

Initiative Grant Review Report – 2025

1. **CNC Plasma Project**, East High School, Dave Evans, Grades 9-12

Amount Requested: \$18,892.55 Amount Awarded \$18,892.55

Mankato East High School is requesting support for the CNC and Design Project, which will integrate permanent CNC plasma cutting technology and updated design stations into Mankato East High School's manufacturing curriculum. Currently reliant on external partnerships and outdated equipment, this investment will give students hands-on experience in design, programming, and fabrication—critical skills for careers in Minnesota's growing manufacturing sector. The project will provide equitable access to industry-relevant learning for over 150 students annually, better preparing them for post-secondary education and careers. By creating sustainable, future-focused learning opportunities, this project strengthens the vital link between classroom learning and real-world workforce needs.

2. **The Scarlet Den (School Store)**, West High School, Curtis Doell, Grades 9-12

Amount Requested: \$11,882.95 Amount Awarded: \$11,882.95

The Scarlet Gear Project at Mankato West High School aims to establish a student-run school store selling high-quality apparel such as hoodies, shirts, and hats to students, families, and alumni. The store will foster school spirit while providing students with hands-on experience in entrepreneurship, marketing, finance, and business operations. The grant would allow the purchasing of necessary equipment (like a heat press and embroidery machine), launching a marketing campaign, and beginning sales through a Square store and in partnership with the entrepreneurship class. The store is expected to impact over 1,000 individuals annually, including 75% of the student body. The project will provide educational value, foster community engagement, ensure long-term financial sustainability, and offer innovative, real-world learning experiences. The Scarlet Gear store is designed to be integrated into the school's business curriculum, giving students valuable career and leadership skills.

3. **HMS Desktop Mill**, West High School, Mark Zenk, Grades 9-12

Amount Requested: \$9,995 Amount Awarded: \$9,995

The *CNC Milling Project* at Mankato West High School is requesting the addition of a CNC desktop mill to the manufacturing curriculum, aligning with technology already in place at Mankato East. This equipment will enhance students' skills in design, programming, and fabrication, providing hands-on learning tied directly to industry standards. The project will impact about 142 students annually across three key courses and prepare them for careers in Minnesota's growing manufacturing sector. Implementation is planned for fall 2025, with student progress measured through competency and career-readiness surveys. This investment will create a sustainable, long-term improvement to the curriculum and support future workforce needs.

4. **Sensory/Movement Room**, Monroe Elementary, Grades K-5

Amount Requested: \$3,319.20 Amount Awarded: \$3,319.20

Monroe Elementary is requesting to convert a classroom into a sensory, calming, and gross motor room to support students' emotional regulation, sensory needs, and readiness to learn. This space will provide structured opportunities for movement, calming, and reflection, serving approximately 20% of students annually while enhancing overall school climate. The project promotes equity, sustainability, and student-centered support rooted in SEL best practices. The project will be completed over the summer and operational by the start of the fall semester, serving as a proactive tool to improve student behavior, focus, and emotional health.

5. Real-World Ag Practices, Camp Ignite/All K-5 Buildings, Grades K-5

Amount Requested: \$2,963.11 Amount Awarded: \$863.11

Camp Ignite Administrators are asking for funding to integrate agriculture into their curriculum. By immersing students in agricultural practices, they aim to ignite a passion for learning and develop critical skills. This hands-on approach will cultivate relationships with peers and mentors, bridging classroom knowledge with real-world applications. Through this initiative, students will explore potential career pathways in agriculture, fostering a deep appreciation for sustainable practices and innovation. The goal is to provide approximately 500 Kindergarten through 5th grade students with experiences connected to agriculture during the targeted services program which runs annually through the month of July.

Initiative Grants Funded in 2009 – \$54,259
Initiative Grants Funded in 2010 – \$56,000
Initiative Grants Funded in 2011 – \$50,723
Initiative Grants Funded in 2012 – \$56,999
Initiative Grants Funded in 2013 – \$63,146
Initiative Grants Funded in 2014 - \$55,000
Initiative Grants Funded in 2015 - \$64,209
Initiative Grants Funded in 2016 - \$43,626
Initiative Grants Funded in 2017 - \$88,819

Initiative Grants Funded in 2018 - \$92,395
Initiative Grants Funded in 2019 - \$57,124
Initiative Grants Funded in 2020 - \$76,223
Initiative Grants Funded in 2021 – \$40,282
Initiative Grants Funded in 2022 – \$96,083
Initiative Grants Awarded in 2023 - \$41,607
Initiative Grants Awarded in 2024 - \$62,402
Initiative Grants Awarded in 2025- \$44,953

Total Initiative Grants Funded since 1995 - \$1,385,231