
R.J McElroy Trust Excellence in Education Enrichment Grant Program Recipients announced

Keystone AEA has partnered with the R.J. McElroy Trust for approximately nineteen years to provide teachers with grant money to fund innovative classroom projects. Keystone provides the administrative support for the application/selection process while McElroy Trust provides \$25,000 for the grant awards. Bev Berns, Keystone AEA School Improvement Consultant, facilitates the grant application process.

Process: Each fall AEA 1 teachers are invited to develop and submit grant proposals for up to \$2,000. Projects are to be implemented during the second semester of the school year. A group of six readers, selected from the education environment, read and score the grants based on a rubric. The grants that meet selection criteria and score the highest are awarded funding. Grant recipients are required to submit a report detailing the activities, lessons learned, and expenditures of the project. Keystone staff visits some of the classrooms to monitor the projects and to get ideas to help other teachers. Keystone submits a report to McElroy in June each year.

For the 2019-2020 school year, Keystone received forty-two grant applications for a total amount requested of \$60,090.00. Eighteen of the grant applications were awarded funding.

Please follow the [McElroy grant blog](#) for updates on the projects awarded!

2019-20 McElroy Grant Recipients (listed alphabetically by district):

Slavery, Racism, and Bias: Cross-Age Teaching Builds Knowledge, Understanding, and Hope

This project will create cross-age teaching and learning opportunities for eleventh grade English students and third-grade students as they study the 1619 Project- an examination of the consequences of slavery, the contributions of black Americans, and the impact racism has in our society.

- Amount awarded: \$1,990.00
- Grade level: 11
- School: Decorah High School
- District: Decorah CSD
- Teacher(s) name(s): Lizbeth Fox, Shannon Horton, Jenn DeLaRosa, Zach Fromm

Spring Sprouts Week

Spring Sprouts Week will be a four morning, one full day nature-based experiential class. Children will discover how they share the earth with other animals and plants, to gain an appreciation for this connection, to slow down the pace of life and engage in the wonders of nature.

- Amount awarded: \$1,866.00
- Grade level: 1-3
- School: NE Iowa Montessori School
- District: Decorah CSD
- Teacher(s) name(s): Jane Busch, Lara Martinsen- Burrell, Ida Rotto

Adding to the Toolbox- iPad Station for the Classroom

Students will engage in differentiated learning and be able to show their learning in multiple ways by utilizing an iPad station. From AR field trips to human cell 3D simulations, students will engage their 21st-century learning skills in interactive and engaging ways.

- Amount awarded: \$1,968.00
- Grade level: 6-8
- School: George Washington Middle School
- District: Dubuque CSD
- Teacher(s) name(s): Kathleen Hannan

A Future in Coding

This project will provide 4th graders with a basic working knowledge of computer coding and spark interest in the computer engineering field.

- Amount awarded: \$1,740.00
- Grade Level: PreK-5
- School: Marshall Elementary
- District: Dubuque
- Teacher(s) name(s): Theresa Northouse

Green Screen Team

The Green Screen Team will include students in grades 1-5 in creating green screen videos to share with families and classmates. Each classroom will be equipped with a green screen and a tripod. Each classroom utilizes SeeSaw, which makes sharing videos with parents easy!

- Amount awarded: \$1,321.00
- Grade Level: PreK-5
- School: Sageville Elementary
- District: Dubuque CSD
- Teacher(s) name(s): Jeff Dyer

Inclusive Community Communication

Children with Autism and other developmental delays often lack communication skills which leads to isolation from peers and difficulties developing true friendships. The goal of this project is to purchase three large signs (one for the preschool playground and two for the elementary playground) for children to access communication while playing outside with friends.

- Amount awarded: \$600.00
- Grade Level: PreK-5
- School: Table Mound Elementary
- District: Dubuque CSD
- Teacher(s) name(s): Jennifer Flores, Krystle Feehan, Elaine Erickson, Abbey Meyer

Uke Can Make Music, Too!

This project will purchase 30 ukuleles for students to use in the classroom to enhance their individual and group experience as they make and read music. Students will visit the local care facility, assisted living center, and 6th-grade classrooms to lead a community sing-along.

- Amount awarded: \$1,960.00
- Grade Level: 7-12
- School: Edgewood-Colesburg High School
- District: Edgewood-Colesburg CSD
- Teacher(s) name(s): Carston Calderwood

Performing With Puppets

During this project, students will create shadow puppets to perform student writing pieces to various audiences. Students will write and perform the narratives in Spanish.

- Amount awarded: \$954.00
- Grade level: 2
- School: Our Lady of Guadalupe Spanish Immersion Elementary School
- District: Holy Family Catholic Schools
- Teacher(s) name(s): Laura Barrero, Carolyn Wiezorek

Students Will Be Going Gaga for Gaga Ball

A Gaga Ball Pit is designed to be used indoors and outdoors. In this project, students will learn how to play in PE class and be able to play during recess. High school students will have access to the pit afterschool.

- Amount awarded: \$1,715.00
- Grade Level: K-3; 9-12
- School: MFL MarMac Elementary/HS
- District: MFL MarMac CSD
- Teacher(s) name(s): Chet Bachman, Lynn Jones, Pat Willie

Pop Up Art Gallery

The Pop Up Art Gallery is a student-curated art gallery exhibit with the primary goal to create connections between the students, artists, and the community. The display panels purchased through this grant will allow the gallery to go places where art cannot be hung on walls.

- Amount awarded: \$985.00
- Grade level: 9
- School: New Hampton High School
- District: New Hampton CSD
- Teacher(s) name(s): Melissa Nelson

Project-Based Learning Leads to S.M.A.R.T. Play

High school students will create an environment for early childhood students to learn through movement. Approximately 20-30 high school students will create and build pieces for a S.M.A.R.T. Room (Stimulating Maturity Acceleration Readiness Training, created by A Chance to Grow of Minnesota). The S.M.A.R.T. Room will be used primarily for preschool-aged students (approximately 100 students), but will also be available for grades kindergarten through third (approximately 120).

- Amount awarded: \$2,000.00
- Grade Level: Preschool and High School
- School: New Hampton Elementary
- District: New Hampton CSD
- Teacher(s) name(s): Theresa Knutson

Applied STEM- Shop Safety Equipment

Students will design and build model-sized wooden race cars in Applied STEM class. Within the unit, students will use CAD software as well as test the race car's speed and distance using trial testing and spreadsheet data collection methods, make modifications based on collected data, and present solutions to an audience. This grant will fund a SawStop table saw to allow middle school-aged students to safely use machinery in a controlled setting.

- Amount awarded: \$2,000.00
- Grade Level: 6-8
- School: North Fayette Valley Middle School
- District: North Fayette Valley CSD
- Teacher(s) name(s): Rachael Strong

Let's DEstress! How Yoga Can Reduce Anxiety and Increase Self Confidence in Speech Classes

Students will learn yoga basics focused specifically to reduce their stress: breathing techniques, poses, mudras, etc. all leading to better self-awareness, mindfulness, and inner peace. This, in turn, will contribute to students becoming more effective speakers and communicators.

- Amount awarded: \$895.00
- Grade Level: 10-12
- School: North Fayette Valley High School
- District: North Fayette Valley CSD
- Teacher(s) name(s): Kelli Kovarik

Answer for Cancer

The goal for Answer for Cancer is to teach 3rd-grade students how healthy choices can help prevent us from getting sick with things like the cold and flu. Students will work with the local hospital to create flu fighter bags that will be sent home with all students in the building that will include an informational flyer put together by students as well as student created videos. Connections will extend into the Structure of Life FOSS science kit and a STEM activity called Curing Cancer where students act as biomedical researchers to design a tool to help extract cancer cells from healthy cells. At the end, students make pillows to send to the children's cancer unit at the University of Iowa Children's Hospital.

- Amount awarded: \$2,000.00
- Grade Level: 3
- School: Wings Park Elementary
- District: Oelwein CSD
- Teacher(s) name(s): Kara Schmith, Kristi Druvenga

The Chemistry of Raku

As part of an elective class called Science Application through the Arts, the science teacher and art teacher work together in a co-taught class. One of the topics includes an in-depth look at Raku firing, an atmospheric ceramic firing process.

- Amount awarded: \$727.00
- Grade level: 7-12
- School: Starmont Middle/High School
- District: Starmont CSD
- Teacher(s) name(s): Amanda Knox, Michelle Walker

Let's Get SMART

Students will participate in S.M.A.R.T (Stimulating Movement and Reading Readiness) track which will help them get their minds and bodies ready for each day.

- Amount awarded: \$538.00
- Grade level: K-4
- School: Dyersville Elementary
- District: Western Dubuque CSD
- Teacher(s) name(s): Dakota Dix

CROSSNET

Crossnet is a game that combines volleyball with four-square. The game consists of four quadrants with a player in each quadrant similar to four square, while the net looks like a volleyball net that goes four ways. This will help teach students proper striking form and introductory volleyball skills while playing a fun and competitive game with peers.

- Amount awarded: \$1,200.00
- Grade Level: K-5
- School: Peosta Elementary
- District: Western Dubuque CSD
- Teacher(s) name(s): Matt Kass, Vicki Tilson, Melissa O'Brien

SCRAP Mail

In Intro to Agriculture Mechanics class, students will work in teams to design a thematic mailbox using welded scrap metal pieces. Students begin with a legal metal mailbox and then must create their own design of the mailbox, weld their design to life, and pit their design to a staff panel who will act as the board of Scrap Mail Industries.

- Amount awarded: \$575.00
- Grade Level: 9-12
- School: Western Dubuque High School
- District: Western Dubuque CSD
- Teacher(s) name(s): Luke Rauen