



Annual Report
2022-2023

Winnetka Public Schools Foundation

*dream bigger.
achieve more.*



WPSF grants in action, clockwise from top: a continuing commitment to support the science of reading; an enhanced kindergarten bird study; observing animal behavior at Lincoln Park Zoo; and creating music with artists in residence.



Thanks to your generosity, WPSF awarded more than \$110,000 in grants to foster innovation in District 36. Your contributions support a wide array of grants that help make our teachers, classrooms and schools operate at their very best and cultivate a love of learning in our students. These funds allow for exceptional grants and programming that exceed the District 36 budget and PTO contributions.

Teacher Initiative Grants

\$42,500 to support teacher-initiated programs innovating curriculum and learning in classrooms across all five schools

Core Plus Grants

\$37,500 for teacher training and classroom pilot programs to further our commitment to the science of reading and project-based learning (PBL)



Artists in Residence Grants

\$20,000 to bring artists, authors and experts into the five schools to promote a greater understanding of the arts

Summer Institute Grant

\$10,000 for professional development for all teachers and staff in the district

2022-2023 WPSF FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS (unaudited)

July 2022-June 2023

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Donations Received | \$111,462 |
| Fundraising and Administrative Expenses | \$ 18,253 |
| Disbursements to District 36 | \$110,009 |

July 2021-June 2022

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Donations Received | \$119,795 |
| Fundraising and Administrative Expenses | \$ 15,698 |
| Disbursements to District 36 | \$106,000 |

Students using rain suits funded by a WPSF grant.

Follow us on Instagram to see #grantsinaction.



GRANT SPOTLIGHT

Why Is Project-Based Learning Important?

WPSF-funded teacher training is leading to challenging and exciting student-driven projects happening right now in Skokie and Washburne classrooms.

“By allowing students to be creative problem solvers, instead of receiving information, they are the **drivers of their learning**,” says 6th grade language arts and social studies teacher Tip Walker.

New this year, all Skokie students will take part in a project-based learning (PBL) experience during a skills cycle, and the district plans to have PBL projects fully embedded in the grade 5-8 curriculum by the end of the next school year. **Your contributions enabled the foundation to fund \$34,000 in training to support this PBL implementation.**

“The impact of the training has spread throughout Skokie and Washburne,” says Patrick Dawson, director of innovation, teaching and learning for Winnetka Public Schools. “We’ve

likened the training of the staff last year as the spark, and **this year is the wildfire.**”

Students’ work on PBL projects supports their development of the competencies woven into Winnetka’s “Portrait of a Graduate,” preparing them for their next stages in life.

“As educators, we need to re-examine our approach to teaching in order to equip students with the skills that people are being asked to do in modern times,” says Washburne science teacher John Pappas. “PBL is an **authentic approach to real life problem solving skills** that require students to collaborate, research and integrate themselves in their community in a meaningful way.”

Stay tuned as WPSF follows a variety of these dynamic projects. The foundation will look at their reach within Skokie and Washburne and the impact they leave on students’ learning experience.

Examples of just a few of these exciting and impactful projects:

- **What’s happening to Winnetka’s bee population?** Led by science teacher Emily Berna, Washburne students researched the threats to bees, studied the local ecosystem and came up with solutions, presenting the results to parents.
- **How do you plan a vacation?** Students in Meg Zuehl’s Washburne social studies class studied maps and topography to plan a trip for a family of four to a national park. They researched costs and logistics, creating a website as their final project.
- **What are new ideas for water conservation?** Skokie students in John DeGiulio’s science class researched the environment and came up with concepts to conserve water, including a design for a shower filter. They discussed the logistics of the idea with a plumber.



Classrooms of Meg Zuehl, Tip Walker and John Pappas.

Thank You to Our Donors!

The Winnetka Public Schools Foundation (WPSF) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit volunteer organization that works to enhance and enrich the educational mission of Winnetka District 36 beyond the means of conventional public tax funding and PTO contributions. We are supported by your generous donations to help make our district a leader in educational excellence.

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HOW YOUR DONATIONS MAKE A DIFFERENCE

“The financial support of WPSF has allowed me to support my students in honoring their voices and desires to establish an inclusive and engaging environment. We have been able to purchase new furniture that supports flexible grouping, games to enhance team building and communication skills and 3D pens to model our ideas.” — Marla Goldberg, Skokie 6th grade teacher





Portrait of a Partnership: Superintendent Dr. Kelly Tess sheds light on the 28-year collaboration between District 36 and the Winnetka Public Schools Foundation

How does Winnetka Public Schools Foundation (WPSF) support District 36?

Winnetka Public Schools has enjoyed a historically supportive partnership with WPSF, directly benefiting from the foundation's support to help further the mission and vision of the district.

How do teacher grants support progressive education?

While we are fortunate to be able to resource our teachers with so much of what they need to do their jobs best, there are times when they may have an idea for something new they'd like to try, something that wasn't accounted for in our regular budgeting. When this happens, teachers have the opportunity to apply for a grant with WPSF, further supporting our joint endorsement of instructional design that promotes experiential and immersive learning opportunities.

Can you share an example of a recent grant and its direct impact on learning?

While the district worked to plan for large-scale professional development and a K-8 literacy curriculum review, the foundation

was able to provide funding for teachers with a readiness to make shifts in their classroom libraries consistent with what they had been learning about reading instruction. This is a great example of the partnership between the district and the foundation and the direct way in which these funds support our work as educators.

Can you share some examples of WPSF-funded initiatives that have become vital parts of the district?

WPSF has successfully supported so many projects and efforts over the years that are the result of our teachers' dedicated, innovative approach to instructional design. Some projects that were once grants are now assumed, budgeted-for standards in our district, like instructional coaching (the science coach was once funded by the foundation) and the Preventing the Summer Slide Reading Program, which will be assumed by the district's budget.

What makes a grant a success?

Honestly, the greatest success is measured by the experience it provides our students. When children go home and excitedly share

how they spent their morning observing baby chicks emerge from their eggs or working with a small group of students to weave fabric on a giant loom, it's evident that the teacher has created an environment and learning experience with high engagement, interest and accessibility. Those alone are outstanding indicators that the grant has been a success. Then, when we see teachers in other classrooms or buildings requesting funding for a similar project, we know that the idea has scale and is a viable undertaking for the district.

Why is innovation important in education?

To innovate is to ideate, and to ideate means you are cognitively engaged and thinking creatively. These are critical components to instructional design and elements we specifically seek in progressive education. They promote engagement among our students, and engagement increases the likelihood of retention and comprehension. WPSF helps to support the creative and innovative instructional design our teachers work so hard to embed in the learning experience.



Your support helps foster innovation in District 36!

"WPSF has an incredible influence on developmental education in D36 schools, which is why I continue to donate, even though my children graduated years ago. My favorite initiatives are the teacher grants, which allow our excellent faculty to dream big and receive support for wonderfully rich programming."

— Paige Dooley, WPSF donor



Learn more at wpsf.org

SAVE THE DATES! Carlson Event - January 30, 2024 | Phone-A-Thon - March 10, 2024



Winnetka Public Schools Foundation
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