

Palo Alto Partners in Education Announces 41st Round of Teacher Grants \$47,484 granted to 26 Innovative PAUSD Classroom Projects

February 9, 2008 -- Palo Alto, California -- Palo Alto Partners in Education (PiE) awarded nearly \$50,000 in grants to a variety of innovative educational projects including a musical theater production of Charlie and the Chocolate Factory, a living skills program for students with disabilities, a literacy program for struggling readers, an Odyssey Molecular Modeling Software for high school chemistry students, and "Smartboard" technology for middle and high school students, among other proposals.

PiE, the only non-profit organization that supports all schools in the Palo Alto Unified School District (PAUSD), last week announced its 41st round of teacher grants, awarding full or partial funding to 26 out of 47 projects in an amount totaling \$47,484. PiE granted \$8,664 to elementary projects, \$25,276 to the middle schools, and \$13,544 to high schools, addressing curricular needs ranging from special education to science technology to language and literacy.

According to Al Russell, the PiE board member who heads the teacher grants committee, "PiE received a very large number of grant applications for the current grant round reflecting the goals, interests and the creativity of teachers from across the district. The result of this is that it was very difficult to make the final choices for funding. The teachers in our district continue to challenge themselves with new ideas and concepts with respect to better methods and techniques to enhance classroom education."

Many middle and upper school teachers sought funding for a promising new interactive whiteboard technology, known as "Smartboards."

Leslie Goldman, an art teacher and technology mentor at Jordan Middle School, said, "Interactive whiteboards encourage a very participatory model of instruction. Teachers project from their laptop to the interactive Smartboard. Websites, Word docs, handwriting, almost anything projected on the Smartboard can be moved around, manipulated, written on and saved. In math while a teacher is presenting, students can interact with and add to the presentation on the fly. In English classes the Smartboard allows students to manipulate their written content. Think about a draft essay that can be projected to the whole class: Words and phrases are selected, moved around, or deleted by students."

"It is exciting that PAUSD teachers are willing to innovate, learn, and grow through the use of this technology, and it is all prefaced by an enthusiasm to engage all students by making the concepts more tangible, relevant and fun," she said.

New educational technology will also come in handy for Lucretia Lee, a first grade teacher at Walter Hays Elementary School.

"I was delighted to receive funding from PiE to purchase the Leapfrog Personal Learning Tools and interactive books and skill cards in order to facilitate differentiation and individualize reading instruction," Lee said. "I plan to use the Leapfrogs both with my first grade class as well as in the summer literacy intervention program this summer and hope to also share them with my primary grade level colleagues."

Established in 1987 by PiE's predecessor organization, Palo Alto Foundation for Education, the teacher grants program makes awards to teachers at all levels who propose innovative classroom projects. Since its inception, the program has awarded well over \$1 million.

PiE is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) foundation dedicated to sustaining extraordinary public education in Palo Alto. For more information, please visit www.papie.org.

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