



History

The Education Foundation for Billings Public Schools was incorporated in 1988 by concerned citizens and educators who recognized the need to enhance educational opportunities for Billings students. Through endowments, scholarships, grants, and specific projects, the Foundation provides financial resources for students and educators in Billings Public Schools. Additionally, the Foundation serves as a community partner with both our community and schools to support opportunities for volunteers, mentors, and community engagement. The Foundation works in cooperation with the public school system, but operates independently.

Background

The Education Foundation operates with 2 staff members and is overseen by a volunteer board of directors. The board of directors is comprised of volunteer business and community leaders, parents, and educators. The Foundation's major programs and activities include Saturday Live, Classroom Grants, Scholarships, Reading Rocks, Partners in Education, and special projects to improve student learning in our classrooms.

Thus far in 2015, the Education Foundation has continued to improve upon its programs and the resources that are provided to students, teachers, and schools. Through the Foundation's annual Saturday Live event, school groups raised over \$100,000 for their individual school and/or group to directly benefit students. The Classroom Grant program awarded \$78,000 to teachers who submitted innovative ideas and strategies for teaching in their classrooms. The Partners in Education program involved fifty plus businesses in the Billings community who contributed volunteers, funding, and other critical resources to support their partner school. Continuing into the summer months, the Foundation's literacy program, Reading Rocks, reached an average of 75 kids each day and provided 2,200 free books to children in the Billings community. Through a generous estate gift from retired teacher and community advocate, Dewey J. Hansen, the Foundation established the Dewey J. Hansen and Helen Cothron Hansen Endowment that provides significant funding each year to the 3 high schools in Billings and Laurel High School.

As the skill set our students need to be competitive in the global workforce changes, the Foundation is investing in teaching tools, support, and materials so our community's students will be prepared for the future. This past year, the Foundation funded \$150,000 through donor support in interactive technology, student technology devices, and other items to support 21st Century teaching and learning in classrooms. Understanding the need to improve learning opportunities in the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) field content knowledge areas and soft skills, the Education Foundation has partnered with community leaders and Billings Public Schools to support a K-12 STEM Education Initiative. The K-12 STEM Education Initiative is a five year commitment to invest in science, math, technology and robotics needed for Project Lead the Way curriculum. Through generous community support, the Foundation provided \$203,425 for year 1 of the STEM Education Initiative. Thus far in 2015, the Education Foundation has funded \$246,000 in elementary STEM Education with a goal of funding an additional \$150,000 at the middle schools. The goal of the Foundation is to continue building the strength and sustainability of its programs that directly impact students in public education in our community.

Mission & Vision

- The Foundation believes that all students in Billings Public Schools deserve a well-rounded education to prepare them for successful careers. The mission of the Foundation is to promote excellence in education by providing opportunities and resources to Billings public school students.
- The vision of the Foundation is to make a positive impact on the education of Billings public school students and to strengthen the Billings community through its programs.
- Goals:
 - Promoting and celebrating excellence in education.
 - Providing resources to educators for creative and innovative teaching
 - Increasing the visibility and value of public education
 - Encouraging lifelong learning by providing educational opportunities for students and staff
 - Building awareness of the Education Foundation for Billings Public Schools