



# An Exciting New Chapter For the Hastings Public Schools Foundation



The Hastings Public Schools Foundation announces the transition of its over \$2 million endowed fund to St. Croix Valley Foundation (SCVF), effective May 2023. This announcement marks an exciting new era for Hastings Public Schools and our students.

It is also decades in the making. HPSF was born from the dreams and efforts of community members who wanted to create an endowment that would impact thousands of our District 200 students now and for generations to come by providing you with the opportunity to apply for and receive grants to fund your classroom ideas and dreams.

With over \$1.1 million dollars of What If grants awarded, District 200 educators and staff have over the years enhanced our student learning experiences in disciplines ranging from math, science, language arts, music, health and human performance, to media and technology.

## What Does This Change Mean for You?

HPSF is taking the next step in its mission to protect and continue building the educator grant legacy by transferring its endowed funds to SCVF. SCVF has a larger infrastructure which will continue HPSF's mission long beyond our lifetimes. Working with the District 200 Administrative Team, SCVF will oversee the SPARK grants (formerly known as the What If grants) which will continue to solely support District 200 educator and staff grants through an annual distribution of endowment income, currently \$75,000.

## Request a SPARK Grant!

The District 200 Administrative Team will solicit SPARK grant ideas from you. Upcoming school communications in Fall 2023 will provide you with details on how to request your SPARK grant.

## What are the Grant Criteria?

Criteria for awarding SPARK grants are guided by the definition of the acronym SPARK as stated here:

- S** – Student benefit
- P** – Professional support
- A** – Addressed unmet need or a “what if” idea
- R** – Real applications
- K** – K-12 appropriateness (includes pre-K prep programs)

- ✓ **Student benefit** – The request specifically serves students in District 200 pre-K-12 with a direct academic and/or health and wellness benefit. Any direct or indirect benefit to District staff, families or community are appreciated, but secondary to these criteria.

- ✓ **Professional support** – The request identifies one or more certified staff members within District 200 for its implementation.
- ✓ **Addressed unmet need or a “what if” idea** – The request identifies an unmet need or “what if” idea that is not funded through District 200 regular operating or capital budget.
- ✓ **Real applications** – The request offers a tangible application of funds that can reasonably be measured (e.g. items purchased; event occurred; students engaged in activity).
- ✓ **K-12 appropriateness** – The request is appropriate for a designated group or several grades of K-12 students in District 200; this includes pre-K preparatory programs.



**Preferred grant requests offer the following intended outcomes:**

- ✓ Demonstrates innovative learning techniques or tools
- ✓ Enhances student potential for a variety of aptitudes and abilities
- ✓ Improves the health, wellness and/or confidence of students

**Grants will NOT be awarded in these areas and would be considered non-compliant uses of SPARK grants:**

- ✓ Any activity or program which would normally be paid through the District 200 regular operating or capital budget
- ✓ Any activity or program whose expenditures are not appropriate under District 200 Revenues and Appropriate Expenditures Guideline
- ✓ Scholarships
- ✓ Activities of a single student
- ✓ Overnight field trips
- ✓ Clubs, support groups and community-based opportunities that are not directly tied to academic achievement of students enrolled in District 200 pre-kindergarten to 12th grade.

*For sake of clarity, while HPSF understands and appreciates the positive impact extra-curricular activities, such as athletics and show choir, have in the lives of students, these activities are not funded by SPARK grants.*

- ✓ Staff/Professional development workshops

**Additionally:**

- ✓ Grants cannot be used to pay for staff salary, stipends, incentives, food or refreshments
- ✓ Grants cannot be used to pay for student food and refreshments except when considered to be an integral part of the course and curriculum
- ✓ Grants cannot be used to pay for t-shirts or student incentives

**Payroll Deduction Program Continues**

For all of you who have supported the Hastings Public Schools Foundation through your payroll deductions, you will be able to continue to do so with payroll deductions to the St. Croix Valley Foundation which will be used solely to support District 200 SPARK grants. Watch for communications on how to do this from District 200.

To donate directly: [tinyurl.com/HastingsSpark](http://tinyurl.com/HastingsSpark)



**Thank You!**

A big thank you to all educators and staff who have supported the Hastings Public Schools Foundation over the years. We look forward to watching you continue to dream of innovative learning experiences for our students. Watch for information to submit your ideas to the District 200 Administrative Team.