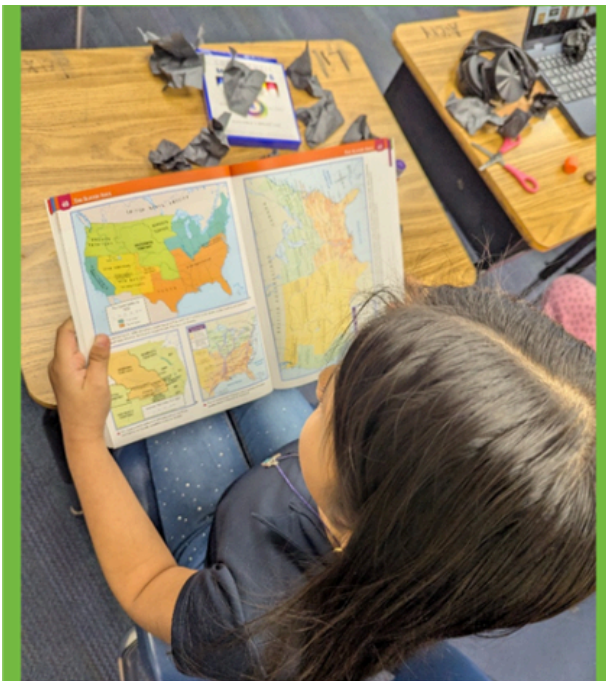


Innovation in Action:

A Catalog of Funded Grant Projects



Every Grant Proposal Begins with an Idea

Sometimes it starts with a classroom challenge. Sometimes with a spark of creativity. And sometimes with a teacher asking, “What more could be possible for my students?”

This catalog celebrates ideas that moved from concepts to classroom impact through Hillsborough Education Foundation’s School & Classroom Enrichment Grants program. It showcases a curated collection of previously funded projects that reflect the innovation, dedication, and student-centered thinking of educators across the district.

From hands-on STEM exploration and literacy initiatives to arts integration, social-emotional learning, and career-connected experiences, these projects demonstrate the many ways educators are transforming learning through creativity and purpose.

This catalog was created to serve as both a celebration and a resource.

Use this Idea Bank to:

-  Explore examples of previously funded projects across content areas and grade levels.
-  Spark ideas for future grant proposals.
-  Consider how instructional need, innovation, and student impact can be articulated.
-  Reflect on ways to design projects with meaningful outcomes.

We hope this catalog encourages you to think expansively, build boldly, and imagine what is possible for your students. Innovation often begins with a single idea and sometimes, that idea becomes the next great project.

The best grant ideas do more than fund materials; they expand opportunity. We hope the pages ahead inspire your next opportunity to do just that, and we look forward to seeing what you create next.

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RIGHTS FOR THE HEIGHTS

Teacher: Jessie Dorsey

School: Robinson High

Category: Art

Students Served: 1,000

Total Budget: \$1,899



Project Description

This project funded the performance rights for *In the Heights*, enabling Robinson High School to produce a full-scale musical featuring a 100% Hispanic and Latino student cast. Students participated as actors, singers, and dancers, while others led the technical and production elements, including lighting, sound, set construction, and design. The production served as a collaborative, school-wide effort that integrated both performance and technical theater.

Project Purpose

Robinson High School serves a large population of Hispanic and Latino students, including English Language Learners and multi-generational students. This project provided a culturally relevant theater experience designed to strengthen students' connection to their heritage while supporting the development of Spanish language skills. Collaboration with a Spanish teacher enhanced both language integration and cultural authenticity throughout the production process.

Impact/Results

Students involved in the production demonstrated improved performance in their Spanish classes, including higher grades and test scores. Many also showed increased curiosity and engagement with the language, asking more advanced questions inspired by their lines and exposure to the script. These outcomes reflect both measurable academic growth and meaningful student engagement.

Additionally, the project had a profound personal impact on at least one student, who reconnected with their estranged father to learn more about their Cuban heritage. This experience has led to the rebuilding of their relationship, grounded in a shared exploration of culture and identity.

HELPING RESCUE ANIMALS THROUGH ART

Teacher: Kim Piercy

School: Sumner High

Category: Art

Students Served: 200

Total Budget: \$369.99



Project Description

This project was designed to increase student engagement in entry-level 2D art classes while building technical skills and a sense of purpose through community connection. Many students enrolled in these courses were working toward graduation requirements and could be difficult to engage. By creating artwork tied to a meaningful cause, students experienced both creative success and personal investment in their work. The project also promoted empathy, highlighted the role of art in the community, and provided students with opportunities to see the impact of their contributions.

Project Purpose

The Helping Rescue Animals Through Art project engaged students in creating watercolor portraits of animals in need of adoption in partnership with local animal shelters. Students learned and applied watercolor, mixed media, and drawing techniques to create original artwork based on shelter animals. Completed pieces were donated to adopting families, allowing each pet to go home with a custom student-created portrait. The project also culminated in a pop-up art show to showcase student work and promote community awareness.

HELPING RESCUE ANIMALS THROUGH ART

Impact/Results

This project was highly successful, resulting in strong student engagement and skill development. Students learned a variety of watercolor and mixed media techniques, including background manipulation, oil pastel applications, and image transfer processes. Using these skills, students created artwork featuring shelter animals from CARE of Ruskin and Mercy Full Projects in Tampa, with final pieces donated to adopting families.

Students demonstrated a high level of investment in their work, often choosing to create additional pieces featuring shelter animals. The opportunity to create artwork as a meaningful gift increased both effort and quality, contributing to improved academic performance. Nearly all participating students earned passing grades, with many achieving A's and B's.

The project also had a noticeable impact on attendance and engagement. Students were eager to participate, with some choosing to remain in class to continue working on their projects. Overall, the experience fostered both artistic growth and a strong sense of purpose, reinforcing the connection between classroom learning and real-world impact.



BRIDGING THE GAP: A COLLEGE EXPOSURE TOUR TO FLORIDA'S LEADING UNIVERSITIES

Project Description

Students were provided with a college exposure tour at two distinct university environments, Florida A&M University and Florida State University, to increase awareness of postsecondary opportunities and support college and career readiness. Through guided campus tours, admissions presentations, and structured reflection activities, students explored academic programs, campus life, and college pathways firsthand.

Designed to support students in the AVID college and career program as well as other motivated students, the experience helped participants compare institutions, engage in inquiry-based learning, and connect classroom planning to real-world college exploration.

Teacher: Akilah Graham-Allen

School: Sumner High

Category: College, Career & Technical Education

Students Served: 60

Total Budget: \$1,500

Project Purpose

The purpose of this project was to increase college awareness, motivation, and confidence, particularly for first-generation students who may have limited exposure to higher education environments. By experiencing college campuses firsthand, students were better able to envision themselves in postsecondary settings and make informed decisions about their academic futures.

The experience supported a schoolwide culture of college readiness by helping students strengthen goal setting, reflection, and planning skills while reducing barriers to college access. The project intention was to turn the idea of college from an aspiration into an achievable plan.

BRIDGING THE GAP: A COLLEGE EXPOSURE TOUR TO FLORIDA'S LEADING UNIVERSITIES

Impact/Results

The AVID College Tour significantly increased students' college awareness and engagement in postsecondary planning. Prior to the experience, approximately 42% of participating students reported a clear understanding of college pathways. Following the tour, 91% demonstrated increased college knowledge, exceeding the project's original goal.



Student confidence also grew substantially, with 88% reporting increased confidence in their ability to attend college, up from 55% before the trip. In addition, 100% of participants completed reflection and goal-setting activities, reinforcing the project's college and career readiness focus.

Grant funding helped remove financial barriers to participation, making this exposure possible for students who may not otherwise have had access to university visits. As a result, students showed increased engagement in college planning and greater interest in pursuing higher education.

The impact extended beyond the data. One student who initially did not view college as a realistic option described the campus visits as the first time college "felt real." Experiences like this reflected a broader shift in mindset among participants, helping students see higher education not as a distant aspiration, but as an attainable next step. The project met and exceeded its intended outcomes while expanding both opportunity and confidence for students planning their futures beyond high school.

DIVERSE DESIGN: 3D PRINTING FOR CREATIVE ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Project Description

At this Title I school, approximately 80% of students in Robotics are of Hispanic heritage. National data shows that women of color, particularly Latina women, remain significantly underrepresented in STEM careers. This project addressed that gap by providing early, meaningful exposure to engineering tools and career possibilities. Many students also face economic pressures to begin working early; this project introduced viable, skill-based pathways that connect education to future opportunities.

Students in Exploration of Robotics designed and produced functional 3D-printed models using TinkerCAD software. Each student had the opportunity to create at least one original design, such as a keychain or jewelry piece, while learning foundational

Computer-Aided Design (CAD) skills including scaling, rendering, and orthographic projection. The project integrated engineering design with creative expression, allowing students to move from digital concept to physical product using classroom 3D printers.

Teacher: Sigrun Ragnarsdottir

School: Pierce Middle

Category: College, Career & Technical Education

Students Served: 90

Total Budget: \$348



DIVERSE DESIGN: 3D PRINTING FOR CREATIVE ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Project Purpose

This project connected STEM learning with entrepreneurship and identity, particularly for Latina students who are underrepresented in engineering fields. By engaging in hands-on product design and fabrication, students were shown how technology can be used for self-expression and income-generating ideas, including small business development. The experience aimed to strengthen interest in STEM pathways while reinforcing that students' cultural backgrounds and creativity belong in technical fields.

Impact/Results

Students were introduced to CAD using TinkerCAD and engaged in the full engineering design process. Approximately 80% of students developed original design concepts, while others explored foundational skills using basic shapes to build confidence and familiarity with the platform.

Through an iterative design process, students refined their work and improved their designs over time. About 20% of students finalized and 3D printed their creations, demonstrating successful application of both technical skills and problem-solving.

As the project progressed, students identified a potential market for personalized 3D-printed items, such as Instagram-themed backpack tags, and explored basic pricing and entrepreneurship concepts. This experience introduced students to real-world applications of design, including product development and small business opportunities.

This project encouraged student interest in STEM and entrepreneurship, providing hands-on exposure to CAD design and innovative thinking.

GAME TIME!

Project Description

The Game Time project intended to establish a hands-on gaming console evaluation workshop within the Gaming and Simulation program. Students researched and compared various gaming consoles, analyzed specifications, features, and game libraries.

Working in small groups, students evaluated gameplay across platforms, collected data on user experience, graphics, storytelling, and overall engagement. Students also explored game design concepts such as player types, types of fun, and nonlinear storytelling. The project culminated in student presentations and reports summarizing their findings and evaluations.

Project Purpose

This project provided students with real-world, career-aligned experience in gaming, user experience (UX), and data analysis.

Through hands-on evaluation and research, students were able to understand how game design impacts player engagement and satisfaction. The project also emphasized data-driven decision-making and collaborative problem-solving, preparing students for careers in game development, UX design, and related technical fields.

Teacher: Kyle Brooks

School: Plant City High

Category: College, Career & Technical Education

Students Served: 160

Total Budget: \$1,989.84



GAME TIME!

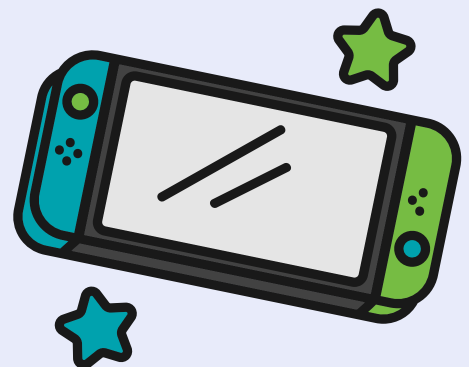
Impact/Results

By increasing engagement, attendance, and career-aligned skill development through hands-on, technology-driven learning, this project positively impacted 160 students.

Student attendance improved from approximately 90% to 96–97%, reflecting a 6–7% increase and demonstrating higher motivation to attend and participate. Nearly all students (approximately 98%) met or exceeded learning goals, including evaluating games through user experience principles, collecting and analyzing gameplay data, and presenting their findings.

Over 95% of students actively participated in collaborative team projects, strengthening communication, problem-solving, and teamwork skills. Students also engaged in industry-aligned certification preparation, with pass rates meeting or exceeding program expectations.

The project created a highly engaging, real-world learning environment that improved academic performance, strengthened technical and analytical skills, and increased student readiness for careers in gaming and technology.



ME, MYSELF, AND BARBIE

Teacher: Erica Davidson

School: Thompson Elementary

Category: Character
Development

Students Served: 24

Total Budget: \$250



Project Description

This project supported small group counseling sessions for elementary school girls using Barbie and other fashion dolls as tools for guided role-play and skill-building activities. Through structured sessions, students explored topics such as self-esteem, peer relationships, and effective communication. The use of dolls provided a hands-on, developmentally appropriate way for students to practice real-life social scenarios and problem-solving strategies.

Project Purpose

The Me, Myself, and Barbie project supported students who struggle with confidence, peer relationships, and a sense of belonging. Through small group counseling, students increased self-awareness and developed the skills needed to express themselves, form healthy relationships, and navigate social challenges. The use of role-play with dolls created a safe and engaging environment for students to explore complex topics such as self-esteem, communication, and conflict resolution.

Impact/Results

Students demonstrated noticeable growth in self-esteem and communication skills throughout the counseling sessions. By the end of the group, participants were more willing to express themselves, share perspectives, and engage in peer discussions. Teachers also provided positive feedback and submitted additional referrals for future groups, indicating strong perceived value and continued need.



ZEN ZONE TO LEARNING ZONE

Project Description

"Zen Zone" calming toolkits were provided for classrooms across Seminole Heights Elementary School, giving students immediate access to resources that supported emotional regulation.

Each classroom was equipped with a set of tools designed to help students manage emotions such as anxiety, frustration, anger, and sadness. By allowing students to self-regulate within the classroom environment, these tools helped students calm down and return to learning more quickly and safely.

Project Purpose

This project's purpose was to support students in developing self-regulation skills that allowed them to manage emotions and remain engaged in the classroom. Seminole Heights Elementary serves a diverse population of learners, each with unique academic and social-emotional needs. By providing classroom-based access to calming tools, students were able to de-escalate, refocus, and re-engage in learning without disruption. This approach supported a more focused learning environment, reduced classroom interruptions, and helped students build skills they can use both in and out of school.

Teacher: Taylor Legge

School: Seminole Heights
Elementary

Category: Character
Development

Students Served: 365

Total Budget: \$494



ZEN ZONE TO LEARNING ZONE

Impact/Results

Students demonstrated improved ability to manage their emotions and self-regulate throughout the school day. With access to classroom-based calming tools, including stress-relief items, sensory supports, and calming visuals, students were able to navigate feelings of anxiety, frustration, and stress in a safe and constructive way.

These resources supported noticeable growth in students' emotional well-being and helped them return to class more quickly, feeling regulated and ready to learn. Teachers observed increased independence in students' ability to manage their emotions, contributing to a more focused and supportive classroom environment.



CRESTWOOD CHESS CLUB CHAMPIONS

Project Description

This grant project supported an afterschool chess club for 4th and 5th grade students, providing updated chess boards and pieces to strengthen and expand the program. Through weekly club meetings, students learned the game of chess while developing strategy, concentration, and problem-solving skills.

Teacher: Nathaniel Strawbridge

School: Crestwood Elementary

Category: Character Development

Students Served: 50

Total Budget: \$674.75

Students participated in structured instruction and practice that promoted critical thinking, perseverance, and sportsmanship. The club also provided opportunities for collaboration and healthy competition in a supportive afterschool setting.

Project Purpose

As a strategy-based game, chess encourages students to think ahead, evaluate choices, and build persistence—skills that support both academic success and personal growth. This project aimed to develop students' analytical thinking, problem-solving, and social-emotional skills through the study of chess.

In addition to cognitive benefits, the club fostered camaraderie and positive peer relationships. With updated materials, more students had the opportunity to engage in a meaningful enrichment experience that supported learning beyond the classroom.

CRESTWOOD CHESS CLUB CHAMPIONS

Impact/Results

The Crestwood Chess Club Champions project strengthened student engagement, expanded access, and elevated the overall quality of the chess program. With new chess boards and materials, students experienced a more engaging and accessible learning environment, leading to increased enthusiasm, more consistent attendance, and growing pride in the club.

The grant also supported program growth. Club participation increased from 20 to 28 students during spring, with expansion underway to reach the original goal of 45–50 students by year's end. In addition, the chess boards extended beyond the club itself, supporting use during the school morning show and becoming an accessible resource in the library for students across grade levels, broadening the project's reach schoolwide.

Students demonstrated growth in critical thinking, persistence, collaboration, and confidence. One student who initially hesitated to participate grew into a more confident and engaged learner through the structure and support of the program, reflecting the broader growth seen across participants.

Beyond improving materials, the project created a stronger learning environment where students felt motivated to take risks, solve problems, and connect with peers.

Overall, the impact extended well beyond the chess club, supporting meaningful enrichment opportunities for both participating students and the broader school community.



TRANSLATOR PENS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS



Teacher: Nicole Ayala
Maldonado

School: Riverview Elementary

Category: English Language
Arts

Students Served: 25

Total Budget: \$299.95

Project Description

At the beginning of the year, 80% of English Language Learners (ELL) at this site scored below proficiency on the Imagine Learning Benchmark assessment. This data indicated a significant need for additional language acquisition support. Providing translator pens ensured students could access instruction while continuing to build English proficiency.

Research and classroom experience both indicated that tools supporting native language access could improve comprehension, academic performance, and student confidence. This project addressed barriers faced by multilingual learners and strengthened equitable access to literacy instruction.

Students used translator pens to independently access and complete language and literacy assignments. These tools allowed students to hear written content translated into their native language, supporting comprehension while they built English proficiency. Students used the pens during classroom assignments aligned to literacy instruction and language development activities.

TRANSLATOR PENS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

Project Purpose

This program was created to aid students in developing foundational literacy skills including reading comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, and oral language development. The use of translation support tools allowed students to practice English verbal skills while reinforcing understanding in their home language, supporting bilingual language development and academic independence.

Designed to increase student independence and engagement in literacy tasks, the project reduced language barriers so students were better able to access grade-level content and participate more fully in classroom learning. The intended outcome was measurable growth in English language proficiency, with anticipated improvement in benchmark literacy scores over the course of the school year.

Impact/Results

Students were able to work independently and complete their language and literacy assignments. On the Beginning of the Year Imagine Learning Benchmark, (the assessment ELL students take 3 times a year to measure their language and literacy learning and growth) 80% of the ELL students scored below level. ELL students took their End of the Year assessment on Imagine Learning and by using the translator pen, their scores increased an average of 38. Three of them are on grade level and 2 of them showed growth from 2 or more grade levels below to just 1 grade level below.

BOOK BUDDIES

Teacher: Lisa Keigher

School: Chiles Elementary

Category: English Language
Arts

Students Served: 900

Total Budget: \$1,600

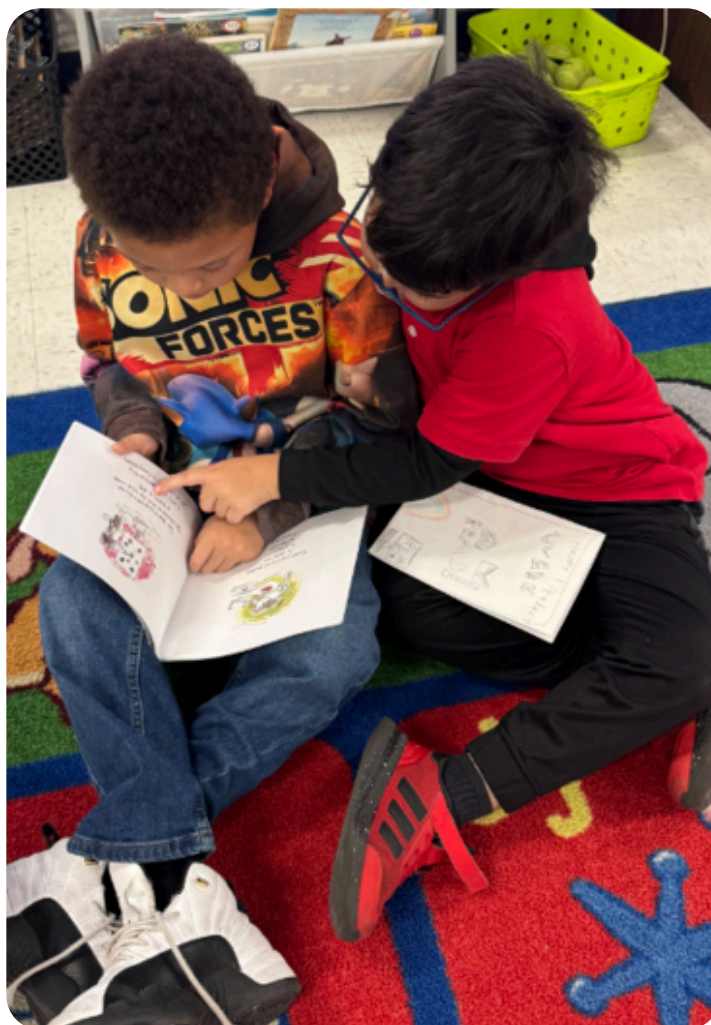
Project Description

A schoolwide peer mentoring program was implemented and 3rd–5th grade students were paired with PreK–2nd grade students to support literacy development.

Mentor students read selected books with their younger peers and led mini-lessons focused on skills such as retelling, identifying characters and setting, and understanding story elements.

Through these structured interactions, younger students built foundational reading skills while older students reinforced their own knowledge by teaching and applying literacy concepts. The program extended beyond initial sessions through additional literacy-based activities that promoted connection, engagement, and a shared love of reading across grade levels

By creating meaningful connections across grade levels, the program promoted a supportive school culture where students felt engaged, valued, and motivated to learn.



BOOK BUDDIES

Project Purpose

This project was designed to strengthen students' literacy skills while fostering a sense of community through peer mentorship. Younger students benefited from positive role models who inspired a love of reading, while older students developed leadership skills and deepened their understanding of literacy by teaching others.

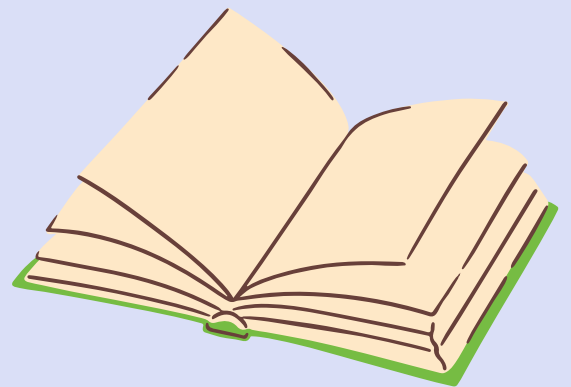
The project also aimed to encourage family involvement as students shared their reading experiences beyond the classroom.

Impact/Results

The Book Buddies program reached all students across the school, supporting reading development at every grade level. Through structured peer mentoring and engaging literacy activities, students strengthened reading comprehension and built reading stamina while reinforcing key academic skills.

Schoolwide assessment data reflects this growth, with approximately 85% of students demonstrating improvement from PM1 to PM2 on the i-Ready assessment

The program fostered a strong sense of community and ownership among students. As students progressed through grade levels, they took pride in becoming mentors, contributing to a positive school culture and a shared commitment to learning.



HONORING THE JOURNEY OF REFUGEES



Teacher: Danielle Cooper

School: Dorothy C. York PK-8

Category: English Language
Arts

Students Served: 150

Total Budget: \$1,001.80

Project Description

The Honoring the Journey of Refugees project engaged students in a novel study of *Refugee* by Alan Gratz, exploring the experiences and challenges faced by refugees across different time periods and regions.

Following the study, students selected a refugee featured in the novel and conducted additional research to deepen their understanding of the historical and cultural context.

Students then designed and created a 3D model representing the selected individual's journey, highlighting key challenges, resilience, and experiences. Completed projects were displayed at a school community event, where students presented their work and engaged with attendees to share their learning.

HONORING THE JOURNEY OF REFUGEES

Project Purpose

This project intended to deepen students' literacy skills while integrating research, critical thinking, and creative application. As part of a STEM and International Baccalaureate learning environment, students were expected to extend their understanding beyond the text by connecting literature to real-world contexts and global perspectives.

Funding allowed for expanded materials and resources, enabling students to fully develop their ideas and create more detailed, high-quality projects. The reusable nature of many materials will support continued implementation in future years while enhancing opportunities for diverse learners to engage meaningfully in the project.

Impact/Results

All students actively participated in the hands-on learning experience, resulting in 100% student engagement—levels that exceeded those typically seen during traditional reading and writing activities, demonstrating the effectiveness of project-based learning in reaching a wide range of learners.

Additionally, 85% of students successfully wrote a cohesive paragraph connecting the novel to its historical context. The hands-on design process helped students better visualize and analyze these connections, strengthening both comprehension and written expression.

Overall, the project supported increased engagement, improved academic performance, and more inclusive learning opportunities for students with varying abilities.

PAWS, PURPOSE, AND POSSIBILITIES: LEADERSHIP AND SERVICE IN ACTION

Project Description

The Paws, Purpose, and Possibilities project provided gifted students with a service-learning experience centered on leadership, problem-solving, and community engagement through a partnership with the Humane Society of Tampa Bay. Students participated in pre- and post-activities, as well as a field trip experience, to explore real-world challenges related to animal care, community outreach, and organizational impact.

During the experience, students toured the facility, engaged in service activities, and participated in structured problem-solving and leadership exercises. They had the opportunity to identify real-world challenges, develop potential solutions, and reflect on their experiences through discussion and presentation.

Teacher: Stephanie Bowe

School: Wilson Elementary

Category: Exceptional
Child Education

Students Served: 9

Total Budget: \$485



PAWS, PURPOSE, AND POSSIBILITIES: LEADERSHIP AND SERVICE IN ACTION

Project Purpose

This project aimed to extend learning for gifted students beyond the classroom by connecting academic skills with meaningful, real-world applications. While these students often demonstrate strong academic ability, this experience supported the development of leadership, collaboration, and social-emotional skills.

Through service learning, students were able to build empathy, strengthen problem-solving abilities, and gain a deeper understanding of how their skills can be applied to address community needs. The project encouraged students to see leadership as both personal growth and a responsibility to contribute positively to the world around them.

Impact/Results

The Paws, Purpose, and Possibilities project significantly increased student leadership, engagement, and real-world problem-solving through a service-learning experience connected to the Humane Society of Tampa Bay. Prior to the project, approximately 50% of students demonstrated proficiency in leadership-related skills such as collaboration, communication, and goal setting. By the conclusion of the project, 90% of students met or exceeded these expectations. Student engagement also increased, with active participation in collaborative tasks rising from under 50% pre-project to 100% of students consistently engaged.

Students designed and completed service-focused projects aligned to community needs, resulting in nine student-led presentations delivered in a TED-Ed-style format. Confidence in public speaking improved notably, with 8 out of 9 students presenting clearly and without distraction, as measured by rubrics and self-reflection.

Beyond measurable outcomes, the project had a meaningful impact on student mindset and motivation. Students developed a stronger sense of purpose and began identifying ways to contribute to their communities. Topics included animal welfare, public safety advocacy, ethical considerations, and community health, reflecting increased awareness and personal connection to real-world issues.

BINGO YOUR WAY TO BETTER SPEECH!

Project Description

The Bingo Your Way to Better Speech project aimed to provide engaging, game-based speech therapy activities using articulation-focused Bingo games targeting key speech sounds, including K, R, L, Th, S, and blends. During structured sessions, students practiced correct sound production in words, phrases, and sentences while participating in interactive gameplay.

Students strengthened articulation through repetition, active listening, and peer interaction, while also developing communication and social skills.

The game-based format increases motivation and participation, creating a positive and supportive environment for skill development and confidence building.

Teacher: Courtney Wilson

School: Valrico Elementary

Category: Exceptional Child Education

Students Served: 50

Total Budget: \$299.70

Project Purpose

The purpose of this project was to improve speech clarity and communication skills for students with articulation needs. Clear speech is essential for academic success, social interaction, and self-confidence, yet many students require consistent, targeted practice to develop these skills.

By embedding articulation practice into an engaging and interactive format, students had increased opportunities for repetition, self-monitoring, and skill development. The project supported students in becoming more effective communicators, enabling them to participate more fully in classroom activities and everyday interactions.

BINGO YOUR WAY TO BETTER SPEECH!

Impact/Results

The “Bingo Your Way to Better Speech!” project resulted in measurable gains in student articulation and communication skills through engaging, game-based therapy.

At the start of the project, approximately 35% of students were able to correctly produce targeted sounds at the word level with moderate prompting. By the end of the project, 100% of students demonstrated measurable improvement in articulation accuracy, as documented through IEP progress monitoring data. All students also showed increased speech intelligibility in classroom participation and peer interactions, as observed by both the speech-language pathologist and classroom teachers.

Students developed stronger self-monitoring and self-correction skills, with many able to independently recognize and correct errors during structured activities and in spontaneous speech. The interactive Bingo format increased motivation and participation, leading to more consistent practice and accelerated progress toward speech goals.

The project improved articulation accuracy, strengthened communication skills, and supported students’ ability to fully engage in classroom learning, including reading aloud, discussions, and presentations.



HELP RAISE CARDIOVASCULAR ENDURANCE IN PE!

Project Description

Additional physical education equipment was provided to increase student participation and activity levels during PE classes. With more equipment available per student, activities became more inclusive and allowed for increased movement, practice time, and skill development.

Students engaged in a variety of cardiovascular-focused activities using equipment such as balls, hoops, and agility tools. These activities supported sustained movement and helped students build endurance in an engaging and structured environment.

Project Purpose

This project's goal was to improve students' cardiovascular fitness by increasing active participation during PE instruction. When equipment is limited, students have fewer opportunities to fully engage in activities.

By providing sufficient equipment for all students, this project allowed for maximized movement time, reduced wait time, and created a more active and engaging learning environment.

Student progress was measured using the FitnessGram PACER assessment, allowing for comparison of pre- and post-performance to evaluate growth in cardiovascular endurance. The goal for students was to demonstrate measurable improvement in fitness levels over the course of the school year.

Teacher: Marissa Bernard

School: Ippolito Elementary

Category: Health / P.E.

Students Served: 550

Total Budget: \$901.40

HELP RAISE CARDIOVASCULAR ENDURANCE IN PE!

Impact/Results

Student participation and engagement in physical education increased by providing sufficient equipment for all students. With improved access to materials, students were able to participate more consistently and actively during each class. Student cardiovascular endurance, as measured by the FitnessGram PACER assessment, improved across all grade levels.

Students achieved an overall 5% improvement, demonstrating measurable growth in fitness.

The increased availability of equipment played a direct role in these outcomes by maximizing active time and reducing wait time during activities. As a result, students were better able to fully engage in PE, contributing to improved endurance and overall physical fitness.



CARDIO DRUMMING

Project Description

Cardio drumming was introduced as an engaging, full-body fitness activity for students in high school physical education classes. Using stability balls, drumsticks, and exercise stands, students followed rhythmic movements set to music, combining aerobic exercise with coordination and timing.

Cardio drumming sessions were incorporated into HOPE classes, providing students with a dynamic and inclusive workout that supports a wide range of ability levels. The activity offered an alternative approach to traditional fitness instruction while increasing movement, participation, and enjoyment.

Project Purpose

The Cardio Drumming project's intention was to increase student engagement in physical education while improving overall physical and mental well-being. Cardio drumming provided a fun, low-impact workout that supported cardiovascular health, coordination, and stress relief.

By introducing a new and motivating form of exercise, the project encouraged greater participation and helped students build positive associations with physical activity. This approach supported the goals of the HOPE curriculum and promoted lifelong fitness habits.

Teacher: Jean Wiser

School: Hillsborough High

Category: Health / P.E.

Students Served: 160

Total Budget: \$1,379.40

CARDIO DRUMMING

Impact/Results

The program increased student engagement, participation, and overall wellness by introducing an innovative and enjoyable approach to cardiovascular fitness. Approximately 160 students participated in the program, demonstrating higher levels of motivation and involvement in physical education classes.

The combination of music and movement created an inclusive environment where students of all ability levels felt comfortable participating. As a result, students showed increased participation and enthusiasm for physical activity.

Students also demonstrated improvement in cardiovascular fitness, as reflected in higher PACER test performance. The program supported both physical health and student engagement, reinforcing the value of incorporating creative, student-centered approaches into physical education.



POCKET CONSTITUTION/ POSTER ASSIGNMENT

Teacher: Sean O'Flannery

School: Sickles High

Category: History

Students Served: 140

Total Budget: \$150

Project Description

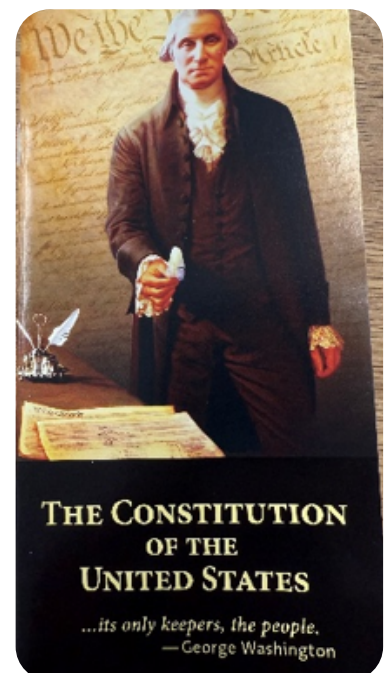
By providing each student a pocket Constitution, this project engaged students in analyzing the structure and key principles of the U.S. Constitution through both quantitative and visual learning activities and supported ongoing reference and preparation for the required civics exam.

Students examined foundational concepts such as limited government, checks and balances, federalism, and separation of powers while working directly with the text of the Constitution. Students mapped the structure of the Constitution by analyzing the distribution of content across its articles and representing this information visually. Through guided discussion and analysis, they explored how these foundational ideas apply to modern government and current issues.

Project Purpose

The purpose of this project was to deepen students' understanding of the structure, principles, and real-world relevance of the U.S. Constitution. By combining textual analysis, quantitative reasoning, and visual representation, students developed a more comprehensive understanding of how the Constitution organizes and limits government power.

Providing students with individual copies of the Constitution ensured consistent access to this foundational document, supporting both classroom learning and preparation for required civics assessments. The project emphasized critical thinking and application, helping students connect historical concepts to contemporary issues.



POCKET CONSTITUTION/POSTER

ASSIGNMENT ON THE AMENDMENTS

Impact/Results

The project resulted in a measurable increase in students' ability to engage with primary source material. Students demonstrated a 40% increase in their ability to accurately use direct citations from the U.S. Constitution, reflecting stronger comprehension and application of key concepts.

Providing individual copies of the Constitution allowed students consistent access to the text, supporting deeper analysis and more confident use of evidence in their work. This access played a key role in strengthening students' civic literacy and ability to connect foundational principles to classroom discussions and assignments.



BLACK HISTORY MONTH CELEBRATION

Project Description

This project supported a schoolwide Black History Month celebration designed to deepen students' understanding of African American history and culture through interactive and engaging experiences. Activities included morning show presentations, a living museum, and a culminating school program.

During the living museum, students researched influential historical figures, created visual displays, and presented their learning while dressed in costume. Students and staff had the opportunity to visit each exhibit and engage with student presenters. The celebration concluded with a schoolwide program showcasing student talents through music, dance, and performance.

Teacher: Shenae Penn

School: Thompson
Elementary

Category: History

Students Served: 850

Total Budget: \$900

Project Purpose

Students were provided with meaningful opportunities to explore and appreciate the contributions, history, and cultural impact of African Americans. Through hands-on and performance-based learning experiences, students gained a deeper understanding of history while developing confidence, creativity, and communication skills.

By engaging students in multiple formats—including research, presentation, and performance, the project fostered a sense of connection across individuals, communities, and generations. It also created an inclusive and engaging environment where students learned about history in a way that was both educational and memorable.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH CELEBRATION

Impact/Results

The Black History Month Celebration project provided students and staff with meaningful learning experiences that increased awareness, reflection, and appreciation of African American history and culture. Through schoolwide activities, students engaged with the legacy, achievements, and contributions of Black individuals in ways that were both educational and memorable.

The project created opportunities for students to learn, reflect, and grow, helping to foster a more inclusive and connected school community. Students demonstrated pride in their participation and engagement, while staff noted the value of the shared learning experience across grade levels.



READING UNDER THE LIGHTS

Teacher: JeanMarie French

School: Limona Elementary

Category: Literacy

Students Served: 550

Total Budget: \$1,304



Project Description

A schoolwide “Reading Under the Lights” literacy event was hosted at a local high school, bringing together students, families, and community partners for an engaging evening centered on reading. Families rotated through interactive literacy stations, including activities such as creating word-based bracelets, designing bookmarks, and participating in read-aloud–connected crafts.

High school students helped support each station and led read-aloud sessions throughout the event, while school organizations such as band and cheer helped create an exciting and welcoming atmosphere. The event was designed to connect literacy to everyday experiences while building relationships between elementary students, their families, and the broader school community.

READING UNDER THE LIGHTS

Project Purpose

This project was designed to strengthen family engagement and support literacy development beyond the classroom. By creating a fun and accessible environment, families were encouraged to participate in literacy-based activities and continue supporting reading at home.

Limona Elementary serves a diverse student population, including many English Language Learners, making family involvement especially important for student success. This event provided an opportunity to build connections, promote a culture of reading, and reinforce the importance of literacy in both school and everyday life.

Impact/Results

The Reading Under the Lights initiative contributed to significant growth in student reading performance and family engagement. At the beginning of the school year, 31% of students were performing at or above grade level. By the Spring 2026 i-Ready diagnostic, that number increased to 67%, exceeding the project goal of at least 61% of students performing on grade level.

In addition to academic gains, the project supported increased access to books at home and fostered more positive attitudes toward reading. Families were more engaged in literacy activities, reinforcing reading skills beyond the classroom.

This project strengthened both student achievement and family involvement, supporting a sustained culture of reading within the school community.

TWO LANGUAGES, ONE LOVE FOR READING

Teacher: Lissette Lallave Vale

School: Eisenhower Elementary

Category: Literacy

Students Served: 100

Total Budget: \$1,000

Project Description

The media center expanded their collection of Spanish-language books to better meet the needs and interests of bilingual students and Spanish for Spanish Speakers classes. The intent was for students to regularly visit the library to select and read books in Spanish, followed by written reflections and book reports to strengthen comprehension and analysis.

The expanded collection included high-interest genres such as mystery, science fiction, horror, graphic novels, and romance—areas that were underrepresented in the school's library. Increasing access to engaging, age-appropriate texts will support consistent reading habits and deeper student engagement.

Project Purpose

This project strengthened literacy skills by increasing access to relevant and engaging Spanish-language materials. Spanish-language books made up a small portion of the school's library collection, limiting students' ability to read in their native or primary language.

By expanding the collection, students now have greater opportunities to build reading fluency, comprehension, and confidence. Supporting literacy development in a student's first language also reinforces overall academic success, including reading and writing skills in English. The addition of these books will create lasting impact by serving current and future students.

TWO LANGUAGES, ONE LOVE FOR READING

Impact/Results

Increased access to Spanish-language books resulted in higher student engagement and measurable improvements in literacy. The expanded collection significantly increased student interest in reading and led to higher checkout rates.

Students demonstrated noticeable gains in reading comprehension and writing, along with stronger performance on ELA assessments. Increased access to texts in their home language also supported greater confidence when working with grade-level materials in both Spanish and English.

The impact was especially evident in student behavior and attitudes toward reading. One student who previously expressed little interest in reading independently chose to engage with a Spanish-language book and has continued checking out books since. This shift, along with the enthusiasm shown by other students, reflects the meaningful connection students made when provided with materials that reflect their language and experiences.



TURNING PAGES INTO POSSIBILITIES: AUTHOR VISIT + LITERACY ENGAGEMENT

Teacher: Karen Price

School: Turkey Creek Middle

Category: Literacy

Students Served: 60

Total Budget: \$1,081.40

Project Description

Students were provided with an immersive literacy experience centered around an interactive author visit with

Polly Holyoake, author of *Skyriders*, a Sunshine State Young Reader Award title.

Students in the Popcorn & Paperbacks Book Club read the novel and participated in guided discussions, building comprehension and preparing questions for the author.

The experience culminated with in-person writing workshops led by the author, where students engaged in hands-on writing activities, participated in Q&A sessions, and book signings. Students also had opportunities to extend their learning through creative projects, such as artwork or multimedia presentations inspired by the novel.

Project Purpose

This project aimed to increase students' literacy skills by connecting reading and writing to real-world authorship. Through book study, discussion, and direct interaction with a published author, students strengthened comprehension, critical thinking, and written expression.

The author visit provided a unique opportunity to inspire creativity and build confidence, helping students see themselves as writers and thinkers. By engaging students in multiple forms of literacy, reading, discussion, writing, and creative expression, the project promoted reading and supported academic growth.

TURNING PAGES INTO POSSIBILITIES: AUTHOR VISIT + LITERACY ENGAGEMENT

Impact/Results

The Turning Pages into Possibilities project increased student engagement and strengthened literacy skills through a multi-layered reading and writing experience centered on Skyriders. Grant funds supported book access, structured book club discussions, and an in-person author visit with writing workshops.

Students demonstrated high levels of participation and engagement throughout the project. Of 58 participants, nearly all attended and actively contributed to discussions, question development, and workshop activities. During the writing sessions, students applied new strategies, shared their work, and showed increased confidence in their writing and communication skills.

Observational evidence indicated meaningful growth in reading comprehension, literary analysis, and written expression. Students engaged deeply with the text, asked thoughtful, prepared questions during the author visit, and connected their learning to real-world authorship.

The project also expanded and sustained student participation in the Popcorn & Paperbacks Book Club. Participation increased from 30 students midyear to 58 students during the grant-funded experience, a 93% increase, demonstrating renewed interest and broader access to literacy opportunities.

Teachers reported that students returned to class enthusiastic and eager to share what they had learned, reinforcing engagement beyond the event itself. Overall, the project fostered a strong culture of reading and writing, inspiring students to see themselves as active readers, thinkers, and creators.



PLAY, EXPLORE, AND LEARN WITH HANDS-ON MATH

Teacher: Josee Campbell

School: James Elementary

Category: Mathematics

Students Served: 60

Total Budget: \$351.65

Project Description

Kindergarten students were provided with hands-on math games and manipulatives to support development of foundational math skills through active, play-based learning. Students engaged in activities focused on number recognition, counting, number sense, and early addition and subtraction.

Materials were used during small group instruction, partner work, and math centers throughout the school year. Resources were shared across the kindergarten team to maximize impact and provide consistent learning opportunities for all students.

Project Purpose

This project's intention was to build a strong foundation in early math skills by making learning interactive and accessible through hands-on games and manipulatives. The hands-on materials allowed students to actively explore mathematical concepts, helping them better understand and retain key skills.

By supporting diverse learning styles and increasing student engagement, the project helped build confidence in math and prepare students for continued success in future grade levels.

PLAY, EXPLORE, AND LEARN WITH HANDS-ON MATH

Impact/Results

Star Math assessment data showed measurable gains across all students from the beginning to the end of the year. At the start of the year, 12% of students were proficient in math; by year-end, proficiency increased to 78%.

The math games funded through this grant made a meaningful and lasting impact on student learning. Instruction became more collaborative, engaging, and student-centered.

During one center activity, a student who typically struggles with math was paired with a more confident peer. As they worked together, the stronger student modeled problem-solving strategies, while the other began to build confidence and participate more actively. Both students were fully engaged—smiling, encouraging one another, and demonstrating a shared investment in the activity.

Over time, the student who previously struggled showed clear growth and began to consistently look forward to math instruction, reflecting increased confidence and a more positive attitude toward learning.



MATH MEETS THE MARKET

Teacher: Tykedra Horne

School: Jennings Middle

Category: Mathematics

Students Served: 106

Total Budget: \$1,245.72

Project Description

Students engaged in a four-week, Shark Tank-style entrepreneurship challenge where they applied mathematical concepts to design, develop, and pitch their own business ideas.

Working in teams, students identified real-world problems and created solutions while using math to calculate costs, analyze data, determine pricing, evaluate profit margins, and project revenue.

Students completed structured components including business plans, cost analyses, scale drawings, and marketing strategies, culminating in a final pitch presentation. Selected finalist teams developed advanced prototypes using grant-funded materials and presented their ideas to a panel.

Project Purpose

Mathematics were connected to real-world applications by showing students how math is used in entrepreneurship, business, and problem-solving. By engaging in hands-on, project-based learning, students developed a deeper understanding of mathematical concepts while building skills in financial literacy, critical thinking, collaboration, and communication.

The project also provided access to materials and resources that ensured all students could fully participate, regardless of background. By making math meaningful and relevant, the experience aimed to increase student confidence and motivation in using mathematical reasoning.

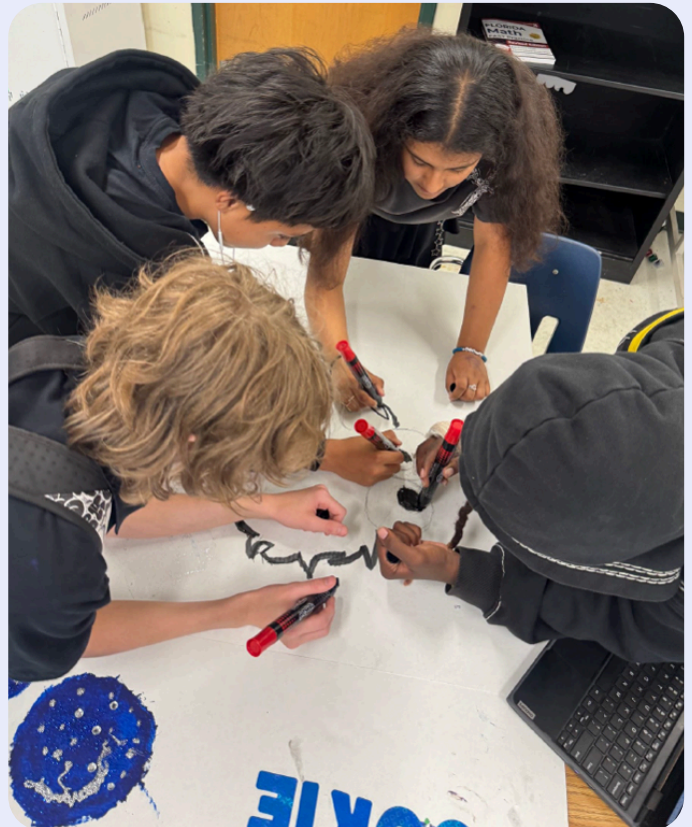
MATH MEETS THE MARKET

Impact/Results

Students applied Pre-Algebra concepts through an engaging entrepreneurship and financial literacy project that challenged them to create original business ideas, develop budgets, calculate startup costs and profit margins, conduct market research, and present business proposals and prototypes. The project transformed mathematics into a hands-on, real-world experience, increasing student engagement, ownership, and collaboration throughout the learning process.

A partnership with LIFT's Financial Literacy Club provided students with a realistic budgeting simulation, where they navigated housing, transportation, grocery, insurance, and other living expenses using local cost data. This experience helped students better understand financial responsibility and the practical application of mathematics in everyday life.

Students also strengthened career-readiness and technology skills by using digital design tools, budgeting software, presentation platforms, and market research techniques. In addition to improving mathematical understanding, students developed creativity, leadership, teamwork, communication, and problem-solving skills. Assessment results demonstrated measurable academic growth, with average student scores increasing by 28% from pre- to post-project evaluations.



SOUNDS OF CHANGE: EMPOWER YOUNG MUSICIANS

Teacher: Katherine Jubert

School: Memorial Middle

Category: Music

Students Served: 355

Total Budget: \$2,500

Project Description

This project provided middle school band students with transformative music experiences through a live performance field trip and a public performance opportunity.

Students studied *The Wiz* in class, exploring its music, history, and cultural significance, before selected students attended a live Broadway performance at the Straz Center.

In addition, advanced band students prepared for and performed a public concert at Busch Gardens. Students learned and rehearsed music, collaborated as an ensemble, and gained real-world performance experience. The project also included the purchase of music scores that will support high-quality performances for years to come.

Project Purpose

Access to high-quality arts experiences was expanded while building students' confidence, teamwork, and musical skills. Many students at Memorial Middle School have limited opportunities to attend live performances or participate in public events. This project provided meaningful exposure to professional-level music and performance settings.

Through both attending and performing, students developed a deeper appreciation for music, strengthened their sense of responsibility and collaboration, and built pride in their accomplishments. These experiences also fostered connection, motivation, and a stronger sense of belonging within the school community.

SOUNDS OF CHANGE: EMPOWER YOUNG MUSICIANS

Impact/Results

The Sounds of Change project expanded access to meaningful arts experiences while increasing student engagement and motivation. A total of 55 students attended the live performance of *The Wiz*, exceeding the original projected number. Students were selected based on attendance, behavior, and academic performance, and the opportunity served as a strong incentive for maintaining positive habits both before and after selection.

Beyond the field trip, 100% of students in the Drama, Band, and Arts programs (300) participated in classroom learning connected to *The Wiz*. In band, students studied and performed music influenced by the production and by composers such as Owen Williams, incorporating these pieces into performances throughout the year, including a Black History Month concert. Art students explored elements such as color, contrast, and design, applying these concepts through hands-on projects, including sculptural work using newly acquired materials. Drama students examined costume design and stage presence, applying their learning through performances and the use of themed costumes in subsequent productions.

The project strengthened students' understanding of music, performance, and visual storytelling while reinforcing cultural connections and artistic expression. Overall, the experience increased student engagement, supported positive behavior, and provided lasting opportunities for students to connect classroom learning to real-world artistic experiences.



MUSIC BOOKS FOR MY STUDENTS

Teacher: Philip Beatty

School: Pierce Middle

Category: Music

Students Served: 160

Total Budget: \$179.40

Project Description

Solo books were provided for instrumentalists in the Pierce Middle band program to strengthen individual musical proficiency through level-appropriate repertoire. Students used these resources to develop tone, rhythm, technique, and expressive performance skills through independent practice and classroom instruction.

The solo books supported students across varying skill levels, helping prepare them for solo performances, auditions, and ensemble participation while enriching the overall band curriculum. These materials provided personalized learning opportunities and support students in reaching higher levels of musical achievement.

Project Purpose

The music books strengthened students' musical skills while expanding access to quality instructional resources. By providing solo books for all instrumentalists, students had opportunities to practice independently, build confidence, and increase their engagement with music.

For many students, the band program is an important outlet for creativity, discipline, and connection. These resources helped ensure all students, regardless of experience level or background, have access to materials that supported growth and success in music education this year and in future years.

MUSIC BOOKS FOR MY STUDENTS

Impact/Results

The books significantly increased student engagement and strengthened individualized music instruction across the band program. Prior to funding, approximately 50% of students were actively engaged in the curriculum. By the end of the year, 95% of students were engaged, representing a substantial increase that exceeded the project's original goals.

Providing solo books for every instrument expanded students' access to high-quality, personalized learning materials and increased the program's ability to support instruction aligned with music standards. Students were able to practice independently, progress at their own pace, and take greater ownership of their musical growth, both in and beyond the classroom.

Student motivation and self-direction improved notably, with increased peer collaboration and accountability for learning. One especially meaningful example came when an 8th-grade student used techniques she had taught herself through her solo book to help a younger classmate master an advanced fingering skill. This moment reflected the broader impact of the project: students not only advanced individually but also began supporting one another's growth.

The grant funding helped create a more engaged, confident, and self-directed band program, exceeding expectations and generating lasting benefits for student learning.



REPLACEMENT DRUM HEADS + ONE NEW LEAD DRUM

Teacher: Jay Garrett

School: Lopez Exceptional
Center

Category: Music

Students Served: 50

Total Budget: \$764.71

Project Description

Drum Heads for classroom tubano drums were replaced and a lead djembe drum was added to support ensemble instruction for students in the music program at Lopez

Exceptional Center. The new equipment improved sound quality and allowed students to engage in daily drumming instruction with instruments that better supported tone production and rhythmic performance.

The addition of a lead drum helped students more clearly follow the teacher during rehearsals and performances, supporting ensemble cohesion and musical responsiveness. Students also applied these skills in preparation for the school's annual concert, where they showcased their musical growth.

Project Purpose

These instrument enhancements were designed to strengthen students' musical skills, confidence, and performance readiness through improved instructional resources. High-quality instruments are essential for helping students develop rhythm, listening skills, and ensemble awareness, particularly in a collaborative drumming environment.

By improving the quality of classroom instruments and adding a dedicated lead drum, the project supported more effective instruction while increasing enjoyment in music-making. The experience helped students build both individual skills and group performance abilities.

REPLACEMENT DRUM HEADS + ONE NEW LEAD DRUM

Impact/Results

The project had a meaningful impact on student participation, confidence, and self-expression during group music activities. With the addition of new drum heads and a lead djembe drum, students were able to engage more fully in rehearsals and ensemble experiences using instruments with improved sound quality and responsiveness.

The upgraded instruments increased student involvement during music activities and supported stronger participation in collaborative drumming experiences. The lead drum also enhanced instruction by helping students better follow rhythmic cues and perform more cohesively as a group.

While outcomes such as confidence and self-expression are not easily measured through percentages, the project's impact was evident in students' increased engagement, musical responsiveness, and enthusiasm for performance. The grant funding strengthened both the quality of instruction and students' experience in making music together.



TURTLE TIME!

Project Description

A living laboratory was created through a student-led classroom turtle habitat featuring two albino red-eared slider turtles. Fourth-grade students participated in rotating “turtle teams,” taking responsibility for habitat care, species research, feeding, water testing, and health monitoring.

Through hands-on involvement, students engaged in inquiry-based science while applying concepts related to ecosystems, animal needs, and environmental stewardship. The project also extended beyond one classroom through supervised visits, cross-classroom learning opportunities, and student-created educational materials that shared learning with the broader school community.

Project Purpose

The intention was to deepen students’ understanding of science through authentic, hands-on experiences that foster curiosity, responsibility, and compassion for living things. By caring for and studying the turtles, students connected classroom concepts to real-world ecological systems while developing skills in observation, collaboration, and problem-solving.

The project also promoted environmental awareness and stewardship by helping students understand the interconnectedness of plants, animals, and habitats. Through this living lab approach, students were able to build both scientific knowledge and a lasting sense of responsibility for the natural world.

Teacher: Jamie Boutilier

School: Bay Crest Elementary

Category: Science

Students Served: 100

Total Budget: \$987.24



TURTLE TIME!

Impact/Results

The Turtle Time project created meaningful gains in student engagement, responsibility, and science learning through hands-on, inquiry-based experiences. All students demonstrated measurable growth in one or more areas related to ecosystems, animal care, and scientific thinking.

Student engagement increased significantly, rising from approximately 75% consistent engagement prior to the project to 100% participation during hands-on activities. Students eagerly shared observations, asked questions, and took ownership of caring for the turtles. Responsibility and collaboration also strengthened, with students consistently demonstrating cooperation and stewardship throughout the project.

Student feedback reflected the project's strong impact: 100% of students reported increased interest in science and shared that the experience helped them develop a sense of responsibility for living things. For many, Turtle Time became a highlight of the school year and brought science concepts to life in memorable ways.

The impact extended beyond classroom learning. One student, inspired by the project, independently developed and presented a speech about albino red-eared sliders in a district-wide competition, demonstrating deeper research skills and authentic ownership of learning. This moment reflected the broader success of the project—students were not simply learning about ecosystems, but connecting with science in meaningful, lasting ways.

This project fostered curiosity, responsibility, and real-world application of learning while creating a lasting connection between students and the natural world.

ANATOMY IN ACTION

Teacher: Denise Kanner

School: Robles Elementary

Category: Science

Students Served: 60

Total Budget: \$479.88

Project Description

Interactive anatomy t-shirts were provided to students, transforming science learning into a hands-on, wearable experience. As students studied the human body, they colored and labeled organ systems directly on preprinted shirts, creating a personalized visual tool that reinforced anatomy concepts throughout the unit.

Students used the shirts during lessons, review activities, and educational games to strengthen understanding of organ structure and function. Additional shirt space was used to reinforce other science concepts, creating a lasting resource that supported continued learning beyond a single unit.

Project Purpose

This project's purpose was to strengthen students' understanding of human body systems through active, engaging learning experiences that move beyond rote memorization. By combining visual, kinesthetic, and collaborative learning strategies, students had stronger retention of key science concepts and deepened their understanding of organ functions.

The wearable nature of the project created ongoing opportunities for review while making science both memorable and fun. It also encouraged curiosity and discussion, helping students connect classroom learning to the world around them.

ANATOMY IN ACTION

Impact/Results

The Anatomy in Action project significantly strengthened student understanding of human body systems through hands-on, visual learning. Prior to the project, students demonstrated limited success answering questions about organs and their functions. Following completion of the project, the class average doubled from 1.8 on the pre-test to 3.6 on the post-test, reflecting substantial academic growth.

Beyond assessment gains, students developed a much stronger understanding of where organs are located in the body and how they function. The interactive nature of the project sparked curiosity and meaningful discussion, with students actively engaging in conversations about anatomy as they created their shirts.

The project increased content mastery, deepened student engagement, and transformed abstract science concepts into memorable, concrete learning experiences.



BRINGING LIGHT TO LEARNING: HANDS-ON REFLECTION AND REFRACTION TOOLS

Teacher: Bethany Pancorvo

School: Heritage Elementary

Category: Science

Students Served: 80

Total Budget: \$380.01

Project Description

Hands-on tools were provided to help third-grade students explore the science of light through interactive demonstrations of reflection and refraction. Using specialized demonstration materials, students observed how light bends and changes direction as it passes through different materials, transforming abstract concepts into visible, engaging learning experiences.

Through inquiry-based lessons and demonstrations, students connected scientific concepts to real-world phenomena, such as light refracting through water or reflecting off surfaces, while building foundational understanding through active exploration.

Project Purpose

The Bringing Light to Learning project was designed to strengthen student understanding of reflection and refraction by making challenging science concepts concrete and accessible for young learners. Because these concepts can be difficult to grasp through traditional instruction alone, hands-on visual tools helped students develop deeper understanding and long-term retention.

The project supported mastery of key science standards while building curiosity, engagement, and confidence in scientific thinking. It also reinforced foundational content students will revisit in later grades and encounter on future state assessments.

BRINGING LIGHT TO LEARNING: HANDS-ON REFLECTION AND REFRACTION TOOLS

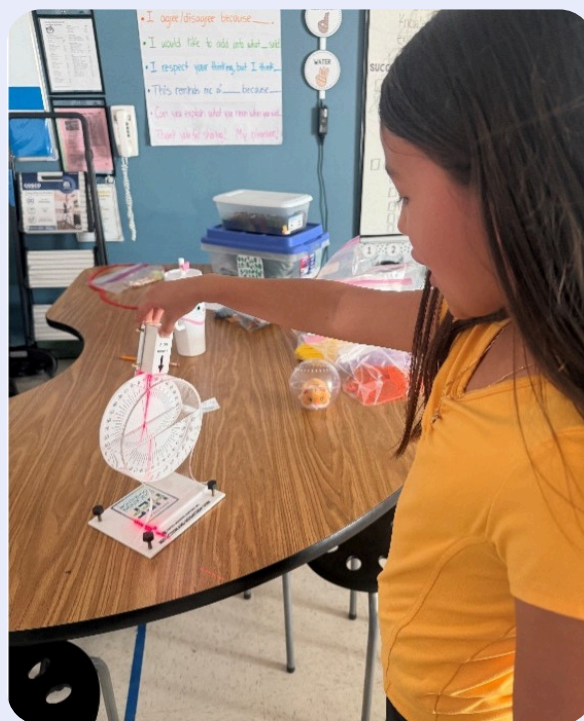
Impact/Results

The project significantly strengthened student understanding of reflection and refraction through hands-on, inquiry-based science instruction. At the start of the unit, 42% of students demonstrated proficiency in these concepts. By the end of the unit, 88% reached proficiency, reflecting a 46%-point increase in student mastery.

Using the laser refraction tanks, students were able to actively investigate how light behaves, make real-time observations, and apply academic vocabulary with greater confidence and accuracy. The hands-on experiences increased engagement and helped students connect abstract concepts to observable phenomena.

The impact was especially evident for students who benefit from experiential learning. One student who initially struggled to understand the concepts gained confidence through the investigations, ultimately becoming an active participant who could accurately explain reflection and refraction to peers. This growth reflected the broader transformation seen across the classroom as students moved from observing science to actively doing science.

Overall, the project improved science proficiency, increased student confidence and participation, and created a lasting instructional resource that will continue benefiting future students.



INSPIRING ENGAGED CITIZENS WITH INTERACTIVE TOOLS

Teacher: Ashley Charles

School: McDonald Elementary

Category: Social Studies

Students Served: 45

Total Budget: \$574.93

Project Description

Updated geography tools, including a classroom globe, maps, and individual student atlases, were provided to strengthen civic literacy and support interdisciplinary learning.

Students used these interactive resources to explore geography, history, literature, and current events in more tangible and engaging ways.

Through activities such as tracing historical routes, mapping locations connected to texts, and using atlases for research and exploration, students gained understanding of place, perspective, and the connections between people, events, and ideas.

Project Purpose

The purpose of this project was to foster curiosity, civic awareness, and stronger connections between students and the world around them by providing updated, hands-on geography tools. Students had opportunities to engage with social studies content while strengthening background knowledge, vocabulary, and reading comprehension.

Beyond academic growth, the project encouraged students to see themselves as informed and engaged citizens. By helping students connect history, geography, and their own place in the world, these tools supported both content learning and the development of civic identity.

INSPIRING ENGAGED CITIZENS WITH INTERACTIVE TOOLS

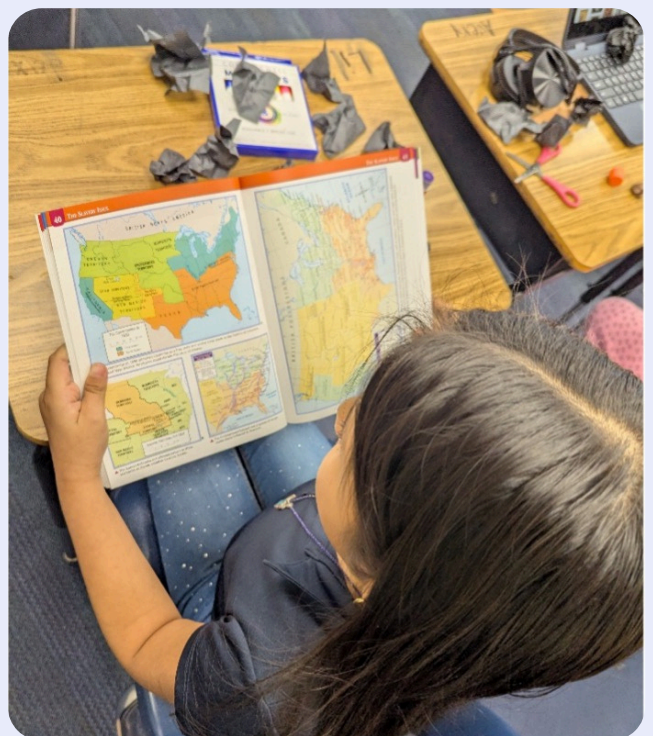
Impact/Results

The project increased student engagement and strengthened students' understanding of geography and civic concepts through interactive, hands-on learning. Students responded enthusiastically to the updated maps, globe, and atlases, with classroom engagement increasing significantly as these tools became embedded in instruction.

The resources also supported student success beyond academics. Of 12 students identified as chronically absent in the prior school year, 9 improved their attendance by six or more days, suggesting increased connection and engagement with classroom learning.

Instructionally, the updated materials provided students access to accurate, relevant geographic information and helped make abstract concepts such as migration, colonization, and historical movement, more concrete and accessible. The individual atlases, in particular, became valuable tools for inquiry, visualization, and discussion, helping students deepen understanding across multiple social studies topics.

The project strengthened civic literacy, increased engagement, and created a more interactive learning environment where students were excited to explore and connect with the world around them.



NEWS ALERT: READERS ARE LEADERS

Teacher: Ashley Leon

School: Lutz K-8

Category: Social Studies

Students Served: 20

Total Budget: \$137.50

Project Description

The News Alert project provided first-grade students with individual subscriptions to Scholastic News, giving them regular access to age-appropriate nonfiction texts focused on current events, science, and social studies. Through weekly reading and discussion, students engaged with informational texts while building comprehension, vocabulary, and critical thinking skills.

Students extended their learning through writing activities, class discussions, and interactive resources that helped them connect classroom learning to the world around them.

Project Purpose

Foundational literacy and civic awareness were built by introducing young learners to engaging nonfiction texts and real-world topics. Through consistent exposure to informational reading, students' skills increased in areas such as identifying main ideas, using text features, and expanding vocabulary while they developed curiosity about communities, geography, and current events.

For students with limited access to books or current events resources outside of school, this project also expanded opportunities for meaningful learning experiences that supported both academic growth and early civic understanding.

NEWS ALERT: READERS ARE LEADERS

Impact/Results

The project increased student engagement in nonfiction reading and supported growth in reading comprehension through consistent use of Scholastic News. Students became active participants in authentic classroom discussions, showing enthusiasm for weekly articles and growing curiosity about the topics they explored.

The resource also encouraged learning beyond the printed text. Students regularly extended discussions through additional questions, videos, and related inquiry, demonstrating deeper interest and engagement with content. Topics such as nature, science, and current events sparked meaningful conversations and sustained attention during instruction.

The project increased students' interest in nonfiction reading, supported literacy development, and helped young learners build curiosity about the world around them through engaging, real-world texts.



SNAPSHOT: A YEAR IN FOCUS

Teacher: Kayla Dorfeuille

School: Bing Elementary

Category: STEM

Students Served: 600

Total Budget: \$968.17

Project Description

This project supported a student-led Yearbook Club in creating the school's official yearbook as a collaborative project combining journalism, photography, design, and storytelling. Students served in roles such as writers, photographers, editors, and designers, working together to document school events, student experiences, and milestones throughout the year.

Through weekly collaboration and the use of digital design platforms, students created a publication that captured the culture and spirit of the school while developing skills in writing, media production, project management, and teamwork.

Project Purpose

Students were provided with an authentic, project-based learning experience that built creativity, communication, and technology skills while strengthening student voice and school connectedness. Through the process of planning and producing a yearbook, students developed transferable skills in journalism, design, collaboration, and leadership.

Beyond the educational benefits, the project also fostered a sense of belonging and pride by celebrating the diverse experiences of the school community and preserving shared memories in a meaningful way.

SNAPSHOT: A YEAR IN FOCUS

Impact/Results

The Yearbook Club provided a project-based learning experience aligned with Florida B.E.S.T. Standards in English Language Arts and Media Arts, supporting student writing, research, collaboration, and media production skills. Prior to funding, approximately 55–60% of participating students consistently demonstrated strong engagement, on-task behavior, and confidence in writing or media-based tasks, and access to up-to-date technology and training was limited.

Grant funds expanded student access to digital tools, photography equipment, and design resources, allowing students to fully participate in planning, writing, editing, and publishing the school yearbook. By the end of the school year, approximately 85% of participating students met or showed improvement toward the project goals, representing a 25–30% increase over pre-funding levels.

Measurable outcomes included improved student behavior, increased classroom participation, and positive student feedback. Students demonstrated higher levels of accountability, collaboration, and leadership, and post-project surveys reflected increased confidence, media literacy, and engagement.

Overall, the grant funds had a positive and measurable impact on student learning, engagement, and readiness for future academic and career opportunities.



TAMPA BAY BOULEVARD ROBOTICS TEAM

Teacher: Kelli Godwin

School: Tampa Bay Boulevard
Elementary

Category: STEM

Students Served: 8

Total Budget: \$761.89

Project Description

Students engaged in competitive robotics through the VEX IQ program, where they designed, built, coded, tested, and refined a functioning robot to complete challenge-based tasks. Working as a team, students used robotics components, block coding, engineering notebooks, and competition game elements to apply the engineering design process in authentic, hands-on ways.

Through practices and competitions, students developed their skills in coding, problem-solving, documentation, strategy, and collaboration while experiencing how classroom STEM concepts connect to real-world applications.

Project Purpose

Students were introduced to engineering and coding through engaging, hands-on experiences that increased critical thinking and confidence in STEM learning while developing their teamwork skills. By participating in robotics challenges and competitions, students strengthened problem-solving and communication skills while gaining exposure to pathways in science, technology, engineering, and robotics.

For students with limited access to enrichment opportunities outside of school, the project also expanded access to meaningful STEM experiences and helped build a foundation for continued participation in advanced STEM opportunities in later grades.

TAMPA BAY BOULEVARD ROBOTICS TEAM

Impact/Results

The Tampa Bay Boulevard Robotics Team project produced significant growth in student STEM knowledge, problem-solving, and engagement through hands-on robotics design and competition experiences. Students learned foundational engineering and coding concepts by building, programming, and operating robots while applying the engineering design process in authentic settings.

Academic growth exceeded expectations. Average pre-test scores increased from 25% to 90%, representing a 260% increase in student performance and far surpassing the projected 50–75% growth goal. These results reflected substantial gains in students' understanding of robotics, coding, and engineering concepts.

Beyond measurable achievement, the project fostered lasting interest in STEM pathways. One student discovered a passion for coding through the robotics team and, inspired by the experience, transitioned to a middle school with a robotics program to continue pursuing that interest. This story reflected the broader impact of the project—not only building skills for today but helping students envision future opportunities in STEM.

Overall, the project exceeded intended outcomes, strengthened student confidence and technical skills, and created meaningful pathways for continued learning in robotics and engineering.



CODING IN THE CLASSROOM

Teacher: Jodi Vizzi

School: Sullivan Partnership
Elementary

Category: STEM

Students Served: 40

Total Budget: \$1,698

Project Description

Students engaged in hands-on coding and robotics using Finch Robots to develop programming, troubleshooting, and computational thinking skills. Students created test programs using sequences, events, loops, and conditionals while applying coding concepts to solve challenges and guide robotic actions.

The project also integrated math learning by using robotics to reinforce concepts such as angles, shapes, measurement, and graphing, helping students apply academic skills through authentic, problem-based experiences.

Project Purpose

This project strengthened students' problem-solving, critical thinking, and computational skills while introducing them to coding and robotics in engaging, meaningful ways. Through hands-on programming experiences, students explored concepts connected to computer science and engineering pathways while building STEM confidence.

The project also expanded access to high-quality enrichment opportunities and demonstrated how coding can be a tool for creativity, innovation, and future opportunities, while reinforcing important math and technology standards.

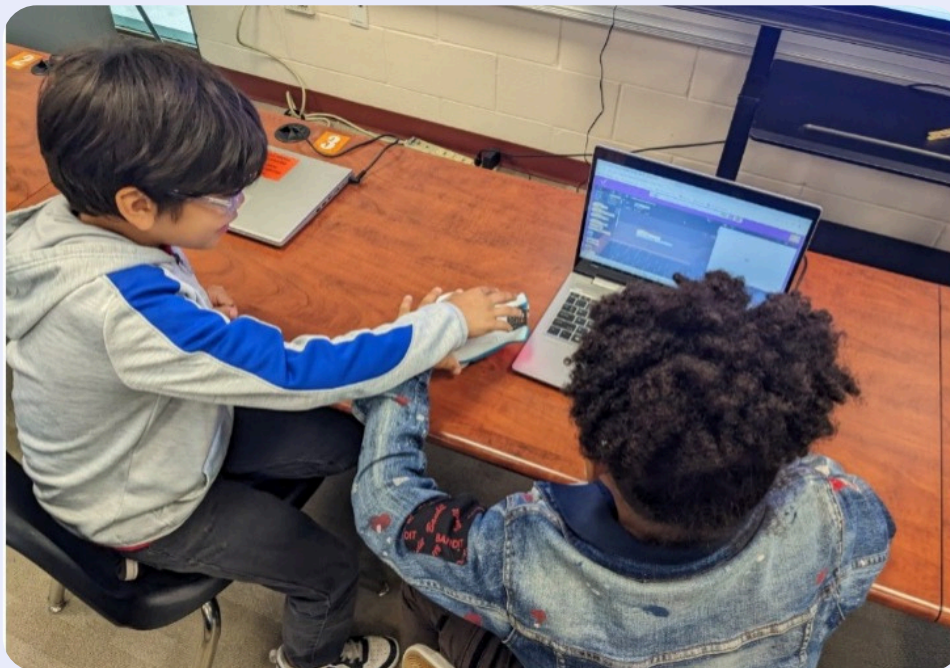
CODING IN THE CLASSROOM

Impact/Results

The Coding in the Classroom project increased student engagement in STEM learning while strengthening problem-solving and computational thinking skills through hands-on robotics experiences. Using Finch Robots, students applied coding concepts to create and refine programs, using trial, error, and reflection to solve challenges such as drawing geometric shapes accurately.

Through these activities, students practiced persistence, troubleshooting, and mathematical reasoning in authentic ways, while building confidence in coding and robotics. Student enthusiasm for the project has been exceptionally strong, with students eager to continue expanding their skills through new robotics challenges and projects.

This project has sparked excitement for coding, strengthened foundational STEM skills, and created engaging learning experiences that encourage curiosity, creativity, and continued exploration in computer science.





Questions?
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