



A P R IPEA Awards Connecting Classrooms Grants

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IPEI, the Ithaca Public Education Initiative, has awarded the first ever Connecting Classrooms Grants. The Connecting Classrooms Grants program is IPEI's fourth and newest grants offering for teachers, staff and others with ideas for enhancing educational opportunities for Ithaca City School District (ICSD) students. Five grants totaling \$34,950 were announced by IPEI Grants Committee Chair Connie Patterson.

"IPEI is pleased and excited to support these fantastic proposals that find new ways to get students actively involved in learning and discovery," IPEI board member and retired educator Patterson said. "Each project was created by a group of educators who have chosen to focus on scientific content while incorporating language arts, math, and technology. We are impressed with the teachers' vision and commitment!"



"What's our Role? Building Community and Understanding our Local Environment: South Hill and Beverly J. Martin (BJM) Elementary Schools' Ecosystem Investigation" will be led by South Hill's Jennifer Wilkie and BJM's Christine Barley who are collaborating with six other teachers and two community partners.

Brian Goodman of Enfield Elementary School is the lead teacher for "Citizen Scientists Action Project (C-SAP)" with ten teachers from four buildings and the Floating Classroom.

"The Neandertal in the Mirror" was initiated by Boynton Middle School's Paula Berman and her three colleagues at Boynton.

Ithaca High School's Carlan Gray is leading "Connecting All Students through Sustainable

Agriculture” with three other Ithaca High educators.

“Caroline Wilderness Campus Curriculum Initiative” was proposed by Principal Mary Grover who will involve all Caroline Elementary School teachers.



“We couldn’t be more thrilled at this vote of confidence IPEI has placed in our vision,” exclaimed Wilkie. “The work we envision represents a powerful combination of rigorous learning, married with the relevance of students knowing their local environment, and valuing service to their local community. We are linking two schools who are not typically partnered which acknowledges that we can help build understanding and community in Ithaca, especially among young children.”

Barley added, “We are thrilled to be partnering with local scientific illustrators and community organizations Museum of the Earth, Cayuga Nature Center, and Trout in the Classroom.”

Connecting Classrooms Grants build on IPEI’s successful models for encouraging and supporting innovative teaching and deeper learning.

“Our intent is to be the catalyst for ICSD staff to seek and develop innovative collaborative partnerships between teachers within a school, across grade levels and/or between schools,” says Patterson.

“It’s about working together,” said IPEI Executive Director Christine Sanchirico. “This is really our guiding principle for the new grants.”

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