



## 2023-2024 Final Grant Awards Report

Thanks to donors' generous support, Chatham Education Foundation funded the following grants in its 2023-2024 fiscal year, in the sum of \$80,400. Of this sum 18 endowments contributed \$25,000 toward the grants.

**The Maud Dahme Library of the Holocaust (CMS, CHS) \$15,000.00**

Michael LaSusa, Rachel Ruffner, Lisa Calamari

This grant funds the creation of the Maud Dahme Library of the Holocaust to enshrine the school district's commitment to the teaching of Holocaust studies (as well as other genocidal events). The Maud Dahme Library of the Holocaust will strive for three defining features: focus on unearthing and highlighting the stories of forgotten or overlooked survivors; serve as a collection of not only published works, but also digital archives of interviews and manuscripts contributed by teachers and students over time and include works from Maud Dahme's personal collection of books. The library will physically span CHS and CMS impacting 800-2,000 students. An evening program for parents and students with Maud was included as part of the programming surrounding the creation of the library.

"The creation of a library to support district programming in the area of Holocaust and genocide education represents a statement about our community's commitment to teach about uncomfortable truths and provide our students with a greater understanding of our world and its history," says grant applicant Michale LaSusa.

***This grant was supported in part by the Routh Family Endowment Fund and the Epstein Family Endowment Fund***

**Building Thinking Classrooms in Mathematics (CHS) \$14,294.48**

Aaron Yamamoto

This grant funds the conversion of the final three high school math classrooms into "Thinking Classrooms". The first two phases of the "Thinking Classroom" transformation funded by CEF grants in 2018 and 2021 demonstrated the validity of current research that supports students working on whiteboard surfaces in the mathematics classroom, resulting in observed increases in student productivity, critical thinking, and wellness. These design changes include vertical non-

permanent writing surfaces on flexible seating/standing tables, and the de-fronting of the traditional classroom setting. This third round of thinking classroom grant funding brings the total funding of this project to over \$60,000.

According to Math Supervisor, Aaron Yamamoto, "Through our first phases of "Thinking Classroom" grants we were able to observe the importance of the physical classroom shift. Students were more willing to take academic risks on the non-permanent surfaces, while significantly increasing their willingness to collaborate. These changes resulted in the mobilization of student knowledge through visual evidence, and allowed for teachers to formatively assess their students and provide real-time feedback and targeted differentiation." "We want to extend our sincerest appreciation for the Chatham Education Foundation. Their invaluable support has transformed our mathematics classrooms into vibrant, collaborative spaces. Through their generosity, we can enhance engagement and build student autonomy while implementing research-based best practices in our classes. Together, we are making a dynamic shift in our mathematics program that supports the growth of all students. "

***This grant was supported in part by the STEM Endowment Fund (Anonymous Donor)***

**Building Teamwork, Collaboration & Creativity with Outdoor/Indoor Block Play (WAS) \$5,500**

Lisa Kressler, Kelli Finn, Francesca Verducci, Rebecca Sheasley, Megan Tompkins, Nancy Volker, Joyce Luongo, Megan Stevens

This grant will allow teachers of Kindergarten and 1st grade at Washington Avenue School to purchase a set of blocks (and accompanying storage system) to be used during indoor and outdoor recess. The blocks would allow for the development of gross motor skills and will provide alternatives to tag, jungle gyms and swing play. The blocks also coordinate with the Pushes and Pulls Science Unit and the D&T curriculum in 1st grade.

Lisa Kressler shared, "As primary teachers, we are continuously looking for ways to increase student collaboration and team building skills...we are finding that primary students need more strategies to work together, problem solve and share materials."

***This grant was funded in part by the Dickson Family Endowment Fund and the Blue Foundry Bank Endowment Fund***

**NJ Symphony Residency (CHS/LAF)**

**\$3,000**

Liam Keller, Lauren Spooner, Emily Gaul and Brian Conti

This grant allows for 30 hours of coaching for the CHS and LAF Orchestra and Band classes from NJ Symphony musicians, along with accompanying instruction for the educators as well. The musicians will work with the students in multi-week small group sessions to allow for a more in depth understanding of what it is to be a musician.

Liam Keller, grant applicant, shared “As working members of the community [these musicians] will also bring students insight into the culture of lifelong musicianship and how professional performance fits into the economic and social landscape of adult society in New Jersey.”

***This grant was funded in part by the Rooney Family Endowment Fund and the PriVikNik Endowment Fund***

**Supporting the Transition to a 5-8 Middle School (CMS/LAF) \$3,050.00**  
Anthony Orsini and Danielle Dagounis

The grant’s main focus is to provide the opportunity for CMS and LAF educators to attend the AMLE national conference and to attend sessions on the strands of “This We Believe” middle school best practices as well as share key learnings back with larger cohorts of middle school staff as the district continues to work towards a broad grade-level reconfiguration.

“This grant will enable the teachers and administrators of Chatham Middle School to enhance CMS’s current strengths and assets, as well as identify areas for growth to assist with the successful transformation to a 5-8 middle school”, says grant applicant Anthony Orsini.

***This grant was funded in part by the Kuppenheimer Family Endowment Fund***

**Hands on Science (WAS) \$1,382.38**  
Jennifer Minsky, Jaclyn Flanagan, Denise Gangaware, Sarah Hughes

The third grade science units have many opportunities for students to experiment with different materials that have to do with weather, forces, speed, measurement, and ecosystems. This grant will fund the procurement of kits designed for hands-on science investigations for students in the classroom.

“These materials will allow students to engage in more of the science and engineering practices as they work on understanding the disciplinary core ideas for each unit,” shares grant applicant Jennifer Minsky.

***This grant was funded in part by the Prael Family Endowment Fund and the Battiato Family Endowment Fund***

**Creating Collaborative and Engaging World Language Classrooms \$11,823.00**  
Hongbin Ng, Tine Engell

The intent of this grant is to enhance students’ understanding of Chinese character structures and writing and foster greater collaboration and interaction to accelerate language acquisition. This will be accomplished via procurement of dry erase desks and new classroom furniture that is specifically designed to create various seating arrangements and adapt the classroom layout to different learning tasks.

According to grant applicant Hongbin Ng, “This grant will provide a culturally authentic environment for students to learn the target language, and facilitate all the language learning needs such as writing characters with proper stroke dissection.”

***This grant was funded in part by an endowment funded by an anonymous donor***

**District Choral Festival (LAF, CMS, CHS)**

**\$4,750.00**

Dana Goodstein, Ken Bryson, Christie Spriggs

This grant will enable the choral instructors to bring in a modern, professional New York City based acapella vocal ensemble consisting of five trained singers, arrangers, and beatboxers to participate in the Annual District Choral Festival. In addition to providing hands-on learning experiences with a group that will specifically tailor the festival to the interests of students at each of the three schools individually, but will also create a custom arrangement specifically for the choral students in grades 4-12. Students will have the opportunity to learn how to beatbox, differentiate with pop vocal techniques, and explore vocal improvisation.

“This project will help form connections between students who are just starting out their choral career and students who have been participating for a decade. In previous years, our Choral Festivals exhibited first-hand how this event improved student communication, collaboration, and musicianship. CHS students paved the way for CMS students who then became role models for Lafayette students,” says grant applicant Dana Goldstein.

***This grant was funded in part by the Ryan T. Ganley Memorial Endowment Fund (Metviner family)***

**Improving Math Facts and Flexible Thinking for 4th and 5th Grade BSI Students \$1,400.00**

Kelly Antunes and Jennifer Magno

Reflex Math is an online math program that offers adaptive and engaging games to help students build accurate math skills, promoting better mathematical understanding and efficiency. The overall goal of Reflex Math is to increase students’ math fact accuracy and efficiency which will increase students’ math confidence, and allow them an easier entry point to access the curriculum which includes many higher order thinking skills. This online program will be used by the Basic Skills Instruction (BSI) Program that supports students who are struggling to meet grade level expectations in the areas of math.

According to the grant applicants, “Knowing math facts and the ability to recall them is a fundamental component of mathematical competence that significantly benefits struggling 4th and 5th-grade learners. It provides a solid foundation for more advanced mathematical concepts, increases efficiency in problem solving, and accuracy. It also fosters flexible math thinking, boosts confidence, and can lead to improved scores on standardized tests.”

***This grant was funded in part by the Sally and Bryan Allen Endowment Fund***

**Supporting Learners in Non-Traditional Settings (MAS)**

**\$8,161.23**

Amy Kerr, Jacqueline Maroney, Gina DelloStritto

This project is modeled after a grant that was awarded to the resource room teachers and successfully implemented at Washington Avenue School. This grant will provide students in the resource room and Basic Skills classrooms with various seating options, writing support devices, and fidget objects. These devices enhance a student's ability to sit and attend in a classroom setting and have been shown to increase academic performance.

“When students use alternative seating and fidgets purposefully, it has shown to increase student engagement and achievement in the classroom. The special education team will make visuals, flexible seating schedules and social stories that will be shared with colleagues that outline appropriate usage and expectations”, says grant applicant, Amy Kerr.

***This grant was funded in part by the Quon Family Endowment for Diversity, Inclusion, and Special Education***

**TV/Film Broadcast Studio Equipment (CHS)**

**\$7,600.00**

Patrick Clark

TV and video production classes serve as an integral part of the educational curriculum, offering students hands-on experience in video production, editing, and broadcasting. This grant will fund upgrades to equipment that will empower students with access to state-of-the-art technology, ensuring they are well-equipped with the skills demanded by the modern media landscape. Exposure to industry-standard equipment will better prepare students for future careers in media production, providing a competitive edge in college admissions and the job market. The new video/TV equipment will not be confined to the classrooms. It will serve as a valuable resource for capturing and broadcasting major events throughout the district, including but not limited to: CHS Fashion Show, TEDxYouth@Chatham, graduation, concerts, performances, and community gatherings.

***This grant was funded in part by an Endowment funded by an anonymous donor***

**Gaga Ball and '9 Square in the Air' Equipment (CHS)**

**\$1,500.00**

Gary Adair, Anna Amster

This grant will enhance the physical education experience of all 9-12 graders by incorporating new games to foster sustained physical activity, strategic thinking, and teamwork. According to research, such activities have the ability to enhance cooperation, social skills as well as problem-solving while fostering a sense of inclusivity.

According to grant applicant Gary Adair, "These are great tools to be used for team building activities while aligning with broader education goals of promoting social and emotional growth as well as a healthy and collaborative school environment".

***This grant was funded in part by the PTO Endowment Fund***

**Musical Exploration of the Durufle Requiem (CHS)**

**\$2,927.45**

Ken Bryson, Liam Keller

This grant supports a collaboration between CHS Performing Arts and Visual Arts department to create pieces inspired by the individual movements of the Requiem. This is a reprisal of the two departments' very successful collaboration for the Mozart Requiem back in 2018. This marks the third CEF sponsored performance of a masterwork performed by the CHS Choir and Orchestra programs.

According to grant applicant Ken Bryson, "By exposing our students to such historical pieces of musical literature - masterworks - we are able to significantly enrich their learning and give them a better understanding of the historical and cultural significance of the music and how it influenced the music they are performing and listening to today. In addition the unique collaboration between the Performing and Visual Art departments will elevate and enrich both the department's curriculum and the experiences the students get to have with the different art mediums."

***This grant was funded in part by the Karpowic Family Endowment Fund and the Asian Community Endowment for Chatham Schools***

Submitted,  
Suzanne David  
Grants Chair 2023-2024