

DFEE 2013-14 Grants Synopses

Animas Valley Elementary - \$6633.

Reading Intervention Program support: High-interest book sets for 2nd and 3rd grades group reading; “Read Naturally” software 1st-3rd grades—stories, quizzes, tracking student progress.

Durango High School DaVinci SLC Robotics - \$7000*

Every sophomore at the Durango High School DaVinci SLC takes three “Foundations” classes, which are intended to introduce and give practice in 21st century skills (which DaVinci lists as critical thinking, problem solving, communication, collaboration, visual, scientific and numerical literacy, cross-disciplinary thinking, adaptability, etc.). The Foundations classes use the platforms of Digital Arts, Entrepreneurship, and Robotics. Following a semester of introductory and intermediate work in all three, every student chooses one concentration, in which he or she creates a “cornerstone project” demonstrating acquisition of the identified skills. In the Robotics segment all DaVinci students will learn STEM elements dealing with physics, math, creative exploration, and expository writing. The grant was written with the intention of using the Lego Robotics program, adapted as a pilot program for high school level students and curriculum. The DFEE grants committee sees Robotics as an exciting platform for learning key concepts of science; however, the grant included salary for a specific Lego instructor, and since it is the Foundation’s policy generally not to pay salaries, the committee opted to fund only materials for the Robotics program.

Durango High School Photography Department, Teaching Cameras - \$6016

The grant will be used to purchase a set of digital single lens reflex teaching cameras for the DHS Photography Department. The new technology, which allows greater manipulation of such elements as aperture, speed, resolution, etc., will allow the students to extend the learning of photography deeper into science and math. The program serves 264 students annually, and the 11-13 cameras will be used in all digital photography courses. With an expected life of more than 5 years, the cameras will be valuable teaching tools for many students.

DHS presently requires students to provide their own cameras for the photography classes; most have only point and shoot cameras, which limits the depth of science and math instruction. Finally, the acquisition of school cameras will open the courses to students who otherwise could not afford the sophisticated level of camera the coursework will require.

Early Childhood Programs – Exploring Books with Young Children - \$1390.

Encouraging parent participation in creating a strong foundation in vocabulary and modeling a love of reading for their young children is at the heart of this grant, developed by a group of retired 9-R E.C.E./Kindergarten teachers. Begun as a pilot in the spring of 2013, this program was received enthusiastically and with this grant, it will continue under the 9-R Early Childhood Education program as six workshops in which parents will be given information about reading aloud and a book to encourage the reading habit at home. The program offers babysitting and snacks for children, and a modest stipend for the teachers. Parents will be surveyed post-program for feedback on the program’s usefulness.

Escalante Middle School – Common Read - \$4000

A repeat of the popular Common Read (“One School, One Book”) from 2012: all students and faculty will read the same book and engage in both formal and casual discussions; students also produce work to share their thoughts and reactions to the book. Parents are encouraged to purchase and read the book on their own. The grant states that the program “builds school community and fosters a climate of literacy by integrating an academic and social experience.” Ideally, if funds remain after the purchase of books, Escalante may invite the author to speak to the students—this was a notable component in the 2012 program’s success.

Florida Mesa Elementary – SMART boards - \$5000

It is Florida Mesa’s intention to have SMART board technology in every one of its 23 classroom; the school currently has 6. The District typically has not paid for SMART boards. This grant is partial funding for 2 SMART boards. SMART board technology has proven very valuable for the classrooms that has had access to it and it is in line with the District intention to establish “21st Century Classrooms.”

Fort Lewis Mesa Elementary – Elements of Reading Classroom Vocabulary Sets - \$1000

This research-based program will serve K-5 students, all of whom receive daily instruction in vocabulary. The school has used the program for the past 4 years; outcomes measurement indicate gains in reading and writing due to vocabulary development. These materials are consumables and so must be replenished yearly; this grant will assist FLME to maintain their high level of vocabulary development despite cuts in the school’s budget.

Fort Lewis Mesa Elementary – Summer Reading Tutorial - \$2492

This grant provides for a 3-week “ramp-up” program to help underachieving students get ready for the upcoming school year in reading and math. Students attend 4 days per week for 3 hours/day. Teachers use targeted interventions to help students catch up with their peers over the summer. Outcomes from past experience demonstrate greater student success from the very beginning of the subsequent school year.

Needham Elementary School – Projector/Document Camera & Mimio - \$1961

The equipment will allow global language teachers to show news clips from the countries speaking the language, build vocabulary through interactive lessons, video record students to hear and reflect on pronunciation, and develop other technology-driven enrichments for these classes.

Needham Elementary School – E-books/Digital Audio Book Library - \$5000

E-books that can be used on any computer or mobile device will allow students greater access to books and also give teachers expanded capabilities in whole-lesson instruction. These books have a longer shelf life than traditional print books. In addition, digital audio books replace the obsolescent CD and books on tape that teachers presently use to encourage under-performing readers.

Needham Elementary School – Multi-media Speakers, all classrooms - \$500

Replaces poorly performing equipment in all classrooms and enhance audio for whole-classroom lessons.

Riverview Elementary School – Science Lab Materials and Books- \$2500*

Starting in fall, 2013, Riverview will have a dedicated Science Lab, through which every child in the school will be exposed to specific, appropriate science curriculum; in fact, Riverview has opted to set aside 1.3 teaching positions for this instruction. This grant will assist in purchasing materials and equipment for the lab as well as science-related books for instruction and correlated independent learning.

Riverview Elementary School – Literacy Grant - \$2700

This grant will build on the literacy foundation at Riverview with an expansion of the school's leveled reading library, enhanced k-2 small group and guided reading, and additional materials for grades 3-5. See the related Science Lab grant for more on reading materials.

Riverview Elementary School – Positive Behavior Program - \$1000

Riverview's results with their PBIS program have been stellar: a drastic reduction in disciplinary referrals, better communications on student-student as well as student-adult levels, and increased academic commitment by the students. The DFEE grants committee considered this a valuable program to support another year.

Sunnyside Elementary School – Yearbook and Photojournalism Digital Cameras - \$500.

The student-created annual yearbook, started in 2010, teaches students to plan and execute the publication enjoyed by the entire student body. They gather, organize, and independently create the pictures needed. Originally, the students relied on donated photographs, but found that to be inadequate and an "organizational nightmare." Teachers loaned students cameras for the last year's efforts, which allowed students to plan out their desired coverage. These cameras will enable students to document people and events independently throughout the school year. Teachers also anticipate using the cameras to document projects and events in their classrooms.

Sunnyside Elementary School – Ebook Library Starter Fund - \$5000*

From the grant narrative: "As the district continues to move towards one-to-one mobile devices in the classroom, it becomes even more important to have an accessible e-book collection filled with books that align with classroom curriculum, are available at a wide range of reading levels, and encompass a wide variety of interests." Previously, Sunnyside subscribed to the Capstone Interactive Library, with its database of more than 400 e-books; however, the subscription cost for Capstone has become prohibitive, and Sunnyside has decided to begin building its own permanent collection. Replacing the entire Capstone collection would cost \$12,000. This grant will provide funding for a significant start on the collection. All Sunnyside students will be able to access, from school and from home, the interactive books. The initial phase will focus on the 1st-3rd grade levels. The Sunnyside PTO (SIPTA) will be asked to contribute to the library as well, in lieu of paying for the Capstone subscription as the PTO has done previously.

Garden Project of Southwest Colorado - \$1500

The Garden Project serves 3 elementary schools (Needham, Riverview and Fort Lewis Mesa) with in-school and after-school programs that integrate science, gardening, cooking and art. This grant will assist with guest speaker stipends, materials and supplies, and discounted tuition for low-income students. The DFEE committee sees this grant as not only a creative avenue to tie a popular activity to core curriculum elements in science and math, but also an opportunity for DFEE to join in collaborate with the numerous other community groups supporting the program.

Miscellaneous notes:

1. * designates grant nominated for Bank of Colorado Innovation award, to be presented to the bank for their selection.
2. Miller Middle School did not apply for any grants.
3. Technology requests: The District's long-range technology plan is still being developed and the hardware requirements for state-mandated testing are not yet completely understood, so the grants committee decided that rather than fund potentially obsolescent technology, DFEE would decline any tech grants that were questionable in light of potential district changes in approach to technology needs. Thus, Park Elementary, from whom we received only that one large request, will not get any funding from DFEE this year—the District has opted to provide every school with 2 mobile computer labs, so this grant is a good example of a grant that might be redundant once the District plan is implemented.
4. The 2013 Grants committee members are: Margie Sittner, chair; Rob Dawes, Joan Schumacher, Mary Stengel, Jean Thweatt, Gretchen Wilson, and Holly Zink.
5. If funding (i.e. outside grants) can be found this summer to leverage some of these grants, DFEE may open a fall funding period. Decision is pending fund-raising results.