

Winnetka Public Schools Foundation Annual Plan
2008-2009

The Annual Plan for the Winnetka Public Schools Foundation embodies the visionary thinking of staff around ways in which the school district might provide unique opportunities for our students. Each school year the Superintendent of Schools confers with members of the Winnetka Public Schools Foundation Board, members of the School Board, and members of the District Leadership Team about creative ways in which Winnetka could benefit from the generosity of the Foundation. After an analysis of the needs of the school district and setting priorities by members of the leadership team, the Superintendent proposes projects to the Foundation Board for approval and then to the School Board for endorsement. With subsequent formal approval on behalf of the Foundation Board, fund-raising begins with projects identified.

In that context, the following projects are proposed for the school year 2008-09 for consideration of the Board of the Winnetka Public Schools Foundation.

PROPOSED PROJECTS

• Artist-in-Residence	\$40,000
• Summer and Leadership Institute	\$30,000
• Teacher Research	\$20,000
• Teacher Initiatives	\$40,000
• Summer Book Club	\$5,500
• Homework Program	\$10,000
• After School Programs	\$14,000
• Leadership and Team Building (SEL)	\$25,500
• Technology	\$15,000
TOTAL	\$200,000

Artist-in-Residence

The research on the brain, the studies on the impact of the arts on the process of learning in early childhood, and the broadening understanding of the nature of intelligence have intensified our interest and commitment to the arts. Though there has always been a commitment on behalf of the community to the arts, there is a growing awareness of the academic benefits of such a commitment.

The Foundation has made a commitment to support an artist-in-residence program in each of the schools over the years. This has provided opportunities for students to interact with artists with the goal of gaining a greater understanding of the creative process, its steps, and the necessary skills and task commitment that are needed. Successful examples of the activities are the frieze and tile murals around the drinking fountains at Hubbard Woods, the 4th grade Crows on Parade project at Crow Island School, the development of a Millennium mural at Greeley School, and visits by nationally known authors. It is proposed that the Foundation continue the support of this program.

Budget Request:

<i>At each school</i>	<i>\$8,000</i>
<i>Total</i>	<i>\$40,000</i>

Summer and Leadership Institute

The success of our Summer Institutes over the last twelve years has been overwhelming and its impact on the district has continued throughout the year. Teachers, administrators, and School Board members work together on various topics that will significantly enhance the way in which we understand and work with our students. This has assisted in bringing our community of learners together with a common vision. Many staff development activities have emerged from the experiences of the Summer Institute and continue throughout the year. A few of the past topics have included the role of the arts in education, brain research, teaching for democracy, looking at students' work, and differentiating instruction to meet the needs of all students. We are requesting \$10,000 for preparation, consultants, and materials for the 2009 Summer Institute.

Consistent with the beliefs that shape our Summer Institute, we need to ensure continuous learning and the ongoing development of teacher leadership throughout the year. Due to an increase in enrollment, teacher retirements and normal attrition, fifty percent of our teaching staff has been hired during the last four years replacing individuals who served in significant leadership roles. In a district that highly values teacher leadership and relies on teacher leaders to chair curriculum committees, grade level meetings, staff development sessions, new teacher induction programs, district-wide committees, and mentor new teachers, it is essential that we explicitly focus our efforts on identifying and training teacher leaders throughout the district. The work of these teacher leaders will directly impact the learning of all of our students.

We are requesting \$20,000 to create a yearlong Leadership Institute. The purpose of the WLI (Winnetka Leadership Institute) is to identify and develop leaders throughout the district. Prospective leaders will participate in a yearlong experiential seminar focused on leadership training. Foundation resources will be used for guest speakers, materials and internship opportunities.

<i>Budget Request:</i>	<i>\$35,000</i>
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Teacher Research

Winnetka prides itself in standing apart from other school districts in the quality of teachers we hire, the on-going engagement of our teachers in research and reflection about practice, and the provision of a rich intellectual environment for our teachers. This has been true since the time of Carleton Washburne, and remains so today. When Elliot Eisner, nationally known expert in the field of assessment from Stanford University, visited our schools, he challenged the whole staff to document what we are doing and share it with the rest of the world.

We are requesting that the Winnetka Public Schools Foundation support some of the teacher research and documentation efforts that are taking place within the district. These efforts are happening throughout the district on an individual or collective basis either through explicit research practices or through the documentation of the learning process. The results of the efforts are designed to impact all teachers and students in the district. We have developed an explicit research protocol that requires researchers to submit proposals to a committee for review. Researchers will be required to follow stringent research procedures, share their findings with all staff and publish their work in a Winnetka research journal.

Projects that have emerged from research have been the New Teacher Retreat and Induction Program, the study of the use of pre-packaged math materials in a progressive setting, the enhancement of our teacher mentoring program, the study of our student advisory programs, and the introduction of Froebel Blocks at all of our elementary schools. In addition, through teacher research, The Winnetka Public Schools played a leadership role in the reestablishment of the Progressive Educators Network.

One example of the process of a project can be seen in the work of The New Teacher Retreat and Induction Program project. It involved 14 teachers and three administrators working over a two-year period who attended approximately 20 meetings (50-60 hours) to do research on the district, analyze the important information that our new teachers needed for an understanding of the district's rich philosophy and history, and to create a two and a half day workshop retreat. The retreat is filled with creative activities that engage new teachers in learning about the district in an experiential way that models the best teaching strategies we want our teachers to use in classrooms with students. The Teacher Researchers also ran the first New Teacher Retreat, analyzed a written evaluation of it done by the new teachers, and passed on recommendations to a new group of teachers who volunteered to facilitate the following summer.

The research projects also support the development of qualitative measures that serve many of the following purposes.

- Enhancement of teachers' own learning as they reflect on and analyze their own teaching.
- Enhancement of students' learning as teachers carefully analyze and grow in their understanding of teaching and learning.
- Engagement of students' metacognition about their own learning.
- Provision of feedback for parents about their children in a meaningful way.

Budget Request:

<i>Research projects</i>	<i>\$15,000</i>
<i>District wide sharing/publication</i>	<i>\$5,000</i>
<i>Total</i>	<i>\$20,000</i>

Teacher Initiatives

It is proposed that the Foundation continue their support of Teacher Initiatives next year. This project has enabled a great deal of visionary thinking on the part of teachers, unique projects for students each year, and an enrichment for many classrooms district-wide as teachers have shared their experiences and products. For a relatively small investment, these projects are the way in which every teacher and child is touched in some significant way by the Foundation. These are the projects that are continually highlighted for parents and the community. We are requesting \$40,000 this year. This will be supplemented with funds that have been unspent from initiatives the last five years. A Committee comprised of a teacher representative and Principal from each building, the Curriculum Coordinator, and Superintendent of Schools receives all of the grant applications each year (averaging 25-30 annually). After approximately 8-10 hours of reviewing the applications, each committee member sends a completed ranking sheet to the Curriculum Coordinator who collates the results and brings them to a meeting in which the criteria for decision making is discussed and grants are chosen. Those not funded are often funded through building funds, artist-in-residence money, PTO, etc.

Budget Request: \$40,000

Summer Book Club

We are requesting funding from the Foundation for our Summer Book Club for students of The Skokie School. This has taken place the last six summers and has been highly successful. It will be a voluntary opportunity for students to be a part of a reading group throughout the summer. This would enhance or help sustain our students' reading skills as well as encourage a love of reading and an opportunity to share. The funds would be used for a stipend for our teachers who would act as facilitators. This program is designed to accommodate approximately 20 students and they meet for six weeks in the summer from Monday through Thursday.

Budget Request \$5,500

Homework Program

The homework program fills a need that has been expressed by parents, teachers, and students at The Skokie School. This is a designated area for students to gather and receive assistance with research, organization, long-range projects, daily homework assignments, etc. In past years we have worked with approximately 40 students annually who are committed to attend on a regular basis.

Budget Request \$10,000

