversity within the classroom, this initiative not only enhances technical skills but also cultivates a sense of belonging and shared achievement among students.

1. What I Hope to Achieve:

The primary goal of this project is to create an inclusive learning environment where every student feels

valued and capable of success. By merging art with math, I aim to enhance students' technical skills, boost their confidence, and encourage creative expression. Additionally, I hope to foster a sense of community and collaboration among students, celebrating the diverse perspectives they bring to the classroom.

2. Why It Is Needed:

This project is crucial because it addresses the need for equitable access to creative opportunities in a diverse classroom, specifically giving our students access to their very own LEGO set, something some cannot afford. Many students at our Title 1 school face socioeconomic challenges that can limit their exposure to enriching educational experiences. By providing a hands-on project that integrates multiple disciplines, we ensure that all students have the chance to engage in meaningful, confidence-building activities that prepare them for future success.

3. What Inspired Me to Apply:

The inspiration for this project comes from my desire to bridge the gap between art and academics while creating an inclusive environment where every student can thrive. I've seen firsthand how creative projects can empower students, especially those who might struggle in traditional academic settings. The idea of using LEGO pixel art to combine math with artistic expression felt like a perfect way to engage all students, inspire them to think critically, and celebrate the diverse talents within our classroom.

4. The Anticipated Outcome:

If funded, this will be the 4th year my 5th grade art students will be able to create this project. I have seen this project result in a classroom where students are more confident in both their creative and academic abilities. The integration of art with math will help students develop a deeper understanding of key concepts, making them better equipped for future challenges. The collaborative nature of the project will also strengthen peer relationships and foster a more inclusive, supportive classroom culture. Ultimately, students will gain a sense of pride and accomplishment from creating something that reflects their unique identities and contributions, making their learning experience richer and more rewarding. We all know how expensive LEGOs are. With your donation our students can continue to have access to this popular and engaging tool.

Poltons incredible musicians

Shianne Cruz, Polton Elementary School

Building Poltons music program aims to integrate a comprehensive music program into the curriculum to foster social-emotional learning and academic enrichment in reading and math. By introducing a diverse range of musical experiences, we seek to create an environment where students can develop empathy, self-awareness, and collaboration skills. Music education provides a unique avenue for students to express emotions, build resilience, and engage in meaningful interactions with peers.

Spanning the Play Gap Between Families and School

Morgan Louie, Polton Elementary School

The Lego Foundation conducted a study on the impact of play on learning. They found that play needed five qualities to cultivate holistic skills in children. Play needs to be meaningful, iterative, joyful, socially interactive, and actively engaging. When children can learn through play, they can support the learning

of cognitive, emotional, physical, social, and creative skills. Unfortunately, many of our students do not have access to age and developmentally-appropriate toys in their homes. In addition, many caregivers report a lack of confidence in being able to engage with their children in this type of play to support their learning.

This project aims to provide access to toys in the home and to empower parents in their interactions with play and their children. Each playbox will contain a toy and a caregiver-friendly handout on how to facilitate play including specific tips to increase social-emotional skills and language development. There will be 11 different playboxes that students will check out and take home throughout the school year. We hope that through these boxes, not only will caregivers feel more confident, but we will also be able to span the learning gap between homes and schools better allowing our students to generalize their skills.

Flexible Seating & Tools for Neurodivergent 3rd Grade Cluster

Annie Rim, Ponderosa Elementary School

As the neurodivergent cluster teacher, I have a classroom full of learners who have a range of learning needs. From kids who have trouble sitting in a traditional chair to kids who prefer to stand, I'd like to create a classroom that accommodates all of their unique learning needs. As a second-year teacher at Ponderosa, I have scavenged most of my furniture from the hallway "garage sale" of discarded items from other teachers. Our meeting table chairs are adult-sized, so don't fit correctly under our meeting table. I'd like to have a set of stools both at the meeting table and as an option for students who prefer stools or other types of seating to using traditional plastic school chairs. I would also like to have a variety of flexible seating for students to choose from for their table groups. Offering different options will increase student focus and engagement.

I'd also like to bring a meeting carpet to put in the center of our room for our Universal Instruction time. I find that team building, class meetings, and universal learning time happen best when students are able to sit close together. This allows for collaboration and ease of partner sharing. This also allows students to have partners who may not sit at their table groups, giving them access to more perspectives within our learning community. A brightly colored carpet will invite my students to have a visual reference for our meeting time. Because our class is so large, at the moment, students spill between desks (and often, under them) during meeting time. Having a bright, dedicated space will give visual boundaries to our meeting time.

Because many of my students have ADHD and ASD, I'd like to invest in learning-related fidget tools. My students often bring toys from home to help them regulate but I'd like a variety of options for when they forget their home fidgets or for when those become toys rather than tools. Having a variety will give students opportunities to find a regulating device that works for them.

For the rest of the grant, I would like to update our classroom library to reflect our student population and the needs of my gifted and talent-pool learners. Again, most of my books were scavenged from the giveaway piles in the hallway and are mostly targeted for a younger grade level. I'd like to fill my library shelves with a range of chapter books that reflect the varied interests of my learners. I have students who will still benefit from the picture books I currently have but I have a large number of students who would benefit from more challenging and diverse chapter books.

I was inspired to apply for this grant because Ponderosa is a highly-impacted school without the financial ability to raise funds through the PTCO or other avenues. Much of our population is newly

arrived in the United States, many refugees from conflicted nations. Asking the community to provide extra funding when they are simply trying to navigate a new system of housing, school, and work is unrealistic. Your help will create a learning environment that is more equitable to those of their peers who are more established in our country and its school systems.

Multi Media Self Portraits

Julia Brown, Ponderosa Elementary School

One of my personal and professional goals as an artist and teacher is to create an environment where students feel represented by the artists we learn about in class. I want all of my students to see artists that look like themselves. Not very long ago, the most famous “artists you should know” were mostly older white men and unfortunately, artists of color are still vastly underrepresented in our education systems here in the United States. As a teacher, I won’t settle for a curriculum that offers what is seemingly a “nod” to diversity.

Fortunately, the Black Lives Matter movement has challenged the institutions of art to be more inclusive. Curators, publishers and others in the art world purposefully responded by highlighting more artists of color to challenge and hopefully replace the status quo of “old white guys” as the seminal staple artists we typically feel all children should know. However, as we know, inclusivity is an active practice that must be nurtured to be sustainable.

My proposed project is a mixed media self-portrait unit for roughly 200 students. The project draws inspiration from well-established portrait-artists of color from all over the world, so our students feel inspired to share their own unique story and voice.

We will learn how contemporary portrait-artists depict people and how they communicate intent— with and through art. We will also learn how the unique and varied backgrounds of the artists show up in their work. Many of these artists were also immigrants, or children of immigrants. Some come from diverse homes and backgrounds and— like my students— have had a unique home-life and personal story. Many of these artists have faced extreme adversity and channel that into their narrative, ideas, and voice to communicate their varied and unique lived experience, feelings and conclusions.

Art has long held power to invoke, expel, confess, transmute, illustrate and, most importantly, regulate. My ultimate objective is to share these artists’ stories with my students to inspire expression, growth, inclusion and regulation.

I will never forget when I was teaching a Basquiat lesson for the third graders. One student asked me what the crown in so many of Basquiat’s paintings symbolized. I did not know, so I looked it up on my lunch hour and the next day I explained to my students that the iconic Basquiat crown was his personal symbol to represent black power— his personal symbol of pride. Several of my students of color silently raised their fists in unity. It was not only a fabulous teaching moment, but a life-moment I carry with me always.

We will look at the portraits of the artists, investigate the methods, media, and processes these artists employ and then experiment with some of their unique and varied techniques and methods. We will integrate these methods to express our own voices, through our own lenses, with our own lived experiences, and share our own personal stories.

Many Ponderosa students come from non-traditional family structures, live in multi-generational homes

and many are refugees from all over the world. I heard we have over 80 languages represented in our school community. Our students have many common experiences they share with these artists, and the students will learn that a lived experience makes an artist's voice and lens unique, different, important, and powerful.

Ninja Life Hacks & More: SEL Curriculum & Supplies

Maria Esteve, Ponderosa Elementary School

As a Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (PBIS) team, we work to teach students how to safely navigate and understand difficult emotions. Having access to a comprehensive Social Emotional Learning (SEL) curriculum will aid us in providing concrete examples and social stories for students to learn from. We aim to teach students regulation skills and coping strategies such as impulse control, emotion identification, and conflict navigation, among others. Students in grades K-5 often struggle with expressing their emotions in a safe, productive way, and teaching students to identify and respond to those feelings can help prevent students from making unsafe choices. We hope to decrease the number of behavioral incidents from our students by prioritizing teaching and relationship building over punishment.

Reading Joy with Wonderbooks

Alexis Tritz, Ponderosa Elementary School

This grant proposal is being proposed by the teacher librarians of Independence Elementary, Mission Viejo Elementary, and Ponderosa Elementary. The purpose of this grant request is to purchase Wonderbooks to be used by K-3 students. A Wonderbook is an integrated set of a picture book and matching audio to support our young and striving readers. The need for this initiative stems from the growing recognition that audiobooks with text can enhance comprehension, vocabulary, and listening skills, while making reading a more inclusive experience for all. Inspired by the desire to meet the diverse learning needs of our students, this grant will help bridge literacy gaps and provide a wider range of learning opportunities. If successful, students will have more access to literature in formats that meet their individual needs, creating a more inclusive and engaging environment that encourages every student to develop a lifelong love for reading. Each school is requesting to purchase their own copies of Wonderbooks and equipment to support the grant that will then become part of a shared collection that will rotate between the three elementary schools.

Exploring Human Metabolism and Cellular Respiration with Origami Organs, Sheep Plucks, and LEGO Molecule Models

Kristin Rizzatti, Prairie Middle School

What I Hope To Achieve:

This project seeks to engage middle school students in exploring human metabolism and cellular respiration by combining hands-on activities, including origami models of digestive system organs, sheep pluck dissections, and LEGO brick sets to model key molecules. By bridging these different learning tools, students will gain a deeper understanding of how digestion, respiration, and metabolism are interconnected at both the organ and molecular levels.

Why Is It Needed:

Enhance students' understanding of metabolism and cellular respiration by exploring how food is broken down, absorbed, and used to produce energy in the body.

Encourage creativity and scientific thinking by using origami, dissection, and LEGO modeling to

represent biological processes.

Foster engagement and interest in STEM by providing hands-on, interdisciplinary learning experiences.

What Inspired Me to Apply & The Anticipated Outcome:

The project will target middle school students (grades 6-8), specifically those from diverse and underrepresented backgrounds in STEM. The project will engage approximately 220 students across two middle school classrooms. Students often find it challenging to grasp abstract scientific concepts like metabolism and cellular respiration because they are typically taught through 2-dimensional means. This project addresses this challenge by incorporating hands-on learning activities that make abstract concepts tangible, relatable, and engaging so that they can develop a more holistic understanding of human metabolism.

Research shows that students learn best when they can manipulate models and perform experiments. By using origami to construct organs, dissecting sheep plucks, and building molecule models out of LEGO bricks, students will create connections between the structures and processes involved in energy production within the body.

Look, I Can Talk- TPRS for Newcomers

Amy Hatton, Prairie Middle School

Look, my students can talk. To fully implement an innovative method for English language instruction, funds are needed to purchase student books for the Newcomer English Elective class at Prairie Middle School. Students arrive in the Middle School English elective class from different language backgrounds with a variety of skills and abilities. The TPRS (Teaching Proficiency through Reading and Storytelling) method uses highly-effective techniques to provide comprehensible input with the power of stories. Students are able to engage with the scaffolded stories and quickly gain functional language. Cherry Creek's ELS department purchased the teacher guide for me last spring. I read the teacher guide over the summer and participated in online training. I purchased the power points to accompany the beginner stories and have kicked off the year with success.

The TPRS materials provide a large variety of differentiated materials that can be easily modified for various grade and proficiency levels. I am missing the student reading text and novels. The teacher guide comes with one copy of the student reading text, but to respect copyright, only a small portion of this book can be photocopied. With one classroom set of the student texts, Look, I Can Talk, and two sets of simplified novels, I will be able to provide hours of comprehensible instruction to each of my newcomers.

Student Leadership Development

Mallory Bond, Prairie Middle School

In 2018, a colleague and I started a leadership group at Prairie geared towards students who showed strong leadership potential but continued to benefit from educator guidance. This group has fundamentally changed the lives of 20 8th grade students each year since. Each year, one of the experiences that most strengthens students' sense of belonging, relationships with peers and confidence in themselves is our field trip to the Cherry Creek Challenge Course. This field trip costs us \$50 a student. This year I am hoping to take 22 8th graders. Since we have done this trip in the fall, it sets the tone that a growth mindset allows you to accomplish anything you put your mind to. I will work hard to instill the values of whole well being, growth mindset and the importance of relationship, but when students have time to play and challenge themselves on the challenge course, these values seep into their bones. It's an experience that they will remember forever.

This grant is needed for the first time during the 24-25 school year for the students leadership group to

continue. Over the past 6 years, we have been able to fund the leadership group and our field trip to the Cherry Creek Challenge Course with a contribution from a private donor. We used the remaining part of this financial contribution after our trip to the Challenge course during the 2023-2024 school year.

Wonder of Science

Robin Thompson, Prairie Middle School

I teach 7th grade science at Prairie Middle School. Each teacher is assigned an advisory class, and this year, I have a group of students for science enrichment. I hope to support and guide students through a variety of self-selected science experiments. I want my students to get multiple hands-on opportunities to develop questions, design and carry out procedures, and collect and analyze data. I want them to be excited but also challenged by engaging in the process of scientific experimentation. I have not received any funding or materials to conduct this class, and in order to truly do science with students, I need materials for students to work with. I applied because I want my advisory students to immerse themselves in science every day and become well-versed in the ways scientists think and work. With funds and materials provided by the grants, my students will strengthen their skill set in each of the Next Generation Science Standards Science and Engineering Practices. My students will be better able to learn new science content and participate in science because they have the skill set necessary to access and make sense of anything that comes their way.

Art for Empathy: Integrating Social and Emotional Learning in Elementary Art Education

Jody Baer-Simon, Red Hawk Ridge Elementary School

At Red Hawk Ridge Elementary, the art program strives to create a dynamic learning environment where students can express themselves creatively, build emotional intelligence, and develop strong social skills. By integrating a range of art process based materials that inspire creativity and imagination, we aim to foster a supportive atmosphere that encourages emotional growth and interpersonal development. Our students are navigating complex social interactions and emotional experiences daily. We hope to enhance emotional expression, encourage students to reflect on their experiences, understand the perspectives of others, build resilience through creative challenges and improve social skills through collaborative projects. Research shows that children who engage in creative play and artistic expression develop better emotional regulation, empathy, and problem-solving skills. Red Hawk Ridge is grateful for the opportunity to help grow our art program with the supplies needed for our continued passion to support building empathy through the visual arts.

Ms. Brown's Initiative Grant

Maddie Brown, Red Hawk Ridge Elementary School

I hope to instill excitement for reading in my 2nd grade students. I would love for my students to enjoy reading and be exposed to texts that they can relate with and see themselves in. Currently, my classroom library contains many texts that do not reach the audience of my students due to relevance of the topics and how they relate to their own lives outside of the classroom. Many of the texts are mine from when I was a child and I need texts that will encourage my students to be excited to read and understand the purpose of why literature is so important and inspiring to our everyday lives. My students inspired me to apply when I mentioned I would be stopping by a thrift store to look for more books for our classroom library and immediately, I had book recommendations from them with enthusiasm and eagerness to convince me why they wanted these numerous texts in the classroom. I am hoping with the outcome I will see a classroom full of students whose love for reading grows and strengthens when they are in possession of texts that they truly love and can relate with. Along with

this, the stamina of my students will grow when reading texts they love as it transfers to reading texts within our learning content. I would love to receive multiples of books to also create book club groups in the classroom that meet each students' reading levels.

Bringing Nature to a Windowless Classroom

Gretchen Lucas, Rolling Hills Elementary School

As occupational therapists, we work with students with sensory differences who are easily affected by the visual and auditory elements of the environment. Thanks to previous grant funding, we installed sound-dampening felt tiles in our therapy space that have significantly improved the acoustics and aesthetics. Environments with negative acoustics subject us to feelings of stress and fatigue and do not feel safe, especially for these already more sensory-sensitive. Sound from the neighboring music room and gym still sometimes disrupts learning and productivity for staff and students. Our therapy space is also windowless and called "The Cave". According to the Ceiling Scenes website, research suggests combining nature and design can reduce stress and depression, influence behavior, enhance positive social response, and improve overall staff productivity. We would like to continue to mitigate the design and sound problems in "The Cave" through acoustic drop ceiling tiles to make it feel like we are in nature. The high-quality, class "A" fire-rated acoustic ceiling tiles provide superior noise reduction and will be printed with images of sky and clouds to appear like "The Cave" has a large skylight. Students and staff who work in "The Cave" have been so impressed with the aesthetic and acoustic benefits of the felt wall tiles thanks to the previous grant funding. We are confident that the new ceiling tiles will bring some nature to our windowless classroom and make it a more inviting, calming, and productive space.

DRUM! - Dedication Respect & Unity through Music!

Don Fairchild, Rolling Hills Elementary School

A new class set of drums will help my students to Dedicate themselves to working together, learn to Respect and value one another, and Unite as a class through Music!

Rhythm is fundamental to life. We constantly engage with the rhythms of daily routines, weekly rituals, changing seasons, and annual celebrations. We may catch ourselves tapping along to a tune on the radio, a random song stuck in our heads, or the rhythmic thrumming from some nearby machine. Rhythm is all around us, and it bridges language barriers and helps people to listen to one another and connect. I feel that understanding rhythm is the most important step to understanding music (and life!).

I was inspired by a fellow music teacher recently who completed her first World Music Drumming training this summer. I completed several summers of the same training/certification a few years ago and feel that now is a perfect time to revisit classroom community drum circles.

Hand drums offer a low-risk and fun way for students to experiment with sound and rhythm. Additionally, they can be accessed by every student at my school and offer an entry point that doesn't require any particular skills or experience to play. Drum circles will help my students to connect with each other and develop a strong classroom culture based on respect and dedication, and have a great time doing it!

Gaga Over Gaga Ball: Funding Portable Gaga Pits to Develop Sportsmanship, Teamwork, and Whole Well-Being

Kim Hunt, Rolling Hills Elementary School

It's no secret that kids are still struggling with social emotional learning after the pandemic. As a physical education teacher, some of the most important skills we work on in the gym are teamwork,

sportsmanship, perseverance, relationship building, and striving for a growth mindset. These skills and so many other health and wellness benefits are involved in every round of gaga ball that students play. Our school has a single gaga ball pit outside that's definitely showing some wear. The kids LOVE it, but our paraprofessionals frequently complain that kids are unclear on the rules and aren't always the best sports. Therefore, last year, I took on teaching the rules and etiquette of gaga ball in the gym setting. Because I don't have portable gaga ball pits, I've been using 10 tables, turned on their sides, propped up against each other to create 2 indoor gaga ball pits. The response and results have been fantastic, but it's definitely an awkward, time consuming, and somewhat worrisome set up.

It would be a dream come true to have 2 sturdy, portable gaga ball pits we could use in the gym and take outside for student use. Many kids tell me that they would like to play gaga ball at recess, but they don't feel comfortable playing because the ball is moving so fast and being hit so hard. They tell me they would play if there were also a pit for kids who want a slower-paced and more relaxed game. Everyone would feel included, and having several pits would allow many more kids to play at the same time. I frequently have students with learning differences, in wheelchairs, and with other special needs come to the gym when it is empty to experience instruction and equipment in a small-group setting. These portable pits would be perfect for many activities with them as well.

Grant Title: Bringing Nature to a Windowless Classroom

Carolyn Billings, Rolling Hills Elementary School

As occupational therapists, we work with students with sensory differences who are easily affected by the visual and auditory elements of the environment. Thanks to previous grant funding, we installed sound-dampening felt tiles in our therapy space that have significantly improved the acoustics and aesthetics. Environments with negative acoustics subject us to feelings of stress and fatigue and do not feel safe, especially for these already more sensory-sensitive. Sound from the neighboring music room and gym still sometimes disrupts learning and productivity for staff and students. Our therapy space is also windowless and called "The Cave". According to the Ceiling Scenes website, research suggests combining nature and design can reduce stress and depression, influence behavior, enhance positive social response, and improve overall staff productivity. We would like to continue to mitigate the design and sound problems in "The Cave" through acoustic drop ceiling tiles to make it feel like we are in nature. The high-quality, class "A" fire-rated acoustic ceiling tiles provide superior noise reduction and will be printed with images of sky and clouds to appear like "The Cave" has a large skylight. Students and staff who work in "The Cave" have been so impressed with the aesthetic and acoustic benefits of the felt wall tiles thanks to the previous grant funding. We are confident that the new ceiling tiles will bring some nature to our windowless classroom and make it a more inviting, calming, and productive space.

Inclusivity for All Learners in the Art Room

Lesley Taylor, Rolling Hills Elementary School

In the Rolling Hills Elementary Art Room, I am committed to fostering a learning environment that embraces and reflects the diversity of our student body. I would love to add to our current art supplies to better represent the rich cultural, racial, and ability diversity of our students. I want students to feel connected to the materials and projects because they see their own identities or experiences reflected in their art. This representation can positively impact students' engagement and self-esteem. It is crucial that our art supplies and materials are inclusive and representative, allowing all students to see themselves in their work and to express their own identities.

Improve Articulation for Speech and Literacy

Lindsey Henderson, Sagebrush Elementary School

Through this grant we hope to achieve a more efficient and effective speech therapy program at our school. Over half of the children on our caseload have a goal related to articulation. Therefore, there is a high need to invest in interactive and effective articulation activities and resources to better serve our students. We were inspired to apply due to recognizing a critical need in our current articulation program. Our students' articulation challenges impact their ability to effectively communicate in both academic and social settings. These materials and resources will give us the opportunity to implement a more comprehensive articulation program to meet individual student needs and foster improvement in communication skills. We are hoping that by implementing shorter, more frequent therapy sessions that target specific articulation sounds, our kids will be able to produce sounds more accurately and more quickly than they have in the past. If this is successful, we would be able to graduate children out of speech therapy sooner, which allows them to spend more time in the general education classroom learning curriculum alongside their peers.

Enhancing Foundational Reading Skills with WordFlight for Students with weaknesses in reading

Diane Tarr, Sky Vista Middle School

1. What I hope to achieve

The primary goal of this project is to provide students with disabilities in reading with access to WordFlight, an educational software designed to assess and accelerate foundational reading skills. By integrating WordFlight into my intervention curriculum, I aim to enhance the reading fluency and comprehension of students who struggle with traditional reading instruction methods. With this software, my goal is to move students toward reading proficiency within one academic year, equipping them with the skills they need to succeed across all subjects.

2. Why WordFlight is Needed

Many of my students face persistent difficulties with reading due to specific learning disabilities, such as dyslexia. These challenges hinder their academic growth, limit their engagement, and negatively impact their self-esteem. Traditional intervention strategies, while helpful, often lack the personalized approach needed to address the unique learning profiles of each student.

WordFlight offers a solution tailored to the specific needs of these students. It provides:

A personalized, online learning experience based on more than a decade of research.

A flexible platform that would allow me to adjust usage, scheduling, and teaching methods according to students' needs.

Online teacher resources for small group instruction, including curriculum guides and easily generated lesson plans for effective intervention.

This program will allow me to pinpoint areas of reading difficulty more accurately and address them through individualized learning paths, accelerating each student's progress.

3. Inspiration to Apply

The inspiration for applying for this grant stems from our ongoing commitment to providing equitable learning opportunities for all students, particularly those with specific learning disabilities. Our classroom experience has shown that students with reading disabilities often face significant barriers to progress when conventional instruction methods are used. After researching successful interventions, I was impressed by WordFlight's strong foundation in educational research and its success in helping students achieve reading proficiency in under a year.

I believe that, with this software, I can provide my students with the support they need to close the reading achievement gap and thrive academically.

4. Anticipated Outcomes and Impact

By implementing WordFlight, I anticipate the following outcomes:

Improved Reading Proficiency: Students will make measurable gains in foundational reading skills, such as phonemic awareness, phonics, and fluency, which are critical to their overall academic success.

Increased Confidence and Engagement: As students experience progress and reading becomes less frustrating, they will engage more fully in both literacy activities and other academic subjects.

Better Differentiation: I will be able to provide more targeted instruction, with WordFlight helping to identify specific areas of weakness for each student, thus allowing for personalized interventions that are more effective.

If successful, this project will result in a measurable increase in reading proficiency for students with specific learning disabilities. Over time, these gains will help close the achievement gap and ensure that every student has the foundational skills needed for long-term academic success.

Learning to Code with Drones

Ashley Cook, Sky Vista Middle School

Technology is constantly developing, changing and improving. Through the Coding With Drones grant students will be able to explore new technologies and develop stronger coding skills. These experiences will help them as they pursue further STEM courses and possible STEM careers. Coding is one of the most popular jobs in the world right now that is seeing an excess of students navigating towards that career. Drones are fun, which drives student engagement, but they're also used as tools in various industries like; shipping, agriculture, construction and entertainment which creates a career connection. Covering drone technology in the classroom helps prepare students for jobs in the fast-growing, multi-billion dollar industry. Learning how to code can be less intimidating if students use drones educational drones for hands-on learning experience. The objective of this grant is to bring educational and durable Codrones into the Sky Vista Middle School STEM classes. These drones are a fun and engaging way to learn to code in advanced coding languages through multiple codrone challenges and lessons. The lesson possibilities are numerous, students can create drone light show, create a flight pattern and complete an obstacle course. Drones are a great way to teach across disciplines in the STEM classroom. Lessons with drones are teaching students essential concepts like mathematical graphing, calculating distances, and basic trigonometry by studying the paths of their drones. . Drones provide something tangible and interesting, instead of boring students with abstract concepts they will have the opportunity to learn in real time. I was inspired to apply for this grant because I see value in engaging lessons and to expose my students to many different technologies. The Codrones are a great addition to sixth through eighth grade STEM classroom. These drones are specifically designed for the classroom and are very durable this will be a huge improvement to the other drones we have used in the past. All of the drones we have used previously have not lasted more than a couple of weeks. I hope to bring the Codrones into my classroom to engage students and improve their coding and cross curricular STEM skills.

Accessible Auditory Graphics for Students with Visual Impairments and Blindness

Kari Slagle, Smoky Hill High School

The Tactonom Reader is a groundbreaking device that significantly enhances educational opportunities for students with visual impairments or blindness. This innovative technology enables independent access to graphical learning content, bridging a critical gap in their educational experience and bringing greater equity of access to sighted peers.

Importance of Access

For visually impaired students, understanding graphical information has long been a major challenge. Traditionally, these students have relied heavily on sighted assistance to interpret visual content, severely limiting their autonomy in learning. The disparity in access to graphical information is stark -

while sighted students encounter approximately 25,000 graphics throughout their school years, visually impaired students typically interact with fewer than 100. This vast difference underscores the urgent need for tools like the Tactonom Reader. Further, because tactile graphics for students with visual impairments are typically larger, they require students to reference braille labels on other pages. Students have described this as asking their sighted peers to have their image labels across the room from their textbooks. Equal access and ease of access is not being afforded. As educators that work to support students with visual impairments, we must work to improve access for our students.

How the Tactonom Reader Works

The Tactonom Reader combines tactile exploration with audio explanations. As students move their fingers across tactile graphics placed on the device, a camera detects their finger position, and the system provides verbal explanations of the elements being touched. This seamless integration of touch and audio enables students to comprehend complex graphical content independently. The files for many Tactonom Graphics are available online for free, and custom ones can be produced by the vision department staff.

Benefits for Academic Access

Independent Learning

The Tactonom Reader empowers visually impaired students to work autonomously with graphical information. This independence is crucial for developing self-confidence and reducing reliance on constant assistance, preparing students for future academic and professional challenges.

Equal Participation

With the Tactonom Reader, visually impaired students can participate in lessons on an equal basis with their sighted peers. They can access the same content, fostering inclusive education and ensuring they don't miss out on critical visual information in their studies.

Comprehensive Understanding

The device allows for unlimited information to be associated with each aspect of a graphic. Unlike traditional Braille graphics with limited space for explanations, the Tactonom Reader can provide extensive details, enabling a deeper understanding of complex subjects.

Interactive Learning

The Tactonom Reader offers interactive features such as acoustic finger guidance and question-answer sessions. These capabilities deepen students' engagement with the material and enhance their learning experience.

Diverse Content Access

Students can explore a wide range of graphical content, including maps, mathematical illustrations, infographics, and tables. This broad access opens up new areas of study and career possibilities that may have previously seemed inaccessible.

Flexibility in Learning Pace

The device allows students to review and deepen their understanding of materials at their own pace. This flexibility is crucial for effective learning, as it enables students to spend more time on challenging concepts when needed.

Broader Impact

The Tactonom Reader not only improves academic access but also prepares visually impaired students for greater independence in their future lives. By providing access to graphical information in fields like geography, science, and mathematics, it expands their career prospects and enhances their ability to navigate the world independently.

Moreover, the device's compatibility with various tactile graphic formats, including Braille printing and 3D printing, ensures versatility in its application across different subjects and learning environments.

In conclusion, the Tactonom Reader represents a significant leap forward in inclusive education technology. By providing visually impaired students with independent access to graphical information, it levels the playing field, enhances their learning experience, and opens up new possibilities for academic and personal growth. This technology is not just an educational tool; it's a gateway to a more inclusive and equitable educational landscape for visually impaired students.

BookED: A Professional Learning Library

Baochau Thomas, Smoky Hill High School

With BookED, I hope to establish a comprehensive resource library in support of professional learning and continuous growth for our teachers at Smoky Hill HS. This library will provide our teachers with access to high quality professional readings while supporting CCSD's Literacy Initiative at the secondary level.

Smoky Hill HS is committed to improving literacy outcomes for all students. To achieve this, we must provide our teachers with the most recent, researched-based strategies as anchors in their professional growth. Currently, there is a lack of professional learning materials with the latest research on reading tailored to secondary literacy instruction available. BookED will address this gap and is a vital step towards equipping teachers with the learning they need to support students across the content areas in literacy. With enhanced instructional practices, I anticipate improved student literacy outcomes.

Empowering Education "Let's Get IXL"

Amber Withers, Smoky Hill High School

This proposal aimed at enhancing educational outcomes for students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) through the implementation of the IXL program.

The robust analytics offered by IXL will allow educators to closely monitor student progress in real-time. This data-driven approach will facilitate timely interventions and adjustments to instruction, ensuring that each student remains on track to meet their IEP goals.

When the program was discontinued through the district my inspiration to apply for this grant stems from witnessing firsthand the significant improvements in individual skills that students experienced while using the IXL program. The data-driven insights provided by the platform enabled me to tailor my instruction effectively, ensuring that each student could progress at their own pace while making strides toward their Individualized Education Plan (IEP) goals.

With the personalized learning experience provided by IXL, students will have the resources they need to effectively work toward and meet their individual IEP goals. The program's adaptive exercises will address specific learning needs, ensuring that each student receives the targeted support necessary for success.

Empowering Voices: Enhancing Communication and Language Skills for Speech Language Students

Madison Marsh, Smoky Hill High School

I have the privilege of working with a remarkable group of speech-language students who exhibit incredible resilience and determination. Their unique personalities and diverse backgrounds make each day in the classroom an inspiring experience. I love how they approach challenges with enthusiasm and a desire to communicate effectively.

The specific resources I am requesting—social skills activities and games, emotional regulation activities, language activities, and an iPad—will significantly enhance their learning experiences. Social skills activities will provide students with practical tools to navigate interactions, build friendships, and develop confidence in their communication. Emotional regulation activities will equip them with strategies to manage their emotions, fostering a healthier classroom environment. Language activities will support their speech development and comprehension, enabling them to express their thoughts and ideas more clearly. The iPad will allow students to access online materials and interactive apps focused on enhancing their language and communication skills, providing them with engaging and diverse learning opportunities.

What I hope to achieve with this project is to create a supportive and engaging learning environment where students can develop essential communication skills. This is needed to address the challenges my students face in their daily interactions and academic performance. I was inspired to apply for this grant because I believe that every student deserves an opportunity to communicate effectively, and I am passionate about helping them reach their fullest potential.

The anticipated outcome of this project is that my students will become more confident communicators and better equipped to express themselves and navigate social situations. If successful, there will be a noticeable improvement in their ability to interact with peers and engage in classroom activities, ultimately leading to a more inclusive and supportive learning environment.

What makes my students special is their unwavering spirit and eagerness to learn. They each have unique strengths and challenges that, when nurtured, can lead to remarkable growth. By providing them with the right materials, we can create opportunities for them to shine and flourish in their communication skills.

In conclusion, the requested resources will not only make a difference in my students' learning but will also empower them to navigate the world with confidence and capability. I am excited about the potential this project holds for enriching their educational journey.

Growing in the Greenhouse

Amy Cleveland, Smoky Hill High School

Smoky Hill High School has an amazing greenhouse space that is currently underused and in need of some updating and fresh vision. My grant seeks to update the space to include working areas in order to bring students in my ACE and ILC classes together with their general education peers. Ace and ILC programs serve students in SPecial Populations and students with an Intellectual Disability diagnosis along with a variety of other disabling conditions. The inspiration comes from my goal to build in-school work based learning opportunities for my students in tandem with my belief that bringing students together in a garden setting will benefit everyone involved. Greenhouse work can involve a variety of tasks and the availability to differentiate to meet the unique needs of students is built in. It is also an area that students may want to explore for future employment, with an average of over 500 annual entry-level job openings right in our community according to My Colorado Journey.

I anticipate that a thriving and active greenhouse environment will give students a sense of accomplishment and inherent well being. Students will be able to activate their creativity and learn vital workplace skills. My students will interact with their typical peers in an equitable setting. The Smoky Hill community will benefit from whatever comes from the greenhouse either in the way of edible or

decorative plant life, and our success will mean that the greenhouse is self-sustaining by selling products. And using the profit to maintain our operation.

'Not Board' Ski and Board Wax Shop-Smoky Hill HS

Brady Goode, Smoky Hill High School

Our initiative seeks to establish a ski and snowboard wax shop where high school students with learning, social-emotional, and cognitive disabilities will learn to tune and wax skis and snowboards. The goal is to provide these students with hands-on experience that not only develops their technical skills but also fosters a responsible work ethic, crucial for real-world success.

This program is needed because students with learning, social-emotional, and cognitive disabilities often face barriers in acquiring practical skills and workplace habits that are essential for future employment. Traditional classroom settings do not always cater to these needs, making it crucial to offer alternative, skill-based learning environments.

Inspired by the belief that all students deserve the opportunity to succeed and contribute meaningfully to their communities, this project aims to empower students by connecting them to a tangible and rewarding activity. It also draws on the understanding that engaging in such practical work can significantly boost their confidence, self-esteem, and sense of responsibility.

The anticipated outcome of this initiative is a transformative fully inclusive learning experience for the students. If successful, these students will not only gain specific trade skills but also develop a stronger work ethic, improve their social interactions, and increase their readiness for post-secondary employment opportunities. This program will create a positive impact by better preparing students for life beyond high school, equipping them with the skills and confidence they need to succeed.

Reading Roots, Growing Futures: Book Buds 2.0 Expansion

Kyle Harmon, Smoky Hill High School

Our "Reading Roots, Growing Futures" initiative aims to expand the successful Book Buds program to Title One schools across our district, with a focus on supporting newly appointed teacher librarians. This expansion will pair high school students with 5th grade students for multigrade reading experiences, now enhanced by integration with Beanstack, a motivational digital tool that will provide a motivational, gamified element to encourage consistent reading habits. This program addresses critical needs in our community: Bridging the resource gap in Title One schools; Supporting new teacher librarians in establishing effective reading programs; Engaging students through technology to foster consistent reading habits; and providing high school students with leadership opportunities.

Inspired by the success of our original Book Buds program and the district's commitment to equity in education and literacy, we're excited to bring this model to schools that need it most, while enhancing it with digital tools, a new feature for Book Buds program. We anticipate several key outcomes: Improved reading skills and academic performance at Smoky and in participating Title One schools; increased voluntary reading and positive attitudes towards literature; stronger multigrade relationships within school communities; and data-driven program optimization through Beanstack analytics.

By expanding Book Buds, we aim to create a sustainable, technology-enhanced culture of reading that supports students in underserved communities, fosters multigrade connections, and lays the foundation for lifelong literacy. "Reading changes everything".

Unified Cafe

Joshua A Teplitzky, Smoky Hill High School

Thank you for your continuing support of students and staff at Smoky Hill High School. I have taught Ceramics and Sculpture classes at Smoky for the past 26 years. I have 6 sections of Pottery and Sculpture I, 2 full-year classes for Intermediate and ADV Sculpture, and a Tuesday afternoon Clay Club. The Intro classes create POPart object, logos, 3D clay printing and functional items. The Intermediate/ADV classes focus on usable functional work and creative sculptures. We have also incorporated, with PTCO support, a new decal printer and Roberto Lugo vase project.

In the last few years with the help of our tech department and Celine Perea we have added Four 3D-clay printers where we print actual wet clay using an open source software. There is NO other high school ceramics program with this level of high tech printers. Products can be seen @shhsclay Instagram. The 3D printing process supports all levels of our students and incorporates students who become “experts” in the room and can teach others. The software incorporates practical mathematical concepts such as X,Y and Z axis in addition to sine waves and other algorithms that create code.

Our main project is to support Kelton Coppinger and the new Unified Cafe’ - The Clay department has worked closely with Unified to create cafe cups through the use of the 3D CLAY PRINTER. ILC / Unified students design on a computer then 3D print wet clay cups (seen @shhsclay - you can witness the process and product in action.) This unified cup project was hugely successful in bringing pride to the unified cafe and connect the staff with students who created the artwork. The cups are micro and dishwasher safe and last year sport a new “can you handle it” theme.(seen @shhsclay) With support We plan to continue this project this year as the Unified cafe’ has grown in size and scope. We have so far provided a Yeti cup, tea cup, oatmeal bowl and NEW for 24/25SY a medallion that will sport the Special Olympics / Unified Logo. Students can now wear it with pride after helping to create, glaze and decal these items.

Unraveling Barriers: Accessible Textile Arts for Diverse Learners

Kyle Harmon, Smoky Hill High School

Our library seeks funding to integrate textile arts—specifically knitting and weaving—into our makerspace, creating an inclusive environment for diverse learners, including those with visual impairments. This initiative aims to break down barriers in traditional makerspaces, which often unintentionally exclude visually impaired individuals.

Inspired by the unifying power of textile arts and visually impaired students new to Smoky Hill, we envision a space where all students can develop skills, express creativity, and build community. The project will provide adaptive tools and materials, enabling participants to enhance cognitive abilities, improve motor skills, and gain valuable vocational experience. By implementing this program, we anticipate: Increased inclusivity and social engagement among diverse learners; enhanced mathematical and spatial reasoning skills for participants; improved self-esteem and confidence through skill mastery; and the development of practical, transferable vocational abilities. This grant will allow us to create a more accessible, diverse makerspace that celebrates the unique contributions of all learners, ultimately fostering a stronger, more connected community.

VEX Robotics - Focus on Equity through Access to Technology

Jessica Prinsen, Smoky Hill High School

Smoky Hill High School students have a desire to expand their knowledge into the world of building and programming robots. Through the Educator Initiative Grant, students in the Technology Student Association (TSA) will have the opportunity to learn marketable skills that will help them stand out from

their peers as they strive to follow their Pathways of Purpose. Students will design, build, program, and compete with their VEX Robot at the State Competition to showcase all they have learned.

Whoopapalooza '24, U18 Drone Race Championships

Dan Cornell, Smoky Hill High School

The Smoky Hill Drone Racing team is thrilled to announce the inaugural scholastic drone racing championship: Whoopapalooza '24! This exciting one-day event is scheduled for December 7, 2024, at Smoky Hill High School and is open to all middle and high school students within the Cherry Creek School District and beyond.

Following the success of last year's TinyWhoop Open, where six Smoky Hill students participated in a professional drone championship that sold out within a day, we recognized the need for a dedicated scholastic event. Whoopapalooza '24 aims to provide a platform for both novice and experienced young pilots under the age of 18 to showcase their skills.

To ensure the success of this groundbreaking event, we are actively seeking funding and support. We are proud to have the backing of several sponsors, including the CSU Drone Center, 3Whoop3 - Denver Chapter, FoCo FPV - Fort Collins Chapter, and BetaFPV.

Your support will help make Whoopapalooza '24 a memorable and successful event for the next generation of drone racing enthusiasts!

Flexible Seating for Neurodivergent Minds

Megan Hernandez, Summit Elementary School

Flexible seating and furniture allows students and teachers to use and adjust a classroom based on their needs. In the Affective Needs classroom where this furniture will be used, the classroom will be able to be adjusted to meet student needs, whether that's a space with a whiteboard table for 1:1 reading intervention or individual student desks that can be moved around and paired together for group work. Flexible furniture is needed in the AN classroom to give students alternative spaces to learn. Perhaps we need a larger space to do a group activity or a significant amount of floor space to do a hands-on math exploration. With flexible furniture, students are given more autonomy over how they approach and attend their learning and are able to give input into what their learning space can look like.

Flexible Spaces for Neurodivergent Minds

Sarah Rutz, Summit Elementary School

Flexible seating and furniture allows students and teachers to use and adjust a classroom based on their needs. In the Affective Needs classroom where this furniture will be used, the classroom will be able to be adjusted to meet student needs, whether that's a space with a whiteboard table for 1:1 reading intervention or individual student desks that can be moved around and paired together for group math work. Flexible furniture is needed in the AN classroom to give students alternative spaces to learn. Perhaps we need a larger space to do a group activity or a significant amount of floor space to do a hands-on math exploration. With flexible furniture, students are given more autonomy over how they approach and attend their learning and are able to give input into what their learning space can look like.

Heartfelt and Insightful Readers

Erin DunbarJohnson, Summit Elementary School

Classroom libraries should mirror the diverse backgrounds of our students by including a wide variety of books that reflect different cultures and family experiences. When I look at the students in our 4th grade classrooms, I see students from a rich tapestry of backgrounds and experiences that each student brings into our learning environment. This diversity not only provides students with a window into the world but also helps build empathy, compassion, and expand their background knowledge about themselves and others in our classroom, school, community, and our world. Exposure to a broad range of perspectives allows students to better understand themselves and others, fostering their personal and academic growth. Moreover, a diverse collection can inspire students to become passionate readers and writers, as they see their own experiences and identities represented in the stories they explore.

STEAM Education Through Sphero Robotics

Caroline Brown, Summit Elementary School

The hope of this grant is to receive funding for Sphero robots to enhance our K-5 STEAM curriculum and after-school club, aiming to engage students through interactive, hands-on learning experiences. This grant seeks to inspire creativity, foster teamwork, and develop critical problem-solving skills by providing students with opportunities to explore programming and robotics in a fun and engaging way. Recognizing the need for a strong foundational understanding of STEAM concepts in our rapidly evolving world, the Sphero robots will bridge the gap between theory and real-world application, catering to diverse learning styles and encouraging exploration. Our motivation stems from witnessing the excitement and curiosity sparked by technology in prior STEAM events, leading us to expand our resources and establish a culture of innovation in our classrooms. If funded, we expect a significant increase in student engagement and participation in our STEAM club, ultimately fostering a generation of inquisitive thinkers prepared for future opportunities in STEAM fields, thereby empowering them to explore their potential and nurture a lifelong love for learning.

The Keys to Success

Brianna Mauricio-Perez, Sunrise Elementary School

We are excited to present our grant proposal aimed at transforming music education for 3rd through 5th graders at Sunrise Elementary. We seek funding to acquire piano keyboards and headphones to enrich our students' musical experience and foster creativity. Our goal is to integrate these resources into our music program, allowing students to create, play, and enjoy music more deeply while supporting individualized learning and exploration. Currently, our limited music resources prevent students from fully engaging with their studies. By providing piano keyboards and headphones, we will address this gap and enhance their ability to practice and express themselves creatively. Inspired by our commitment to nurturing creativity and self-expression, we have seen the transformative power of music and believe these new resources will significantly enhance students' exploration and enjoyment of music. If successful, this funding will offer a more personalized and engaging learning experience, enabling students to compose and practice their own music, leading to increased engagement, improved skills, and a lasting passion for music.

Access to Assistive Technology

Mary Backes, Thunder Ridge Middle School

Grant Proposal: Enhancing Communication Access for Non-Speaking Students in Intensive Learning Center Classrooms Through iPad Integration

Introduction

In today's educational landscape, ensuring that all students have equitable access to learning tools is essential for fostering an inclusive and supportive environment. For students with complex communication needs, particularly those who are non-speaking, technology can play a pivotal role in facilitating communication and enhancing educational experiences. This proposal seeks funding for the acquisition of iPads for use in Intensive Learning Center classrooms, aiming to improve communication access for non-speaking students and support their educational development.

Objective

The primary goal of this initiative is to integrate iPads into Intensive Learning Center classrooms to support students with non-speaking or complex communication needs. By leveraging the versatility and accessibility of iPads, we aim to:

Enhance Communication: Provide students with advanced communication tools to facilitate more effective interaction with peers, teachers, and their learning environment.

Promote Inclusion: Create a more inclusive classroom atmosphere where all students can participate actively and meaningfully.

Support Personalized Learning: Tailor educational content and communication methods to individual student needs, fostering a more personalized and effective learning experience.

Need for the iPads

The need for iPads in Intensive Learning Center classrooms stems from the following critical factors:

Communication Barriers: Many students with complex communication needs face significant challenges in expressing themselves using traditional methods. iPads equipped with communication apps offer alternative and augmentative communication (AAC) tools that can bridge this gap.

Limited Resources: Traditional communication aids and supports in our current setup are often insufficient or outdated. iPads offer a modern, flexible solution that can be easily updated with the latest AAC applications and educational software.

Educational Inequities: Without access to such technology, non-speaking students may experience reduced opportunities for engagement and learning. The iPads will provide these students with the means to participate more fully in classroom activities and academic discussions.

Importance of Robust Vocabulary

Access to robust vocabulary is crucial for several reasons:

Increased Literacy: A rich vocabulary is fundamental to literacy development. When students can access a wide range of words through AAC apps on iPads, they can better understand and engage with texts, which enhances their reading and writing skills. Robust vocabulary tools help students recognize and use words in context, improving their comprehension and expression.

Enhanced Human Connection: Effective communication is at the heart of human connection. By providing non-speaking students with comprehensive vocabulary options, iPads enable them to express themselves more clearly and meaningfully. This leads to stronger social interactions and relationships with peers and teachers, fostering a sense of belonging and emotional well-being.

Facilitation of Everyday Language Use: Robust vocabulary supports practical language use in daily life. By using iPads to access diverse vocabulary, students can learn to navigate various social and academic

situations more effectively. This includes asking for help, expressing needs, sharing opinions, and participating in conversations, which are essential for their overall development and independence.

Inspiration for the Proposal

This proposal is inspired by both professional observations and personal experiences with students who struggle to communicate effectively within traditional educational frameworks. Witnessing the profound impact that technology can have on these students' ability to express themselves and engage in learning has underscored the importance of integrating advanced tools into their educational environment. Additionally, research and success stories from other educational settings have demonstrated the significant benefits of using iPads and similar devices to support students with complex communication needs.

Anticipated Outcomes

The successful implementation of this proposal will yield several positive outcomes:

Improved Communication: Students will gain access to sophisticated communication tools, allowing them to articulate their thoughts, needs, and ideas more effectively. This improvement in communication will facilitate better interaction with peers and teachers.

Increased Engagement: By enabling more meaningful participation in classroom activities, students will be better engaged in their learning process, leading to enhanced educational outcomes.

Enhanced Inclusivity: The presence of iPads will contribute to a more inclusive classroom environment where all students, regardless of their communication abilities, can contribute to and benefit from the learning experience.

Personalized Learning: Teachers will be able to tailor instruction and support to meet the unique needs of each student, leveraging the flexibility of iPads to adapt educational content and communication methods.

Elevated Literacy and Everyday Communication: Access to a robust vocabulary will enhance students' literacy skills and facilitate their ability to use language in everyday situations, promoting greater independence and social integration.

Conclusion

In summary, the integration of iPads into Intensive Learning Center classrooms represents a transformative opportunity to enhance communication access for students with non-speaking or complex communication needs. By providing these students with advanced tools to facilitate communication, we will promote greater inclusivity, engagement, and personalized learning. This initiative has the potential to significantly improve the educational experiences and outcomes for these students, aligning with our commitment to fostering an equitable and supportive learning environment.

We respectfully request funding to support this initiative and look forward to the positive impact it will bring to our students and educational community.

Ipads for Special Education

Paula Brosch, Trails West Elementary School

This grant will allow the Affective Needs teacher at Trails West Elementary to provide both engaging and interactive instruction that is geared toward specific foundational skill deficits using an iPad. Teachers will be able to use the iPad and various apps to provide various accommodations for students such as text-to-speech, speech-to-text, copies of notes, and teaching students to utilize educational materials in

digital format to help them be successful in the classroom. Teachers will also be able to provide multisensory input (visual, auditory, tactile) which helps special education students to stay engaged in learning throughout the day. iPads come with a variety of adaptive technology that will help students in special education programming with a variety of learning opportunities that can increase their level of independence. Acquiring one or more iPads with cases would enable students in our program that have historically struggled, and are often below grade level, to interact with school content to show their knowledge in an alternative and accessible way.

The anticipated outcome for this grant is that students in my Affective Needs Program will be able to use technology in a way that is inspiring and will help them stay engaged in learning. Writing is especially difficult for my students and I feel that having an alternative option that is electronic which various ways to help them in this area will be inspiring. iPads also offer a variety of learning apps that can be provide alternative learning opportunities for students that have disabilities or problems with emotional regulation. My hope is that this could also be an alternative learning option or motivational tool in my classroom for students that are unwilling to write or participate in learning activities in the traditional classroom manner. Students in Affective Needs programs are typically behind in academics for a variety of reasons. When they are able to address learning we need to take full advantage of each opportunity and I feel that having iPads in our classroom could be advantageous to my students educational growth.

Hope and Healing: Youth Service Projects for Mental Health

Emily Ziniel, Traverse Academy

What do you hope to achieve?

"Hope and Healing" is a school-based initiative aimed at enhancing youth mental health through meaningful service projects. Our goal is to instill a sense of purpose, build resilience, increase a sense of belonging between peers, increase connection between peers, and improve emotional well-being by involving students in acts of service. Alongside this, students will develop foundational skills in subjects such as math, art, and project management.

Why is it needed?

Research indicates that acts of kindness and service foster deeper social connections and can significantly reduce emotional reactivity and stress. Additionally, research on service projects in young adolescence has shown statistically significant improvement in empathy, civic responsibility, and prosocial behaviors. While we're beginning to understand how these acts contribute to healing, it's clear that engaging in service helps shift focus from oneself, promotes perspective-taking, and builds self-efficacy.

What inspired you to apply?

This application is inspired by the growing body of literature on the benefits of service-oriented projects for youth well-being. Observing firsthand how students' perspectives shift when they have the chance to meaningfully help others further motivated us. Despite our efforts in the 2023/2024 school year to launch a service initiative, financial constraints prevented its establishment. We hope that with this grant, we can integrate a service component into our curriculum to address students' mental health needs more comprehensively.

What will be different or better if you are successful?

If successful, the initiative will foster enhanced social connections, improve quality of life, and boost emotional wellness among students. The school community will benefit from a strengthened culture of

kindness, belonging, and service. Additionally, the broader community will see tangible impacts from the service projects. The ultimate goal is to integrate a holistic approach to wellness into the curriculum, establishing a sustainable service project model that can be repeated regularly.

Traverse Welcome Launch Bags Grant

Courtney Thronson, Traverse Academy

Traverse Academy is a brand-new school and mental health program owned by Cherry Creek School District. We accept Cherry Creek students grades 4-12 who have shown significant mental health distress and want to engage in school as well as intensive outpatient mental health treatment. Starting in the Fall of 2023, Cherry Creek, partnering with the University of Colorado, opened their doors to serve this vulnerable student population and have achieved a lot of preliminary success. This is a temporary program where students spend 8-10 weeks with us undergoing a variety of mental health treatment and then they are encouraged to return to their home school. As a community we at Traverse try to encourage and espouse values such as self-care, growth mindset, perseverance and authentic personal expression. We hope that when students find us we can quickly warm them up to the sense of care and hospitality these values endorse.

On behalf of Traverse's "Welcome and Launch Committee", we want to ask the Cherry Creek Foundation to help us continue our efforts to ensure students feel a sense of safety, care and belonging when coming to Traverse. We also want your help in continuing our tradition of rewarding our students when they Launch off to their home school. This tradition consisted of assembling a welcome bag and a launch bag containing tools that ensure their sense of belonging and safety during their journey with us and beyond. This tradition was first initiated by the Tuchman Foundation, an outside foundation, who's interest in our mission inspired them to make these bags. They were so gracious to equip us with a lot of high quality materials and items that we would like to continue to provide new students. As of now we have enough bags from last school year to gift 45 students, with this grant we are hoping to create 50 more welcome launch bags to last us the entire school year and possibly longer. Further details about the bag's contents are to follow.

Building Community through Colorado History

Megan Butterman, Village East Elementary School

Through the Golden History Museum school outreach program, our 4th grade team would like to inspire interdisciplinary learning that brings Colorado history, economics, geography, and math alive. In 4th grade, Colorado history is an essential learning standard, and having interactive lessons with hands-on experiences will create long-lasting memories for our diverse population of students that promotes empathy and equity. Students will engage in two game-based learning experiences to highlight the communities of Colorado through the lens of empathy and by focusing on trade, community, history, geography, problem-solving, communicating, economics, and city planning.

Digital Classroom

Katherine Hoisington, Village East Elementary School

I am applying for this grant to acquire a digital camera for my kindergarten classroom to enhance students' learning experiences by allowing them to document their activities, explore their creativity, and engage in projects that develop their observation skills. This will foster narrative skills, encourage teamwork through collaborative projects, and provide opportunities for reflection on their learning experiences.

'Empowering Young Minds: A K-5 Experiential Learning Initiative in Renewable Energy and Sustainable Agriculture

Susan Irwin, Village East Elementary School

My Educator Initiative Grant proposal aims to create an engaging, hands-on learning environment in my K-5 STEM/Tech classroom, focused on solar and wind energy, hydroponics, and chicken egg incubation. I hope to inspire my students to become curious, critical thinkers by providing them with real-world experiences in renewable energy and sustainable agriculture.

This initiative is needed in my high-need school, where many students have limited access to experiential learning opportunities that spark interest in science, technology, engineering, and math. By immersing students in projects that address real-world challenges, I aim to foster a deeper understanding of sustainability and environmental stewardship from a young age.

My inspiration to apply for this grant comes from the desire to empower all students with the skills and knowledge they need to thrive in the future. I am motivated by the potential to create a classroom where learning is not just about textbooks but about experimentation, discovery, and problem-solving.

If successful, the grant will transform my classroom into a dynamic learning hub where students are engaged, curious, and empowered to explore STEM concepts in meaningful ways. I anticipate increased enthusiasm for science, improved academic outcomes, and a stronger foundation in sustainable practices that students will carry with them beyond the classroom.

Soaring Eagle Leaders at Village East

Ying Ong, Village East Elementary School

I hope to support our young children in building skills and confidence to be strong leaders at our school. Our school population is racially, culturally, and linguistically diverse. Students are absolutely brilliant and it's important to provide opportunities where they can imagine a better place for themselves and have the ability to shape their school environment. I want to implement different programs and have resources to create an inclusive and empowering space for our students.

Conflicts arise during unstructured times so I would like to have more structures in place to be more proactive with creating a safe and kind environment during the lunch and recess period. I want to have students be leaders for their peers. One thing that I would like to implement is "Peace Makers". I would like to teach students how to navigate their conflicts with a tool called the "Peace Path". It is a restorative way to recognize their problem and to find a solution together. These "Peace Makers" would be available to help their peers solve problems during the recess and lunch period. There is a hallway in the school that recently got painted with a nature mural. I would like to add more features in that hallway as a way for students to take a "Peace walk" and be able to regulate their emotions to a calmer state. Students need to be able to regulate their emotions before they are able to resolve any conflicts.

In addition, I would like to do a "Junior Coach" program so that intermediate students teach primary students various games and activities so that there are more structured play available during that time. They can help our younger students learn how to have good sportsmanship and collaboration. They will learn the skills on how to teach younger students games and be a coach to ensure that the younger students are growing in their skills.

Currently, there are pictures on the walls of Village East and the students are now much older and no longer attend the school. I would like to update the pictures of our current student body in the building so that we can continue to recognize the brilliance and beauty of our students. There are many students who speak different languages, cultures, and religions. Our school has many immigrants and refugees

who attend our school. I would like to start a "Village East Ambassador" program where students welcome our new families and students in the building by giving them tours and answer any questions that they may have. Since we have so many languages in our building, I will be intentional in diversifying our "Village East Ambassadors" so they may even be able to give the tour in different languages.

I am Asian American and a daughter of Vietnamese refugees. I was in the English as a second language program until I was in the 4th grade. All of my teachers helped shape the person that I am today. There were a few teachers and professors who believed in me and taught me the tools to be more confident with myself and to become the leader I am today. I am now an educator in hopes to do the same for my students. If it wasn't for various leadership programs and opportunities, I would not be as equipped to be able to handle difficult situations and be as equity-minded.

By implementing these programs, I hope to help students have agency and build leadership skills so that they have control in shaping how they want their school to look and feel. I anticipate that students will learn to take care of one another and be more collaborative. I believe that it will help students feel like they belong and it will support our whole school's climate and culture to be more inclusive and welcoming.

Village East Pottery Studio Extravaganza

Ian Ostrowski, Village East Elementary School

I hope to achieve a pretty extensive update to the clay studio and tools that I currently have in my Art classroom at Village East Elementary. Over the last two years I have worked very hard on updating the classroom. The district acquired a new Kiln for Village East and last year my principal worked with me to update the seating and tables in my room in order to give my students and myself a fresh new start at the school this 24-25 school year. As a result, it has come to my conclusion that the art room is in need of updated clay tools, storage, and supplies in order to better accommodate the growing needs of my students. This request is very much needed as I am currently missing tools and/or the things that were left to me are incomplete like pottery wheels and ways to store projects. I was inspired to apply for the Educator Initiative Grant because I have applied in the past and I think it's a great way to supplement your classroom in unique ways. I was also inspired to apply due to the other partnerships I am trying to create like getting Denver Art Museum to partner with Village East through their Art Lives Here program. I am just inspired to see more art in my building while also giving my students new ceramics experiences and memories to spark conversations about art through the hallways. Other expected outcomes through this grant will be more clay art created by students, giving students the sensorial experiences of pottery wheel use, and also giving my students that need the ability to use their hands to make art.

Composting at Walnut Hills Elementary

Jannette McLaughlin, Walnut Hills Elementary School

In fourth grade we study a Sustainability unit and towards the end of the inquiry unit, the class has the chance to come up with a final project that they want to do. Last year they wanted to do a project to reduce the amount of waste going to landfills, but we did not have the resources at the time to carry out the project.

We would like to begin a school and community composting program, where the school collects daily compostable waste and family/community members can subscribe to drop off their own compostables at the school, to be picked up by a local composting company weekly. According to The State of Recycling and Composting in Colorado report (2023), "In Colorado, nearly 18%, or over 200,000 tons, of

the material landfilled is food” (p. 13). Composting helps to “keep organic materials like food scraps and yard trimmings out of the landfill, which prevents the generation of harmful methane emissions, and ... create[s] a valuable soil amendment that will help Colorado farms and landscapes build healthy soils that absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, reduce water and chemical use, and grow nutritious foods” (p. 31).

We would like to do our part not only for our school to divert this waste from landfills, but also to educate and motivate our families to do so as well. This will also impact the learning of fourth and fifth graders who study a unit about sustainability (4th) and decomposition and transfer of energy (5th). In addition to learning about sustainability and composting, the kids will create a marketing campaign for the school and community, and be a part of coordinating the collection of compostable waste around the school. Kids will also teach younger students and the lunch monitors to sort their waste.

This project will empower kids to take what they are learning and DO something with it that will make an impact on our community and our environment. It will engage their families and the surrounding neighborhood, and it is tangible and ongoing. Receiving this funding will give us the resources to put this all into action.

Primary Power Learning Carpet

Marcia Foster, Walnut Hills Elementary School

My initiative seeks to improve mathematical reasoning and problem-solving skills in my kindergarten students at Walnut Hills, addressing a key area of need identified through our CMAS data. By incorporating The Learning Carpet—an interactive tool developed by a Cherry Creek educator—I aim to build these critical skills early in a fun, engaging way. This tool will enhance our daily lessons by providing hands-on opportunities for students to develop mathematical vocabulary, collaborative skills, and approach complex problems with a growth mindset. My goal is to help students gain confidence and a strong foundation in math, setting them up for long-term success and a love for mathematics.

Structured Tasks for Students with Severe Needs

Addie Mair, Walnut Hills Elementary School

I would like to provide more opportunities for my students to practice literacy, math, self-determination, and fine motor skills independently through the use of structured tasks in the ILC classroom. Structured TEACCH tasks are a research-based approach to promoting independence primarily for students with Autism. However this methodology works well with most students with severe needs. TEACCH was developed by Dr. Eric Schopler and Dr. Robert Reichler in the 1960s and is still used successfully today with students with severe needs. In fact, CCSD strongly encourages all ILC teachers to take a CCSD sponsored TEACCH training that is offered in the summer. Structured TEACCH tasks are activities that are visually organized and include visual instructions to help students with autism learn and be independent. I have had tremendous success with teaching my students how to use structured TEACCH tasks. By design, TEACCH tasks use a work system. Work systems provide students with a clear beginning and end to a task and can help students to understand: what tasks or activities they are expected to complete and what they will earn once the tasks or activities are done. It is important to note that many students with autism do not experience the world around them as their neurotypical peers do, therefore the traditional direct instruction and paper to pencil practice is oftentimes anxiety inducing for them. While structured tasks provide an excellent opportunity for practice, they can also be used as instructional tools to help students learn new skills by increasing engagement. Finally, my ultimate goal with my students with severe needs is to foster as much independence as possible to prepare them for lives up to and after high school. Most of my students will

likely rely on those around them for support long-term. I believe that fostering independence while practicing and retaining academic skills is a win win.

The Learning Carpet

Brooke Gralla, Walnut Hills Elementary School

Enhancing Early Mathematical Skills with The Learning Carpet

My initiative seeks to improve mathematical reasoning and problem-solving skills in my kindergarten students at Walnut Hills, addressing a key area of need identified through our CMAS data. By incorporating The Learning Carpet—an interactive tool developed by a Cherry Creek educator—I aim to build these critical skills early in a fun, engaging way. This tool will enhance our daily lessons by providing hands-on opportunities for students to develop mathematical vocabulary, collaborative skills, and approach complex problems with a growth mindset. My goal is to help students gain confidence and a strong foundation in math, setting them up for long-term success and a love for mathematics.

The Learning Carpet

Stephanie Plattner, Walnut Hills Elementary School

Enhancing Early Mathematical Skills with The Learning Carpet

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Waste Management Field Trip

Andy Mohrhaus, Walnut Hills Elementary School

In fourth grade we study a Sustainability unit, which includes the study of natural, renewable, and nonrenewable resources, as well as how their use affects the environment in multiple ways.

We would like to take the fourth graders on a field trip to the Larimer County Garbage Garage Education Center in Fort Collins. This field trip includes a drive-thru tour of the landfill with a tour guide, viewing from the Recycle Center observation room, and guided navigation throughout the education center, where “visitors learn just how much trash they create, where it goes, and alternatives to throwing it all away.”

According to www.healthepanet.com, “Landfills are among the biggest contributors to soil pollution. Roughly 80% of the items buried in landfills could have been recycled.” Colorado’s recycling rate is 16%, which is half the national average of 32% (The State of Recycling and Composting in Colorado report, 2023). We would like to do our part for our school to divert this waste from landfills.

One of our teachers visited a landfill years ago, and the trip left a significant impression on her. It led her to make lifestyle changes and to recently start initiatives at her church and at our school to reduce the amount of waste going to landfills. This field trip would not only bring the science learning standards to life, it could inspire and motivate our students in bigger ways as well. At our school, we have been working on reducing the amount of waste we send to the landfill; this learning experience complements

these efforts at our school. At the end of our sustainability inquiry unit, students are invited to use their knowledge to take some kind of informed action within their school community on this issue. Our goal is to inspire and empower kids to take what they are learning and DO something with it that will make an impact on our community and our environment.

Functional Furniture

Katie Shuford, Willow Creek Elementary School

Our students with significant needs require support in learning boundaries and having access to safe yet flexible seating options. Since they spend a considerable amount of time in our classroom, providing more comfortable seating would greatly enhance their experience. Additionally, we are seeking shelving to store materials out of students' reach. This would improve safety by keeping potentially hazardous items inaccessible, while also encouraging students to develop functional communication skills by asking for items they wish to use. This has been a goal of ours for several years, and we are hopeful that with this opportunity, it can finally become a reality. The ability to safely store materials would not only create a safer environment but also reduce clutter, which can otherwise contribute to student dysregulation.

Drab to FAB - Making Learning Fun through Fabrication!

Brandon Petersen, Woodland Elementary School

At Woodland we are always about providing students voice, choice, advocacy, and ownership in their learning. We started doing Fab Fridays in Art and STEM where we combined up and gave students various opportunities to fabricate / make items. We soon realized it was a huge success but that we were very short on opportunities and supplies that would further enrich the program. We do have some items like a laser cutter, some building materials, cardboard and cutters, t shirt press, etc. but that we were in need of items that students were requesting such as jewelry making supplies, a sublimation printer for the t-shirt press, other building materials, a multi extruder 3D printer, etc. Their ideas are wild and their motivation and intrigue are gigantic and infectious. We want to continue to beef up this program which would also give all teachers access to the items to utilize in infusing curriculum into the fabrication process. Plus, our students will be able to utilize these with our three LAUNCH nights to great genius hour related projects. By adding additional items students will be able to make so many new items happen that they can ideate, prototype, customize, and deliver (take home). Fabrication can link in to all the standards we are heavily invested in and allow for a newfound proficiency to occur. Our hope is that this newfound passion in students will invigorate and motivate them to want to continue to learn and harness that excitement learning can bring PLUS we can work with staff to show how Fabrication can open new doors to literacy, math, and science / social studies ideas! With fabrication students can literally MAKE anything happen!

Education & Regulation Through Meeting Basic Needs in Early Childhood

Nicole Brown, Woodland Elementary School

Our team wants to provide a low barrier, free resource pantry focused on healthy fruits and vegetables, nutritious non-perishable foods, and essential personal care and clothing items. The resource pantry will help provide nutritious snacks at school for children without access; as well as filling the gap of food insecurity during school breaks. Preschool lays the foundation for future learning and social emotional development. Good nutrition is vital for brain development, and children facing food insecurity face negative impacts on learning and attendance. This can affect students' ability to engage, putting children at risk of increased stress and anxiety. At the same time, approximately fourteen percent of all households in Colorado suffer from food insecurity. When accounting for households with children under six, this jumps to 20 percent across the country and only increases when measuring factors such

as race and single parent status. We were inspired to apply for this grant when discussing observed food insecurity within our current preschool population. It's hard to learn and play if you're hungry! We anticipate that providing a discreet pantry will increase trust and partnership between staff and our preschool families who are in need, as well as improve education and engagement outcomes that will last a lifetime.

Education and Regulation through meeting basic needs in Early Childhood

Lisabeth Dillman Place, Woodland Elementary School

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First Grade Community Connections

Christine Emereuwa, Woodland Elementary School

The First Grade Cultural Connections Grant aims to create a classroom environment where students are surrounded by books and materials that both mirror their own identities and serve as windows into other cultures. This initiative is needed to foster a more inclusive and equitable learning experience, where all students feel represented and valued. As an African American teacher with a diverse classroom, I am inspired to apply for this grant to ensure my students have access to resources that will enhance and expand their sense of community. The grant will also include materials like games that encourage bonding and teamwork, further supporting the development of a cohesive and inclusive classroom. The anticipated outcome is that students will develop a deeper understanding of equity and build stronger, more inclusive relationships with their peers. This grant will help create a classroom where every child feels seen, heard, and connected to a broader world.

Innovation in the art room

Ashley Pershing, Woodland Elementary School

I am excited to introduce an initiative that aims to foster deep, joyful learning and spark innovative thinking among the students in my classroom. Through this project, I hope to help students make meaningful connections between art, the world around them, and future career opportunities. The Hummingbird Robotics Kit will play a pivotal role in bringing this vision to life—literally. By incorporating robotics into their art projects, students will be able to animate their creations using any materials they choose, expanding both their technical and creative abilities.

This kit is needed because it encourages students to express their creativity in endless ways, fueling their curiosity and innovation. The versatility of the Hummingbird Robotics Kit ensures that each student

can approach their project in a unique way, allowing for individualized learning experiences. The kit is also accessible for students of all ages, and it offers free online professional development, which I plan to attend in order to enhance the learning outcomes for my students. By integrating this cutting-edge technology into our art curriculum, I hope to cultivate a new level of engagement and inspire students to think about the broader applications of art in fields like engineering, technology, and beyond. The anticipated outcome is a classroom environment where art is not just something students create, but something they can interact with, bringing their imagination to life in a tangible way. If successful, students will develop a stronger understanding of how art connects to real-world technologies and careers, empowering them to explore future opportunities with confidence and creativity.

Literacy on the Move: Mobile Reading Solutions for Transformative Learning

Robin Schuhmacher, Woodland Elementary School

A mobile reading cart can be a game-changer for struggling readers by providing targeted, personalized support right in the classroom. Equipped with a variety of engaging materials, from interactive reading tools to phonics games and leveled reading texts, the cart ensures that resources are tailored to meet each student's unique needs. This flexibility will allow our interventionists to quickly adapt their instruction based on individual progress, offering more effective interventions that can address specific challenges faced by struggling readers.

The mobility of the cart enhances accessibility by bringing reading support directly to students, eliminating the need for them to leave their classroom environment. This convenience means that intervention can be seamlessly integrated into daily routines, making it easier for students to receive the help they need without interrupting their learning flow. The cart's adaptability also allows it to be used across different grade levels and classroom settings, ensuring that a broad range of students benefit from its resources.

In addition, the mobile reading cart fosters a collaborative learning environment by encouraging shared use among classrooms or grade levels. The interventionists and teachers can collaborate to exchange ideas, resources, and strategies, creating a community of practice focused on improving literacy outcomes. This collective approach not only enhances the effectiveness of the intervention but also builds a supportive network for both educators and students, ultimately driving better reading proficiency and a deeper love for reading among struggling learners.

The anticipated outcome of a mobile learning cart for reading intervention is to provide flexible, accessible, and engaging resources that support personalized learning. This grant aims to enhance student literacy by offering targeted instructional materials and interactive tools that can be used in various classroom settings, ultimately improving reading skills and overall academic performance.

Tools for Literacy and Math for Kindergarten Students

Beth Rothman, Woodland Elementary School

My hope is to equip our kindergarten classroom with 5, 9th generation Ipads as well as a pretend and play register and multiracial baby dolls for purposeful play. The goal is to integrate technology and interactive resources into our curriculum to foster a dynamic, engaging learning environment that supports diverse developmental needs.

Currently, we have laptops that we share with another classroom. In today's world integrating technology is crucial to keep pace with educational advancements and student expectations. iPads will offer individualized learning opportunities and access to educational apps, while purposeful play materials will enhance cognitive and social skills through hands-on activities. This blend will address

varying learning styles and needs more effectively than traditional methods alone.

I am inspired by the growing emphasis on digital literacy and interactive learning in early childhood education. Observing the positive impacts of technology on student engagement and skill development, I recognize the potential for iPads to enhance educational experiences. Additionally, I aim to provide materials that encourage creativity and critical thinking, making learning both fun and effective.

With successful funding, our classroom will benefit from an enriched learning environment where technology and play materials are used to enhance the academic and social learning of my students. Students will have personalized learning experiences, access to innovative educational tools, and opportunities for meaningful interaction through play. My goal is to have improved engagement, a more inclusive learning atmosphere, and enhanced developmental outcomes for all students.