



Recipients  
Spring 2024  
Teacher Mini Grants

**★ Mikva/Soapbox Project ★**

**Teacher: Jason Bowen, All Elementary Schools Grade 8**

**Funds Awarded: \$250**

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

The soapbox project promotes citizenship, youth advocacy and student voice. Students will identify, research and present a speech on a soapbox topic of their choice. Each community school in the district will select the top 5 winners in their building to compete in a district-wide speech contest at the high school in spring 2025. Next year will be the 5th annual Interboro Soapbox contest.

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

The funds will be used to promote, enhance and support the event

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**★ Kinder-Garden Growth and Learning ★**

**Teacher: Mary Deegan, Pre-K and Kindergarten Academy**

**Funds Awarded: \$500**

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

There is an empty plot of dirt near the playground at the Kindergarten and Early Learning Academy that would make a perfect school garden. I would like to turn the garden into useable space and clean it up so that PreK and Kindergarten students can use it every year for science activities and hands on learning. Students would not only benefit academically, but would also learn important skills such as teamwork, responsibility, and taking turns which are crucial in PreK and Kindergarten.

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

We know that young students benefit from exploring the world around them, asking questions, and trying new things. Creating a school garden that can be used with students every year will help promote important social and emotional development in addition to academic curriculum. In PreK and Kindergarten, we use a program called Second Step which teaches students how to regulate their emotions. Working together in a school garden would help connect the skills that we teach in the program to real life moments. For example, the students are taught how to problem solve by identifying a challenge, trying a solution, and then trying something different if the first solution does not work. This could easily be modeled and taught using a problem in the garden such as accidentally breaking a necessary tool. There are many other social and emotional skills that could be connected directly from the Second Step curriculum including taking turns, sharing, managing frustration, following directions, caring for belongings, learning how to wait, and knowing the difference between accidents vs. on-purpose. Academically, working in a garden would provide a hands-on connection to components of our Mystery Science curriculum and Benchmark Advance Reading program. Mystery Science has a unit in Kindergarten called Plant Secrets which teaches students about living and nonliving things, plant needs, and human impacts on the environment. The Benchmark Advance Program has a Unit about Plant and Animal Needs where students learn not only about plant needs, but also plant parts and how they grow and reproduce. Building student background knowledge in these areas through hands-on experiences will increase vocabulary and comprehension.

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**★ Math Intervention Resources – Whiteboard, Kidney-Shaped Tables ★**

**Teacher: Stacy Foreacre, Norwood and Prospect Park Schools, Grades 1 - 5**

**Funds Awarded: \$1,000 (\$500 each school)**

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

We are currently about halfway through our first year of Math intervention instruction at Interboro and the use of a kidney-shaped table that includes a whiteboard top will be incredibly useful to the program. Small groups of students are working with interventionists in small spaces and this type of table will facilitate greater ease of instruction and student participation compared to the rectangular tables we are currently using

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

Our intervention curriculum is designed for small group instruction. This table will help increase student participation in allowing all students the same view of the teacher and manipulatives and materials. The white board top allows students and teachers to quickly and easily demonstrate thinking and learning, allowing for immediate formative assessment ongoing throughout the lesson.

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**★ Molecular Model Sets ★**

**Teacher: Kirk McGrotty, Interboro High School, Grades 10, 11, 12**

**Team Member: Joseph Martino**

**Funds Awarded: \$250**

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

Having these kits allow for construction of the molecules that they are identifying and categorizing according to their geometry. Seeing the three dimensional model will make more sense of the categories they select from the two-dimensional Lewis structures that are drawn to determine the characteristics of the molecules. Working in small groups, students will be able to visualize the category of molecule that they are attempting to categorize.

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

Anytime a higher-level cognitive concept, such as molecular geometry, can be shown with an actual hands-on model, it enhances the learning and makes the connection to the categories. With practice, students, working in small groups, should be able to identify the geometric categories easier and make the connections to the Lewis structures faster.

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**★ Math Intervention Supports – Whiteboard, Kidney-Shaped Tables ★**

**Teacher: Shannon Oden, Glenolden and Tinicum Schools, Grades 1 – 5**

**Funds Awarded: \$1,000 (\$500 each school)**

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

I currently provide small group instruction for math support throughout the day for our students in both Tinicum and Glenolden Elementary Schools. In both buildings, I am in rooms with either desks or a rectangular table. These set ups do not always allow for me to access students needs quickly or efficiently. Students sitting around a table or in a pod of desks are not in very close proximity to me for me to provide quality small group instruction. A

kidney-shaped table allows me to be accessible to all students in my small group equally while I provide small group instruction. Students are able to see and access the materials being used with ease. The added bonus of a whiteboard on top of the table gives the students another way to interact in a fun and engaging way during our small group session.

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

For students who are performing below grade level in math, small group instruction provides these struggling students with a chance to strengthen their overall math skills. During a small group session, we only have 25-30 minutes of instructional time. This short amount of time needs to be used efficiently. Allowing me to use a table that has been designed for small group instruction helps me ensure the learning environment I create is beneficial to all. With this table, students have an optimal viewpoint and easy access to me when one-on-one instruction or clarification needs to occur. The whiteboard top also allows me to eliminate the use of individual whiteboards during our small group session. Instead of handing out whiteboard and collecting them throughout the session as we move to other activities, instruction can occur more fluidly.

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**★ Teacher: Julia Pickett, Kindergarten Academy ★**

**Classroom Centers**

**Funds Awarded: \$1,000**

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

In the hopes of having a larger classroom space, I am looking to create an open layout classroom with designated centers for students to learn and explore. Throughout this school year, I have learned first hand that students learn best by using a multi-sensory approach to learning. When students are engaged, and excited about learning, curiosity and exploration take place. Allowing for centers to be student and teacher led, will allow for more growth to take place in a meaningful way.

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

Using the IEF Grant to purchase materials for classroom centers will allow my Learning Support Special Education vision to come alive. Students will be given the opportunity to explore different centers, try new activities, be classroom leaders, and lifelong learners through classroom centers. The idea is for the teacher to model and teach the students about the materials in each center and how to use them. The end result is having the centers be student led with adult support when needed.

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**★ Flexible Seating for Kindergarten and Pre-K STEM and Library ★**

**Teacher: Christine Regino, Pre-K and Kindergarten Academy**

**Funds Awarded: \$1,000**

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

I currently have two forms of flexible floor seating in the Library at the KA/ELA that I have purchased myself, which are both floor rockers. I have had students ask to use the floor rockers and I have had to say on multiple occasions "I'm sorry, please remember that we don't always get what we want, but we always get what we need", especially when I try to reserve these rockers for those students who have the greatest need for movement. This often happens as the lesson portion of STEM and Library can be a bit heavy before we move onto the hands-on portion, requiring listening to directions. This answer frequently leaves those students who rarely "need" the rockers, but who

certainly want a chance to use them without a turn. I would like to be able to provide flexible seating options for more than just the students who have a need for them, because how am I to be able to determine each day who might be the one in need. Perhaps a student is feeling in need without outwardly showing it. Having more flexible seating for my students would allow me to give to those who may need but don't always get. Having more options for my students can increase participation, because they will be more likely to want to share when they feel more satisfied with their learning environment.

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

Sitting on the floor is not always comfortable, which may result in students rolling around, rolling backwards and becoming otherwise more distracted. With more flexible seating that has less of an ability to distract, I feel that my students will be more engaged in my lessons, get the sensory input that those who need it may quietly seek, and help participation. This will encourage students to be more creative, share ideas and thoughts, and be more overall interested in the district curriculum.

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**★ Headphones and Markers ★**

**Teacher: Jennifer Schneider, Tinicum School, Grade 5**

**Funds Awarded: \$500**

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

In my classes, the students use their whiteboards and dry erase markers a lot. I go through about 50 markers a month - sometimes more. Over the years, I have found that the more inexpensive markers are not worth the price, which is why I am requesting Expo or Take Note dry erase markers. We also use headphones often for MAP and CDT testing, IXL, Edpuzzle, Nearpod, among others. More than half of my students did not come with headphones or earbuds, and most that did have broken by now. I'm requesting nice headphones that can withstand switching classes and fifth grade hands! I'm also requesting these things because many of our parents can't, won't, or don't provide these for their children. I'm noticing more and more that students do not have basic needs met, and I am happy to provide what I can, but headphones and good dry erase markers are expensive and I could use the help.

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

Using whiteboards keeps my students engaged and accountable for their work. It provides me with feedback that I can use immediately to tailor my lessons to student needs. Headphones will give the students accessibility to all of the wonderful programs our district invests in, like MAP, CDT, Edpuzzle, Nearpod, etc.

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