



## NEWS RELEASE

### *Warren County Educational Endowment Awards \$36,534.56 in Grants to Warren County Public Schools*

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**Front Royal** – The Warren County Educational Endowment awarded 11 grants for 2020 totaling \$36,534.56 to the Warren County Public School System.

Grants were awarded for the following projects:

- **Mindfulness Journaling – Jamie Dusing/WCMS – \$770** – The goal of this program is to integrate mindfulness into the daily writing practice of students. Now, more than ever, students are struggling with social and emotional behaviors. Many do not have the resources or the strategies to deal with their new “norm”. As an English teacher, Ms. Dusing has been trying to incorporate daily writing into the students’ routines. A mindfulness journal for each student would allow for students, both hybrid and virtual, to have access to a resource that would teach them strategies for coping, while also practicing their writing skills. Students would write in their mindfulness journal daily and share submissions (on a volunteer basis) in the writing community, which has been built as a classroom.
- **STEM Exploration – Michelle Edwards/SMS – \$1,869.56** – The goal of this program is to increase the rigor for the Gifted and Talented students and provide them with STEM activities. This project includes creating take-home STEM packets, if needed,

due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, as well as offer differentiation of instruction to multiple levels of sixth through eighth grades.

- **The Drum Circle Project – Sally Meredith/SHS – \$700** – This program seeks to improve students’ physical health through cardio exercise while also adding in social and emotional learning. Research shows that cardio drumming not only provides students with a unique form of physical activity, but also helps students access their right brain which controls emotions and relaxation, which can lead to better self-regulation, improved focus, and a reduction in anxiety. Studies have shown that students with disabilities benefit from the use of percussion equipment showing improvement in both fine and gross motor skills, communication skills, social skills, ability to relax, creativity, focus, self-regulation and lowered aggressive behaviors. Additionally, drumming provides physical exercise that is available to all students of all physical ability levels.
  
- **Instrumental Music Classes – Pam Dyke/SMS and WCMS – \$5,000** – The goal of this program is to improve students’ playing skills by bringing in professional musicians to offer master classes in person and/or online. Teaching instrumental music virtually and with a COVID-19 mitigation plan in place is extremely challenging. Band directors are looking for any method which will give student musicians more instructional time and more specialized instruction on their instrument. The plan is to use an updated Master Class format, due to the hybrid schedule. Professional musicians from the local area will be brought in for each of these instruments: flute, oboe, clarinet, saxophone, trumpet, French horn, trombone, baritone/tuba, and percussion. When possible, these classes would occur in person at each school, with any virtual students participating via Google Meet. Each session would be recorded for future use.
  
- **STEM Kits for Gifted and Talented Students – Denise Walton and Lisa Rudacille/School Board - \$1,800** – The project goal is to provide enrichment activities for identified elementary gifted and talented students throughout the division. In order to meet the needs of gifted students, whether they receive instruction in person or virtually, gifted-endorsed teachers will be planning monthly enrichment activities to meet their unique learning needs. STEM kits will be created to provide gifted students the opportunity to engage in STEM-focused projects remotely. Kits will go home monthly, each with a different STEM focus. The kits will contain materials to be used in open-ended projects and investigations.
  
- **Generation Genius Web-Based Science Program – Missy Johnson/HJBES – \$995** – Generation Genius provides access to science lessons, unit vocabulary, quizzes,

science reading materials, DIY activities, discussion questions, teacher guides and exit tickets. Each lesson provides videos and hands on activities. This year, teachers are searching for high quality resources that can help students regardless of their mode of instruction. While nothing replaces hands-on experiments, Generation Genius will help all of the students of Hilda J. Barbour experience science in a format that is conducive to this year's learning environment. In fifth grade, students will not only use the videos and exit tickets in their daily lessons, but some of the hands-on activities will be implemented within the classroom whenever possible, given the current COVID-19 restrictions. Discussion questions will be posted on Schoology as often as possible to spark investigative learning. Reading materials provided by Generation Genius will be used to integrate language arts into the science curriculum whenever appropriate.

- **Skyline High School Robotics Club – Stephanie Scriva/ SHS – \$5,000** – The goal of this project is to foster the imaginations and curiosity of Club members and build a community of creativity, cooperation, and collaboration with a STEM focus. Front Royal isn't known for its technology industries. Students at SHS do not have the same opportunities as students in Northern Virginia when it comes to easy access to industry engineers and internships. The SHS Robotics Club gives students that opportunity. It allows students from this rural community to have hands-on engineering, coding, and robotics experiences in a dynamic and challenging environment. Students learn to be a part of a team and develop problem solving skills that will be used for the rest of their lives. An additional goal of the team is to increase robotics awareness in the community to inspire future generations to get into the diverse and evolving field of robotics.
- **Brain Breaks for Kids – Grace Croson/SMS – \$800** – This program will provide stimulating games and activities for students. Students need small breaks during the school day in ways that engage them and allow them to do hands on activities. The grant will be used to purchase STEM activities, educational toys and games, puzzles, and other items to keep students engaged.
- **Emergency STAT Packs and Equipment – Whitney Ulibarri/WCHS – \$2,600** – The goal of this project is the education and application of proper injury treatment and lifesaving equipment. The emergency STAT Pack and equipment that will be purchased include rapid form vacuum splints, a red emergency medical "STAT Pack" bag, and lifesaving items to fill the bag including, but not limited to, an oxygen tank, pulse oximeter, blood pressure cuff, stethoscope, cervical collar, and various airway and respiratory kits. All of the above-mentioned items are already part of, or would become part of, the class curriculum and clinical usage.

- **HALO (Helping All Little Ones Read) – Bryan Mosher/ WCMS – \$10,000** – It is the overall project goal to provide books to all Warren County children from birth to their sixth birthday. Research overwhelming indicates that children who are exposed to books and reading at an early age (0 to 5) are more likely to be successful in school and in life. This program is a partnership between the Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library, The Warren Coalition, What Matters, and Warren County Public Schools. Each month HALO will mail a high quality, age appropriate book to all registered children (addressed to them) at no cost to the child’s family. Children will receive an award winning book each month until they turn six years old.
  
- **Community STEM Outreach – Jennifer Davis/WCMS - \$7,000** - This program will provide WCMS families an opportunity to connect with their family and other WCMS families while participating in engaging STEM challenges. This year, families will register for a WCMS Virtual Family STEM Night through online registration and receive a STEM challenge supply kit. The kit will contain all the supplies needed to participate in the STEM challenge. Families will have a certain amount of time to complete the challenge and upload a video of their finished project to the WCMS Facebook page. Families who participate will be entered in a drawing to win STEM related prizes. Leftover funds from the virtual STEM night will be used to purchase STEM kits and supplies for our science classrooms and for future hands-on Family STEM Nights.

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.

Endowment 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. It was an even more difficult task this year with the impacts of COVID-19. With these eleven grant awards, we feel that the Endowment has 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 Dr. Chris Ballenger, "The Warren County Educational Endowment continues to be a great partner of Warren County Public Schools. Without this partnership, many programs and opportunities may be pushed to the wayside. The funding provided by the Endowment enables our school system to create exciting learning opportunities, develops strong community-based programs, and creates a supportive learning environment. I am excited to partner with such a dedicated group that has a vision and desire to see our schools succeed. This year, the Endowment is funding projects related to health sciences, performing arts, entrepreneurship, social-emotional learning, environmental stewardship, and accessibility. The Endowment's direct impact on our division is immeasurable. We are thankful for their support."

Since 1996, the Endowment has awarded 167 grants totaling \$581,824.97. Persons interested in supporting the Endowment can contact the Endowment or make a donation at [www.wceducationalendowment.org](http://www.wceducationalendowment.org).

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