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**SELCO COMMUNITY CREDIT UNION AWARDS 61 SPARK! CREATIVE LEARNING GRANTS WORTH MORE THAN $53,000, INCLUDING 22 TO SCHOOLS IN LANE COUNTY**

**Annual program awards individual grants of as much as $1,000 each to K-12 educators throughout the state**

(SPRINGFIELD, Ore.) — A total of 61 educators representing 56 schools across Oregon, including 22 from Lane County, have been awarded more than $53,000 as part of SELCO Community Credit Union’s annual [SPARK! Creative Learning Grants](https://www.selco.org/community-giving/spark-creative-learning-grants) program.

SPARK! Creative Learning Grants are designed to support teachers with creative classroom ideas but lack the funds to get those projects off the ground. Individual grants of as much as $1,000 each are awarded to K-12 educators across the 27 Oregon counties that SELCO serves.

“SELCO launched the SPARK! Creative Learning Grants program more than 30 years ago, and year after year we’re struck by the innovative ways Oregon’s educators spark their students’ thirst for knowledge,” said Craig Carpenter, SELCO’s senior vice president of lending and business banking. “The SPARK! program was created to support new and meaningful ways to reach students, and it continues to be successful in that mission. As a credit union founded by educators, championing teachers and students will always be an important part of what we do.”

This year’s recipients include 22 programs from 21 schools in Lane County:

* Learning Kits for Diverse and Complex Communicators — Abby Nehls-Lowe, Family School, Eugene
* Name Our Chain! Holt Bolts Rock! — Ashley Reich, Holt Elementary, Eugene
* Outdoor Science and Exploration — Audrey Hartsfield, Willagillespie Community School, Eugene
* Paint by Numbers— Brian Gulka, Gilham Elementary, Eugene
* Learning Place Value with Classroom Economy — Christal Miller, Buena Vista Elementary, Eugene
* KaPOW! Graphic Novels Engage Readers — Denae Potterf, Malabon Elementary, Eugene
* Rhythm in Motion — James Elwell, London Elementary, Cottage Grove
* Conscious Discipline Shubert Books — Kerri Sage, Awbrey Park Elementary, Eugene
* Chavez Library Literature Circles — Martha Dyer, Cesar Chavez Elementary, Eugene
* Enabling Success: Tools for Autism and Behavioral Life Skills — Melinda McGladrey, Applegate Elementary, Eugene
* Learning and Creating Community Through Books and Play — Rebecca Ansen, Kennedy Middle School, Eugene
* Reading Science: Looking and Listening to the Sounds We Make! — Sharie Borneman, Clear Lake Elementary, Eugene
* Ukuleles for Musical, Cognitive, and Social Growth — Tracy, Zehner, Bertha Holt Elementary School, Eugene
* "Let's Regulate!" - Social-Emotional Learning — Brandi Bailey, Siuslaw Middle School, Florence
* Amplifying Student Learning & Creativity With Podcasts — Duane Bean, Siuslaw High School, Florence
* It's a Great Day to be a Leopard! — Jeffery Tompkins, Laurel Elementary School, Junction City
* Operation Mazlow — Mindie Ezelle, Junction City Options, Junction City
* Good Game! — Amy Donaldson, Centennial Elementary, Springfield
* Digital Storytelling — Jill Plumb, Springfield High School, Springfield
* Making Movies in the Classroom — Karen Tunnell, Centennial Elementary, Springfield
* From Chairs to Choices — Kate Aly Brady, Mt. Vernon Elementary, Springfield
* Crafting for a Cause — Monica Tapia, Guy Lee Elementary, Springfield

A complete list of statewide recipients and project descriptions can be found [HERE](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1AB--y1TB-4AeBnVIfIHLqLUxG2O31Jfh/edit?usp=share_link&ouid=116068707752443126195&rtpof=true&sd=true).

The committee’s goal is to fund innovative projects that will make the most significant impact on students and the greatest opportunity to leave a lasting impression.

This year’s recipients include Colin McCusker, a teacher at Cascades Academy in Bend, who is using a SPARK! Grant to help fund the “Sustainable Hydroponic Window Gardens” project — which asks students to design and fabricate sustainable hydroponic window gardens that will provide organic herbs and greens to the school’s lunch program. Other recipients include Nicholas Krissie of Lincoln Middle School in Oakland, who will use the funds for “STEM Rocks!” which teaches students STEM principles through building guitars that students can use to learn to play the blues.

In 2022, SELCO awarded more than $54,000 to 60 educators across 55 Oregon schools. Funded projects included a library book overhaul at Cesar E. Chavez Elementary School in Eugene to replace aging books with new, engaging nonfiction. See a video spotlight of the program [HERE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3qkE1PkQwoM).

“(The students) were able to get new books — about dinosaurs, about pets, about crafts, about maker things — and they were super excited,” said Martha Dyer, Chavez Elementary School’s teacher-librarian and SPARK! Grant recipient. “You could see the joy in their faces and the excitement. They wanted to check them out right away.”

For more information on SELCO Community Credit Union’s SPARK! Creative Learning Grants or to follow the progress of some of the grant recipients, visit [www.selco.org/spark](http://www.selco.org/spark).

**About SELCO Community Credit Union:**

Founded nearly 90 years ago by a group of fiscally minded teachers, Springfield-based SELCO Community Credit Union today serves more than 150,000 members as one of the largest and longest-standing Oregon-based credit unions. A not-for-profit, federally insured, member-driven financial cooperative with more than $2.7 billion in assets, SELCO provides its member-owners with exceptional rates and low fees on a full range of financial products and services, including banking, mortgages, personal and business loans, investments, and insurance. Membership is available to anyone who lives or works in one of the 27 Oregon or eight Washington counties SELCO serves. For more information or to become a member today, stop by one of SELCO’s 15 branches, visit [selco.org](https://www.selco.org/), orcall **800-445-4483**.

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