NWEA Recognizes Educators Moving the Needle on Equity

Five teachers nationwide receive “Educators for Equity” grants to close the opportunity gaps that affect student achievement

Portland, Ore. – Oct. 30, 2019: NWEA, a not-for-profit education assessment organization, has awarded $44,500 in grants ranging from $4,500 to $10,000 each to five educators who help foster growth for students facing systematic barriers to academic opportunities. The grants, funded through the inaugural year of the NWEA Educators for Equity Grant Program, will support specific school initiatives that focus on helping eliminate inequity in education. Two hundred eighty educators from pre-K–12 schools and nonprofit organizations from across the United States applied for a grant through the program, and the five selected will implement their projects during the 2019–2020 school year.

Joe H. Lee, Fresno School of Missions (Fresno, California), received a grant to help fund the Lil’ Playmakers project that combines sports fundamentals and English/Spanish language acquisition. This K-8 program combines language development with an emphasis on literacy, and sports skills that reiterate positive involvement to counter the efforts of gang recruitment. The program utilizes Footsteps to Brilliance, a national program which was adopted and endorsed by President Obama’s administration as their signature program for teaching limited and non-English speakers English.

Casey Andrews, TechBoston Academy (Boston, Massachusetts), was awarded a grant to help fund the Personal as a Political Senior Trip project. High school seniors will travel to Montgomery, Alabama in April 2020 to visit the Legacy Museum and National Memorial for Peace and Justice and to volunteer at the Montgomery Habitat for Humanity. The trip will further students’ understanding of the role of race in American history and the current political climate. Through opportunities for self-reflection and sharing with the Boston community, the project will encourage students to participate in civic activities to help them become part of the next generation of leaders.

Miranda Stramel, International High School of New Orleans (New Orleans, Louisiana), was awarded a grant to host a four-week English-language immersion summer camp for recent immigrants and refugees fleeing war, poverty, crime, and violence. The summer camp will help prepare students for high school by building vocabulary and comprehension. In addition, students will connect with the New Orleans community through field trips that explore the multicultural heritage of the city and offer opportunities to practice conversational English.

Brendan Kearney, East High School (Madison, Wisconsin), was awarded a grant to help establish a study center to provide academic support for low-income students and students of color after hours and on weekends to encourage enrollment and retention in Advanced Placement (AP) courses. East High School is one of the most diverse schools in Madison; however, enrollment in AP courses sees a disparity between races. Two key reasons identified by students of color were a lack of access to additional help with rigorous coursework as well as a reluctance to ask classroom teachers for help in front of peers, which is particularly acute for marginalized students. This new study center will provide the targeted help and support that students need.
Kennan Eaddy, Battleground Elementary School (Lincolnton, North Carolina), was awarded a grant to provide a project-based learning camp in the summer and during winter break for 60 economically disadvantaged elementary students to fight the summer learning slide. The camp will focus on science, social studies, math and literacy and will provide rich project-based learning experiences that will help students make real-life connections to learning.

“These educators have spent their careers closing gaps that exist in our society for kids, and we hope that these grants can accelerate their work,” said Chris Minnich, CEO of NWEA. “It will be incredibly exciting to see what these leaders will do with these resources.”

The Educators for Equity program invited educators, including teachers, principals, and education specialists, to apply for grant awards for their schools or districts to fund initiatives and programs designed to support the academic development of underserved students.

Applications were evaluated through an extensive application process in which applicants described their program and how it would address closing the opportunity gap and building equity for students. In addition, programs were evaluated based on evidence base; equity mission; cultural relevance; and academic focus. Applications were reviewed by a selection committee that included education experts at NWEA and local and national community-based organizations.

About NWEA

NWEA® is a mission-driven, not-for-profit organization that supports students and educators worldwide by creating assessment solutions that precisely measure growth and proficiency—and provide insights to help tailor instruction. Educators in more than 10,000 schools, districts, and education agencies in 141 countries rely on our flagship interim assessment, MAP® Growth™; our progress monitoring and skills mastery tool, MAP® Skills™; our reading fluency and comprehension assessment, MAP® Reading Fluency™; and our new assessment solution that combines growth and proficiency measurement. Visit NWEA.org to find out how NWEA can partner with you to help all kids learn.

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