



IPEI Launches \$600,000 Campaign

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The Ithaca Public Education Initiative today launched a \$600,000 capital campaign designed to meet the growing demand for its educational grants and programs. An independent not-for-profit organization, IPEI facilitates community connections and innovative learning initiatives for thousands of pre-K-12th grade students and their teachers in the Ithaca City School District.

"This campaign is an opportunity for all of us to help make Ithaca's schools the very best," says IPEI President Terry Byrnes. "We are doing this for our kids, our schools, our community and our future."

The IPEI Campaign: Our Children • Our Schools • Our Future addresses three priority areas. Besides increasing the number and size of grants that IPEI can award, it also will allow IPEI to move from being an all-volunteer group and to build an endowment to ensure that it can continue to support the schools for years to come.

"IPEI is receiving more and more requests for support—we want to be able to say 'Yes' to the project proposals that can make a positive difference for our kids' educational experiences," says IPEI Vice President Jennifer Engel. "This campaign will allow IPEI to make an even greater difference in our schools, but we cannot do it without support from the community."

This school year IPEI has already made a record number of grants—totalling more than \$300,000 so far, thanks entirely to donations from the community.

Since its founding in 1996 by a group of concerned community members and parents, IPEI has awarded over 1,100 grants totalling more than \$1.3 million to enable hundreds of teachers to undertake innovative projects.

"IPEI has grown in importance to teachers and students every year," says Mary Grainger, who along with Byrnes and Engel, is a tri-chair of the Campaign. "The teachers and students need us and we need your help! IPEI is the vehicle through which you can show your support for excellence in our classrooms."

This month alone IPEI helped fund several projects with direct impact on students, including an all-school immersion with Latin American music, dance, history, and food; Kids Discover the Trail! experiences with spring wildflowers and 19th century school-day activities; a Vivaldi concert by middle and high school students that was the culmination of months of learning about the Baroque period in collaboration with a Cornell musicology professor; and assistance to the Code Red Robotics team that competed successfully at the world championships.

More than 150 requests for grants are made to IPEI each year, and IPEI would like to be able to approve even more worthy requests, at higher levels, for longer periods of time—and to fund new opportunities and community collaborations. This campaign will positively impact the education and future of hundreds more children by increasing all of IPEI's grants and programs.

The campaign has raised just over \$500,000 in early and lead gifts, and IPEI hopes to conclude the effort by early fall.

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