

# THE BRIGHTON EDUCATION FUND

## CELEBRATES



## YEARS OF GRANTS TO

## BRIGHTON SCHOOLS!

## 1994-2024



# The Brighton Education Fund



*Supporting innovation  
cultivating excellence*

In 2024 we celebrate the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first Brighton Education Fund (BEF) grants to the school district:

- Over 440 grants awarded to date totaling \$600,000
- Grants have supported every grade and every academic area
- Grants addressed a wide range of purposes, each one in response to staff requests
- Every grant is intended to enrich the learning opportunities for Brighton's student

The Fund provides teachers with a unique resource to explore new ideas beyond the reach of a given year's budget, often piloting projects that will become a permanent part of the district's program. Requests may come from one or more teachers for the purpose of serving a single class, a cluster, even a grade level or an entire school. This report will present a cross-section of the funded grants, which have ranged from a few hundred dollars to over \$5,000. The dollar amounts might seem small compared to the district's budget, but every grant represents an important idea.

All this has been possible because of support from the Brighton community - parents, alumni, staff members who value the special quality of enthusiasm for learning that characterizes the Brighton school district.

Funds are dispersed from an endowment that has been built over the years as well as from recent donations. In addition to the endowment, several named funds created in memory of staff members and graduates support designated areas of interest.

This report highlights examples of how Brighton Education Fund grants have served the district. To see a full listing of all the grants by school, go to [www.brightoneducationfund.org](http://www.brightoneducationfund.org) and select Grants, Scholarships, & Awards.





Books on feelings and life issues in the CR Library and Counseling Department. Other age-appropriate collections were supplied to FRES.

## BOOKS ARE A SPECIAL CATEGORY

Special collections at TCMS

Over 30 years BEF has purchased 1000s of books, over 2000 in the last decade alone. Each collection was requested by district staff to address specific topics and needs for K-12 students and to make the work of visiting authors widely available.

The Council Rock and French Road libraries have used BEF grants for collections of children's literature focused on the social and emotional issues that can impact young students. Literature is used by the schools' counseling staffs to facilitate conversations with students around topics that are often difficult for children to discuss.

BEF enabled the piloting of Council Rock's summer bookbags - a carefully selected collection of books for students with reading challenges to take home for the summer and return in the fall. That program is now included in the building budget.

Many varied special collections have gone to the middle school, among them an updated collection on New York state history, foreign language books so that students from other nations can maintain their native language skills while they are learning English, and a large collection of leveled texts (books with similar content but different reading skills) that align with the curriculum.

The high school English department received a substantial collection of novels from other cultures and nations, broadening the literature selections available to the students. Finally, BEF supported the establishment of the alumni book collection, which has grown to include 244 books by Brighton graduates.



New publication birthday party at CR.



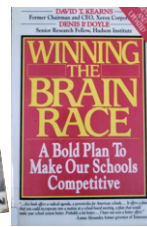
Leveled reading texts at TCMS



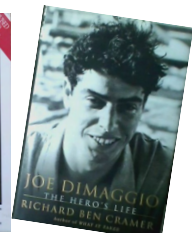
As authors visit the schools, BEF has purchased multiple copies of many of their books, both for classrooms and for students to read and keep.



Shirley Jackson, David Kearns,  
BHS 1934



BHS 1948



Richard Ben  
Cramer,  
BHS 1967

Alumni authors





The high school Science Research Club engineered how to send and retrieve two weather balloons to photograph the curvature of the earth.



FRES students learned about alternative energy with solar cars and wind turbines.



Digital Sphygmomanometers - blood pressure cuffs - for 8<sup>th</sup> graders to learn about the importance of blood pressure to health.



TCMS exercise bikes measure generated wattage, used both for gym and 8<sup>th</sup> grade science energy studies.

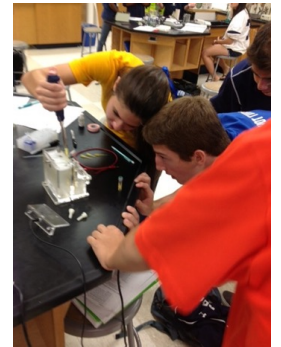
## SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY



Bee-Bots teach CR students the basics of programming.

Over 240 grants have supported science and technology, enabling all sorts of new possibilities.

Science teacher George Smith wrote: "The BEF has provided critical support for materials not ordinarily covered by the BCSD/Science Department budget, but more importantly BEF funding has provided seed money for new projects/new ideas that need to be tested - and may or may not ultimately work out. Two strengths of the BEF's approach are: 1. the BEF's emphasis on funding hands-on materials that will be used by as many students as possible, and 2. providing funding for materials for piloting concepts that may later be adopted by BCSD and incorporated into the curriculum."



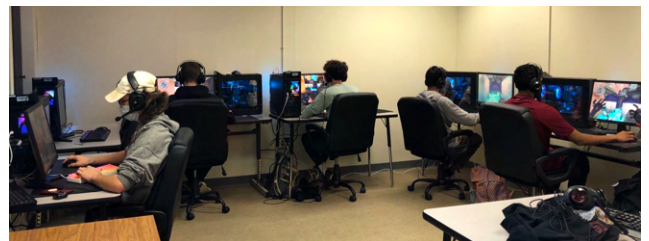
Protein gel electrophoresis -students process proteins to generate a DNA-like pattern that gives a molecular "fingerprint."



LEGO kits enable middle and high school students to design robots.



Flow-through hydroponic system in the BHS greenhouse for use in biology and environmental science courses.



E-sports are a new collegiate sport, and a source of scholarships. BEF, in partnership with Brighton Rotary, supplied the special computers to the TCMS and BHS teams.



A performance of *Candide*, for which BEF provided music and coaching from professional musicians as well as books to read the story, involved over 350 students.



Ed Klorman, (BHS '00), now a music professor at McGill, provided a series of workshops at all four schools.



Special software aids student music composition.

## VISUAL & PERFORMING ARTS

Over 100 grants have supported the visual and performing arts. From bringing in visiting artists and musicians (the Ying Quartet, Mitzi Collins, The Moxie Strings, and others), to field trips to plays (GEVA, Broadway) and museums, to purchasing hardware and software to enable digital media productions, arts grants have introduced Brighton's students to an amazing array of experiences. Exposure to such a variety of new ideas and creative ideas has greatly enriched and benefited Brighton's students.



A designated gift allows BEF to purchase a 2-D and 3-D work of a BHS senior each year building a permanent collection of student work.



Music teachers have commissioned performance scores for district-wide concerts with parts for all levels of music students, grades 4-12.



Art students attend a raku workshop.



The TCMS Magic Club, funded in its first year by BEF, presented magic shows and used profits for special projects like this display of human and primate skeletons at the Seneca Park Zoo.



Over the years students from CR through high school have attended plays and special programs at GEVA.







BEF funds supported the purchase of one of the district's vans enabling small groups of students to go to events and activities off campus without the cost of hiring a bus.



BHS Guidance Department group discussion space and reading space in the TCMS library.

## THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Rows of desks are not suited for all purposes in a school. BEF grants have supported the creation of special environments to help students learn.

Soft furniture, lamplight, and rugs instead of hard floor can make for more relaxing spaces. BEF has provided such furnishings to create a cozy reading area in the TCMS library, a comfortable discussion space for the BHS Guidance Department, and less formal decor for the INSPIRE and PATH programs.

BEF contributed to the district's explorations of alternative classroom furnishings with standing desks and softer seating. In other spaces, free-standing white boards were provided for students to use for group problem solving.

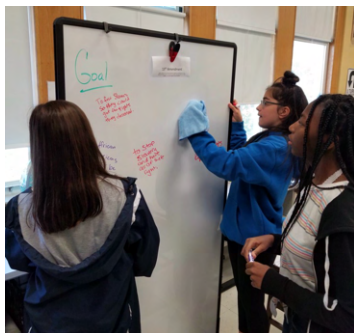
Hands-on manipulatives in the form of creative materials and board games have been requested as an alternative to electronics for activities at CR, FRES, and TCMS.



Three LEGO walls outside kindergarten classrooms allow students a unique 3D hands-on way to explore ideas.



Hands-on games and materials for engaging students at CRPS, FRES, and TCMS.



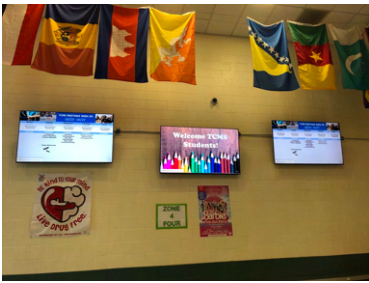
White boards for group work.



Positive messages on the walls at FRES.



For some students, standing desks are more comfortable.



Three large visual display screens at TCMS update students daily on activities and information about the school.



Kayaks introduced a new lifelong skill to the BHS physical education program.



For CRPS, 5 biofeedback systems help students learn to regulate their emotions and manage stress and anxiety levels. One child stated, "It is a really fun way to practice breathing strategies and calming myself down!".

## So Many Different Kinds of Requests!

Some grants are for one-time events, some become permanent parts of the district program, some introduce an idea that will then be developed in another way, but all grants are an opportunity to try something that will make a positive difference for Brighton's students.



10 Virtual Reality headsets designed to connect to most smartphones, allowed counselors and students to "visit" college campuses despite COVID-19 travel restrictions, and they remain useful.

In the TCMS multidisciplinary Empty Bowls project, students learned about hunger in Social Studies, nutrition in Health class, cooking rice dishes in Home and Careers, and making rice bowls in Art. BEF provided all the materials and ingredients, and the students sold their rice bowls as in fundraisers for the Brighton Food Cupboard.



Many grants have addressed understanding emotions and developing critical thinking skills. In Health class at FRES, small groups of students use puppets to represent the fight, flight, and freeze reactions in the brain - how this happens, why this happens, and how to respond to these feelings.



An outdoor speaker provided music for FRES students waiting in line for daily temperature checks during COVID -19.



BEF provided a wide variety of hands-on building materials to launch the Makerspaces at CR and FRES.



## Staff Comments about the Brighton Education Fund

Matt Tappon, Council Rock Primary School, Principal

The Brighton Education Fund has been incredibly supportive and instrumental in supporting innovative programming and special events at Council Rock in my 11 years as the principal. Their support has meant that out of the box thinking and sometimes, crazy ideas, can come to life and bring opportunities and joy to our students and staff.

Allison Rioux, Former Principal French Road

French Road Elementary School has been very fortunate to receive many different opportunities for grants from the Brighton Education Fund. Over the years, these grants have supported learning and well-being for thousands of FRES students and the staff could not be more thankful.

Rob Thomas, French Road Elementary School, Principal, retired

In my nearly twenty years as an administrator in the middle school, I witnessed first hand the positive impact the Brighton Education Fund has had on teachers and student learning. Requests granted for innovative and creative projects made a real difference and often were the impetus for programs and equipment that are now integrated into the district budget.

Tom Hall, Brighton High School Principal

From my start as a biology teacher at BHS in 1996, to BHS assistant principal, to FRES principal, to the BHS principal for the past 11 plus years, the Brighton Education Fund (BEF) has always been a part of my Brighton experience. When many schools struggle to fund special projects that are above and beyond what school budgets must cover for our students, the BEF has always been there to make those special projects come alive for the benefit of our 3500 plus students K-12.

Katie Lambert, TCMS Media Specialist

The TCMS Library program has been a frequent partner with BEF over the last 12 years. Our students have experienced the Fund's generosity in the furniture in which they read or relax, the resources/tools they use to expand their knowledge, and the literature they read and enjoy. TCMS Library is proud and immensely grateful to have a partner who supports and shares a vision which expands the worlds of students, builds their skills, and creates a welcoming environment.

Dr. Rachel Lauber, Director of Orchestras Brighton High School

I cannot thank you enough for continuing to embrace our creativity and enrich the lives of our students here at the Brighton School.

For more information about the fund, or to make a contribution, go to:

[www.brightoneducationfund.org](http://www.brightoneducationfund.org)

or contact Jody Siegle, Chair, by phone at 585-461-0434 or email her at:

[jody@brightoneducationfund.org](mailto:jody@brightoneducationfund.org)