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News Release

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Grape Commission Awards Education Grants Nine Grants Awarded to Educators in Kern County

Fresno, CA – Schools in the table grape growing regions of California’s San Joaquin and Coachella valleys are benefiting from grants awarded this academic year.

In total, 36 education grants worth up to \$750 were awarded by the California Table Grape Commission on behalf of California’s table grape growers and will reach over 4,000 students. Nine of the grants were awarded to educators in Kern County, with projects to be completed this spring.

“California’s table grape growers have been supporting local education for years,” said Kathleen Nave, president of the commission. “This program is one of the ways table grape growers give back to the communities in which they live and work.”

Examples of the projects in Kern County include agriculture lessons using MinecraftEdu (a video game), inspiring youth through chess and music, programming robots, learning vocabulary by studying owls, and using calculators to learn chemistry.

Here are the Kern County grant recipients and their projects by school district:

Bakersfield City School District

- Sarah Riess, Horace Mann Elementary School. At-risk elementary school students will build confidence and stay fit by learning clogging steps and dances in a health class that meets three times per week. The group will perform for the entire student body and parents at assemblies and events.
- Tapp Hancock, Frank West Elementary School. Third grade students will learn about owls, their habitats, diets, environments and more. Funds will be used to purchase owl pellet kits, posters, books and models of owls and prey.
- Joyce A. Victor, Owens Primary School. Kindergarten students will work with a professional artist to create a mural on the wall outside their classroom. The students will learn about eight famous artists and practice their techniques.

Then they will vote on a theme for the wall, and will each paint a part of the mural.

Beardsley School District

- Nancy McNally, North Beardsley Elementary School. Special education students will use art to practice reading, writing, math and science. Funds will be used to purchase art supplies such as paint, brushes, easels, glitter, clay and markers.

Kern High School District

- Scott Lockhart, East Bakersfield High School. Funds will go toward robot kits and software, and students will build and program robots designed to accomplish specified tasks.
- Manuel Alderete, Mira Monte High School. An iPad and 3-D scanner will improve lessons for high school students taking drafting and engineering classes.

Rosedale Union School District

- Steve Winn, Freedom Middle School. A grant will allow the school to purchase chess clocks and additional chess sets for the school's chess club, and hand percussion instruments for the music club. Both clubs serve a combined total of about 60 middle school students.
- Brook Webb, Rosedale Middle School. Students will participate in agriculture lessons through MinecraftEdu, a version of a popular video game designed for use in the classroom. They will work together to find fertile land, determine soil type, create an irrigation system, and locate seeds, fertilizer, light and water sources, relying on prior knowledge gained from earth science units on growing and managing crops.

Wasco Union High School District

- Heather O'Connor, Wasco Union High School. A class set of calculators will benefit high school students learning multiple step math conversions during chemistry lessons.

The Innovation in Teaching education grant program was created in 1993 to support innovative educational projects in the table grape growing regions of California's San Joaquin and Coachella valleys.

For more information, go to www.grapesfromcalifornia.com/EducationGrants.php.

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