



FY 2026 Small Grants

Scaling Success Grants: Prospective Coaches & Projects

This year, the MCPSEF is providing a special opportunity with the goal of accelerating progress towards our mission, by scaling successful projects. Scaling Success Grants provides additional funds to replicate a successful project from one school or office to another.

Engaging coaches helps new project leads access resources from successful projects, including the expertise of a previous project lead, budgets, outreach materials, project plans, community engagement strategies, training materials, logistical guidance, curriculum, and procurement tips.

Interested in Replicating a Successful Project?

You may select from this list or propose a coach partnership and project. If you would like help finding a project to meet a need in your school community, contact us! We will help identify a project and coach. By doing this, you can increase your maximum grant amount from \$2,000 to \$2,500.

Interested in Being a Coach?

If you are interested in coaching a project lead who will replicate your successful project in a different school or office, **send your name and a** three- to five-sentence description of the project, its target participants, and its impact. This opportunity carries a \$500 stipend!

Guidelines

Review the [MCPSEF Small Grants Guidelines](#) for additional guidelines, including information on how to apply. **All Scaling Success Grant project leads and coaches must meet with MCPSEF prior to applying.**

Questions?

240-740-3216 | Ed_Foundation@MCPSMD.org | www.MCPSFoundation.org/Grants
[Book time for a one-on-one conversation.](#)

Project AAC!

Carol Walker – PEP Parent Educator, Dr. Charles R. Drew Elementary School

Original Site: Dr. Charles R. Drew Elementary School

This communication board was for the preschool playground. It has core words and playground-specific vocabulary with picture supports that the students can use to communicate their wants and needs. The board facilitates social interaction on the playground as well as giving students access to a voice in order to increase communication opportunities amongst all students. The primary beneficiaries are students with disabilities; the board is helpful for all students.

Sensory Path for Learning Engagement & Socio-Emotional Support

Rena Reese – Teacher, English Language Development & Reading Initiative at Bethesda Elementary School

Original site: Beverly Farms Elementary School

This sensory path was an engaging, educational, and compassionate way to invite children who struggled with extra energy and appropriate classroom behaviors to channel their energy purposefully – and get back to learning. It had a positive impact socially and academically. In addition, teachers used the paths when walking their classrooms, or to facilitate indoor recess days.

Indoor Movement Courses

Sheryl Winans – Occupational Therapist with Physical Disabilities; Brown Station, Diamond, Great Seneca Creek Elementary Schools

Original site: Brown Station Elementary Schools

Indoor movement courses provided low cost, safe, and structured spaces that guided movement and provided brief mental breaks, which made them excellent tools that facilitated academic success. They were particularly helpful for students who struggle with focus and engagement in class because they needed more opportunities to move than were available during the normal course of their school day.

Flexible Learning Stations in Classrooms

Sheryl Winans – Occupational Therapist with Physical Disabilities; Brown Station, Diamond, Great Seneca Creek Elementary Schools

Original site: Brown Station Elementary School

Students with learning styles that require movement and physical change struggled to engage and complete school work at traditional desk/table chair stations. Flexible learning spaces improved student control and investment in their own learning. When paired with teachers and staff who facilitated use of flexible learning spaces, these spaces were powerful learning tools that enabled children to do their best work.

Cultivating Genius & Joy through Culturally Responsive Planning

Katie Hamill, Teacher, Staff Development at James Huber Blake High School

Original site: Benjamin Banneker Middle School

In response to the MCPS Anti-racist Audit data, this project created planning and feedback structures to ensure teachers built with relationships and engaged Black students in lessons where they saw themselves positively reflected. Staff built capacity with the reading and macro learning on texts by Gholdy Muhammad. Then, staff targeted the literacy department PLCs to apply the framework in literacy-focused departments.

Excelling in Science Benjamin Banneker IXL MISA Project

Katie Hamill, Teacher, Staff Development at James Huber Blake High School

Original site: Benjamin Banneker Middle School

This project added IXL Science access for 8th graders to facilitate skill attainment and increase performance on high-stakes assessments.

Accessible and Inclusive Recess for All

Bonnie Hines, Teacher, Media Specialist at Mill Creek Towne Elementary School

Original site: Mill Creek Towne Elementary School

This project purchased a wheelchair-accessible picnic bench and adapted physical education and recess equipment to increase accessibility and fun for all of the students, with the focus on students with physical disabilities.

Romeo & Juliet Field Trip to Chesapeake Shakespeare Company

Gina Miller, Teacher at Clarksburg High School

Original site: Clarksburg High School

This field trip, which included attending a performance and conversations with performers, made Shakespeare's language accessible to increase comprehension for key learning texts and removed barriers to access to live productions.

Dolphin Dates – Parent's Night Out

Shanique Moore, Family Engagement Specialist at School Support & Wellbeing

Original site: Waters Landing Elementary School

Caregiver participants in this project engaged monthly in a variety of group, peer-to-peer, parent-to-child, and individual activities that promoted strong family relationships, increased parent knowledge of MCPS curriculum and child development, and created positive relationships between parent peers and WLES parents and staff.

Self-Sustaining Salad Business for Students in Alternate Learning Outcome Programs

Elizabeth Nardin

Teacher, Special Education Transition & Special Education Teacher at Rock Terrace Middle School

Muncha Leah Rodriguez

Teacher, Special Education at Odessa Shannon Middle School

Original site: Gaithersburg High School

This project created a self-sustaining salad business where students in alternative learning programs created salads for staff lunches. It was a project-based learning model, where students engaged in hands-on literacy and math lessons applied to practical life skills while also building communication and social skills through working with peers and interacting with customers.

Strategies to Support Emergent Multilingual Learners

Jennifer Rushin, Physical Education Instructional Specialist (PreK-12) at Instructional Programs

Original site: Instructional Programs, Physical Education

This project created language acquisition resources for physical educational teachers to incorporate into their instruction.

Rolling Terrace Recess Overhaul

Charles Silberman, Teacher, Physical Education at Rolling Terrace Elementary School

Original site: Rolling Terrace Elementary School

This project made more equipment and playground sets available during recess, turning it into a more enriching experience where students learn to work together, share, and are engaged in more activities to create a welcoming and inclusive environment.

Language Acquisition and Academic Integration in Specials

Charles Silberman, Teacher, Physical Education at Rolling Terrace Elementary School

Original site: Rolling Terrace Elementary School

This project equipped and empowered educators to support language acquisition of emergent multilingual learners. Staff accomplished this by bringing together cross-disciplinary approaches to teaching language while integrating new equipment and curricular materials as an avenue to exact impact.

Gymnastics Equipment Replacement Equipment

Charles Silberman, Teacher, Physical Education at Rolling Terrace Elementary School

Original site: Rolling Terrace Elementary School

This grant replaced outdated and unsafe gymnastics equipment, and training teachers and students on the equipment.

Pollinator Garden

Luz M. Laboy Acosta, Teacher, Seneca Valley High School

Original site: Seneca Valley High School

This project transformed an underused outdoor space into a vibrant, sustainable habitat for pollinators while creating an authentic learning environment for students. It connected science, environmental stewardship, and student engagement by involving students in planning, planting, and maintaining the garden. It supports lessons on ecosystems, biodiversity, and sustainability, while fostering a sense of ownership and community pride.

Mini-shoes from Mini Pinch Pots

Judybeth Greene, Ceramics & Sculpture Teacher, Albert Einstein High School

Original site: Albert Einstein High School

This project introduced students to the basics of clay sculpture through creating small pinch pots, as an introduction to clay during art class and in a three-day creation challenge event.

The unit is inspired by a public interest collaboration between Nike and the Oregon Health and Sciences University Doernbecher Children's Hospital, which has raised more than \$33 million for the hospital since its inception. In that program, children who are recovering from long term illnesses in the hospital are given the opportunity to design sneakers that represent their interests and values.

Literacy is LIT: Makerspace Projects for Reading Intervention Students

Tracey Diskin, Library Media Specialist, Silver Creek Middle School

Original site: Silver Creek Middle School

This project was a collaboration between the library media specialist and reading teacher to design hands-on, engaging makerspace projects that aligned with the reading intervention curriculum. Students built literacy skills through planning, design, and reflection for one project each academic quarter. These projects fostered critical and creative thinking through problem-solving and analysis, and innovative design. Projects have included, but were not limited to, mini-mini golf course cardboard construction, battery-powered drawing robots, floating boats, LED light sculptures, string art, 3-Dbrian diagrams gift jars, and more. Project leads can replicate these projects with a wide variety of curricula and to meet a wide range of student needs.

Career Explore, Prepare and Train

Laurie Stiles, Special Education Teacher, Rockville High School

Original site: Rockville High School

This grant was for the classic autism program. The project provided supplies necessary to create comprehensive work-based learning to prepare students (ages 14-21) to participate at community work sites, school-based jobs and school businesses. The materials allowed students to create work boxes that taught job skills in the classroom for a variety of career clusters, including hospitality, custodial, retail and office. Work

boxes encourage independent work skills as students follow a schedule of boxes to complete. Materials were also provided for career stations in the classroom and the school building. Students learned to wash windows, set tables, file documents, and stock shelves. All these skills provide opportunities for career exploration, preparation and training for real work experience. These are materials that will last for years and will provide many students with positive work-based learning opportunities.

Restorative Justice, Socio-Emotional Learning & Mindfulness, Pregnant & Parenting Student Support, & Trauma-Informed Teaching projects

Jamie Fraunhoffer, Special Education Teacher, MCPS Blended Learning Program

Original Sites: S. Christa McAullife Elementary School, Virtual Academy, Clarksburg High School

Past projects were related to community-building, classroom management, restorative approaches to coaching, socio-emotional learning and mindfulness, regulation/behavior management, coaching caregivers, supporting pregnant and parenting students, self-care for school communities, and trauma-informed teaching practices.