



2023-2024 GRANTS

MISSION:

SEEF's mission is to preserve and enhance the quality of education in Shakopee Public Schools by funding projects that provide innovative learning opportunities for our students.

www.shakopeedfoundation.org





ABOUT SEEF

The Shakopee Educational Endowment Foundation (SEEF) dedicates itself to preserving and enhancing the excellence that Shakopee Public Schools provide by funding cutting-edge technology, best practice programs, and innovative instructional materials for our students. Through our grant program, SEEF enables educators to test new ideas, attempt creative programming, or incorporate new technology that otherwise would not receive funding – all of which support valuable educational experiences for Shakopee students.

SEEF awards grants across all schools and curriculum areas. Each year, district staff are encouraged to submit proposals up to \$2,500. Thanks to our donors, the Foundation has awarded **585 grants totaling nearly \$494,000** since 1991.

Supportive But Separate

While contributions to the SEEF enhance programs in Shakopee Public Schools, the Foundation operates independently of the school district. We are a separate 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization comprised of parents, community members, and alumni who are passionate about education in Shakopee. The Foundation's board of directors review grant application submissions and fund projects that align with the Foundation's guidelines and criteria.

Our Future Depends on the Community

Donor contributions continue to be the force behind SEEF's ability to fund grant proposals that engage students and enhance curriculum. Donations of any amount are appreciated and vital to the Foundation and its mission. We rely on support from area businesses, service organizations, community members, school district staff, and alumni. Challenges due to economic uncertainty and changes in donor philanthropy make contributions to SEEF even more critical. SEEF invites cash contributions, annual pledges, matching gifts from employers, donations of stock, memorial gifts, and planned gifts from a will, estate plan, life insurance policy, or charitable trust. Donations are tax-deductible, and contributions of \$1,000 or more appear on the donor plaque at the Shakopee High School.

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GRANTS

GRANT CRITERIA

- We award grants of up to \$2,500 to support innovative projects that will enhance education and benefit Shakopee Public School students.
- Rarely a unique project will be considered for a more significant award. Applicants must discuss a request for special consideration with a SEEF board member before applying.
- To keep projects in line with the general direction of the district, the applicant's principal or supervisor must sign all grant applications.
- Projects that include technology must obtain the approval of the Director of Instructional Technology to ensure the school district supports the equipment.
- Within 12 months of the award, applicants must spend grant funds. Any balance remaining after that time is no longer available to the grantee.
- All purchased equipment becomes the property of Shakopee Public Schools.

2023-24 GRANT AWARDS

The Shakopee Educational Endowment Foundation is proud to announce more than **\$27,000** in teacher grant awards for the 2023-24 school year. This year's grant program awarded 16 grants to ten schools in Shakopee Public Schools, benefiting approximately 220 staff members and more than 4,000 students during the 2023-24 school year alone. Funding will increase the creative use of technology, expand book collections available for students, and enhance learning in science, math, and language arts classes.

GRANT SUMMARIES*

DISTRICT WIDE

ADAPTED ART EQUIPMENT - Julie Philips, Assistive Technology Consultant

Project Mobility uses adaptive art tools that give students with special needs the opportunity to draw, paint, blow bubbles, use chalk and create their own art. The equipment is created for students with special needs and intended to include students without disabilities as well.

Shakopee Public Schools has an increased number of center-based programs and has a partnership with the GLOmies group (students without disabilities), starting with the High School all the way down to the Middle and Elementary Schools. The High School GLOmies go to each of the Middle and Elementary Schools to interact with the students, creating activities for them to do on a monthly basis. Within each Middle School and each Elementary School there are Jr. GLOmies and Mini GLOmies who work with the center-based classrooms. The adaptive equipment will give all students the opportunity to have another resource to help them gain independence, and create their own art, and have fun!



*Summary statements provided by the applicant as part of the grant process
Photos are from 2022-2023 grant initiatives

CORE VOCABULARY SENSORY BINS - Debbie Arterbury, Speech Language Pathologist

The use of core vocabulary in our center-based classrooms is widely used throughout the district. Since the implementation of core vocabulary, students with complex communication needs have become more efficient communicators, able to self-advocate and be more independent during their day. Core Vocabulary Sensory Bins will combine core vocabulary with engaging activities. They will be theme-based and include a bin, sensory base (beads, corn, cotton balls, rice), core board with fringe, other visuals, and manipulatives. Sensory bins have many benefits for children with special needs and are designed to be open-ended, which allows the opportunity for students to explore with creativity, resulting in exploring new concepts and often the emergence of language! Pairing these bins with a core vocabulary board with thematic-related fringe will help foster meaningful connections and communication between staff and peers.



GRANT SUMMARIES

PEARSON EARLY LEARNING CENTER

CLASSROOM EQUITY BOOK SETS – Allison Gill, Early Childhood Special Education Teacher

The purpose of the classroom equity books is to increase materials in the early childhood classrooms that reflect the diversity of the learners in the room. This would impact all student learners at Pearson as all classrooms would get a set of books for their rooms.

Children should see themselves represented in their classrooms and the books that they read. Most children's books main characters are white or an animal. By increasing the amount of diverse characters that are in the books we use at Pearson more students will see themselves in the main character role, which directly impacts all students in a positive way.



EQUITY CLASSROOM MATERIALS – Julianne Kambeitz, Early Childhood Special Education Teacher

The purpose of the equity materials is to reflect the diversity within the early childhood classrooms through creative means. This would impact all learners at Pearson Early Learning Center as all classrooms would have access to the materials requested.

Children should have access to various materials that represent who they are. This may be through using art materials, manipulatives, puzzles as well as a variety of posters that represent the community within our school walls. Most materials and toys are reflected by our white population and by increasing the diverse materials it will allow our students to express themselves and who they are in a more accurate representation.

EZ WRITE EXTENSION ACTIVITY KITS - Stephanie Kaste, Occupational Therapist

EZ Write is the handwriting curriculum that we utilize in Shakopee Public Schools. It is being used in preschool and elementary schools and has been since the district started it several years ago.

The focus for preschoolers is learning the eight basic strokes. These eight strokes (tall line down, short line down, EZ across, U-turn, rainbow curve, down the steps, down the slide, and C-stroke) are the basis for forming all letters and numbers. By creating extension activity kits, this will help support students in solidly learning these strokes. The idea is that each stroke will have additional tasks such as tissue paper for the strokes, lacing tasks following the stroke formation, use of dice that will show the strokes and students can practice in a game like manner, practicing them on a writing tablet, and using ink pads to make strokes with fingerprints. These activities will help to increase the motor memory necessary for learning the strokes and becoming a proficient writer.



GRANT SUMMARIES

PEARSON EARLY LEARNING CENTER CONTINUED

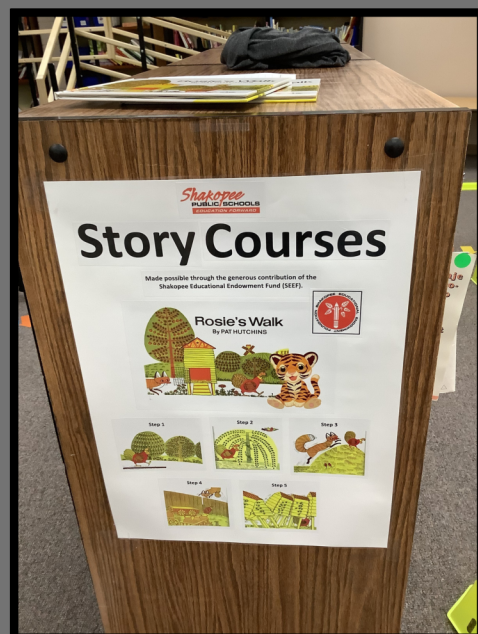
EARLY CHILDHOOD SPECIAL EDUCATION LITERACY NIGHT - Renee Mauroy, Early Intervention Teacher

Early Literacy is a passion of mine. I work with our youngest children and their families. The purpose of this evening event is to allow parents the chance to interact with their child to help build literacy skills and create a 5-senses book to take home. Target learners would be parents/caregivers and their young children. The purpose and objective align with why literacy from a young age is so vital. One statistic is called the "million-word gap". Research at the Ohio State University indicates that children who are read one book a day by age 5 compared to those who do not regularly have books read to them, will hear 290,000 more words.

Oftentimes, parents of young children have not had experience or explicit teaching on how to engage their child when reading books to them. Some parents will ask "What is that?" or "What color is that?" This proposed event would include modeling on how to read a book with a young child. Expected outcomes of the project are that participants will leave the event with a personally made 5-senses springtime theme book. Parents would go from station to station to create a book cover, then 1 page of content for each sense (hearing, vision, touch, smell, and taste) and a back page for the book. Parents would participate in a story time and observe how to help their child connect with text. Then there will be a brief discussion with parents on hints/tips they observed on reading to their child.

ZOO PHONICS EXTENSION ACTIVITIES - Heather Stripling-Swenson, Preschool Teacher

The district has been using Zoo Phonics for several years. Zoo Phonics is the phonics curriculum used at Pearson and in the elementary schools. It is a multi-sensory language arts program. The purpose of this proposal is to provide additional learning materials to enhance children's knowledge in early reading and writing skills. The target learners are all 350+ students at Pearson. According to research, when Zoo Phonics is used, even if children have had no prior exposure to both Zoo Phonics lower and uppercase alphabets, near mastery of all alphabetic skills is evident by the end of the school year. This allows children to utilize this new information with more advanced literacy skills.



EAGLE CREEK ELEMENTARY

CONVERSATION AND COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS – Merie Elise Silkey, 5th Grade Teacher

This project aims to promote conversation and community connections through unique cultural experiences at the Ordway Center in St. Paul. Students will attend two performances focused on African and Native American culture in a way that inspires conversation lasting much longer than the duration of the events. Most of our 5th graders have never had the experience of attending a professional production at the Ordway, nor have they had a cultural experience such as seeing The Sampson Brothers or Cirque Kalabanté: Afrique en Cirque. These performances of Native American dance and African music combined with acrobatic skills will provide students the opportunity to compare the artistry of Native American and African cultures – some of the same cultures represented at Eagle Creek Elementary. African and Native American music are part of our music classes which will allow for a deeper understanding of the experience.

The opportunity for students to attend a production at such an amazing theater offers a very broadening experience for many of them. This project provides numerous ties to student learning in terms of cultural awareness, experiencing learning through watching and listening to the music and the movement, honing listening skills, learning to choose self-control and accept ownership, following the behavior expectations of audience members, and finding similarities to their own cultural experiences both from an artistic lens and from the community in which they live.

VISUAL & SENSORY BAGS FOR PARAPROFESSIONALS – Amy Wilma, Speech Language Pathologist

The Eagle Creek special education team is working towards more frequent and thorough training provided to our paraprofessionals to empower them while supporting students. Part of this includes ensuring that our paraprofessionals are equipped with the tools and resources that may be necessary to aid student learning and listening throughout the building. Currently, many paraprofessionals take it upon themselves to find resources and tools that make their work more effective and efficient. They carry these resources with them during the day, utilizing the tools when they are supporting our special education population within the general education classroom, specialists and hallways. Our goal is to create 'resource bags' so each paraprofessional has access to the tools and resources that our Special Education Team has deemed most appropriate. Visual aids will also be made by the Special Education Team and included in the bags. Upon receiving these tools, our Special Education team will ensure proper training for each paraprofessional on how and when to utilize the tools and resources.



GRANT SUMMARIES

RED OAK ELEMENTARY

OUTDOOR LEARNING – Athena Rieck, Kindergarten Teacher

Shakopee students live in an increasingly urbanized community, and some are losing the connection to the outside world and how to be creative using the materials around them. This natural play area is one way to give students this experience during part of their school day. Imaginative play is an essential part of child development. Students need to have a place where they can turn a rock into food, a stick into a spoon, and a pile of wood chips into a bowl to make a delicious meal for their friends. This equipment will assist in fostering the imaginations of students in ways that are not possible in the classroom.

Imaginative play has measurable social-emotional, academic and wellbeing benefits, and we see this as an amazing opportunity to meet this need. This list of benefits makes the proposed outdoor learning space ideal for all Red Oak students, including general education, special education, multilingual, and specialist programming.

SUN PATH ELEMENTARY

NON-VERBAL CUES FOR LISTENING – Sara Connell, Kindergarten Teacher

Teaching social concepts should follow a natural sequence from simple to complex to support the learning of our children. Our world right now is very confusing to the smallest children. During COVID, children were at home with only the people in their household. They were sometimes given whatever they wanted so that their parents could still work from home when they needed it quiet. When these children came to school, they only knew what they learned from home. Little social interaction occurred in many households and preschool was not an option. Children are now in a big social setting and need to learn all the rules of being in school and in this world. Learning rules of how to act in the classroom is sometimes done in nonverbal ways. Students need to pick up on social clues and learn the non-spoken verbal rules around them to be successful in a classroom and in the world.

These books will teach executive functioning skills and problem-solving while building the core foundational skills they need. Keeping their thoughts in their head and watching a speaker, showing a speaker they care about the feeling that they have in their heart by listening to them, and by sitting in their own personal space are all non-verbal actions that all kindergarteners in our building will learn through the use of these books. Students will learn social competencies in a sequential order to help them be successful.

EAST MIDDLE SCHOOL

BUILDING THINKING CLASSROOMS IN MATH – Heather Schultz, 7th and 8th Grade Teacher

We would like to implement a new teaching strategy that promotes thinking in mathematics. The model we are using comes from Peter Liljedahl's Building Thinking Classrooms in Mathematics. He shares that students learn better when they are standing and working on vertical non-permanent surfaces. His research has shown that students' brains shut off when they are sitting and students will mimic what the teacher is doing without much thinking. So they are learning how to mimic rather than thinking about math and learning it.

Our main goal is to use Mr. Liljedahl's method to improve our math students thinking about math. One of the strategies is that students are moving while talking with their classmates about math. The activities we create to help take students out of their "comfort zone" and facilitate thinking about the math they are learning. In the few short weeks we have been in school this year we have seen improvements in their math and the skill to talk about math regularly. We expect our students to enjoy their time in class while learning important concepts in mathematics, ultimately creating better problem solvers and better outcomes on MCAs/FASTbridge testing.

Our target learners consist of a diverse group of 7th and 8th graders who are at all levels of academic performance. Our focus is to help students measure up to their peers and be able to narrow the gap for all learners. Math is also going through the process of purchasing a new curriculum.



GRANT SUMMARIES

WEST MIDDLE SCHOOL

CARON PARK FIELD DAY EQUIPMENT - Matt Erdman, 6th Grade Teacher

We believe kids should be given opportunities to learn outside of the classroom, in nature, to help broaden their life skills and nurture concern for preserving our natural settings. The Caron Park Field Day we created is perfect to supplement the learning targets of sixth grade science. We put hand lenses and rock hammers in their hands, use technology to gather data on stream health, and let them experience the results of glacial evidence. We include cross-curricular experiences with each station. We take the learning from the classroom and get them into nature where they can apply their skills. We help foster a love for the outdoors and the wonder it holds for us all. For some, this is their first experience in a natural wooded environment. Our students leave the day of learning having a greater appreciation for the environment, gaining experience in gathering data, exploring their natural environment, and learning the importance of natural resource management.



INCREASING INCLUSIVITY IN 8TH GRADE LITERATURE - Kayla Albers, 8th Grade Teacher

As the student population in Shakopee Schools is continually growing and changing so do the needs of books in our classrooms. Studies have found that students who feel invested in what they read, feel connected to the learning, and feel like they have previous background knowledge in a content area will be more successful in the classroom. Because of this, my proposal is that the 8th Grade English Department at West Middle School be granted funds to purchase books for book clubs that would reflect the backgrounds, cultures, and languages of the students that we teach. A large part of the 8th grade English curriculum is to foster a lifelong love for reading that will help improve literacy in our students not only in English classes, but across all subject areas. Students who feel confident in their reading will be more successful in classes with denser readings such as science and social studies. Having book offerings for these students that reflect their interests, passions, and backgrounds will only help grow their love for reading, and therefore grow their reading skills to create lifelong readers and learners.

SHAKOPEE HIGH SCHOOL

BUILDING THINKING CLASSROOMS - Kelly Wallace, 9th Grade Teacher

The math department at Shakopee High School is currently trying to enhance the way our students learn math by building a "thinking classroom." We have begun implementing some of the research from Peter Liljedahl based on his book "Building Thinking Classrooms in Mathematics" (BTC). The collaboration has been awesome to watch as students step out of their comfort zones and talk math more and more. The overall goal of BTC and our work is to get students "thinking" more about math and to achieve a higher understanding of the mathematical concepts moving forward. One of the key components of BTC is getting students working vertically (standing) at whiteboards in groups of 2-3 vs. sitting at desks. The research shows students will perform at higher rates when working vertically in random groups. In order to successfully do this, we need to have about 12 whiteboard stations per classroom; with our current whiteboards, we will not be able to provide vertical space for the 12 stations to be spread throughout the rooms.

TOKATA LEARNING CENTER

BAKING AND COOKING LIFE SKILLS - Ben Krupnick, 9-12th Grade Teacher

Our purpose in requesting these grant monies is to procure a refrigerator, oven/stove, and cookwear to teach students at the TLC how to cook and bake using nutritious, whole foods. Our students struggle with confidence. It is often the case that by the time they arrive at the TLC they feel they have experienced a myriad of failures and believe that they themselves are failures. Learning life skills such as nutrition, baking, and cooking will help them be more confident as they transition to adulthood and gain a sense of confidence that will help them see themselves differently. In addition to a lack of confidence, our students regularly report mental health struggles. It has been proven that proper nutrition helps humans think clearer, boosts mood, decreases anxiety, and lessens the risk for depression (National Institute of Health). As TLC students do not have the opportunity to take FACS courses, this equipment would help to provide equitable opportunities for them. These skills would be taught in our flex elective program and our adulting course.

GRANT SUMMARY RECAPS

2023-2024 GRANTS

DISTRICT WIDE

J. PHILLIPS - ADAPTED ART EQUIPMENT, \$2,000
D. ARTERBURY - CORE VOCABULARY SENSORY BINS, \$2,500

PEARSON EARLY LEARNING CENTER

A. GILL - CLASSROOM EQUITY BOOK SETS, \$2,081
J. KAMBEITZ - EQUITY CLASSROOM MATERIALS, \$2,102
S. KASTE - EZ WRITE EXTENSION ACTIVITIES KITS, \$850
R. MAUROY - EARLY CHILDHOOD SPECIAL ED. LITERACY NIGHT, \$250.00
H. STRIPLING-SWENSON - ZOO PHONICS EXTENSION ACTIVITIES, \$1,668

EAGLE CREEK ELEMENTARY

ME. SILKEY GR. 5 CONVERSATION AND COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS, \$1,400
A. WILMA GR. K-5 VISUAL & SENSORY BAGS FOR PARAPROFESSIONALS, \$1,201

RED OAK ELEMENTARY

A. RIECK- OUTDOOR LEARNING, \$2,498

SUN PATH ELEMENTARY

S. CONNELL - NONVERBAL CUES FOR LISTENING, \$2,234

EAST MIDDLE SCHOOL

H. SCHULTZ - BUILDING THINKING CLASSROOMS IN MATH, \$1,148

WEST MIDDLE SCHOOL

K. ALBERS - INCREASING INCLUSIVITY IN 8TH GRADE LITERATURE, \$1,200
M. ERDMAN - CARON PARK FIELD DAY EQUIPMENT, \$1,595

SHAKOPEE HIGH SCHOOL

K. WALLACE - BUILDING THINKING CLASSROOMS, \$2,490

TOKATA LC

B. KRUPNICK - BAKING AND COOKING LIFE SKILLS, \$1,900.00

DISTRICT WIDE

J. PHILIPS - LET'S PLAY AND LEARN, \$1,260
D. ARTERBURY - CORE VOCABULARY BOOK BAGS, \$2,500

SABER ONLINE

D. MCCLOSKEY - A PASSPORT TO THE WORLD OF READING!, \$2,434

PEARSON EARLY LEARNING CENTER

S. EDBERG - STORY COURSES, \$2,500
S. KASTE - STEAM PLAY BOXES, \$1,442
M. SCHMIT - OPEN ENDED MATERIALS, \$833

EAGLE CREEK ELEMENTARY

J. DIETZ - PBIS FOCUSED TARGETED TIME ACTIVITIES, \$230
K. NEU - SENSORY INTEGRATION, \$310
M. SILKEY - CULTIVATING CONFIDENCE, COMMUNICATION & COOPERATION, \$2,400

RED OAK ELEMENTARY

E. AMMERMAN - MOTIONAL LEARNING INITIATIVE, \$1,800
E. KOONST - CUSTOMIZED VISUAL SCHEDULE & SUPPORTS STATION, \$210
M. THOMAS - LET'S PLAY!, \$490
S. SCHANEN - LIGHT IT UP, \$2,480

SUN PATH ELEMENTARY

L. BLOOM - LITERACY FOOTPRINTS INTERVENTION PARTNER READERS, \$2,187

WEST MIDDLE SCHOOL

S. KOCH - ACTIVE READING, \$350

SHAKOPEE HIGH SCHOOL

S. WILSON - MULTICULTURAL BOOK KITS, \$2,000

2022-2023 GRANTS



THANK YOU SEEF

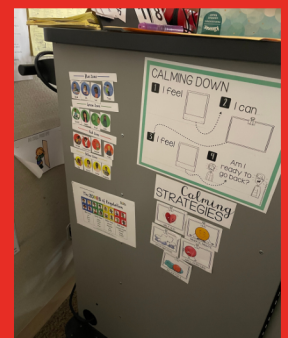


"This is awesome news - THANK YOU SO MUCH! We are excited to continue our goals with Building Thinking Classroom and will put the grant to good use!"
Kelly Wallace/Shakopee High School

"How wonderful! Thank you for the generous gift. We look forward to creating the engaging environment for our students with the grant. I will watch for additional communication."
Heather Schultz/East Middle School

"This is fantastic and thank you so much for your support!"
Clayton Ellis/East Middle School Principal

"Thank you for sharing this wonderful news and your continued support of our programs at SHS! It truly makes a difference in kid's lives and we are so thankful for SEEF!"
With gratitude,
Jeff Pawlicki/ Shakopee High School/Principal



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