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AFTER POSITIVE RESPONSE, GREF FUNDS SECOND LISTENING STATION GRANT

Use of tablets, audio in class accelerates creation of good habits that lead to a lifetime of literacy

GLEN ROCK, NJ, March 23, 2015 – Following the initial success and positive reaction from first grade teachers in the district to Byrd School's pilot use of tablets to accelerate first grade reading fluency, the Glen Rock Education Foundation has announced the recipient of its second listening station grant. Heather Frank, a first grade teacher at Central Elementary School, will receive \$2,250 for the purchase of two Dell tablets (or the equivalent) to duplicate the "Listening to Reading" activity in Central's first grade classrooms.

Fluency, the ability to recognize words easily, read with greater speed, accuracy, expression and understanding, is a main ingredient in successful reading instruction, according to The National Institute of Child Health and Human Development's National Reading Panel. By increasing "listening to reading" time and enabling more students to participate at once, the stations will pave the way for earlier, more successful reading comprehension in the first grade.

"Thank you, Glen Rock Education Foundation, for approving my grant proposal," said Ms. Frank. "I am looking forward to using the tablets with the first grade students in my classroom. I know they will benefit immensely from this learning experience."

Using the newest technology, the classes will use several free apps and websites for both fiction and nonfiction. Tablet screens provide sharper, livelier graphics, engaging students (including those with learning and attention disorders) and giving them opportunities to choose books of interest, and listen to books with more complexity on a higher reading level.

"Putting these tablets into additional Glen Rock first grade classrooms keeps the district's position on the implementation of technology moving forward," said Dr. Paula Valenti, Glen Rock Superintendent of Schools.

District Director of Curriculum and Instruction Dr. Kathleen Regan noted that the Listening to Reading activity using tablets funded by GREF has had a positive influence. "At the midyear point, Byrd first graders were all reading, improving their pace, and reading aloud with more accuracy and expression," she said.

The \$2,250 grant funding covers the purchase of two Dell Venue 11 Pro tablets (or the equivalent), cases for the tablets and two tablet keyboards.

As part of their reading instruction, first grade students follow The Daily Five – five autonomous tasks created by renowned education consultants Gail Boushey and Joan Moser – to develop habits that lead to a lifetime of literacy independence. Listening to reading is one of these five activities. (The other four are reading to self, reading with someone, writing, and word work.)

The tablets will be used daily during reading workshop and most likely incorporated into other lessons in different subject areas. Tablet use will also reduce the cost of books (saving space in the classroom) and decrease interruptions that interfere with the flow of teachers' direct instruction with small guided reading groups.

The Glen Rock Education Foundation is a nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving Glen Rock's commitment to excellence in public education. The GREF raises private funds to support innovative teaching, administrative leadership, professional development, and community participation in the schools.

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