



HPS Grant Recipients, front row (L-R): Cynthia Thompson-Schmidt, Robin Rash, Cameron Grace, Gena Barnhardt, Beth Shoffner, Bonnie Schultz (Back row): Heather Minton, Ellie Wilson, Karla Carpenter, Ellen Douglas, and Donna Wiles. (Not pictured: Diane Owens; Anna Gilbert's photo follows story)

Dedicated Educators Awarded Grants for Schools

As classrooms across North Carolina and the nation continue to experience budget restraints, educators at Hickory Public Schools, backed with community support, are doing everything possible to keep their students' academic growth as a top priority.

Driven to discover additional funds for their schools, thirteen dedicated educators were recognized during the recent meeting of the HPS Board of Education for their grant awards, collectively valued at more than \$47,000. These funds will be used for multiple purposes from improved technology in the classroom to books for school media centers. HPS Superintendent, Dr. Walter Hart and Chairman of the HPS Board of Education, Joab Cotton, presented each grant recipient with a certificate of appreciation from Hickory Public Schools.

As of November 28, the 2011-2012 HPS grant recipients include:

- **Anna Gilbert**, a teacher at Southwest Elementary, received \$1,184 from Rutherford Electric Membership-Bright Ideas grant to be used for literacy materials.
- **Ellen Douglas**, an ESL teacher at Southwest Elementary, received \$1,000 from Wells Fargo to help expand the school garden and to fund field trips to local farms.
- **Donna Wiles**, conductor for the Hickory High chorus, received \$350 from a Rotary scholarship to help students perform in a National Festival held in Washington, D.C.
- **Karla Carpenter**, a pre-school teacher at Hickory High, received \$3,300 from Lake Hickory Rotary for a shade structure for the children's playground. Early childhood education strives to bring the classroom outdoors and a shade structure will provide more time outside during warmer weather with a comfortable environment—promoting exploration and physical activity.

- **Gena Barnhardt**, a biology teacher (including AP & IB) at Hickory High, received \$1,000 from Burroughs Wellcome to use for staff development training—which in turn, benefits her students. She was named one of 10 finalists for the Burroughs Wellcome Career Science and Math Teacher Award; and although not the final award winner, they were impressed with Barnhardt’s Blended Learning proposal—and awarded her the \$1,000.
- **Ellie Wilson** and **Diane Owens**, teachers at Grandview Middle School, collectively received \$1,197 from the NC Council of Math Teachers to help purchase mimio pads and a mimio view to enhance the classroom interaction between students, teachers and materials. These two devices project information from folders, documents or online sites directly to the white board.
- **Cameron Grace**, an English teacher at Hickory High and Teen Leadership Advisor, Student Council Advisor and Director of Leadership 2000 and Beyond, received \$1,000 from the Community Blood Center of the Carolina’s. She will purchase iPads with applications to improve technology in her classroom as well as class sets of novels to better represent the contemporary science-fiction literary genre.
- **Beth Shoffner**, the media coordinator at Oakwood, received \$10,000 from Library Services and Technology Act to purchase new books for the school’s media center, designed to improve the age of the collection, support the Literacy First program, and Close the Gap in student achievement.
- **Bonnie Schultz**, the media coordinator at Grandview Middle, received \$6,000 from Library Services and Technology Act for the purchase of new books for the school’s media center, designed to improve the age of the collection, support the Literacy First program, and Close the Gap in student achievement.
- **Heather Minton**, the media coordinator at Viewmont Elementary, received \$10,000 from Library Services and Technology Act for the purchase of new books for the school’s media center, designed to improve the age of the collection, support the Literacy First program, and Close the Gap in student achievement.
- **Robin Rash**, the media specialist for Jenkins Elementary, received \$10,000 from Library Services and Technology Act for the purchase of new books for the school’s media center, designed to improve the age of the collection, support the Literacy First program, and Close the Gap in student achievement.
- **Cynthia Thompson-Schmidt**, a teacher at Jenkins Elementary, received \$2,000 from Beyond Question Learning Technologies to purchase two units for 30 class sets of student response systems (hand-held remote control devices).



Anna Gilbert, teacher at Southwest Elementary, receives award from a rep with Rutherford Electric.

Congratulations to all of these outstanding educators! Thank you for your dedication to “Extending Excellence” in Hickory Public Schools!