**2020 Innovation Grant Winners**

*This year there were 13 Grants funded totaling $37,748.35*

*Osmo Little Genius Starter Kit*

*Jackie Poole, Pittaway -- $1,876*

“Two “Osmo- Little Genius Starter Kit” and preschool related games for the specialized programming classrooms within the Ashland Preschool, that support children with Autism and similar learning profiles. The “Osmo- Little Genius Starter Kit” is used in conjunction with an iPad which incorporates technology, allows for an interactive way to learn, and increases attention to educational activities. As explained on the Osmo website, it helps teach early literacy, fine motor skills, understanding of word, social emotional skills, and language and communication skills through fun activities. The Osmo and its related materials are portable and able to be used during various activities such as morning circle, small group activities and while working one-on-one with a student.”

*Flexible Seating Grant*

*Jillian Gawlik, Pittaway -- $1,437.33*

“Recent research has shown the immense benefits that alternative seating can have on students’ ability to focus during instructional times. For three, four, and five year old students, it is not developmentally appropriate to sit for long periods of time. However, with the educational demands that all students are under, we heed are students to attend to instruction for longer periods of time. I believe my alternative seating options will allow all of my students to obtain more of the information that I am teaching because they will be better able to focus on the lesson and will get less distracted.”

*Integrating Music Therapy Groups at Preschool*

*Megan Smith, Pittaway -- $3,526.58*

“This grant is to pilot a music therapy program to enrich communication and engagement amongst preschoolers with and without developmental delays. It includes funds to contract a music therapist on a biweekly basis, as well as hands on and adapted musical instruments. The use of music therapy to engage and educate students with disabilities is an evidence based and innovative approach to education and its implementation into the Ashland Preschool program would support our youngest learners with their most foundational skills in a new way.”

*Music Therapy and Severe Special Education*

*Alyssa Nawrocki, Warren -- $3,150*

“Music therapy is proven to make positive impacts on both mental and physical barriers of students with special needs. Music therapy engages and/or develops children’s language skills, improves motor skills through playing instruments or using motor movements with song. Research has shown that music therapy engages most neurological systems while also stimulate cognitive development. Lastly, it offers a unique learning environment for students to practice social and behavioral skills.”

*Embracing Teaching for Artistic Behavior in the Warren Art Studio*

*Deborah Colella, Warren -- $4,170.28*

“This project will allow the art teacher, all grade one and grade two students to embrace the philosophy behind *Teaching for Artistic Behavior*, also known as TAB. TAB’s guiding philosophy is:  What do Artists do? The child is the artist. The art room is the child’s studio. In a TAB Studio students are regarded as artists. Students choose what to work on. Classes begin with a short demonstration or discussion to inspire new ideas. TAB creates a nurturing community of artists. t is developmentally appropriate, where differentiation occurs regularly.  Students determine purpose for and learn to reflect on their work.”

*Family Communication*

*Rachel Kriegsman, Warren -- $2,575.91*

“This grant will increase family and community engagement by teaching students how to apply their academic skills with developmentally appropriate technology to inform families daily about what is happening in our first grade classroom. Through utilizing different applications on iPads, students will become better readers, writers, and speakers, who think creatively and enjoy sharing their love of learning with their families.”

*Drone Club*

*Carolyn Breault, Mindess -- $3,951.20*

“Drones got their name because like drone bees, they tend to wander and they don't think on their own. The name drone, also refers to the buzzing sound that remote controlled drones make - and they do buzz like a swarm of bees. Drone Club at Mindess will expand student understanding of how coding is used to program drones to complete a challenge. Students will work in cooperative groups where each student has a specific role to play. While learning about drone technology and the role that drones play in today's world, students will also work on their math skills; specifically their measurement and geometry skills.”

*Increasing Independence & Creating Space*

*Cassia Ashman, Mindess -- $3,985.49*

“Within our Life Skills special education classroom, we have students with varying abilities… The goal of the classroom is to create an independent work system for students. The materials they would be accessing would be directly linked to their IEP objectives or unit topics. This would assist with ensuring that students are engaging in materials related to their learning while simultaneously increasing their ability to work independently. In addition, having access to flexible and movable furniture would allow me to provide various work stations to best meet the needs of students in order to access the curriculum. Having these items will support their learning with various group sizes during the school day/week. The objective is to also create a safe learning environment for students of various behaviors while being able to continue to provide instruction with other students in the classroom.”

*Leading a Physically Literate Lifestyle*

*Dan Powers, Mindess -- $1,386.97*

“Mindess Physical Education would like to introduce new ways to be active while utilizing technology to all students. By implementing technology students would get hands on learning, immediate feedback, instant activities, videos, and so much more. Our goal is to educate students on how to live a physically literate lifestyle. While technology is only going to continue to be more prevalent in today’s society, we want to be proactive and provide students with different types of technology that they can use today and in the future to have the knowledge and skills to lead a physically active lifestyle.”

*Integrating Technology to Enhance Social and Emotional Interventions at AMS*

*Traci-Lee Bartlett, AMS -- $1,497*

“The AMS Counseling Dept would like to begin to utilize social-emotional based applications to provide an innovative and novel approach to reach our students who are resistant to traditional counseling. This would be delivered across the entire student population, in an effort to grow our ever expanding 'toolbox.' The AMS Counseling Dept would also benefit from a translation app to facilitate communication with and provide social/emotional support to one of our most vulnerable populations, our ELL students.  The non-English speaking population has grown tremendously, and we are hoping to use a translation app to assist with interventions and support.”

*AMS Math Fact Stair Treads*

*Karen Bernier, AMS -- $2,302*

“This grant would be used to fund stair treads in three hallways at AMS. The treads would consist of math facts. The treads would enhance the aesthetics of the Middle School stairwells and immerse the students in math facts. This immersion will help with math fact recall and automaticity.”

*School Specific Agendas with Q Codes*

*Brenda Iannarilli, AHS -- $3,892*

“A common issue facing high school students, particularly students with learning disabilities, is organization. A planner is a simple, effective tool that students will use when available. When partnered with cell phone technology (embedded Q codes) students will be able to combine organizational skills with current technology and easily access websites that teachers use to assign homework, post lessons and link to websites with instructional material. Teaching students soft skills like organization will impact performance not only in all academic subjects, but also with associated social emotional welfare components such as confidence, self-esteem, personal achievement and goal-directed behavior.”

*Classroom Resources to Support Social-Emotional Learning*

*Jennifer Cutler & Jennifer Pavia-Shiels, AHS -- $3,997.50*

“This grant proposal is to take an innovative, forward thinking approach to expose high school students to materials within the classroom to help them achieve personal growth in their social-emotional and academic development. The goal is to purchase resources that can impact social-emotional learning through improving the self-regulation skills of our students. Proposed resources include yoga ball chairs, standing desks, and chair elastics for energy displacement. Additionally, stress management and mindfulness classroom resources will be purchased to help build the SEL competencies of self-awareness and self-management in the classroom. These items have been shown through research to improve concentration, blood flow, and self regulation and ultimately impact the student’s academic and social-emotional functioning.”