

Hands-on Learning Grants – 2014-2015 School Year

Essential Minnesota

Author: Matthew Pletcher

School: Robbinsdale Middle School

While growing up in the Minnesota educational system most students have the opportunity to visit several important civic features in their communities. Our beginning English Learners have not had these experiences due to their recent immigration to the US. This project helped our students develop language and content skills while gaining a greater understanding and appreciation of our civic treasures. Through structured field trips to important community locations, students had the opportunity to develop their production and receptive language skills in a variety of contexts. The field trips served as a springboard for students to engage in community benevolence, representative democracy and educational excellence.



R.E.A.D at Zachary Lane Elementary

Author: Jennifer Ellison

School: Zachary Lane Elementary

This program improved the reading skills of approximately 125 students and to help them learn to love reading. We did this with the Reading Education Assistance Dogs®. R.E.A.D is a program that helps improve children's reading and communication skills by employing a powerful method: reading to a dog. R.E.A.D. dogs are registered (certified) therapy animals who volunteer with their handler as a tea, going to school, libraries, and many other settings as reading companions for children. The proposal involves four R.E.A.D teams reading with children in five classrooms during the school year. The program has gained so much attention from the students, teachers, community, and R.E.A.D volunteer teams that we've been able to expand from the desired five R.E.A.D. teams to now eight R.E.A.D. teams!



African American's Contribution to the Arts: It's More Than Black History Month

Author: Barb Abeln

School: Sonnesyn Elementary

The goal of this project was to bring more depth to the students' understanding of the contributions to the Arts and our common cultural heritage of African Americans both past and present. The WITNESS program of VocalEssence is a three part program that includes two free days of Artist-in-Residence., one young person's concert, and a music teacher workshop. It also includes all materials needed for the program. This grant helped add an additional two days of the Art-in-Residence. Each 5th grade classroom received four 50 minute classes with the artist. It included such things as music, spoken word, art or dance.



Highview Integrated Math/Canoe Building Project

Author: Jim Wangenstein

School: Highview Alternative Program

Students worked in groups of six or seven, under the guidance of experienced boat building instructors to build three canoes. Urban Boatbuilders is a non-profit organization located in St. Paul that works with schools and has been in operation since 1995. By engaging in the boat building process with Urban Boatbuilders, our students learned, practiced, and applied science, technology, engineering, and math skills. They experienced the scientific process in a real-world way that reinforces classroom learning and prepares them for jobs in a variety of fields. Through the building process, students put math to work following plans, using tools and materials, and solving problems as they arise.



Lakeview's Little Free Library - 2014-2015

Author: Susan Cunningham

School: Lakeview Elementary

Have you heard about the Little Free Libraries that are springing up all over town these days? They are put into neighborhoods that would like to build community through reading. This Little Free Library was built by our third graders. This project benefited not only the school, but helped build community ties through the books in the 'library.' Reading is a key ingredient to education and something ALL families can do together.



Computer Programming for Elementary Students

Author: Cara Rieckenberg

School: School of Engineering and Arts

Computer Programming encompasses all that the School of Engineering and Arts is about. Within the STEAM-focus, computer programming allows students to think critically, problem solve and engage fully with projects and products of their own design. This project included a request for a very recently developed arduino board called the Makey Makey. This product allowed students to not only develop a program via a web-based application, they can also created real life applications and literally watch their programming come to life right in front of them.



Stronger, Better, Faster, Smarter: Teamwork and Technology in Tutorial Study Groups

Author: Kate Fuller

School: Armstrong High School

We all know that technology changes and grows with every passing moment, as do the resources supporting students learning in the classroom. The past decade has brought us HyerStudio, Google, Quizlet, Khanacademy, and apps like Animoto and the Oxford Picture Dictionary. All of these tools can be instant resources for students. That is, if they know how to use them and have the technology.

This project brought iPads to high school students who work in study groups two times a week. They learned by asking questions to each other and working together to get through difficult material. If students could help each other try to figure out vocabulary and then check their answers online or watch a short clip when they are stuck with the trigonometry problem, undoubtedly they would become stronger, better, faster, and smarter.



Creating a Classroom in the Cloud

Author: Anne Norsted

School: School of Engineering and Arts

With more and more standards requiring digital tools for producing and publishing information and more and more curricular materials supporting online educational opportunities, it only makes sense to provide more one-on-one opportunities for students to engage with technology. While this engagement does not equate to one-on-one interactions with a teacher, it does allow for greater opportunities for differentiation allowing all students to have their learning needs met. Chrome books are the perfect tool to achieve this.



Ready! Set! Work!

Author: Carol Kemble

School: Armstrong High School

The Ready! Set! Work! Project will enable students with mild to moderate mental impairments the opportunity to participate in a work readiness program that focuses on the hands-on skills needed for entry-level jobs such as data entry, cashier and production. In addition, students will work on the social skills needed to be successful in a job and will learn how to effectively use a time clock and card.



Hip-Hop After School: Beatz & Mindz

Author: Michael Hastert

School: Robbinsdale Middle School

This is a learning enrichment program where the students in grades 6-8 learn about hip-hop culture and create their own music. Students are taught the history of hip-hop and its original core values. This grant will help to expand the program with additional equipment to meet the needs of more students. This program is innovative because it teaches something that kids love and enjoy which will in turn open them up to numerous opportunities for learning.



The Yoga Calm Project: Teaching Students Strategies for Self- Regulation

Author: Lynn Marrs

School: Robbinsdale Middle School

This project will aim to teach students strategies to improve their ability to draw on their own inner resources to increase their ability to self-regulate in order to decrease negative behaviors, decrease test anxiety thereby improving test scores, and maximize learning by providing opportunities for mindfulness, calming the mind, movement and exercise during the day.



Environmental Playground and Community Gardens

Authors: Donna Allen and Jane Wicklund

Program: Family Literacy Program

Remember the benefits you experienced when participating in physical activities and its effect on development? Our program included young children and their parents with academic needs. Parents work on English, their GED, or high school diploma, while children prepare for Kindergarten. By providing an environmental playground, hands-on learning become available through music, large-motor equipment, and science activities. This gave students the opportunity of experimentation through sight, touch, hearing, and smell that guides children's development allowing them to be equipped in understanding their world.

