

Durango Education Foundation 2014-15 Core Academic Grants

Animas Valley Elementary ELL Reading Professional Development \$5274

Kelly Von Stroh, grant administrator

 **Bank of Colorado** Member FDIC **Winner: Bank of Colorado Award for Innovation**

Teaching reading to English Language Learners (ELL) has become a necessity in many schools in 9-R, especially so at AVE, which has the highest number of ELL students (36, this year). Grant applicant Kelly VonStroh writes: "While many of AVE and 9-R's classroom teachers are highly trained in reading instruction, none have had specific training in delivering reading instruction to ELLs. Many teachers also lack effective differentiation skills for ELLs, and an understanding of how ELLs' literacy development is different than native speakers of English." This grant, funded by the Bank of Colorado Award, will effectively train the trainer (Kelly) to train the AVE teachers as well as to offer the training and a peer mentoring program to teachers at other 9-R schools.

Durango High School Base Camp Common Read \$4300

Jennifer Johnson, grant administrator

The Basecamp small learning community is incorporating common reading of 3 books this year to "promote literacy and unite students' thinking across disciplines." Common reads allow regular and honors students to engage in discussion, and allow all teachers, regardless of their curricular specialty, access to the discussions. The books chosen for the 2014-15 year are: The Other Wes Moore (Wes Moore), Nickel and Dimed (Barbara Ehrenreich), and The Heart and the Fist (Eric Greitens). All of these books align with school goals; they deal with issues of poverty, education, respect, responsibility and perseverance. The recipient, Jennifer Johnson, will be encouraged to purchase the books locally.

Durango High School Base Camp Lap Desks \$345

Jennifer Johnson, grant administrator

Field work is an essential component of Expeditionary Learning. Students complete work in the soon-to-be-completed outdoor classroom. Science teachers plan next year to involve students in study about water and weather. Lap desks (18" x 14.5" sketch boards) will make the students' field work more productive and efficient.

Escalante Middle School Classic Novels \$2730

Duane Tucker, grant administrator

Using classic literature to meet the Common Core Standards provides "rich vocabulary, universal themes, in-depth literary analysis, and rich... topics in student writing, as well as a large amount of rigor for every student. This year 6th graders are reading Treasure Island (RL Stevenson), The Call of the Wild (Jack London) and The Invisible Man (HG Wells). The grant will provide enough copies of each book so that all 130 students in the program can take the books home to read and use for assignments; previously, Escalante had only enough books for students to use during class time.

Florida Mesa/Sunnyside Language Nut Spanish Curriculum \$500

Vanessa Fisher, principal and grant administrator

Language Nut (<http://www.languagenut.com/us>) uses current research on linguistic acquisition to present 24 units (144 lessons) that cover the entire K-5 World Language experience, using stories, games and song. Students can work individually, using school computers, which in addition to gaining proficiency in Spanish language, will also help them develop skills that will help with PARCC standardized testing. Florida Mesa and Sunnyside will share a single license for the yearlong pilot program.

Fort Lewis Mesa iPad for Special Education \$600

Jill Darland, grant administrator

The Fort Lewis Mesa special education program (SPED) targets K-5 students who are below grade level in Reading, Writing and Math, with priority given to incoming K and 1st grade students as well as identified SPED students. The iPad will be used for specific interventions targeted for students with autism and behavior disorders, using applications that are research-based and proven to help with academic success.

Fort Lewis Mesa Summer Tutoring Program \$2462

John Marchino, grant administrator

This immensely successful program is entering its third year of D.E.F. support. It targets students who are below grade level in reading and math entering grades 1-5, with the focus on incoming 2nd and 3rd graders. 20-25 students will participate in the program. The instructional techniques are research-based, designed to help students fill in gaps to be ready for the upcoming school year. The first two summers of this program demonstrated that students who participated in the program have been more successful at the onset of the school year than those who did not. Durango 9-R will reinstate summer school programs in 2015; at present there is no district or school funding for programs such as this one.

Fort Lewis Mesa Worldly Wise 3000 Vocabulary Cards \$1200

John Marchino, grant administrator

DEF has funded these consumable teaching materials in the past. Every student at FLME uses the cards daily; the students enjoy the work and the school reports “tremendous gains” from the program. In fact, Dr. Marchino reports that the FLME teachers have tried using the district vocabulary program in the past and found that the students were already ahead of that program’s grade level expectations.

Fort Lewis Mesa, Needham, and Riverview Elementary Gardens \$1000

Sandhya Tillotson, grant administrator

This community-collaboration grant will expand the Garden Project of Southwest Colorado school garden programs by supporting “Farmer Days” (environmental science and food resources); enrichment programs (integrating science, gardening, cooking and art); garden training (training school staff to use available gardens for teaching).

Needham Elementary Mobile Technology Lab \$7500

Nisia Lawler and David Tanaka, grant administrators

Beginning in the fall, every student at Needham Elementary will attend technology “special” classes every week. The existing computer lab at Needham is inadequate for the task: small, with outmoded and poorly functioning computers. This grant requested \$21,540 for a full Computers on Wheels (C.O.W.) set up. The grants committee awarded a partial grant, and suggests that Needham consider applying C.A.F.E. discretionary funds to cover the balance.

Park Elementary Classroom Set of iPad Air Tablets \$7500

Kathleen Lau and Scott Emrich, grant administrators

Serving 450 students per week (every K-5 student in the school), the Park Elementary technology classes are designed to help students learn and master state standards for research and presenting materials. The existing desktops in the Park lab will be used to teach keyboarding and test preparation skills. This grant requested \$17,050 for a full classroom set of 30 iPads; the grants committee awarded a partial grant, and suggests that Park consider applying C.A.F.E. discretionary funds to cover the balance.

Riverview Elementary Sound System \$10,428

Shannon Fontenot and Johnny Bertrand, grant administrators

The present sound system in the Riverview gym/multi-purpose room is used for assemblies, performances, and PE classes serving all of Riverview’s 475 students (and occasionally, their parents); it is aged and inadequate, affecting the quality of education and even (in one case) resulting in a teacher vocal cord injury. This sound system is powerful, durable, and adaptable for multiple kinds of uses. Katzin Music of Durango presented the winning bid.

Sunnyside Elementary E-Book Library Expansion \$3000

LaRae Dotson, grant administrator

E-Book licenses offer versatile and inexpensive ways for teachers to offer shared reading experiences as well as independent reading to their students, without the maintenance, loss and replacement headaches of paper-and-glue versions. Last year, D.E.F. awarded Sunnyside \$5000 as seed money to start their e-Book library collection; this year the committee voted to award \$3000 for its expansion. This was the full amount requested.

Title VII Native American Education Program Transportation Costs \$1000

Lucinda Long-Webb and Teri Nuhn, grant administrators

Title VII students at Florida Mesa, Park, and Needham Elementary Schools attend weekly Native American Cultural Literacy Enrichment and also participate in twice-weekly literacy classes after school, with the focus on reading and writing skills. Transportation is an essential component to enabling students to stay after school.

TRIO Talent Search**Middle School College Camp Support****\$1400**

Wendy Javier, grant administrator

TRIO Talent Search, hosted by Fort Lewis College, serves 7-12th grade students throughout the region, of whom 235 are currently Durango 9-R enrollees. Talent Search participants share the goal of pursuing post-secondary education; many of them are both low-income and first-generation potential college students. The program advisors identify participants starting in 7th grade, and help to prepare them to continue their formal education after high school via academic, financial and goal-oriented counseling, field trips, and College Camp, which this grant will support. In the College Camp, the students become familiar with a college campus, complete a community service project, meet Talent Search alumni, and participate in science enrichment activities. They also learn best-practice study skills using the Stanford neuroscience curriculum, Brainology.

Women's Resource Center**"Girls to Women, Women to Girls" Conference (2015) \$1000**

Elizabeth Mora, grant administrator

This 1-day educational workshop is structured to help girls make the transition to high school and beyond, providing tools to help them mature into confident, independent adults. Workshop topics typically include a range; in 2014, WRC offered the girls sessions in media literacy, personal safety, career and life choices, interpersonal relationships, healthy meals and snacks, overall wellness, and coping with cyber bullying. The conference is offered in different versions to 8th graders and 5th graders; this grant supports the 8th grade program. Numerous organizations support this conference either with financial support or in-kind donations; because the conference grows every year, the WRC appreciates all community collaboration and does advertise such collaborations in the conference materials, online and in advertisements.

District-wide**Burst Reading Program, 4th & 5th Grades**

Lynn Mather (9-R Executive Director of Curriculum and Instruction) & Christy Bloomquist (9-R Executive Director of Student Achievement), grant administrators

Funded with a grant from the Westmeath Foundation and a match from a private donor, the Burst Reading program offers individualized reading instruction to all 800+ students in Durango 9-R 4th and 5th grades. Whether the students are struggling with reading skills or honing their expertise, the program offers targeted instruction that engages and appeals to young readers.