

TOPS (Teaneck Organization for Public Schools) Announces Mini-Grant Recipients

In September 2019, TOPS presented Teaneck Public Schools with a donation of \$20,000 to be used during this school year. A portion of that donation -- \$6,000 -- was designated to be used to award a series of teacher mini-grants that would serve to provide our teaching staff with opportunities to develop supplemental programs “outside the box” that will help address student classroom needs.

The criteria for the TOPS grants were:

- * Innovative instructional support
- * Demonstrated need for classroom instruction and student achievement
- * To be funded as a pilot program
- * Impact on grade-level instructional support within district guidelines
- * Outside ability of the district to fund the particular requests
- * Interdisciplinary projects should be seriously considered for educational innovation and support.
- * Could apply to core curriculum or support subjects like art, drama, dance, music, etc.

By November 15, TOPS received 23 applications from all seven schools (some more than others) and reviewed them through a TOPS subcommittee. Per the attached recipients list, TOPS awarded 12 of the applications submitted by individual teachers – or in some cases, a group of 2-3 educators working together.

Proposals submitted included: addressing the needs of our ESL and special needs students, leading an entire elementary school’s staff to teach students environmental conservation through reusable water bottles, a middle school STEM Club to creating a digital flipbook at the high school that will share HIB, School Safety, Education Pedagogy on student achievement, and Professional Development resources for teachers.

Barbara Ostroth, TOPS Board Trustee, commented, “We are quite proud of these winning concepts and look forward to hearing reports of their success in the district’s classrooms during the winter and spring of 2020. TOPS celebrates our public schools and the dedication of our wonderful teaching and administrative staff to see that student achievement continues to thrive for all our kids.”

TOPS Mini-grants Award Recipients December 2019

After reviewing 23 applications for teacher mini-grants submitted by staff from all seven Teaneck public schools, the TOPS sub-committee has chosen to award a total of \$6,000 for the following grants:

1. **“Digital Flipbook”** -- proposal by Dr. Lottie Watson of Teaneck High School develop and produce a digital FlipBook to share and archive issues of HIB, School Safety, Education Pedagogy on student achievement and Professional Development resources for teachers.
2. **“STEM Club”** -- proposal by Sue Luckman Jacobs of Thomas Jefferson Middle School, using LEGO Mind Storm EV3 Challenge set and supporting supplies to create complex robots and learn to program them.
3. **“SITE Club”** -- proposal by Rena San George of Thomas Jefferson Middle School, a new club involving students in solving problems through creative inventions (previously a successful club from 2000-2010).
4. **“Homework Heroes”** -- proposal by Diana Spain & Roberta Weiss of Benjamin Franklin Middle School, providing participation wristbands, snacks and other materials to encourage students to participate in peer tutoring for Community Service as well as enabling supervised homework help every day after school.
5. **“Math Rug”** -- proposal by Zainabu Conteh from Benjamin Franklin Middle School, providing a new Times Tables Mag Rug allowing students to work collaboratively in pairs or groups more informally in the classroom.
6. **“Special Ed Technology”** -- proposal by Jim DiMicelli, Janine Lawler & Keith Orapello of Whittier School, funding additional specialized technology to enhance overall student achievement.
7. **“Reusable Water Bottles”** -- proposal by Nina Lionetti of Whittier School, a school-wide program to increase recycling and environmental awareness, reducing the amount of plastic waste. Bottles will be supplied to each student to be returned at the end of the school year, and also available for purchase by families.
8. **“PENpals”** -- proposal by Teri Wilcox of Lowell School & Jennifer Cortez of Hawthorne School, funding the purchase of two PENpal Audio Recorder Pen Sets to be used by Lowell ELL students and the second for Hawthorne ELLs.
9. **“STEM Bins”** -- proposal by Shena Thomas, Kristen Nunez & Allison Norris of Hawthorne School, creating a pilot program using STEM bins for the 3rd grade team to enhance students’ creative thinking with engineering materials and photo task cards.
10. **“Fiddlestix”** -- proposal by Peter Antonakis, Arielle Van Gulick & Mei Linh La-Mui of Bryant School, providing the purchase of Fiddlestix math manipulative kits to improve student learning by enhancing hands-on STEM concepts.
11. **“Express Your Health Event”** -- proposal by Stephanie Baer, Amis Aguero & Jessica Brown of Bryant School, funding supplies and a Zumba/Aerobic/Yoga instructor for this 2nd annual event scheduled for May, 2020 for the entire school.
12. **“Dual Language Books”** -- proposal by Kelly Cambridge & Teri Wilcox of Bryant School, purchasing more dual language books for the Bryant Library (for use in

school and at home with parents) to serve the growing Pre-K3 and Pre-K4 ESL population.