



NEWS RELEASE

Warren County Educational Endowment Awards \$46,450 in Grants to Warren County Public Schools

For Release: Wednesday, December 5, 2018

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Front Royal – The Warren County Educational Endowment awarded 11 grants this week totaling \$46,450 to the Warren County Public School System.

Grants were awarded for the following projects:

- **Equitable Access to Books and Increased Comprehension Through the Use of Audiobooks – Rebecca Webster/ Warren County Middle School – \$600** – The grant will be used to purchase audiobooks for books most frequently checked out from the library and classroom libraries. Offering audiobooks will allow students reading below grade level to read and engage in discussions with their peers while increasing their vocabulary and comprehension as they follow along in the print version of the book.
- **Flexible Seating for a Special Needs Classroom – Rebekah Pennington/Warren County Middle School – \$600** – Research shows that movement during instruction improves focus, increases the oxygen to the brain, enhances engagement, and helps dispel excess energy. The grant will provide flexible seating, such as wobble stools, standing desks, and yoga balls. Flexible seating will allow students to move around during a lesson without distracting other students.

- **Friday Coffee Cart – Tess Wharton/ Warren County Middle School – \$650** – The project will provide funding for a coffee cart that will be operated by Tier III extensive needs students. Students will prepare and sell coffee and baked goods to staff members. They will be fully involved in all stages from preparation to completing the sale. The cart will be utilized to teach real life application of counting money, customer service, shopping, and money management.
- **Read and Write for Google Chrome – Amirra Lanterman and Jacqueline Dopson/ Warren County Middle School – \$1,800** – This project will provide read aloud and word prediction accommodations through benchmarks and other tests that currently do not have this feature through Powerschool Assessment. Students will use Read and Write to access benchmarks and other tests to prepare them for the read aloud format for the SOL test.
- **Educational Opportunities for Our Future Medical Community – Michele Barber/Skyline High School - \$15,000** – The funding will provide a 50% match to allow Warren County Public Schools to purchase necessary equipment and partner with LFCC to offer Dual Enrolled Anatomy and Physiology classes. The classes would include labs, case studies, and projects as well as normal college class activities such as lectures, assessments, and class discussions. The goal is to help address the current nursing and medical staff shortage by offering college level classes through dual enrollment which will allow them to transfer the credits to LFCC or any 4-year university in Virginia.
- **Spreading Roots: A Non-Traditional Approach to School Gardening – Thomas Hodge/Diversified Minds/Brighter Futures Non-Traditional Programs – \$2,500** – Project will fund the purchase of equipment and supplies to create and manage an organic vegetable garden at the Health and Human Services Complex. Students, teachers, families, and community members will collaborate to plan, create, and manage a vegetable garden where everyone can utilize the outdoor space as an experimental learning tool across all content areas. The activities will spark students' curiosity and imagination about gardening, natural resources, nutrition, and human impact on the environment.
- **B.I.G. (Boys Into Gentlemen) – Rodney Brown and Shane Goodwin/ E. Wilson Morrison Elementary School – \$2,500** – The project will intensely serve between 8-10 at-risk boys in 4th and 5th grades by providing them with opportunities for leadership, mentoring, and community involvement. In addition to weekly meetings, the boys will be taken on a monthly walking field experience during the school day to a local

restaurant where they can employ their skills of etiquette while listening to an invited local business owner or community member. The goal of the program is to provide the boys with a roadmap for a successful future in our community.

- **The Future is Now: Bringing Imagination into Reality – Jill Atherton-Mellish/Skyline Middle School – \$5,000** – This project will provide students with the opportunity to learn creativity in an engaging learning space filled with the most recent technology by funding the purchase of equipment for a TinkerLab. Students in the gifted and talented classes will be able to produce more advanced projects that will prepare them for STEM jobs when they graduate.
- **Improving STEM Learning for Skyline Students – Paula Lévesque/Skyline High School – \$2,800** – This project will allow the offering of additional classes that will count towards college credits. The grant will fund books, lab manuals, and lab equipment necessary to complete labs for BIO 101 and 102.
- **WCMS STEAM TinkerLab – Jen Davis/Luke Heeter/Amy Lelito/Warren County Middle School – \$5,000** – This project will provide STEAM resources and kits that encourage exploratory learning for all WCMS students. The kits would include activities focusing on electricity and circuits, magnetism and electromagnets, design and construction, and robotics; focusing on topics that are traditionally difficult for many students. The TinkerLab would be available for all teachers and students and would encourage opportunities for cross-curricular projects.
- **Mental Health First Aid – Michael Hirsch/Division-wide – \$10,000** – The grant will provide funding for an eight hour, evidence based training to teach a five-step action plan for crisis and non-crisis situations. The grant resources will be used to support teachers and other staff on a Saturday while trainers from VCU provide the day long experiences. Staff will be able to (1) assess for risk of suicide or harm, (2) listen in a non-judgmental capacity, (3) give reassurance and information, (4) encourage appropriate, professional help, and (5) encourage self-help and other strategies. Activities will include hands-on training, role playing, and simulations.

The Endowment is a catalyst for improving the education and learning environment in Warren County Public Schools. Sometimes it takes private support of public efforts to incubate an idea or a new approach that helps students compete in a global marketplace, instills passion for life-long learning, and sparks a vision to strive for success. Programs funded by the Endowment are sponsored by our school system and are consistent with its mission and

direction. They are intended to initiate sustained improvement in the fundamental capability of the school system and enhance the attractiveness of the community through the promotion of educational excellence.

WCEE President Doug Stanley stated, "The Warren County Educational Endowment maintains its commitment to its mission of helping the local school system support high level and creative programs for our children. The Board was again extremely excited to see the cooperation shown by the teachers in developing the grant proposals, many with cross collaboration of disciplines. With these eleven grant awards, we feel that we have been able to provide additional tools to our dedicated teachers to continue to push innovation for our students in their Trek-to-Excellence."

According to School Superintendent Greg Drescher, "The Warren County Educational Endowment provides funding for learning activities in our schools that often involve cutting edge technology or unique instructional practices that teachers are interested in trying in their classrooms. This funding allows our school system to try out something new before making a large investment. This year the Endowment is funding projects related to STEM, supporting students' Mental Health, supporting At-Risk Elementary Students, adding a Dual Enrolled Program, Agriculture in the Classroom, Specialized Technology for students with special needs, and supporting true to life Economic Lessons for special needs students. There is no doubt the Endowment has had a profound and important impact on our school system. They are a perfect example of the community support our school system enjoys."

To date the Endowment has awarded 146 grants totaling \$500,879.67. Persons interested in supporting the Endowment can contact the Endowment or make a donation at wceducationalendowment.org.

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Picture L to R – Doug Stanley, WCEE President; Greg Drescher, Superintendent; Cathy Bower, School Board Chair; Sue Ann Fox, WCEE Board Member; Mark Jordon, WCEE Board Member