

## Foundation awards grants to Fort Mill schools

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FORT MILL TOWNSHIP -- Fort Mill schools will get an extra boost thanks to the Foundation for Fort Mill Schools and some creative teachers.

The Foundation awarded 13 grants worth \$500 each to teachers and teaching teams in the Fort Mill School District for "Innovative Classroom Projects." The funds were awarded at the beginning of the school year to teachers who presented proposals to the Foundation for creative classroom projects and initiatives that exceed the funding abilities of the school district.

The awards were announced at a school board meeting this week.



Martha Kinard of the Foundation for Fort Mill Schools (left) presents grants to Fort Mill teachers at Monday's school board meeting.

"Even though the timeline for each of these projects may be a year or less, the influence and accomplishments of these teachers in developing the funded programs ripples through our schools and community in ways that cannot be measured," said Cheryl Hill, director of the privately run Foundation for Fort Mill Schools.

Among the projects funded was the "Falcon Life Skills Classroom," proposed by Joshua Hope, a special education teacher at Nation Ford High School. This project will help students with special needs put writing, reading and math skills into practice in real life situations in the Falcon Life Skills classroom. The money will be used to stock the classroom

"store" in sections that mimic real life stores, including grocery and department stores, restaurants and a vocational workshop, allowing students to practice skills in the classroom without the expense of a field trip.

Another grant, "Telling our story: Writing memoirs using literature and technology," was awarded to Treva Hamlin, a sixth grade teacher at Fort Mill Middle School, who plans to use the funds in a year-long project that combines writing topics, such as interviews with family members, with digital photography to create a personal student memoir.

Riverview Elementary teachers Sydney Field and Jessica Catledge joined forces to create "Effectively Implementing Guided Reading and the Daily 5." The funding from their grant award will help provide materials for reading stations in two classrooms, helping to strengthen reading and writing skills. A similar grant was awarded to second grade teacher Emily Gaither, also at Riverview Elementary School, for creating a lending library. "Lending Library: Getting leveled books to kids at home," will help improve reading scores by getting books into children's homes for nightly reading.

The Foundation for Fort Mill Schools was established in 2003 with the goal of helping promote and enhance academic programs in Fort Mill schools. Awarding \$500 grants to educators is an annual effort for the Foundation. The Foundation also has several academic scholarships it awards to students each year.

At the Oct. 2 school board meeting, Superintendent Chuck Epps thanked the foundation for funding the grants.

"The work you do helps children in this district, and we couldn't thank you enough," Epps said.