

When Money Brings New Opportunities

AISD Issues Campus Innovation Grants

A library makeover. A new view of theatre. A library of textbooks. All of these projects and more are coming this year, thanks to special funds from the district.

AISD has issued campus innovation grants this fall after determining that it had extra tax funds in the budget. Each school received a budget based on the number of students in each school—about \$35 per student. Bigger schools get more money. The Shared Decision-Making committee approved these grants before they were submitted to the district. Kerr received a total of \$28,035.

Whatever is bought with campus innovation grant funds has to benefit the students in one way or another. The grant has to be used by the end of this year, and a report of the grant is done in May of 2016. Many centers are receiving their new equipments and gadgets now.

The college station has always been a place aimed to get students prepared and ahead. Eugene Miller has plans to increase the efficiency of dual credit classes by making them more accessible.

"This particular grant is just shy of six thousand dollars. It's to buy textbooks for certain courses for our library to house," Miller said. "Mrs. [Paula] Murray has graciously agreed to house those books for us. The supply is going to be dictated by the demand. I am looking at college math, history and psychology. It depends on what is donated from the university and what people sign up for."

Despite all of the complications that come with the dual credit process, Miller narrows the process down to make it more appealing to students.

"I'm trying to find a professor that will work with us who has reasonably priced books that we can buy and house them in the library for students to check out. That way, let's say you're taking government, and you are able to get in that professor's class, you don't have to buy the book. You can check it out from the library," Miller said. He said the cost of college textbooks—which can be more than \$200 each—keeps some students from taking dual credit classes. "I think this plan will solve most issues. I think when kids are in a scenario where they have an assignment that requires

a book that they don't have, they need to communicate with me that they do not have that book."

According to Miller, what may seem like a large amount of money is not that much when it is put to use to benefit the students.

"It is my hope that this semester, that everyone taking a class will have access to most of their materials here at Kerr without having to pay for them," Miller said. "Six thousand dollars sounds like a lot, but it isn't. That's just 30 books and they're gone. It isn't a lot of money. It is not going to solve all the problems but I'm hoping it will solve most."

Last year, the library received many furniture upgrades, and Murray is continuing the updates with just over \$7,000 in grant funds.

"We are getting tables with wheels that you can move around and configure in different groups. We are also getting chairs," Murray said. "That way it will be more collaborate for students. If they want to work in a group of four they can move the tables."

Murray said the change is necessary because the current library furniture is heavy and hard to move. She is basing the looks of the new tables and chairs on the Kerr colors of pur-

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—Joey Watkins

ple with gray.

Theater Teacher James Watkins is also looking to innovate in theater with grants

"We got a camera. We also are getting a big flat screen television that we are going to put next to the black box entrance," Watkins said. The monitor will show commercials, slides, schedules and other information about upcoming shows, as well as behind-the-scene photos and videos showing the tech crews and what they do to



Sabrina Dang (Left) and Alondra Tristan (Right) sort the newly arrived book received from the grant

support shows.

The camera has already arrived and was put to work preparing for the Mr. KHS event.

"I've been using it for a commercial that we have been doing," Watkins said. "We are also going to record

what the actors do because they are performing, but they do not understand all of the work the set people put in, the props people put in, the costume and makeup people put in and the light people put in. During the rehearsal process, we are going to take pictures of all the people working, and then show it to the parents, community members and administrators."

Other grants approved this year were \$800 to science for microscopes and equipment; about \$2200 to the English center for a collection of novels; \$2000 for large monitors in social studies; almost \$3000 to renew Turnitin for students and teachers; and \$350 to journalism for microphones and \$5000 for lighting.

The grants are for the students, and the teachers and staff are all working on getting things that will provide more convenience and opportunities for them.

"I like to support anything that the kids are doing," Murray said. "I am here for the students, so anything that is going to make their life easier am I willing to help out with."

some other footage that we are going to roll the night of the actual show. Then I can use the video to take single pictures that we are going to use on posters. We will also use the high quality camera to take production photos."

Watkins believes that the work of the theater students should be noticed more by the community.

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Nelson Nwachukwu
Yazan Abuashour