

dream bigger achieve more

Winnetka Public Schools Foundation Annual Report 2020-2021

The Winnetka Public Schools Foundation (**WPSF**) raises funds to allow Winnetka's public schools to go above and beyond what is possible with tax dollars. WPSF is a 501(c)(3) non-profit, volunteer organization that has provided nearly \$5 million to our schools since 1995. Our Board members are a talented group of parents from across the District who are passionate about our schools. The Foundation's mission is raising funds to pilot innovative grants tied to experiential teaching and learning, and to support professional development for District 36 educators. These grants enable teachers to foster growth and creativity in the classroom, making the Foundation a catalyst for innovation.

In 2020-2021, WPSF provided \$111,377 in grants to benefit students in all five schools across the District. ***Thank you to our donors—your generosity has helped District 36 lead in educational excellence. We appreciate your continued support of WPSF!***



Pursuing Educational Excellence with WPSF Grants

WPSF awards several categories of grants.

In 2020-2021 WPSF awarded the following grants:

- Teacher Initiative Grants:**
 \$29,677 to fund grants requested by teachers specifically for innovation to achieve learning objectives in their classrooms, and in some cases, lead to larger scale adoption.
- Micro Grants:**
 \$21,200 across two school years, offering teachers funding of up to \$250 to cover the cost of classroom and teaching needs that arise in what continues to be a different learning environment due to COVID-19.
- Artist in Residence:**
 \$25,000 to promote a greater understanding of the arts at all five schools.
- Core Plus:**
 \$20,500 to fund system-wide support for students in the important area of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) in our schools.
- Family Engagement:**
 \$5,000 to fund virtual educational activities for families during the hybrid learning approach last year, as well as continued opportunities for our school and family community to connect during this year.

- Summer Institute:**
 \$10,000 to further professional development for D36 educators. The June 2022 Summer Institute will focus on Inquiry-Based Learning, which is a learning process that engages students through real-world connections, problem solving, and experiential learning.

Take a look at the back of this Annual Report to learn more about WPSF's contribution to a significant District investment, intended to fully integrate effective Social and Emotional Learning practices into all District schools and build system-wide support for students beginning in the 2021-2022 school year.



2020-2021 WPSF Financial Highlights (unaudited)		
	July 2020- June 2021	July 2019- June 2020
Donations Received	\$ 89,128	\$126,442
Fundraising and Administrative Expenses	\$ 13,859	\$ 14,005
Disbursements to District 36	\$111,377	\$ 53,516

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July 2020-June 2021

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"In a year like no other, the Winnetka Public Schools Foundation ensured our schools offered the best possible student experience. Through an innovative "micro-grant" program, teachers swiftly implemented new and engaging activities and materials. The Foundation continues to advance the District's vision and commitment to the Portrait of a Graduate. On behalf of the thousands of students and staff who have benefitted from their generosity, we thank the Foundation for their long-standing partnership."

Trisha Kocanda, Superintendent
Winnetka School District 36

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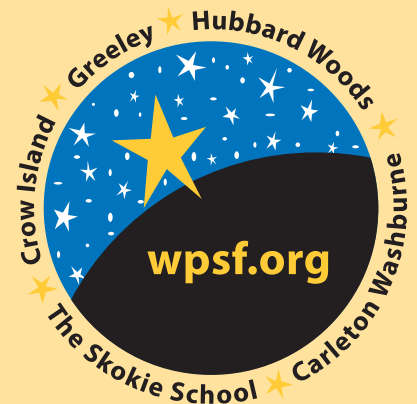
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Enabling Social and Emotional Learning During the Most Critical of Times

Collectively, we as a community have experienced an unprecedented period of disruption in our daily lives resulting from the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. While each individual student's, educator's, and parent's response to this disruption is varied and deeply personal, the truth remains that this experience makes **Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)** even more timely and important. Indeed, it has become critical for us as educators and parents to facilitate continuing effective SEL for our students and children. Recognizing this need and a unique learning opportunity for our school community, **WPSF contributed funding to an initiative across District 36 to fully integrate SEL into all District schools and build system-wide support for students beginning this school year.**

The primary goal of SEL for the 2021-22 school year is providing educators and parents requisite tools to model effective social-emotional competencies for our children and implement them in the classroom and at home. To that end, District 36 is engaging educators in professional development through SEL workshops and is offering similar learning opportunities to District parents in the form of virtual workshops throughout the year.

The inaugural workshop, "**Search Inside Yourself (SIY)**," is a neuroscience-based emotional intelligence program developed at Google. This training was offered to staff and parents this fall and focused on Mindfulness-Based Practices for developing emotional intelligence. **District 36 is honored to be the first school district in the country committing all staff to the SIY training, with the goal of increasing the skills of mindfulness, empathy, compassion, and overall emotional intelligence to create the conditions for individual and collective thriving in our schools.**

The core curriculum for the program emphasized the following topics: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and leadership skills. Participants learned many valuable skills, including how to decrease their discomfort with disruptive change, reframe and respond to challenges and skillfully manage impulses and reactions. They also learned how to recover from setbacks, listen empathetically and lead with compassion.

Teachers have been able to immediately implement SIY practices in the classroom. For example, a teacher at Skokie noticed that following lunch recess, students had a hard time settling into the day's lesson. She was able to successfully embed the "Minute to Arrive" Mindfulness-Based Strategy to start the class period. Students now arrive and are asked to quietly focus on their breathing for one minute while the teacher calmly guides them with language such as, "it is now time to calm my body and think about being present for learning..." This short practice has allowed students to be more available to learn and has taught them a skill they can replicate in other situations.

When you hear your child using terminology such as "Minute to Arrive" and exploring other mindfulness-based concepts, please know that it represents far more than a few new catch-phrases or buzz words used in passing. In reality, this represents the fruits of SEL in practice and the availability of leading-edge tools that will be used in the classroom and beyond, as we navigate the post-pandemic world together.

● What is SEL?

SEL is the important process through which children and adults understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.

● What Does SEL Look Like in a Classroom, School, Community?



- **A large body of research demonstrates SEL skills lead to higher academic achievement.** For example, a meta-analysis of 213 studies that included 270,000 students demonstrated results such as 11 percentile-point gain on standardized tests, improved attitudes about school, and fewer conduct challenges.*

*Source: Durlak, J.A., Weissberg, R.P., A.B. Taylor, R.D., & Schellinger, K. (2011) The impact of enhancing students' social and emotional learning: A meta-analysis of school-based universal interventions. *Child Development*: 82 (1), 405-432

Made possible through your donations, WPSF is thrilled to have contributed to this important and valuable collective learning opportunity!