

# 2024-2025 Impact Report



Building strong community connections and support for Stillwater Public Schools.  
\$1,957,103 Provided to SPS since 1984



## \$51,285 Awarded to SPS Through SPEF Grants 45 Grants Awarded Across All School Sites

From robotic sets for elementary students, to fraction tiles, to pickleball sets, grants provide powerful, innovative resources to creative educators looking for ways to engage and challenge students.



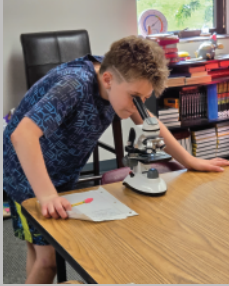
“Students use STEM activity boxes to connect a “thinking-outside-the-box” approach to other curricular areas of learning.”  
  
Karen Holman  
Will Rogers Elementary



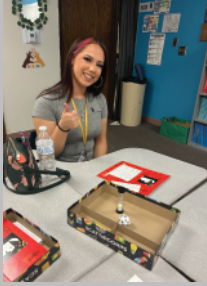
“My students have enjoyed learning from the items that were a part of this grant award!”  
  
Rachel Horschler  
Skyline Elementary



“When I put these new titles on the shelf for the first time, students were ecstatic, wanting to check them out right away.”  
  
Morganne Clyburn  
Sangre Ridge Elementary



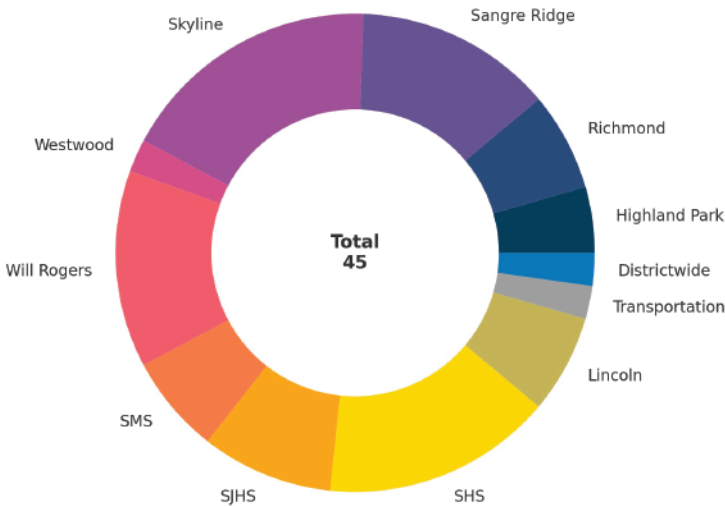
“Microscopes transforms abstract concepts into vivid, memorable learning experiences.”  
  
DeeDee Liebenau  
Richmond Elementary



“Games are a low risk way to engage learning and participation when students might not even realize they are using multiple skills to just *play*.”  
  
Anastasia Mendoza  
Stillwater Junior High School



“Scarves, rhythm sticks, and egg shakers have been used to support self-regulation through movement, music, and sensory engagement. It has given them a sense of accomplishment and readiness to learn and participate.”  
  
Amanda Welch  
Westwood Elementary



## Grants by the Numbers

67% of applications funded

51% of requested funding provided  
(\$51,285 provided of \$101,066 requested)

2025-2026 goal is to fund 75%  
of application requests.

# Thank You, Corporate Partners

## GOLD

BancFirst

Cockrell Eyecare Center

Eskimo Joe's

Oklahoma Community Credit Union

OnCue

Stillwater Medical Center

Wilson Auto Family

## SILVER

505 Architects

Blue Sky Bank

Exchange Bank

Grand River Dam Authority

Great Plains Bank

InterWorks, Inc.

Lambert Construction

Oklahoma State University

OSU College of Education  
and Human Sciences

Rosenstein, Fist & Ringold

Simmons Bank

Stillwater Designs/Kicker

Stillwater News Press

Tinker Federal Credit Union

Willowbrook Construction Services

## Most Valuable Pioneer Winners

### Awarded at Teacher of the Year Program

Shon Wilhelm, Second Grader Teacher at Sangre Ridge Elementary and Celeste Fox, Second Grade Teacher at Westwood Elementary, were named MVP winners. SPEF's Most Valuable Pioneer Fundraiser, presented by Oklahoma Community Credit Union, is a month-long program for community members to nominate SPS staff for the title of Most Valuable Pioneer. Proceeds from this fundraiser go to Special Services to purchase important equipment and materials for students.



## A Message from our Executive Director

I am thrilled to play a small role in an organization that is continually adapting and growing to meet the needs of Stillwater Public Schools. Our district faced many challenges and transitions this past year, but community support remained strong as businesses and individuals stepped up to provide for teachers and students in numerous ways. When new funding parameters threatened to end off-campus programming for Special Services students, Stillwater community members made sizable donations to make sure those students could continue participating in those valuable activities. We had record attendance at our 27th Annual Taste of Stillwater fundraiser in March, bringing in more than \$20,000 for teacher grants. In addition to the crowd, we were at max capacity of vendors! What a testament to the generosity of area restaurants to donate their time, talents, and delicious food and drinks in order to support Stillwater teachers and students.

I have the privilege of serving alongside a board of trustees comprised of business leaders and educators whose singular focus is to enhance educational opportunities within Stillwater Public Schools. Our hope going into 2025-2026 school year is for teachers to feel encouraged and supported and for students to have fantastic classroom experiences where they foster a lifelong love of learning.





## SPEF Receives Outstanding Program Award from Oklahoma Foundation of Excellence

On May 10, 2025, SPEF was recognized as one of three public school foundations in the state for having an OUTSTANDING PROGRAM by the Oklahoma Foundation of Excellence. This award represents what can be accomplished when educators place students first and the foundation comes alongside to turn their passion and vision into reality. The PreK Play-Based Learning initiative was a collaboration between SPS and SPEF and made possible by The Simmons First Foundation, with additional funding for play-based endeavors from The Wondertorium. A \$1,000 donation accompanied the award. SPEF Trustees voted to apply those funds to the new Kindergarten Play-Based venture launching this year (read more below).

## Adopt-An-Author Visits Are a Hit After Five-Year Pause

After many years without a visiting author, (the last Adopt-An-Author visit was in February 2020, right before COVID shutdowns), SPEF was proud to be a part of welcoming authors for both elementary and secondary sites. In November 2024, Adam Rex, author/illustrator of over 40 books, (including a 2025 Sequoyah Children's Book Finalist, Gumluck the Wizard) visited all six elementary sites to talk about creative process that goes into completing a book.

In March 2025, Dante Madema visited SJHS and SHS. She brought a binder of 98 rejection letters from when she was querying for an agent. She talked with the kids about persevering through that, and how it only takes one yes. If it is a lifelong dream, you have to keep trying and believing in yourself!

Many thanks to PermaBound Books for helping facilitate these authors, and our Corporate Partner, Wilson Auto Family, for providing transportation in Stillwater.



## Simmons First Foundation Makes Kindergarten Play-Based Learning Program Possible

Thanks to the incredible success of the PreK Play-Based Learning initiative that launched in 2023, we're thrilled to partner with Simmons First Foundation once again to bring the same kind of programming to Kindergarten classrooms across the district. Thanks to the Simmons First Foundation's grant of \$23,000, SPEF matched their funding to provide SPS with play-based resources that align with Kindergarten curriculum. These materials engage children through imaginative play while simultaneously providing avenues for educators to teach math, literacy, problem-solving, and social-emotional skills.





# 2024-2025 Total SPEF Funding to SPS

\$51,285	SPEF Teacher Grants
\$47,000	Kindergarten Play-based Learning Initiative with Simmons First Foundation
\$18,000	Teacher of the Year Awards and programming (made possible through Gish Memorial Fund & Corporate Partners)
\$15,200	Elite Repeat Grant (Elementary supplies, Libraries, and Pioneer Pantry)
\$11,250	Adopt-An-Author Visits at Elementary Sites and High School & Junior High
\$10,000	Most Valuable Pioneer (MVP) Fundraiser for Special Services
\$8,367	Onward Arts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o \$4,000 Title I Elementary After-school Drama Club/performances</li> <li>o \$2,475 3rd grade recorders</li> <li>o \$905 Middle School Drama Production of Little Mermaid, Jr.</li> <li>o \$815 Junior High Drama Production of Freaky Friday</li> <li>o \$172 McKnight Center Link Up for 3rd, 4th, and 5th Graders</li> </ul>
\$8,000	Community Donations for Special Services off-site programming
\$7,587	Bartley Fund Distribution for Elementary 3D Printer Upgrades
\$5,000	Exchange Bank Pioneer Debit Card contribution to Book Bus
\$4,250	Grady Lambert Memorial Library at Lincoln Academy Donations
\$2,500	Donor-directed Scholarships
\$1,000	Powerful Peer Winners
\$500	Pioneer Robotics
\$458	Charlie Hall Funds to Junior High Band
\$190,397	Total

