

RUMSON EDUCATION FOUNDATION 2025–26 GRANTS

Investment in innovation for our community.

The **Rumson Education Foundation** is proud to announce the most dynamic grant cycle in its history, with **20 grants awarded** for Deane-Porter and Forrestdale Schools. Thanks to the generosity of this community and the creativity of our teachers and staff, many of these programs are already in classrooms today, with all 20 fully funded for the 2025–26 academic year.

This broad and diverse group of grants is designed to enhance our curriculum, strengthen our special services, and prioritize the well-being of our growing student population. From language arts to life skills, this year's grants touch every corner of the school day. They fall into three areas of focus:

Curriculum: Resources that accelerate and enrich learning across subjects.

Special Services: Programs that ensure every student is seen, supported, and set up for success.

Social-Emotional Learning: Innovative tools that nurture the whole child.

Curriculum: Tools That Transform Learning

These grants span technology, literacy, language, and STEM, designed to meet students exactly where they are and push them further.



Turning Pages, Building Readers:

Geodes brings phonics-based decodable books to third graders, extending a beloved program already thriving in K–2.

Submitted by: Vera Ridoux and Erin O'Connell

Math That Sticks:

Reflex Math builds speed and automaticity in basic arithmetic, while **Delta Math** layers in conceptual depth with standards-aligned problems.

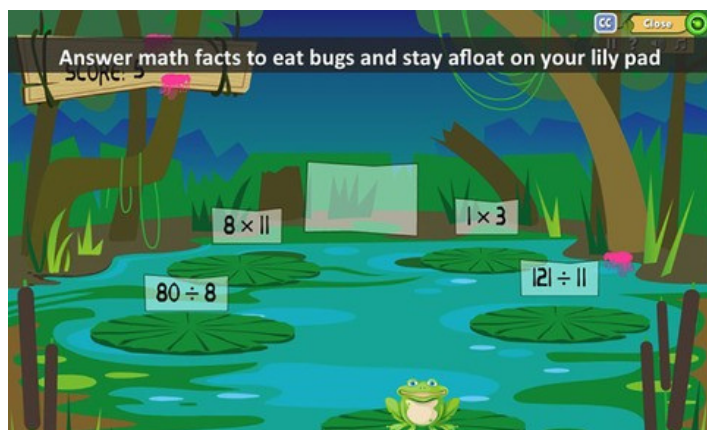
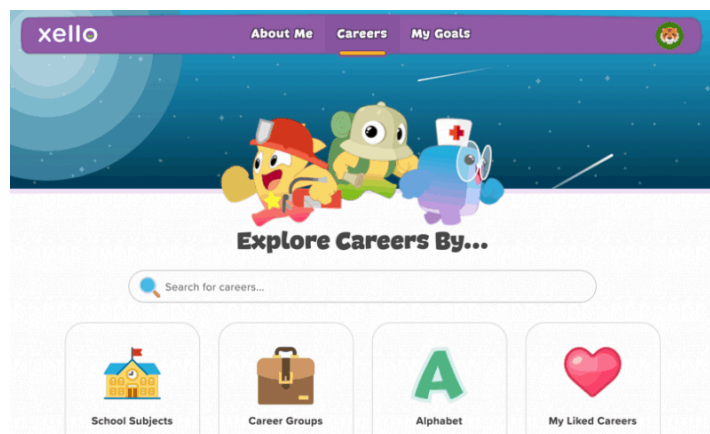
Submitted by: Marla Beil and Vera Ridoux (Reflex Math) and Sommer Vandeboe (Delta Math)



Finding Your Voice:

Speakable has already been piloted in Spanish and French, offering students real-time feedback on speaking, pronunciation, and writing.

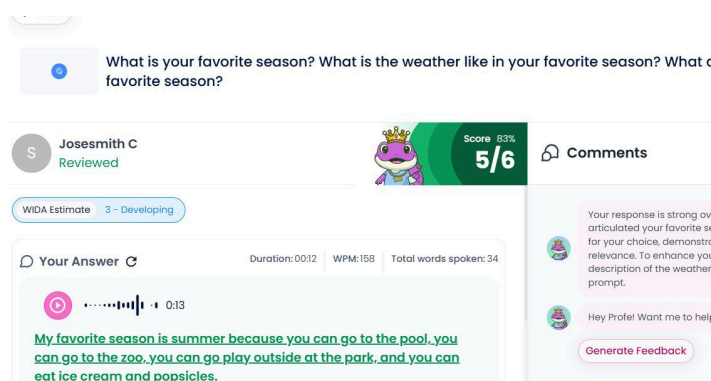
Submitted by: Natalie Carroll, Basil Henning, and Amanda Cowen



Engineering Minds, Built with LEGO:

LEGO AI SPIKE Kits bring hands-on engineering design to 4th and 5th grade science.

Submitted by: Jesse Johnson



A Head Start on What's Next:

Xello empowers students to explore their future academic and career paths. Through engaging activities and real-world scenarios, students will learn key financial concepts such as budgeting, saving, managing money, and responsible financial decision-making.

Submitted by: Vera Ridoux

The Essentials, Elevated: Chromebooks for grades 1 and 5 support everything from digital reading to adaptive state testing.

Submitted by: John Bormann and Louis Pelissier



The Essentials, Elevated: The Cool Lam! laminator supports making high-quality instructional materials more accessible and longer-lasting. **Fine Motor Foundations** in Pre-K will expand access to durable, developmentally appropriate fine motor manipulatives that intentionally build hand strength, dexterity, and bilateral coordination.

Submitted by: Paulette Barham (Cool Laminator), and Rachel Hayes (Fine Motor Skills)

Special Services: Every Student, Every Need

These grants reflect a deep and thoughtful commitment to every learner - including those with IEPs and students in our new Multiple Disabled (MD) program.



Life Skills for Real Life: The Life Skills and Dramatic Play Center creates a structured, engaging environment where MD students can practice daily living skills, functional communication, and cooperative play.

Submitted by: Nancy Salamone

Data-Driven Care: MD Digital Assessment

Tools equip instructional aides with the technology to track progress, identify behavioral patterns, and make informed decisions for each individual student.

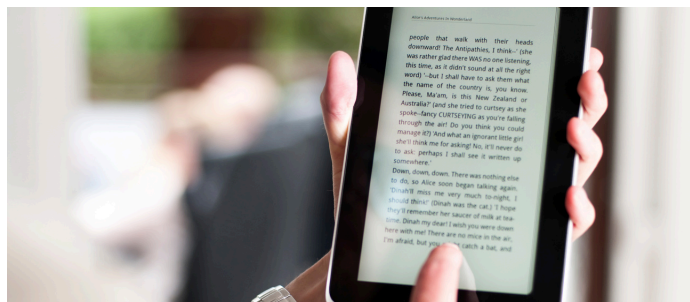
Submitted by: Moira Barrett and Durie Leidner



Removing Barriers: Accessible Literacy Tools

convert digital text into accessible formats and support the full writing process — ensuring that reading and writing challenges never become roadblocks to learning.

Submitted by: Sandy Self



Comfort in the Classroom: Flexible Furniture

Accessories bring a variety of seating options to accommodate diverse learning styles, because where a student sits can shape how well they learn.

Submitted by: Jolene Berardi, Meghan Rady, Pam Mannion, Emily Kenlay



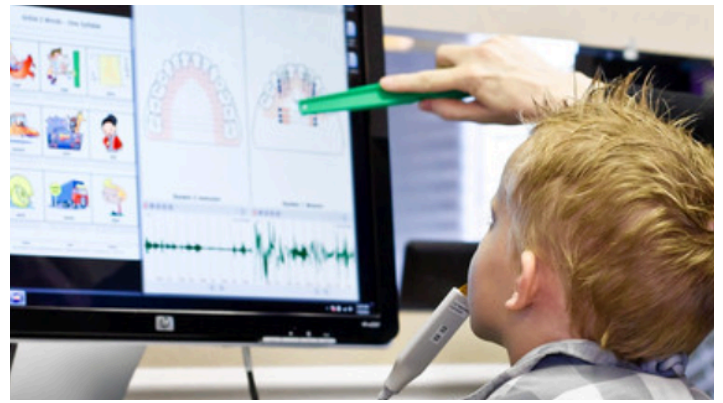
Smarter Evaluations: The **Woodcock Johnson** assessment system evaluates cognitive abilities, academic achievements, and language skills, while the **BASC behavioral tools** help identify challenges and develop precise intervention strategies.

Submitted by: Sandy Self (Woodcock Johnson) and Spencer Austin (BASC)

Modernizing Speech Services: **Speech**

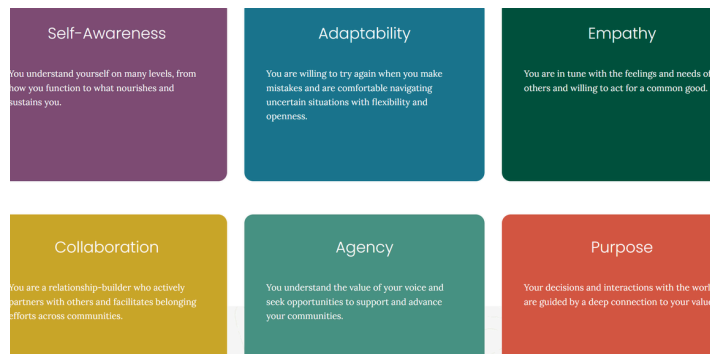
Language Digital Tools bring updated technology and evidence-based resources to speech and language services, giving students more effective and efficient pathways to communication.

Submitted by: Ursula Glackin and Jamie Caruso



Social-Emotional Learning: Centering the Whole Child

Social-emotional learning (SEL) has moved from buzzword to bedrock and the REF is investing accordingly.



Building Inner Strength: The **Wayfinder SEL Program** and **SSIS SEL Screener** provides structured, research-based lessons in emotional regulation, mindfulness, and executive functioning. These are life skills dressed as school skills.

Submitted by: Mike Dugan

Moving to Learn: **Flexible Seating** supports collaborative learning and student choice — recognizing that not every student learns best sitting still in a traditional chair.

Submitted by: Erin O'Connell and Patrick Sullivan

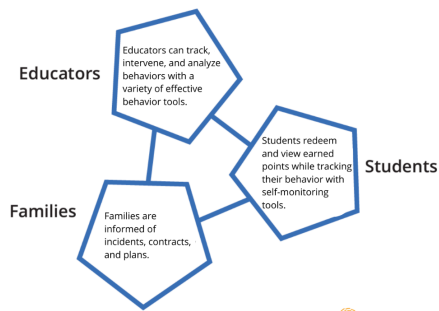


A Place to Reset: Designed for students who experience sensory overload, anxiety, or difficulty with focus, **The Sensory Space** gives students a safe place to regulate and return to learning ready and renewed.

Submitted by: Jennifer Gibbons and Spencer Austin

Behavior Support, Backed by Data: The Rethink Behavior Suite provides a platform to track, support, and improve behavior interventions using real data — closing the loop between observation and action.

Submitted by: Durie Leidner



A Special Thank You to Grant Submitters

Behind every grant in this list is a teacher or staff member who gave their own time to make it happen. Writing a grant proposal is no small feat. It requires creative thinking, careful research, and a deep belief that the effort is worth it for students. This year, we are grateful to every person who submitted a proposal during this cycle — your creativity, dedication, and advocacy for students made this record-breaking year possible.

We also want to extend our thanks to **Dr. Bormann** for his guidance, enthusiasm, and steadfast support throughout this process.

Thirty Years of Making It Possible

Since 1995, the **Rumson Education Foundation** has been the engine behind some of the most innovative learning experiences in our district, and this year is no exception.

This year, we held two successful fundraising events: our signature **Golf Classic** and a special **“Rooted In Rumson” Tree** installation celebrating our 30th Anniversary, which we are excited to unveil later this Spring. Plus, the **Rumson Kitchen Tour returns this May**.

None of this happens without you. These 20 grants are a testament to our dedicated teachers, a supportive community, and a foundation rooted in helping every student in Rumson learn, grow, and thrive.



rumsonedfoundation.org