

## **PELHAM EDUCATION FOUNDATION AWARDS EIGHT MINI-GRANTS**

The Board of Education accepted at its December 20 meeting a gift from the Pelham Education Foundation of \$28,032.88, which represents full funding of eight teacher initiated mini-grants. Will Cavanagh, the Board's liaison to the Foundation, said that these mini-grant projects are "innovative and creative and, like past mini-grant projects, will enhance the educational experience of our children. Some mini-grant projects may serve as 'test-tube' catalysts for broader educational initiatives that are funded in the future out of the district budget," he stated. Mr. Cavanagh commended the faculty for taking the initiative to develop these project ideas and thanked the Foundation for continuing to partner with the school district.

A \$4,925 grant requested by Sean Llewellyn, English Supervisor for grades 6-12, will fund a Shakespeare festival in which all High School and Middle School students will be involved as performers or observers. The funds will cover staff development for 26 teachers through the Folger Shakespeare Library as well as expenses, including costume rental and a make-up artist, for the festival.

A \$5,000 grant requested by High School and Middle School Band Director Campbell Whitford will fund the purchase of a complete set of 80 "music posture" chairs for the band room. The chairs will replace the former cafeteria chairs currently in use, and will enable students to learn proper posture and musical technique.

Another music department grant, awarded to High School and Middle School Orchestra Director Michele Zanky, will provide \$3,000 toward the purchase of standard repertoire sheet music for the growing orchestras. The grant will enable Dr. Zanky to acquire music of varied styles, periods and playing techniques that meets the standards of the New York State Music Association.

Middle School art teachers Christina Levi and Rebecca Schwarz were awarded \$2,998.10 for their "Art History Chairs" project. They will purchase 70 unfinished stools that will replace the mismatched chairs currently in the art rooms. They will guide the students in painting the stools in the styles of various famous artists in order to teach art history and painting techniques while enhancing the aesthetics and function of the art rooms.

High School physics teacher Jason Lindley will use a \$4,046 grant to begin a co-curricular robotics team that will familiarize students with the design, construction and programming of robots. The grant will cover registration fees and other expenses for students to compete in the FIRST Tech Challenge, a national robotics competition.

Middle School teacher David Acocella and Social Studies Supervisor Maria Thompson will use a \$2,841.78 grant to provide living history activities for Middle School students. Seventh grade students will work with Living History Education

Foundation experts to build a military encampment of the type used during the Civil War. Eighth grade students will participate in a global summit simulation during which they will assume diplomatic or bureaucratic roles in developing countries and work toward achievement of one of the Millennium Development Goals.

Siwanoy teachers Gail Sider and Alissa Schaps were awarded \$2,450 to purchase two classroom sets of Smart Response System devices. The devices, sometimes referred to as “clickers”, are accessories to the SMART Board that provide teachers the ability to assess learning during a classroom lesson.

Prospect Hill teacher Emily Kayser, on behalf of all elementary teachers, will use a \$2,772 grant to purchase a license for the differentiated *Math Exemplar* CD, which contains authentic performance tasks for math instruction and assessment. This tool is part of the school district’s ongoing program to provide differentiated instruction in heterogeneous classrooms, and complements other materials recently purchased through Foundation micro-grants: Flashmaster electronic devices for teaching math facts (awarded to Siwanoy’s Beth Finkelstein) and math enrichment materials for students in need of additional challenge (awarded to Hutchinson’s Jacqueline Soccodato).