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NORWIN SD FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES EDUCATOR INNOVATION GRANT AWARDEES Grant Program Funds Three Proposals to Benefit 400+ Students in 2015-16 School Year

The Norwin School District Community Foundation will provide \$2345.00 in *Educator Innovation Grant* awards for three projects to benefit students in the Sunset Valley, Stewartsville and Sheridan Terrace Elementary Schools. The Foundation is a 501c(3) non-profit group whose primary mission is to support Norwin School District's students and programs.

The Foundation's competitive *Educator Innovation Grant* program challenges District employees to dream up an innovative classroom project that might not otherwise be funded by the school district. An independent review team scores applications without knowing the identities of those who applied. This year, teachers could ask for up to \$1000.00.

The Three projects being funded for the 2015-2016 school year are:

The Comprehension Toolkit: Building Comprehension Using Research-Based Strategies and Authentic Reading Experiences for Third and Fourth Grade. Proposed by Ms. Amy Proctor, this project will provide students targeted strategies to help them become more proficient readers through explicit instruction and authentic reading experiences that are interactive and highly engaging. This project will provide the tools necessary to engage all students in rich reading experiences that will construct a deeper understanding of text. At the same time, the intervention piece of the program will provide the direct instruction with scaffolding needed for students who are at-risk. This approach to teaching reading strategies has been proven effective through student growth on assessments, including high-stakes tests. Using this program will help prepare students to be more confident, successful readers.

Room for Improvement: A Step toward a 21st Century Classroom. As a kindergarten teacher, Rachel Kalberer knows that children come to her classroom with a wide variety of experiences and skills. She also recognizes that children at this age are not prone to sitting still for hours of instruction. Ms. Kalberer's proposal will provide furniture that will allow children opportunities to work at standing tables for some activities. In addition, several wobble stools will be available for children who have difficulty sitting still. The intent is to incorporate this furniture as part of small group instruction areas (work stations) to maximize learning by reducing the distractions of children who are naturally antsy.

Lift Off: Engineering Rockets and Rovers. Proposed by Ms. Trisha Brunazzi and Ms. Gwendolyn Zappa, this project engages students in STEM education and teaches them to apply their knowledge of force and motion to construct their own rockets and rovers. Students will pretend to work in a NASA Jet Propulsion Lab to engineer rockets and rovers to explore several planets and moons in our solar system. Aligned with the goal of Norwin STEM Education- to integrate real-world problem solving into multidisciplinary experiences, this project reaches that goal by presenting a real world problem, and having the students use Math, Science, Reading, and Language Arts to solve it. Using the lessons and the unit's storybook, students will embark on an engineering scavenger hunt, make connections between simple machines, force and motion, and space, all while using the engineering design process to invent robots.

Since the inception of the *Educator Innovation Grant* program in 2011, the Norwin School District Community Foundation has distributed a total of \$12,080 in grants for projects benefitting over 2800 students.

The Norwin School District Community Foundation exists to provide enrichment to students of the Norwin School District. It does this by managing more than a dozen scholarship funds for local families and organizations and also by supporting Norwin schools and programs. To learn more about the Norwin School District Community Foundation, visit its website at www.norwinsd.org/foundation.