

ARTS, MEDIA & CULTURE

ALBA Film Festival

\$19,957 | Mark Hoskisson | Impact Grant
San Diego Education Association

The ALBA Film Studio project at ALBA Community Day School allows students to build storytelling, filmmaking, and graphic design skills through hands-on, student-driven media projects. Participants will learn screenwriting, cinematography, editing, and promotional design while developing films based on personal interests, including cooking videos tied to cultural identity and documentaries about student-led community service projects. The program emphasizes student voice, equity, and advocacy by allowing students to direct their creative vision and showcase their work at local theaters, district events, and film competitions. It fosters cross-curricular collaboration among staff, family involvement through film showcases, and community partnerships. By integrating technical training with self-expression and civic engagement, the program equips students with future-ready skills in media production, leadership, and teamwork.

Amplify the Arts

\$19,045 | Derek Mangan | Impact Grant
Teachers Association of Paradise

This project will support an annual, student-centered puppet show at Pine Ridge Elementary to promote engagement, creativity, and collaboration. Students take on key roles in scriptwriting, voice acting, puppet-making, and stage production, fostering agency, critical thinking, and teamwork. Designed to be inclusive, the project especially supports students with disabilities and those who struggle with traditional instruction by providing accessible performance opportunities. It also builds school-wide and community relationships by involving teachers, families, and local organizations in the creative process. The performances will highlight diverse regional cultures, promote equity, and strengthen student voice and leadership through a safe, supportive arts-based learning environment.

Castle Rock Orff Orchestra

\$11,986 | Louis Silber | Impact Grant
Castle Rock Education Association

The Castle Rock Orff Orchestra project will bring a lasting, inclusive music program to Castle Rock Elementary, a small school in rural Northern California. Building on the success of recent student performances, the initiative will provide a range of accessible instruments—including Orff instruments, Boomwhackers, and guitars—to help students in grades TK–8 gain hands-on experience in music. The program emphasizes equity by giving all students, many from low-income families without access to instruments at home, the opportunity to learn and perform. Music will be integrated across the school through performances, electives, and workshops, promoting confidence, academic growth, and community engagement. Designed to be sustainable and aligned with the school’s collaborative culture, the project aims to create a long-term foundation for musical expression, inclusion, and student pride.

From Page to Stage: The Transition of Literary Works to Musicals

\$16,800 | Rebecca Rankin | Impact Grant
San Diego Education Association

This project will be a cross-curricular, interdisciplinary experience that engages students in exploring how literature is adapted for the stage. Students will study novels and then travel to New York to attend Broadway productions. While in New York, students will participate in workshops that include playwriting, poetry, backstage tours, and live performances. After returning, students will select fairy tales from different cultures and adapt them into original musicals or plays using the same creative process. These productions will be performed at Morse High School during a spring one-act festival and added to the school’s growing script library of student-created work. This initiative is part of a larger effort within the theatre program to foster student voice and creativity through original writing.

25-26 IFT GRANT SUMMARIES

ARTS, MEDIA & CULTURE

Hands On, Hearts In: Sustaining A Student-Run Crafting Studio

**\$3,873 | Tascha Folsoi | Educator Grant
United Teachers Los Angeles**

The Uni Library's student-run crafting studio is a vibrant, inclusive space where students lead and teach creative skills such as crocheting, sewing, jewelry making, and weaving. Open before school, during lunch, and after school, the studio operates as a self-sustaining hub where students organize workshops, share knowledge, and collaborate across grade levels and learning needs. The program promotes student agency, equity, and leadership by creating a welcoming environment that includes both general and special education students. This grant provides the resources necessary to sustain and grow the program, supporting student creativity, collaboration, and lifelong skill development.

Huelga! Student-led Literary and Arts Magazine

**\$7,220 | Anand Vedawala | Impact Grant
United Educators San Francisco**

The Huelga! Student-led Literary and Arts Magazine is a schoolwide project at César Chávez Elementary that empowers students to share their voices through writing, art, and photography centered on the themes of freedom, community, home, and justice. Open to all grade levels and language abilities, the project is led by a literary club of 4th and 5th graders who oversee editing, layout, and publication. Submissions are accepted in English and Spanish and include written, drawn, and photographed work, ensuring accessibility and creative expression for all students. The project includes zine-making, bookbinding workshops, a field trip to the San Francisco Center for the Book, and culminates in a schoolwide magazine release celebration. By uplifting student narratives and fostering collaboration, advocacy, and cultural pride, Huelga! builds literacy, leadership, and community connections while promoting equity and inclusion.

In Sight Photography Club

**\$6,196 | Mary Schoenthaler | Impact Grant
Chico Unified Teachers Association**

This grant proposal supports the creation of an after-school photography club for eight 4th and 5th grade classes, with a focus on photojournalism and fine art photography. The club, called In Sight, will integrate visual arts and literacy, encouraging students to tell meaningful stories through both images and words. Participants will explore the people, places, and communities around them while studying the work of fine art and documentary photographers to understand how photography and writing can be powerful tools for self-expression. As students develop their skills, they will uncover their own unique perspectives and learn to tell the stories of others with empathy and creativity. In Sight will help students build confidence as both visual artists and storytellers, deepening their understanding of themselves and the world around them.

Knight Watch at Letha Raney Intermediate

**\$17,072 | Nichole Calizo | Impact Grant
Corona Norco Teachers Association**

Many students face challenges in engaging effectively with media, limiting their ability to think critically and navigate digital content responsibly. To address this, a mixed-media journalism club will be established to mirror real-world media experiences. Students will learn to responsibly share information, recognize bias, and identify misinformation. By modeling ethical journalism, the program will equip students with essential media literacy skills. In addition to working with the on-campus drama elective, the club will collaborate with the high school Film Club and Digital Media Team, creating a vertically aligned learning experience. The club will serve as a hub for campus, district, and community news, strengthening connections among students, families, and the broader community. A weekly news show will provide students with a platform to inform and engage their peers. This initiative will empower students to use their voices, advocate, and become thoughtful, responsible media creators and consumers.

25-26 IFT GRANT SUMMARIES

ARTS, MEDIA & CULTURE

Mural Masterpieces: Revitalizing School Spaces **\$19,500 | Lee Harrington-Reese | Impact Grant** **United Teachers Los Angeles**

This project aims to transform school environments by incorporating vibrant murals celebrating the cultural heritage and artistic expressions of BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) communities. Through the fusion of traditional and contemporary art, graphic design, and local cultural narratives, the murals will revitalize school spaces, making them not only visually striking but also educational and empowering. The murals will carry themes of empowerment, unity, and cultural pride, offering students a space that fosters inclusion, creativity, and self-expression. Interactive elements such as QR codes or augmented reality features will provide educational resources about the cultures depicted, enhancing learning and sparking curiosity.

LVTB Broadcast Equipment **\$4,986 | Cynthia Nunez-Rivera | Educator Grant** **Old Adobe Teachers Association**

This project supports the expansion of the LVTB Broadcast Club, a student-led video production program at a dual-language elementary school that fosters bilingualism, student voice, and leadership. By producing Spanish-language content for the school community, students develop communication, collaboration, and digital storytelling skills. The club encourages participation across grade levels, supports peer mentorship, and offers an inclusive space for bilingual and neurodiverse students to shine. Through this initiative, students build confidence, creativity, and a sense of ownership while strengthening school community connections.

The Dome: An Art Installation of Hope and Resilience

\$17,849 | Liane Shih | Impact Grant **United Teachers of Pasadena**

This project invites students to explore the meaning of home and community in the aftermath of the Eaton Fire, which displaced over two-thirds of the student body and disrupted their sense of safety and belonging. Through poetry, art, and storytelling, students will reflect on shared experiences and imagine a hopeful future for Altadena. The project culminates in the creation of a 16-foot geodesic dome, symbolizing protection, healing, and unity, adorned with student-made artwork in wood, fabric, glass, and ceramics. A permanent mural will also be installed on campus, honoring Altadena's legacy as an inclusive, diverse, and resilient community. Together, these installations will serve as powerful symbols of restoration, identity, and collective vision.

Voices in Focus: A Studio for Empowerment and Expression

\$4,700 | Tyler Pierce | Educator Grant **San Juan Teachers Association**

Voices in Focus is an inclusive media production studio that empowers students with special needs through hands-on experience in broadcast journalism and digital storytelling. The program provides a creative platform for students to build confidence, improve communication, and express themselves in meaningful ways. Through bi-monthly news broadcasts and weekly productions, students will explore roles such as anchor, reporter, camera operator, editor, scriptwriter, and stage manager—each adapted to their individual strengths and developmental goals. Along the way, they will develop essential life and vocational skills like teamwork, time management, digital literacy, and self-advocacy. By amplifying student voices and showcasing their talents, the project will foster school pride, strengthen community visibility, and create a more inclusive and celebratory school culture.

25-26 IFT GRANT SUMMARIES

CAREER & TECHNICAL EDUCATION

Bright Futures: Increasing Opportunities for English Learners at LHS

\$5,000 | Annika Pattenauode | Educator Grant
Lodi Education Association

The "Bright Futures" project is a year-long career exploration initiative designed to help upper-level English Learners (ELs) identify their professional interests and build essential skills for life after graduation. At Lodi High School, less than 75% of ELs graduate, and fewer than 1% meet A-G college entrance requirements. This program addresses a clear need for targeted support in college and career readiness. Rooted in student curiosity and guided inquiry, Bright Futures empowers ELs to explore career pathways, engage with local business owners and recruiters, and build the academic and professional language skills aligned with ELD and Common Core Standards. The project centers on two essential questions: How are local business owners making a difference in their communities? And how do people live meaningful lives? By connecting classroom learning to real-world experiences, Bright Futures aims to improve language development, increase academic motivation, and expand opportunities for ELs to envision and prepare for their futures.

Bullfrog Baristas: Building Independence Through Business

\$5,000 | Cora Broglio | Educator Grant
Bret Harte Teachers Association

The Bullfrog Baristas project will create a student-run coffee cart at Bret Harte High School to provide students in the Independent Living Skills (ILS) program with hands-on job training in a supportive, inclusive setting. Students will gain experience in customer service, money management, inventory tracking, and teamwork, building confidence, communication, and financial literacy. By running the coffee cart, students will develop real-world skills that prepare them for employment in food service and beyond. Ultimately, the program aims to foster greater independence and life readiness for students with diverse abilities.

Home Economics and Media Arts Collaboration to Educate the Community

\$18,740 | Joby Gutierrez | Impact Grant
Anaheim Secondary Teachers Association

This project fosters a collaboration between Home Economics and Digital Animation programs to educate families on balanced nutrition through hands-on student-led meal preparation and media production. Every six weeks, students will plan, cook, and serve healthy meals while Digital Animation students document and market the events, including maintaining a school social media presence. The initiative builds real-world skills in nutrition, communication, teamwork, and digital media, while strengthening school-family partnerships and promoting community engagement through culturally relevant content. The project also emphasizes inclusive participation and cross-disciplinary learning for middle school students.

Logan's Vocational Lab

\$3,678 | Nikki Moore | Educator Grant
New Haven Teachers Association

The Vocational Lab at James Logan High School is a hands-on, inclusive learning space designed to help students with extensive support needs (ESN) build foundational vocational and independent living skills in a safe, familiar environment. The lab will include dedicated areas for cooking, domestic tasks, leisure, and vocational activities and integrating academic domains such as math, science, and English. Students will gain experience in real-world tasks such as office, retail, restaurant, and household work, tailored to their individual strengths and needs. The program promotes self-advocacy, collaboration, and problem-solving, while supporting student independence, social growth, and future employment or community integration. The grant will fund the materials and setup needed to bring this life skills lab to life and support long-term student success.

25-26 IFT GRANT SUMMARIES

CAREER & TECHNICAL EDUCATION

Mammoth Middle School AutoShop Club

\$5,000 | Gil Campos | Educator Grant

The Mammoth Middle School AutoShop Club is an after-school program designed to provide hands-on automotive training and career exploration for 6th–8th grade students. The program introduces students to vehicle maintenance, repair, and diagnostics while reinforcing real-world STEM concepts and life skills. Students will learn through community partnerships, alumni visits, and monthly events like field trips and guest demonstrations. The club fosters confidence and offers a meaningful career path alternative for those not pursuing traditional college routes.

Palm's Game of Life

**\$20,000 | Trina Escarzaga | Impact Grant
Moreno Valley Educators Association**

Palm's Game of Life is an annual event at Palm Middle School that brings math and literacy to life through a real-world simulation based on the classic board game. Students begin by receiving a career, salary, debt, and credit score, then move through booths representing everyday expenses like groceries, healthcare, taxes, and auto repair. Staff and community members run the booths, guiding students as they make budgeting decisions and calculate expenses using real-life scenarios. The event also includes lessons on reading contracts and understanding financial responsibility. This grant will expand the program to include more accessible activities for students with disabilities, English Learners, and younger siblings, while also supporting teacher planning time, hands-on materials, and deeper community involvement.

SerranoCity Café a la Cart: Vocational Training and Life Skills for Neurodiverse Youth

**\$5,000 | Yvonne Serrano | Educator Grant
Huntington Beach UHSD Education Association**

This project supports a vocational training program for neurodiverse high school students, particularly those on the Autism Spectrum, by providing hands-on experiences through a student-run coffee cart and an integrated life skills curriculum. Students manage real-world responsibilities such as inventory, customer service, budgeting, and cooking while learning independent living skills like laundry, banking, and navigating public systems. The program emphasizes student agency, collaboration, and self-advocacy and builds strong partnerships with families, local businesses, and the wider community. Through these inclusive, future-oriented experiences, students develop confidence, independence, and workplace readiness.

Tiger Paw Café

**\$19,960 | Andrea Meier | Impact Grant
San Diego Education Association**

The Tiger Paw Café is a student-run beverage business at Morse High School that brings together general education and moderate-severe special education (SPED) students through hands-on learning and inclusive collaboration. Operated by students in the Hospitality, Culinary, and Mod-Severe SPED programs, the café allows students to develop and manage every aspect of a small business—from menu planning and marketing to inventory, customer service, and budgeting. The project provides simulated job experiences and internship hours while aligning with IEP goals and fostering independence, teamwork, and workplace readiness. General education students serve as peer mentors, helping create visual aids and offering guidance to support SPED peers in leadership and job roles. Through daily operations, school-wide staff engagement, and partnerships with families and local businesses, the Tiger Paw Café strengthens equity, student voice, and community connections while preparing all participants for future success.

25-26 IFT GRANT SUMMARIES

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT & COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

Empowering Gladiator Student Leadership

\$5,000 | Lynn Greep | Educator Grant

Alhambra Teachers Association

This project supports a student-led leadership program at Northrup Elementary School aimed at fostering student voice, agency, and engagement through two groups: Gladiator Guards and Ambassadors. Gladiator Guards lead inclusive games on the playground, while Ambassadors gather peer input and develop school and community improvement ideas. In response to student requests, the program will incorporate more art and STEM activities during lunch and after school, expanding learning opportunities beyond the classroom. The initiative encourages collaboration, problem-solving, and responsibility while strengthening school-family relationships through parent volunteers (Gladiator Guardians) and community partnerships. The program aims to cultivate a dynamic and inclusive school culture where students actively shape their environment and build future-ready leadership skills.

English Learners Leading Change

\$4,975 | Alejandra Reynoso | Educator Grant

United Teachers Los Angeles

The “English Learners Leading Change” project supports the creation of a student-led club for Emerging Bilingual and immigrant high school students to provide academic language support, social connection, and leadership development. The club will be coordinated across four campuses where a core team of students will plan monthly meetings, organize cultural events, and build welcoming environments for newcomers. Activities such as language games, peer mentorship, and community-building exercises are designed to strengthen language acquisition, increase reclassification rates, and promote a sense of belonging. The program also involves families and community partners and includes field trips to universities and cultural institutions. By empowering students to lead with empathy and advocate for equity, this project builds school unity and prepares participants to thrive as multilingual, community-engaged leaders.

K-8 Cultural Celebration Program: Solidarity, Transformation, Affirmation, and Resilience

\$18,200 | Nishat Taylor | Impact Grant

Bayshore Teachers Association

The K-8 Cultural Celebration Program is designed to promote cultural awareness, unity, and resilience by ensuring that all students see themselves reflected in their learning while gaining a deeper appreciation for the diverse experiences of others. This program fosters a sense of belonging by allowing students to see their identities affirmed, explore different perspectives, and engage meaningfully with diverse cultures. Through four major student-led celebrations—Latino Heritage Month, Black History Month, Native American Heritage Month, and Asian and Pacific Islander Heritage Month—students will showcase their heritage, learn from their peers, and cultivate their academic and cultural strengths. These celebrations provide authentic opportunities to highlight student voices, build solidarity, and transform learning.

Merced College Shark Tank Innovation Challenge

\$5,250 | Annette Macha | Impact Grant

Merced College Faculty Association

This project establishes the Merced College Shark Tank Innovation Challenge, a business-focused competition that brings together high school students and their teachers from four local schools for a day-long event on the Merced College campus. Students will participate in an innovation and pitch competition, where they work in teams to design and build a product for a target demographic using provided materials. The event, hosted and judged by Merced College faculty, students, and administrators, aims to expose participants to college life and inspire them to pursue higher education and careers in business. The initiative emphasizes teamwork, leadership, public speaking, and problem-solving, while promoting equity, inclusion, and future-oriented thinking. The program also fosters relationships between students, faculty, and the broader community, with the ultimate goal of motivating students to see themselves as future college students and leaders.

25-26 IFT GRANT SUMMARIES

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT & COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

PHHS AVID California Colleges Road Trip

**\$20,000 | Patrick Schoettler | Impact Grant
San Diego Education Association**

This project supports a week-long college tour for AVID juniors at Patrick Henry High School who are primarily first-generation, low-income students with limited access to college visits. While many peers can explore universities with family support, these students face barriers that make the college application process more abstract and daunting. The trip will include visits to twelve UC and CSU campuses to help students visualize and plan for their futures, develop confidence, and shift their aspirations. The experience is designed to reduce inequality by offering a formative college exposure opportunity. It will also strengthen student advocacy, school-family connections, and interest in the AVID program across the campus, with long-term goals of expanding AVID enrollment and increasing equity in postsecondary outcomes.

The Historical Marketplace – Where the Past Meets Creativity

**\$5,000 | Kia Gregory | Educator Grant
Tracy Educators Association**

This project transforms a 7th-grade classroom into a student-run historical marketplace, where students take on the roles of merchants and artisans from ancient civilizations. By researching trade systems and cultural traditions, students create handmade goods and persuasive marketing materials, culminating in a live marketplace event. The interdisciplinary project blends history, writing, math, and public speaking while promoting creativity, cultural understanding, and real-world skills. It ensures access to materials for all students and encourages collaboration across grade levels, family involvement, and community engagement.

Together We Will Soar: A Year of Family Engagement with Hawthorne Eagles!

**\$9,348 | Fiona Lloyd-Moffett | Impact Grant
San Luis Coastal Teachers Association**

This Family Engagement grant proposal aims to strengthen partnerships between families and the school to help close the achievement gap between socio-economically disadvantaged (SED) and non-SED students. Through a year-long series of events focused on literacy, STEAM education, and relationship-building, families will be invited to participate in meaningful, hands-on learning experiences. The project seeks to create a welcoming environment where families feel valued as essential members of the school community. By fostering trust and connection between staff and families, the project will support students' academic, social, and emotional growth. The goal is to ensure that every child and family feels heard, supported, and connected through shared, engaging learning opportunities.

We Belong in College

**\$20,000 | Elaine Whitney | Impact Grant
Alameda County Teachers Association**

We Belong in College is a student-inspired, teacher-led initiative at Opportunity Academy that empowers students to access college courses within the supportive environment of their high school classrooms. Focused on dual enrollment, the program enables students to fulfill high school requirements, take career and technical education courses, and complete general education credits toward associate or bachelor's degrees. The project will build confidence for disengaged high school students, many of whom are between the ages of 16–24 and will be the first in their families to attend college.

25-26 IFT GRANT SUMMARIES

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT & COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

Young Ambassador Program

\$19,999 | Wally Scott | Impact Grant

Oakland Education Association

The Young Ambassador Program at Grass Valley Elementary, a Black Thriving School, is a student-led leadership initiative that empowers upper-grade students to take active roles in improving their school and community. Organized into six themed ambassador groups, School, Student, Garden, Culture and Climate, Communication, and Peace, students will design and lead projects that promote positive school culture, peer mentorship, environmental care, and creative expression. Meeting twice a month during the school day, students will collaborate on real-world initiatives, participate in field trips connected to their group's theme, and share their work during trimester exhibitions. The program is inclusive of all students, including those in special education, and strengthens school-family connections through community involvement. Its purpose is to build student agency, leadership, and a sense of responsibility by giving students meaningful opportunities to shape their learning environment.

25-26 IFT GRANT SUMMARIES

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION COHORT

Addressing Environmental Impact & Social Inequities Through Public Art

**\$11,000 | Cat Chiu Phillips | Impact Grant
San Diego Education Association**

This project supports student-driven public art initiatives across four San Diego Unified School District sites, focusing on environmental impacts tied to social inequities. Through hands-on civic art experiences, students will investigate how environmental issues disproportionately affect marginalized communities and use public art as a platform to raise awareness and inspire meaningful change. By combining environmental education, civic engagement, and artistic practice, this project equips students with the skills, knowledge, and confidence to become socially responsible, future-ready leaders who use the transformative power of public art to advocate for environmental and social justice.

Climate Empowerment Learning Initiative

**\$17,131 | Peter Hiester | Impact Grant
Hayward Education Association**

This grant supports an innovative, interdisciplinary climate literacy program integrating science, English Language Arts, mathematics, history, art, and physical education. The program empowers students to understand and address climate change while fostering cross-disciplinary connections and hands-on learning experiences. In English Language Arts, students will engage in a book study focused on environmental themes to develop critical reading and writing skills. Science lessons include building solar suitcases to explore renewable energy concepts, while math classes will analyze climate-related data to model environmental trends. History instruction will examine the evolution of environmental policies and social movements, and art classes will promote visual storytelling. Physical education will focus on outdoor activities and sustainability practices. An after-school Climate Action Club will offer additional opportunities for leadership and community engagement. This holistic approach fosters environmental stewardship, interdisciplinary learning, and student empowerment.

Culinary Arts Kitchen Garden

**\$4,400 | Sadie Rose | Educator Grant
San Marco Education Association**

The Culinary Arts Kitchen Garden project establishes a hands-on learning environment where students engage with sustainable food practices by cultivating a school garden. The initiative integrates environmental education into the curriculum by teaching students about local food systems, biodiversity, and ecological sustainability. Students will be involved in all aspects of the garden's design, planting, maintenance, and harvest. The project emphasizes inclusion and food equity by connecting students to cultural food traditions and real-world sustainability practices. It also strengthens school-wide collaboration and community involvement through workshops, volunteer opportunities, and partnerships with local stakeholders.

Designing Green Spaces and Enhancing Zero Waste: An Inclusive Approach to Drawdown for BVHS Climate Action

**\$18,263 | Jennifer Ekstein | Impact Grant
Sweetwater Education Association**

This grant proposal focuses on creating green spaces and implementing zero-waste initiatives at BVHS to promote student engagement, climate action, and wellness. The planned green spaces, including Pollinator Gardens, Sensory Gardens, Farm-to-Table Gardens, and Wellness Green Spaces, will help reduce the effects of urban heat islands, which worsen health risks, raise energy costs, and contribute to climate change. Students will design these spaces through science classes and inclusive clubs, supporting climate change strategies and community service. These green spaces will be used as educational tools to explore urban heat islands, connect students to food systems, agriculture, and cultures, including indigenous knowledge.

25-26 IFT GRANT SUMMARIES

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION COHORT

EcoGaming: Student-Designed Environmental Education in Unreal Engine

\$19,027 | Laura Compton | Impact Grant Santa Ana Educators Association

This project will give students access to scientific tools to monitor and investigate environmental conditions in their own community, which ranks in the 95th percentile for environmental burden according to CalEPA's CalEnviroScreen. Students will use this data to conduct their own research and present their findings using ESRI's ArcGIS mapmaking software. By engaging in this process, students will not only build scientific and data literacy but also raise awareness among their peers and contribute to ongoing community efforts to address environmental injustice. Sharing their work with the local community will help students see themselves as leaders and changemakers. The project bridges classroom learning with real-world impact, empowering students to apply their knowledge for the betterment of their environment and community.

EcoHale: Student-Led Sustainability **\$16,653 | Joy Ferrante | Impact Grant United Teachers Los Angeles**

This collaborative project establishes a comprehensive environmental initiative, integrating recycling, composting, and sustainable agriculture. The initiative includes implementing recycling infrastructure with bins in all 75 classrooms and larger sorting stations in common areas, while expanding composting capabilities through the Farm Program. Students from Environmental Studies, Horticulture, and Leadership classes will lead the effort. Environmental Studies and Leadership students will manage publicity, communication, video production, posters, recycling collection, and outreach events. The Farm Program will serve as a practical laboratory where Horticulture students implement composting systems for food waste and seasonal organic materials. This multi-teacher initiative offers numerous benefits: reducing landfill waste, providing cross-curricular environmental education, building leadership skills, and connecting classroom learning to real-world conservation.

Edison Elementary Goes Green

\$12,650 | Jennifer Larocque | Impact Grant Santa Ana Educators Association

This project aims to create a greener, more equitable learning environment by integrating school gardens, composting systems, and outdoor classrooms. These enhancements will provide hands-on, real-world learning experiences in environmental science, sustainability, and healthy living. Students will take active roles in designing and maintaining the gardens and compost areas. Outdoor learning spaces will support cross-curricular instruction while improving access to green spaces for students who may not have them at home. The initiative will also strengthen family and community engagement through workshops and partnerships with local organizations focused on environmental justice and sustainability.

Enhancing Urban Biodiversity Through Native Plant Education

\$19,900 | Thomas Lechuga | Impact Grant San Bernardino Community College District Teachers Association

This project will enhance the biodiversity of the San Bernardino Valley College campus garden by planting native plant species to teach students about the importance of native plants in urban environments. Students will engage in hands-on activities, including planting, pollinator sampling, and animal behavior observations, while uplifting Indigenous and ethnocultural significance and fostering environmental stewardship. College students will create garden interpretive signage and multilingual educational materials and share their acquired knowledge through workshops and outreach targeting the community and local K-12 schools. This project will create student-centered, real-world learning experiences that empower students to become informed stewards of their environment and advocates for urban biodiversity.

25-26 IFT GRANT SUMMARIES

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION COHORT

Environmental Impact K-2

**\$19,760 | Alyssa Bement | Impact Grant
Fontana Teachers Association**

The Environmental Impact K-2 project at Maple Elementary introduces young students to environmental science through hands-on learning and storytelling. Designed for kindergarten through 2nd grade, the program builds awareness of nature, pollution, and sustainability with age-appropriate lessons such as seed planting, recycling relays, and garden-based activities. Students take active roles in projects like composting and clean-up efforts, gradually developing a sense of environmental stewardship and responsibility. The initiative emphasizes student voice, equity, and accessibility, providing differentiated instruction and inclusive activities for learners of all abilities. It also strengthens school-wide collaboration through teacher PLCs and connects families and community partners to support environmental justice and long-term sustainability goals.

Farm2Fork: Bridging Cooking, Equity and Environmental Responsibility in the Classroom

**\$4,141 | Rupika Malik | Educator Grant
Hayward Education Association**

This proposal will expand the Farm2Fork classroom by integrating hands-on cooking activities with environmental education, equipping students with practical life skills while deepening their understanding of sustainability, nutrition, and energy conservation. Using cooking appliances and eco-friendly tools, students will explore the connections between food production, climate change, and responsible consumption. The program emphasizes waste reduction through reusable wraps, vacuum sealers, and biodegradable dishcloths, encouraging environmentally conscious habits. Designed to be accessible to all students, the initiative promotes student-centered learning, advocacy, and community engagement.

Environmentally Sustainable Solutions to the Housing Affordability Crisis

**\$19,860 | Chad Davis | Impact Grant
Menifee Teachers Association**

This collaborative project brings together students from Technology, Media, and Science to address the intersection of innovation, sustainability, and community development. Technology students will explore the use of drones for land surveys and environmental monitoring, applying CAD software to design homes constructed with 3D printing technology to promote affordable and environmentally conscious housing solutions. Science students will engage in two phases of research: first, studying the environmental impact of traditional construction, and then exploring solutions for environmentally friendly community development. They will also study the Santa Rosa Plateau, focusing on local habitats and gaining firsthand knowledge of environmental preservation. Afterwards, they will design and construct a model of sustainable housing communities in a Makerspace. Media students will utilize industry-standard video production equipment to document the entire process, conducting interviews with peers and local experts in city planning and environmental preservation. Their work will culminate in a documentary that captures the interdisciplinary efforts of all involved. The project will conclude with a presentation to district leaders and the community, showcasing the students' work and fostering a culture of collaboration, empathy, service, and collective action toward meaningful environmental and social change.

25-26 IFT GRANT SUMMARIES

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION COHORT

Garden2Class2Table

\$20,000 | Anne Armstrong | Impact Grant

ALBA Community Day School is a Title 1 community day school focusing on at-risk students. Through the Garden2Class2Table (G2C2T) project, students will take leadership roles in developing and running an aquaponic garden that emphasizes aquaponic gardening, zero waste, recipe development, and community sharing. Students will learn about aquaponics and zero waste, working together to design and construct a system that produces enough vegetables and fish for culinary classes to create recipes and meals to share with the community. Culinary students will use the fresh fish and produce to develop recipes and prepare meals for students, families, and community members. By the end of the year, students will host an open house to educate the community about aquaponic gardening, zero waste practices, and recipe development, while also creating a book based on their recipe development stories. Students will provide demonstrations on fish and plant care, harvesting, and cooking, and participants will take home fresh produce after the event.

Growing and Going Green: Arts & Leadership in Action

**\$7,710 | Liza Gesuden | Impact Grant
Teachers Association of Long Beach**

This project is designed to engage both Leadership and Visual Arts elective students in taking meaningful action on campus and in the wider community. Student leaders will plan and facilitate monthly environmental impact workshops on topics such as plastic pollution, composting, healthy soil, pollinators, and container gardening throughout the school year. The school's edible garden will be cultivated and enhanced with multilingual signage to serve as a more functional learning space for the community. The native plant garden in the school's quad will also be revitalized, with students learning about the vital role native species play in the local ecosystem. The project will culminate in the unveiling of a student-designed mural and a celebration to honor the school's shared commitment to "Grow and Go Green."

Into the Wild: A Living Laboratory for Environmental Education

**\$19,421 | Miriam Sikking | Impact Grant
Teachers of Encinitas**

This project is a school-wide environmental science initiative that will engage over 500 TK–6 students in hands-on learning directly tied to the native canyon habitat next to campus. The project includes constructing a dedicated lab space and equipping it with scientific tools to support student-led investigations of local ecosystems. Students will study native and invasive species, conduct soil and water testing, and contribute to real-world citizen science databases. Every grade level will participate in developmentally appropriate environmental research—from weather tracking in kindergarten to cellular analysis in upper grades—making science accessible for all learners, including multilingual and neurodiverse students.

Learning Life Science through Local Salmon Ecosystems

**\$20,000 | Suzanne King | Impact Grant
Chico Unified Teachers Association**

This project restructures the 7th-grade Life Science curriculum into a year-long exploration of the importance of salmon in local ecosystems, empowering students to use their voices to advocate for the planet and inspiring interest in scientific careers. The program includes a field trip to Lake Oroville's floating classroom to observe salmon spawning, a fish dissection demonstration, a classroom aquarium to raise trout, and a visit to Feather River Hatchery to release the fry, each aligned with key science units. Guest scientists will visit, and students will create a culminating book project that combines their learning into an educational booklet focused on endangered salmon, ecosystem health, and local conservation efforts. The year concludes with the "Salmon Social," a public event where students share their knowledge and hands-on experiences with the community.

25-26 IFT GRANT SUMMARIES

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION COHORT

Mitigating Climate Anxiety Through Environmental Engagement, Civic Engagement & Literary Engagement

**\$19,970 | Zeena Pliska | Impact Grant
United Teachers Los Angeles**

Mitigating climate anxiety is a crucial first step in addressing the climate crisis and achieving climate equity. Students will participate in monthly field trips to local habitats to build direct connections with the environment. Civic engagement will involve visits with elected officials to foster student advocacy and awareness of policy-making. Literary engagement will be supported through classroom visits from picture book authors who focus on climate activism, enriching the learning experience through storytelling. The project will be informed by the educator's upcoming fellowship with the Morpho Institute's Educators Academy in the Amazon Rainforest, with the goal of building lasting connections that further enrich the program.

Project ACE: Air Community Education **\$5,000 | Jacqueline Valadez | Educator Grant El Centro Secondary Teachers Association**

Project ACE (Air Community Education) is an environmental health initiative embedded in the Community Health Worker course at Southwest High School in El Centro, CA. This project empowers students, especially those from historically marginalized communities, with knowledge about air quality and its effects on respiratory health. Students partner with the Imperial County Air Pollution Control District to conduct research, analyze real-time air data, and lead peer education. The program includes field visits to environmental sites, student-created outreach materials, and presentations at district and community events.

Ripple Effect: Investigating Ocean Plastics and Inspiring Change

**\$14,027 | Melinda Steele | Impact Grant
Association of Cypress Teachers**

In this hands-on environmental impact project, 6th-grade students across six campuses will explore the growing issue of ocean plastics through scientific investigation and community action. They will begin by researching different types of plastic, learning how they enter marine environments, and mapping where they accumulate in ocean gyres and the water column. Students will analyze real-world samples, compare them to local sand samples, and investigate the impact of plastic pollution on marine ecosystems. Through mapping ocean currents and gyres, they will gain a deeper understanding of how plastic moves through the ocean. The project will culminate in a field trip to Seal Beach, where students will conduct a hands-on microplastic survey using a meter-by-meter grid. By collecting and analyzing data, they will connect their research to real-world environmental challenges. Students will apply their knowledge to develop and implement personal action plans to reduce plastic use. These solutions will be shared with their families and the broader community.

School and Garden Greening Project **\$19,421 | Shareen McFall | Impact Grant Association de Maestros Unidos**

This project supports the transformation of a long-neglected school garden into a dynamic, student-led greening initiative that promotes environmental education, equity, and community engagement. The initiative will include sustainable green spaces across campus, each managed by different grade levels. Students will lead all aspects of the project, from planning and planting to maintenance, while integrating environmental learning into advisory periods and across disciplines. The project fosters collaboration, student voice, and hands-on learning, with strong connections to families and local organizations. Addressing food deserts and promoting environmental justice empowers students to become stewards of their environment and advocates for sustainable change in their communities.

25-26 IFT GRANT SUMMARIES

GARDEN & OUTDOOR LEARNING

Drone-Based Environmental Education for 6th Grade Students

**\$19,988 | Christina Tucker | Impact Grant
San Diego ESP/NEA**

This project engages 6th-grade students in environmental education through hands-on drone technology, emphasizing sustainability and the exploration of environmental changes and conservation efforts. Conducted after school with a cohort of 220 students and three educators, the initiative equips students with practical skills in drone operation, data collection, and ecosystem mapping. By examining the intersection of technology and environmental science, students will develop critical thinking, teamwork, and technical competencies. The project will culminate in a student-led exhibition showcasing their findings on environmental challenges and solutions, fostering a deeper understanding of ecological issues. Additionally, it will create opportunities for collaboration among educators and students, promoting an innovative, interdisciplinary approach that leaves a lasting impact on the school community.

Environmental Science: Urban Agriculture Lab **\$20,000 | Caroline Rodriguez | Impact Grant Ocean View Teachers Association**

The Environmental Science: Urban Agriculture Lab project transforms Golden View Elementary School's 2.5-acre farm into a hands-on environmental learning facility for TK–5 students across the Ocean View School District. Through weekly lessons and field trips, students explore plant growth, animal care, ecosystems, and sustainable farming practices. The program emphasizes student voice and equity by offering choice-based learning and inclusive participation, while also building future-ready skills in agriculture and environmental science. Partnerships with families and local organizations support community involvement, and a yearlong Environmental Showcase highlights student learning and fosters civic engagement. The initiative ultimately prepares students for future careers and encourages environmental stewardship from an early age.

Expanding Environmental Innovation, Inquiry, and Equity

**\$13,500 | Lesley Feikert | Impact
Hayward Education Association**

This project expands a play-based academic program for Transitional Kindergarten and Kindergarten students into an outdoor classroom environment, transforming the schoolyard into a hands-on space for environmental inquiry, scientific exploration, and creative expression. At a Title I school serving a diverse and under-resourced student population, the initiative addresses equity by increasing access to safe outdoor learning through gardening, water play, artistic expression, and dramatic play. The outdoor classroom will enhance physical, cognitive, and social-emotional development, especially for English Language Learners, while building connections between students, families, and the broader community through workshops, family volunteerism, and community partnerships.

Farm2School

**\$5,000 | Maria Gelleher | Educator Grant
Sweetwater Education Association**

The Farm2School project will build partnerships with local farmers and a state university to deliver hands-on lessons and real-world experiences connected to agriculture and environmental science pathways. Community partners will contribute soil testing kits, seedlings, tools, soil, and mulch. Farmers will also provide organic vegetable boxes for distribution at parent meetings and offer cooking demonstrations. College students will guide high school students in analyzing soil samples and using mycorrhizal fungi to enhance plant health. These interactive lessons will be integrated into the Social Justice in Food elective at Chula Vista High School, promoting outdoor learning, physical activity, and meaningful social interaction. This approach addresses concerns such as excessive screen time and social isolation, while fostering deeper engagement and improving mental and physical well-being through collaborative, nature-based education.

25-26 IFT GRANT SUMMARIES

GARDEN & OUTDOOR LEARNING

Food Scraps to Garden Soil: A School Composting Project

**\$5,000 | Rose Munn | Educator Grant
Fresno Teachers Association**

This project teaches middle school students how to compost food scraps to support a healthier school garden. Students will collect food waste, learn vermicomposting with red wiggler worms, and use the finished compost to enrich garden soil. They will conduct experiments comparing plant growth in composted vs. regular soil and share their findings through posters and presentations. Grant funding will provide compost bins, soil boosters, and supplies for hands-on learning. The project promotes environmental stewardship by giving students practical skills in waste reduction and sustainable gardening.

Hydroponic System for Biology Class

**\$4,995 | Sam Hamilton | Educator Grant
United Educators of San Francisco**

The Hydroponic System for Biology Class project at Woodside Learning Center in San Francisco's Juvenile Hall aims to bring more hands-on, engaging science instruction to students in a detention facility. Using a Flex Farm hydroponic system, students will grow leafy greens and herbs indoors, tying their work directly to biology lessons. The system will allow students to grow and harvest crops year-round, even when they cannot access the outdoor garden, and send fresh produce home during family visits. The project promotes connection to the broader community and provides a therapeutic, team-based learning experience.

Journey North Tulip Test Gardens

**\$4,817 | Amanda VonRosen | Educator Grant
Lake Elsinore Teachers Association**

The Journey North Tulip Test Gardens provide a powerful, hands-on opportunity for students to engage in environmental education while contributing to a global study on climate change. Through this citizen science project, students plant tulip bulbs each fall, carefully track their growth, and record bloom times in the spring. By comparing their local data with observations from gardens across the country and around the world, students develop a deeper understanding of seasonal changes, climate patterns, and the impact of global warming on plant life cycles. As warming trends cause earlier bloom times in some regions, students witness firsthand the effects of climate change on ecosystems. By participating in this initiative, young learners become environmental scientists in their own right—analyzing evidence, making predictions, and understanding the broader implications of climate shifts.

Oak Bridge Garden Club Greenhouse Project

**\$19,927 | Nicole Ballew | Impact Grant
Chico Unified Teachers Association**

The Oak Bridge Garden Club Greenhouse Project is a multi-grade, interdisciplinary initiative that uses a student-managed greenhouse to connect classroom learning with real-world applications in science, horticulture, sustainability, and career readiness. Students across grade levels will engage in hands-on activities such as plant propagation, composting, hydroponics, and crop cultivation, while also learning about environmental stewardship and sustainable agriculture. The project fosters student agency through peer mentorship, student-led lessons, and entrepreneurial experiences. Strong partnerships with families, local organizations, and higher education institutions support career exploration and community involvement, preparing students for future pathways in agriculture, environmental science, and green technology.

25-26 IFT GRANT SUMMARIES

GARDEN & OUTDOOR LEARNING

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Seeds of Literacy

**\$4,800 | Lauren Vu-Tran | Educator Grant
Westminster Teachers Association**

The Seeds of Literacy project integrates reading, gardening, and culinary arts to promote literacy, sustainability, and hands-on learning for TK–5 students at Fryberger School. Aligned with the school's environmental focus, students will participate in storytelling sessions centered on gardening, plant seeds using hydroponic, greenhouse, and organic methods, and grow herbs and spices to take home. The program culminates in a tasting activity featuring recipes made from the same plants, encouraging healthy eating and eco-conscious living. Students build responsibility and collaboration through maintaining garden spaces, journaling their experiences, and engaging families in garden-based activities. Community partnerships and cross-curricular integration with science and language arts support environmental stewardship, equity, and family engagement, making this a student-centered and future-oriented initiative.

25-26 IFT GRANT SUMMARIES

GARDEN & OUTDOOR LEARNING

Smart Agriculture: Using Arduino to Enhance Sustainable Farming Practices

**\$5,000 | Rose Munn | Educator Grant
Fresno Teachers Association**

This project teaches middle school students how to compost food scraps to support a healthier school garden. Students will collect food waste, learn vermicomposting with red wiggler worms, and use the finished compost to enrich garden soil. They will conduct experiments comparing plant growth in composted vs. regular soil and share their findings through posters and presentations. The project promotes environmental stewardship by giving students practical skills in waste reduction and sustainable gardening.

TAHOE Lab and Outdoor School

**\$20,000 | Suzie Bates Dale | Impact Grant
Tahoe Truckee Education Association**

The TAHOE (Transformative Adventures in Hands-on Outdoor Education) Lab and Outdoor School is a new vision for an underutilized school facility in the Tahoe Truckee Unified School District. This facility is being converted into a vibrant hub for outdoor learning, serving as both a residential outdoor school and a central resource for outdoor education programming within our district. Students will embark on multi-day adventures at TAHOE. Modeled after successful California Residential Overnight Science School (ROSS) programs, these experiences provide significantly more time for hands-on learning than is typically possible in the classroom. Students delve into ecological investigations, earth science concepts, and stargazing sessions, and forge deep connections with the environment, fostering a lifelong love of learning and discovery. Beyond academic learning, the program fosters crucial social-emotional skills such as teamwork, independence, and resilience.

Vacant to Vibrant: Transforming Spaces for Community Wellness

**\$20,000 | Valencia Davis | Impact Grant
Anaheim Secondary Teachers Association**

The “Vacant to Vibrant” project transforms three underutilized lots into sustainable garden spaces to combat food insecurity and support student wellness. Through interdisciplinary collaboration, students from science, art, media, economics, and world language courses engage in hands-on, real-world learning. They design and build vertical gardens, raised beds, and a Zen relaxation garden that contribute to the school’s food pantry and lunch program. The initiative includes family workshops, cultural food-sharing events, and community partnerships that promote sustainability and social justice. This student-led project fosters leadership, advocacy, and civic engagement while creating lasting change.

Wilderness Arts and Literacy Collaborative (WALC)

**\$19,500 | Conrad Benedicto | Impact Grant
United Educators of San Francisco**

The Wilderness Arts and Literacy Collaborative (WALC) is an innovative academic environmental education program at two inner-city high schools in San Francisco, serving primarily low-income youth of color who have historically been underserved. WALC addresses students’ critical academic needs while fostering their sense of self and place as active participants in society and the ecological processes of the planet. Through thoughtfully planned field experiences, WALC teaches academic concepts and skills grounded in real connections to the environment. These field studies create transformative, lifelong memories and friendships, enriching students’ understanding of the novels they read, the historical eras they explore, and the lab work they conduct. Integrating wilderness experiences and environmental concepts across subjects equips students to become knowledgeable and responsible citizens.

25-26 IFT GRANT SUMMARIES

INCLUSION & SPECIAL EDUCATION

Building Community for the Neurodiverse

Population at Nevada Union High School

\$3,400 | Tracy Donadio | Educator Grant

Nevada Joint UHS Teachers Association

This project will create inclusive supports for neurodiverse students through the development of indoor and outdoor sensory-friendly safe spaces, peer-focused social events, and staff training on neurodiversity and inclusive practices. These safe spaces will offer quiet, calming environments where students can regulate and recharge during the school day, while events like game nights and community outings will foster friendships and a sense of belonging. These initiatives aim to foster connection, emotional well-being, and self-advocacy among neurodiverse students, whether or not they are formally enrolled in special education. The project also includes collaboration with families and community members to design spaces, inform practices, and strengthen support networks, ultimately building a campus culture where all students feel safe, understood, and empowered to thrive both socially and academically.

JBHS Cultivators of Growth Expansion and Accessibility Improvements

\$3,800 | Erin Berich | Educator Grant

Burbank Teachers Association

The “JBHS Cultivators of Growth Expansion and Accessibility Improvements” project enhances an existing school garden program for students in the Independent Living Skills Moderate/Severe Special Education program at John Burroughs High School. The grant will fund a drip irrigation system, accessible raised garden beds, and adaptive workstations to improve student access and independence in the garden. Students will engage in hands-on learning to build daily living and job skills while participating in every stage of the project—from planning and installation to maintenance and harvest. The initiative promotes student voice, equity, and inclusion by increasing access for students with physical limitations and supporting long-term sustainability

Unified Through Sports

\$19,950 | Sarah Apacible-Holm | Impact Grant
San Bernardino Teachers Association

The “Unified Through Sports!” project will expand inclusive sports opportunities across San Bernardino City Unified School District by launching Unified PE classes and intramural teams where students with and without disabilities play together. Supported by the Special Olympics Unified Champion Schools model, the program begins with sports as a foundation for building friendships, leadership, and a school-wide culture of inclusion. Activities will include campus-based practices, districtwide tournaments, and a Unified Sports Day. The project brings together students, teachers, families, and district leaders to promote equity, belonging, and student empowerment. Through shared goals and teamwork, all students, especially those with disabilities, will gain meaningful opportunities to participate, lead, and thrive.

Transition Expansion Project

\$20,000 | Pauline Cabales | Impact Grant

San Diego Education Association

The Transition Expansion Project at Hoover High School provides students with disabilities meaningful vocational training through hands-on experiences in three key areas: a school café, an expanded Hoover Closet, and the Unified Sports program. The student-run café will offer coffee and snacks to staff and peers while teaching skills in customer service, food preparation, cash handling, and facility upkeep. The Hoover Closet, which supplies free clothing to students in need, will grow to include a student-led retail experience focused on customer service, laundry, inventory, and store management. Through the Unified Sports program, students will participate in mobility training, health and nutrition education, and support the school’s fitness center by learning job-related tasks. Together, these initiatives promote confidence, independence, and workforce readiness while enriching the school community through local partnerships and student leadership.

25-26 IFT GRANT SUMMARIES

INNOVATION & DESIGN

Kidwind World Challenge

**\$11,517 | Ricardo Gonzales | Impact Grant
Coachella Valley Teachers Association**

This grant supports the development of the KidWind World Challenge Club at Valley View Elementary School by providing tools, materials, and a wind tunnel to enhance student learning in renewable energy and engineering. Through this project, students will work in teams to design, build, test, and refine wind turbines using data analysis and real-time feedback from wind tunnel testing. They will also create team shirts and tumblers, prepare presentations showcasing their engineering process, and compete in local, regional, and potentially world-level KidWind events. The project fosters collaboration, critical thinking, and leadership while expanding STEM access to all students through hands-on, project-based learning that connects directly to real-world sustainability challenges.

The Modern Workshop

**\$5,000 | Nancy Ton | Educator Grant
Torrance Teachers Association**

This project engages middle school engineering students in designing and building therapeutic toys for children with sensory needs. Using Tinkercad and laser cutters, students will create prototypes in collaborative teams, with final toys donated to local hospitals. Multimedia students will assist in packaging and producing demonstration videos, reinforcing cross-curricular learning. The initiative promotes student creativity, teamwork, and real-world problem solving while fostering connections with families, school staff, and the broader community. It empowers students with hands-on experience and a sense of purpose through service-based learning.

Future Innovators: A Hands-On STEAM Lab

**\$4,950 | Shelly Warschaw | Educator Grant
Covina Unified Education Association**

This project engages middle school engineering students in designing and building therapeutic toys for children with sensory needs. Using Tinkercad and laser cutters, students will create prototypes in collaborative teams, with final toys donated to local

hospitals. Multimedia students will assist in packaging and producing demonstration videos, reinforcing cross-curricular learning. The initiative promotes student creativity, teamwork, and real-world problem solving while fostering connections with families, school staff, and the broader community. It empowers students with hands-on experience and a sense of purpose through service-based learning.

Raising the Competition in Esports: Expanding Access, Equity, and Opportunity

**\$19,940 | David Weed | Impact Grant
Association of Rowland Educators**

This project expands the Esports Program to provide equitable access to competitive gaming and STEM career pathways for underrepresented students. The program emphasizes student leadership, teamwork, and digital literacy while integrating esports into school-wide engagement and family involvement. Students will gain hands-on experience in game design, streaming, content creation, and event planning, fostering academic growth, career readiness, and community solidarity.

Westfield STEM Robotics and Maker Space Competitions

**\$4,000 | Elizabeth Estella Burkholder | Educator
Washington Unified Teachers Association**

This project will launch a series of school-wide STEM robotics and maker space competitions that engage students in hands-on learning, coding, mechanical design, and engineering challenges. Students will collaborate in teams to build and program robots, use 3D printing and woodworking tools to create functional prototypes, and apply problem-solving skills creatively. Open to all grade levels, the initiative promotes technical skill development, leadership, and perseverance, with support from teachers and community partners. The project will culminate in a showcase event celebrating student innovation and achievement in STEM.

25-26 IFT GRANT SUMMARIES

LITERACY, LANGUAGE & COMMUNICATION

Beyond the Bars: A Public Speaking Curriculum for Transformative Education

\$4,000 | Dale Lendrum | Educator Grant

Antelope Valley College Federation of Teachers

This project supports the creation of an Open Educational Resource (OER) textbook, workbook, and curriculum specifically designed for incarcerated students enrolled in public speaking courses at California State Prison, Los Angeles County, through Antelope Valley College. The materials will be tailored to the unique needs and lived experiences of imprisoned learners, addressing barriers such as limited access to technology, restricted educational resources, and the psychological impacts of incarceration. Unlike standard public speaking curricula, this OER will incorporate trauma-informed practices, culturally responsive content, and assignments adapted to the prison environment, while also featuring the voices of currently and formerly incarcerated individuals to ensure relevance and authenticity. The curriculum will foster communication skills that support personal growth and prepare students for reentry into society with confidence and purpose. Grant funding will support research, collaboration with formerly incarcerated educators, and the design, piloting, and distribution of these justice-oriented, accessible materials.

Building a Thriving Classroom Library

\$5,000 | Maria Martinez | Educator Grant

Alum Rock Educators Association

This project creates a dynamic classroom library program designed to foster a love of reading and improve literacy skills. Students will participate in read-alouds, peer book talks, and book clubs, and actively curate, organize, and maintain the collection. Through literacy challenges and regular reading celebrations, the program encourages student voice, collaboration, and critical thinking. This project builds a supportive reading culture that promotes equity and engagement by promoting culturally relevant literature and involving families.

Cultivating Diversity

\$5,000 | Porsja Dyer | Educator Grant

Compton Education Association

The “Cultivating Diversity” project engages high school students in exploring themes of cultural diversity, heritage, and societal integration through Shonda Buchanan’s memoir *Black Indian*. Students will analyze diverse cultural narratives and historical contexts, connect personal experiences to broader social themes, and express their learning through a culminating panel discussion and the creation of a cultural quilt for a schoolwide display. The project promotes student voice, equity, and civic engagement while strengthening school-family and community relationships through workshops, collaborative activities, and cultural celebrations.

Expanding Language Learning Beyond the Classroom

\$20,000 | Jennifer Black | Impact Grant

East Side Teachers Association

This project is a real-world, community-based language program at Oak Grove High School that immerses English Language Development (ELD) and World Language students in practical, engaging experiences. Students will practice their target languages in authentic settings—such as restaurants and stores—where they’ll order food, calculate tips, and manage financial transactions. They will also create written and digital content like Yelp reviews, thank-you notes, and video critiques in their target languages. The project prioritizes equity, access, and cultural relevance by removing financial barriers and encouraging inclusive participation from multilingual and diverse learners. By building language fluency through hands-on learning, collaboration, and community engagement, the program prepares students for academic success and future careers in an interconnected world.

25-26 IFT GRANT SUMMARIES

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Rally Around Fitness

\$20,000 | Staci Reinalda | Impact Grant

Moreno Valley Educators Association

This project will expand “Rally Around Fitness,” an inclusive district-wide event that brings together general education students, at-risk youth, and students with moderate to severe disabilities for a day of adapted physical activities and teamwork. Designed to promote equity, wellness, and student leadership, the event includes fitness stations, entertainment, and student-led logistics, supported by trained peer ambassadors. The initiative builds strong school-community relationships through collaboration with staff, families, and local organizations, and fosters student advocacy, social responsibility, and cross-campus unity.

Stepping into the Heart of Things

\$19,383 | Evan Scott | Impact Grant

San Bernardino Teachers Association

This project will support the implementation of the IHT Spirit heart rate monitoring system in high school physical education classes to enhance student engagement, promote lifelong fitness habits, and provide teachers with data-driven insights. The system emphasizes effort over athletic ability, allowing for personalized learning, equitable grading, and inclusive participation for students of all fitness levels. It fosters student voice, collaboration, and goal-setting, while supporting broader wellness and academic goals. The program will also strengthen school-family relationships and community partnerships, promote equity in health education, and equip students with future-ready skills in self-management, teamwork, and data analysis. Funding will support the purchase of monitors and related technology to benefit approximately 400 students.

25-26 IFT GRANT SUMMARIES

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING & WELLNESS

Social Emotional Learning Program

**\$16,250 | Sharde Avila | Impact Grant
Cutler-Orosi Unified Teachers Association**

This project creates a comprehensive, school-wide social-emotional learning (SEL) program for TK–5 students, starting with kindergarten and first grade at Palm Elementary. The initiative focuses on establishing calming corners and providing developmentally appropriate tools, like emotion charts, bilingual visual supports, breathing strategies, and sensory tools, to help students independently manage their emotions and build emotional intelligence. The program is designed with equity in mind, offering culturally responsive materials and supports for diverse learners, including bilingual resources and accommodations for sensory needs. It incorporates student leadership through peer roles and collaborative activities like morning meetings and “emotion councils.” Family engagement is key, with bilingual take-home kits, workshops, and activities highlighting family cultural wisdom and resilience. The program will also partner with local organizations, health clinics, and cultural centers to address systemic barriers and connect families to community resources.

My C.R.E.W. (Creating Resilience Empowering Wellness)

**\$5,000 | William Cullen | Educator Grant
United Teachers Los Angeles**

My C.R.E.W. (Creating Resilience Empowering Wellness) is a student-led mental health initiative that fosters a safe, inclusive, and supportive environment where students can prioritize their emotional well-being. The program reduces stigma around mental health through education, peer support, and advocacy. Through workshops, creative activities, guest speakers, and partnerships with mental health professionals, students build resilience, learn coping strategies, and access vital resources.

Thrive Project

**\$19,000 | Jennifer Longueira | Impact Grant
Victor Valley Teachers Association**

The THRIVE Project at Adelanto High School is a comprehensive support program for foster youth that addresses academic progress, emotional well-being, and access to basic necessities. Rooted in the values of Trust, Hope, Resilience, Independence, Value, and Empowerment, the program provides a dedicated safe space, academic help, after-school activities, and resources like food, hygiene supplies, and clothing. THRIVE also connects students with mental health providers, social workers, and educational rights advocates, while offering opportunities such as college field trips, career exploration, and graduation support. The initiative strengthens partnerships with families, staff, and community organizations to create a consistent, caring network.

SEL Through Sports

**\$13,665 | Michael Garcia | Impact Grant
Sacramento City Teachers Association**

SEL Through Sports is a student-centered program integrating social-emotional learning (SEL) with athletic activities to promote confidence, teamwork, academic success, and community engagement. The program is open to all students, regardless of skill level or past sports experience, and offers coed, no-tryout teams in soccer, basketball, volleyball, and running. Each sport includes structured practice, weekly study halls to support academics, and end-of-season celebrations. Coaches are trained in SEL, and students receive tutoring and mentorship to help them thrive on and off the field. The program fosters inclusion by emphasizing empathy, responsibility, and communication, and gives students a sense of purpose and belonging. This initiative aims to transform student culture and create lasting community connections through the power of sports.

25-26 IFT GRANT SUMMARIES

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING & WELLNESS

The Kindness Squad: Building a Culture of Compassion

**\$5,000 | Elle Hassani | Educator Grant
Twin Rivers United Educators**

This project will launch a student-led Kindness Squad to build a culture of empathy, inclusion, and positive action in a fourth-grade classroom. Grounded in the belief that kindness is a powerful, intentional choice, the initiative will provide students with hands-on opportunities to practice compassion through peer mentorship, classroom activities, and community outreach. The goal is to help students recognize that kindness can shape not just their classroom, but their homes and communities as well. This project aims to inspire a lasting movement rooted in the belief that small acts of kindness can create meaningful change.

Playful Pathways: Enhancing Social and Emotional Development Through Dramatic Play in TK and K

**\$8,382 | Emily Merchant | Impact Grant
Redland Teachers Association**

This project aims to provide a dynamic approach to fostering social and emotional growth in transitional kindergarten and kindergarten classrooms by integrating structured and unstructured dramatic play experiences into the curriculum. These experiences will help young children develop essential skills such as empathy, self-regulation, communication, and problem-solving. Students will practice understanding and managing emotions, negotiating with peers, and navigating complex social situations by engaging in role-playing activities. Through a combination of teacher-led guidance and child-directed play, the project will offer opportunities for children to express themselves creatively, build positive relationships, and enhance their emotional intelligence.

Empowering Adolescents Through Community Outreach and Resilience Building

**\$1,280 | Olivia Najar | Educator Grant
Association of Rowland Educators**

This project equips students with mental health coping strategies, peer support skills, and leadership

experience and provides students with tools to recognize when to seek help, support others without overstepping, and build resilience through practices like yoga, breathwork, and journaling. Students engage in monthly sessions with expert presenters and later lead peer workshops.

Kindness Ambassadors

**\$15,500 | Daniella Martinez Lefer | Impact Grant
Los Lomitas Education Association**

The Kindness Ambassadors Program empowers students, particularly those not traditionally seen as leaders, to develop confidence, empathy, and leadership through student-led activities, school-wide initiatives, and structured mentorship. By organizing lunchtime enrichment sessions that promote kindness and provide a safe, inclusive space, Ambassadors help foster meaningful connections between peers and staff, contributing to a more compassionate school culture. A mentorship model between 4th and 5th graders and middle school Leadership Students supports leadership growth at all levels, preparing younger students for future roles while offering older students meaningful opportunities to lead.

Learning to Lead with Link Crew

**\$19,921 | Erin Mettlen | Impact Grant
United Educators of San Francisco**

This project expands the Link Crew peer mentoring program at San Fernando High School to support 9th-grade students in their transition to high school through relationship-building, academic support, and inclusive campus engagement. Upperclassmen will serve as Link Leaders, guiding freshmen through orientation, classroom visits, and regular mentoring activities. The program will incorporate a new Maker Space to provide hands-on opportunities for collaboration and creative expression, fostering connection and a sense of belonging. By emphasizing leadership development and cross-grade relationships, the project promotes a positive school culture and student success.

25-26 IFT GRANT SUMMARIES

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING & MATH

Aerial Guardians: Engaging Students in Watershed Conservation Through Drone Technology

**\$5,000 | Sarah Hillard | Educator Grant
San Diego County Association of Educators**

This project empowers students by integrating drone technology into environmental science education, focusing on monitoring and improving neglected areas of the Chollas Creek Watershed. Through biweekly site visits, students will assess erosion, flooding, pollution, and water and soil quality using advanced technology to collect and analyze data. They will present their findings to elected officials, community members, and peers, advocating for environmental restoration efforts. The program fosters student agency, equity, and advocacy by providing STEM learning opportunities for historically underserved communities while building leadership and collaboration skills.

Building Bridges

**\$5,000 | M. Nayeli Camacho | Educator Grant
Chico Unified Teachers Association**

The Building Bridges program connects Rosedale's dual immersion third graders with students from Chico Junior High to enhance learning through engaging, hands-on science experiences. Junior high students—both in immersion and non-immersion Science and Social Studies classes—will design and lead interactive lessons that reinforce core standards for both grade levels. This cross-age collaboration offers Rosedale students personalized support and opportunities to explore scientific concepts through inquiry and experimentation, while junior high students deepen their understanding and build leadership skills. By promoting science learning, bilingualism, and socio-cultural competence, Building Bridges fosters academic growth, peer connection, and enthusiasm for continued dual immersion education.

CHS Science Library Outreach Project **\$19,940 | Eric Madrigal | Impact Grant Caruthers Unified Teachers Association**

This project aims to close the gap in early science education by having high school students collaborate with teachers to design hands-on science lessons aligned with NGSS standards. These lessons will be packaged into reusable “lesson tubs,” each containing physical demonstrations, background information, and adaptable activities that can be checked out and delivered to elementary classrooms across the district. The project provides leadership and mentoring opportunities for high school students and supports younger students, especially in underserved communities, to gain access to engaging, high-quality STEM experiences. The initiative fosters community involvement by showcasing student-created materials at public events and promoting connections between schools, families, and local organizations.

CRISPR in the Classroom: Exploring Genetic Solutions for Environmental Challenges

**\$5,000 | Dylane Painter | Educator Grant
United Teachers Los Angeles**

This project introduces middle school students to genetic engineering through a hands-on, interdisciplinary exploration of environmental challenges. Using CRISPR virtual simulations and real-world case studies, students will design genetic solutions to problems like plastic pollution and crop resilience. They will research, collaborate in small teams, debate ethical implications, and present their findings at a community showcase. The project fosters student voice, cross-curricular learning, and community engagement and prepares students with critical STEM, communication, and ethical reasoning skills.

25-26 IFT GRANT SUMMARIES

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING & MATH

Engineering and Robotics at Oxford Academy and Cambridge Virtual Academy: A Hybrid STEM Education Model

**\$16,000 | Susan Stephan | Impact Grant
Anaheim Secondary Teachers Association**

This project will launch a hybrid engineering and robotics program for students in grades 7–12, combining virtual and in-person participation to foster independence, collaboration, and hands-on STEM learning. Students will use industry-relevant tools like computer-aided design (CAD) and follow the Engineering Design Process—design, build, test—to construct functional robots. While in-person students assemble hardware, virtual participants contribute by developing software and providing remote support, ensuring all students are fully engaged. Saturday workdays and regular sessions will give students opportunities to lead, manage timelines, and document progress, building critical thinking, problem-solving, and leadership skills.

Funding for the After-School Capitol Region Engineering Science Technology (CREST) Program

**\$5,000 | Rachelle Gray | Educator Grant
Sacramento City Teachers Association**

This project will support an after-school STEM program. Through engaging, hands-on challenges like building water bottle rockets, solar-powered cars, and stop-motion animations, students will develop confidence, creativity, collaboration, and critical problem-solving skills. CREST is committed to equity, offering free access to all students, including those from underrepresented and diverse backgrounds. Participants will work in inclusive, multi-grade teams, compete in regional events, and benefit from mentorship by STEM professionals. The program strengthens school-community connections through family involvement, public showcases, and collaborative events, fostering a culture of curiosity, STEM engagement, and long-term academic success.

Math Minute Podcast: Engaging Minds, One Minute at a Time

**\$12,968 | Rene Herrick | Impact Grant
Antioch Education Association**

This innovative, student-led initiative enhances mathematical thinking and improves student outcomes through daily one-minute podcast episodes. The project will engage students in creating, producing, and broadcasting math tips, problem-solving strategies, and real-world applications of mathematical concepts. Each episode will feature student hosts, providing a platform for peer learning and fostering enthusiasm for math across all grade levels. This initiative will support Career Technical Education (CTE) by integrating media production skills with STEM learning. Students will develop communication, collaboration, and digital literacy skills while making math accessible and engaging for their peers. The project will be broadcast school-wide via morning announcements, social media, and the school website, promoting a culture of mathematical curiosity beyond the classroom.

Numeracy is the Nexus: No Formulas Here! Empowering Use-Oriented Mathematics

**\$19,558 | Tamara Clark | Impact Grant
Kern High School Teachers Association**

Many students, often disengaged in abstract mathematics courses, need real-world applications to make learning relevant. This project bridges the gap between the classroom and everyday life by focusing instruction on the four facets of numeracy: context, responses, information/ideas, and representations. Unlike traditional classes prioritizing content, this project-based approach gives high school students a practical understanding of numeracy that prepares them for success in life-applicable mathematics. The project culminates in a "reality check" capstone event, where students use their skills in real-life simulations, including managing budgets and making decisions about housing, insurance, clothing, and childcare, demonstrating that math is a vital and practical tool for adulthood.

25-26 IFT GRANT SUMMARIES

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING & MATH

STEAM Lab on Campus

**\$4,930 | Catarina Hernandez | Educator Grant
Escondido Elementary Education Association**

The “STEAM Lab on Campus” project will create a hands-on, exploratory learning space at Hidden Valley Middle School where students can engage in coding, 3D design, engineering, and problem-solving. Through projects like building cardboard arcades, designing prosthetics with 3D pens, and simulating a mission to Mars, students will build creativity and critical thinking skills. The lab will serve all students through elective classes, with lessons differentiated to meet varied learning needs. Students will also connect learning to real-world issues by designing community-improvement projects for a public showcase. This grant will launch a space that fosters innovation, equity, and future-focused learning.

Tech for Tomorrow's Leaders

**\$5,000 | Magdalene Mason | Educator Grant
Pittsburg Education Association**

The Tech for Tomorrow's Leaders project equips elementary students at a Title I school with essential digital tools and experiences to thrive in a tech-driven world. Students will develop critical thinking, creativity, and collaboration skills through hands-on projects like designing models, building websites, and showcasing their work in digital formats. This initiative promotes equity by giving all students access to future-ready technology, supports student voice and teamwork, engages families through tech fairs and workshops, and fosters community collaboration with local mentors. The program prepares students for academic and career success by integrating meaningful, tech-rich learning across all grade levels and subject areas.

Trout Tales: An Interdisciplinary Journey Through the Life Cycle

**\$19,541 | Paul Longshore | Impact Grant
Victor Elementary Teachers Association**

Trout Tales: An Interdisciplinary Journey Through the Life Cycle is an inclusive, community-enriched STEM project for third-grade students at Galileo in the Victor Elementary School District. Students will embark on an interdisciplinary journey focused on the life cycle of the Rainbow Trout. Through hands-on science activities, physical education lessons, and language arts projects, students will strengthen their understanding of biology while improving their reading, writing, and technology skills. In partnership with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and local fishing clubs, students will hatch and care for Rainbow Trout eggs, culminating in a conservation-focused release at Mojave Narrows. The project also includes casting lessons, narrative and informational writing, stop-motion animation, and 3D modeling. Designed to support all learners, this project blends academic rigor with environmental stewardship, equity, and real-world skill-building.