

Mary R. Stauffer Foundation Grant Program Update (2025–26)

Overview

The Mary R. Stauffer Foundation continues to support Downey Unified School District students through grants that expand learning opportunities, enhance student engagement, and promote creativity, collaboration, and academic growth. The program reflects Dr. Mary R. Stauffer’s vision that schools are defined by the experiences and opportunities provided to students.

Program Impact

During the 2025–26 school year, the Foundation supported a wide range of student-centered initiatives:

- **1,167 student awards** were provided through scholarships, merit recognition, and college savings programs
- **33 grants** were awarded across the District
- **Over 20,000 students** were impacted annually
- **Total funding awarded:** \$513,895

These investments support both direct student recognition and innovative programs across school sites.

Grant Distribution and Focus

Grant funding supports a variety of programs and initiatives, including:

- Districtwide learning experiences and events
- School site projects led by principals
- Classroom innovation led by teachers

At the middle school level, **33 grants totaling approximately \$128,000** supported programs such as clubs, STEM resources, arts programs, leadership opportunities, and student wellness initiatives.

Student Learning and Engagement

Grant-funded programs provide hands-on, engaging learning opportunities that support student development across multiple areas:

- **Academic enrichment:** STEM tools, classroom resources, and literacy supports
- **Student engagement:** Clubs, performing arts, and interactive activities
- **Social-emotional learning:** Wellness centers, leadership programs, and inclusive student activities

- **College and career awareness:** College banners, schoolwide initiatives, and student discussions about future goals

Examples include:

- Garden clubs that promote responsibility and life skills
- Leadership conferences and student activities that support school culture
- Expanded library e-book access to increase student reading
- STEM tools such as laser cutters and robotics support
- Wellness activities that foster student connection and engagement

Inclusive and Collaborative Opportunities

Many funded programs emphasize inclusion, collaboration, and student voice, including:

- Unified sports and inclusive student clubs
- Team-based learning activities and problem-solving programs
- Opportunities for students to collaborate across grade levels and programs

These efforts support a positive school climate and increased student participation.

Staff Innovation and Support

The grant program empowers educators to design and implement creative learning experiences tailored to student needs. Teachers and staff report increased student engagement, improved collaboration, and expanded opportunities for hands-on learning.

Feedback from Grantees

Educators shared that grant-funded programs:

- Increased student engagement and participation
- Allowed students to remain focused during instruction
- Supported meaningful, hands-on learning experiences
- Promoted creativity, collaboration, and student confidence

Legacy and Continued Impact

The Mary R. Stauffer Foundation's contributions continue to positively impact students, staff, and school communities. The program supports innovative practices and creates meaningful opportunities that enhance the overall educational experience for Downey Unified students.