



**Essex Fells
Foundation**
for Educational
Excellence

**A Personal
Commitment
to Public
Education**

Annual Report
Fiscal Year July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021

Essex Fells School District
102 Hawthorne Road
Essex Fells, New Jersey 07021

Dear Officers and Trustees of the Essex Fells Foundation for Educational Excellence,

EFS was able to accomplish things last year that would not have been possible without the generous support and collaboration of the EFFEE. We were able to provide in-person and remote education for the entire school year, with minimal interruptions to in-person instruction during the pandemic. We are so grateful that we were able to do this for the children of Essex Fells, and cannot thank all of you and your generous supporters for your partnership.

Last year, the Foundation worked with the Administration and teachers to continue providing programming and enrichment opportunities even with all the health and safety restrictions that were in place. The variety show and school musical happened virtually as well as many all-school assemblies. In the spring clubs and study hall were able to return. Those opportunities are priceless for the children and would not be possible within our school budget.

For the second year in a row, at the end of August, the Foundation funded a social emotional grant providing the opportunity for the kids to visit the buildings with Ms. Santin. It allowed the children to experience the current look and feel of their school, so they could be prepared for the new year and all it will entail. It is so wonderful that they were able to have this opportunity during these changing times.

We know there are many programs that are back in place in-person this year, and there are many grants that you have funded to continue making EFS the special place that it is for our children. We can't wait to see what they do with the Rigamajig Lab.

We look forward to another wonderful and successful school year at EFS.

Sincerely,

Kris N. Huegel
President, Essex Fells Board of Education



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September 2021

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Dear Friends & Neighbors in the Essex Fells School Community,

The Trustees of the Essex Fells Foundation for Educational Excellence and I thank you for your continued generosity and support of the Essex Fells School (EFS).

Your support enabled our Trustees to work together with the dedicated teachers, hardworking staff, tireless Board of Education and PTA volunteers, and our visionary Principal/Superintendent to fund and provide many programs that enriched our children's learning experiences this past school year – all in the face of the unprecedented obstacles presented by the pandemic.

Our beloved EFS remained open while many neighboring districts closed their doors. And the Foundation was very active in the face of the pandemic, increasing our year-over-year funding to \$65,000 in enrichment grants during the school year. None of these programs would have been possible without our community's unwavering support and generous donations; we've highlighted a few of them below:

- Prior to the first week of school, a Social Emotional Well-Being grant enabled the students to visit the school and tour their reconfigured classrooms, to help ease the transition back to a whole new style of classroom learning driven by COVID-19.
- Despite the fact that it couldn't take place live, the popular annual Variety Show still took place this past fall in a virtual setting, and was a huge success.
- Virtual assemblies by musicians and storytellers fed our children's creative appetites throughout the winter months, and an especially poignant presentation by a Holocaust survivor made real for our children the impacts of historical prejudice and injustice.
- As the weather warmed in the spring, we were able to restore many historically popular grants, like Study Hall, the First Grade Book-nic, Art Club, and Book Club – all outdoors.
- Throughout the school year, the student-led Bengal Broadcast provided viewers a glimpse of life at the school, a familiar place that was off-limits to nearly everyone due to the pandemic.
- Finally, the annual musical *Aladdin, Jr.* was released as a film as the school year wound down – the result of the artistic team's spectacular vision, and truly a labor of love. Superb acting, singing, and choreography as well as countless hours spent on editing and special effects made this incredible production extremely entertaining and certainly one to remember.

Looking ahead, we've got a host of amazing, enriching programs planned for the upcoming school year, including the school's first Rigamajig Lab, an award-winning system for hands-on STEM exploration that launches this fall.

On a personal note, after six years as a Trustee of the Foundation (and having served as President for the past three), my time with the Foundation has come to an end. While the pandemic has wrought many changes for all of us, one constant through it all has been the devotion that so many volunteers, teachers, staff, and Dr. Gadaleta have shown to our children. I am extremely grateful for the spirit of community that has enabled us to accomplish so much in the face of such daunting circumstances. Thank you to everyone in the EFS community – it has been my honor to serve you.

With gratitude,

Laura Z. D'Avella
President

Financial Summary **July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021**

Income:

Gifts Received	\$ 53,852.70
After School Enrichment	\$ 2,254.67
Fall Fundraiser	\$ 0.00
Total Income:	\$ 56,107.37

Expenses:

Grant Disbursements:

Arts and Culture Grants	\$25,220.08
Character Education Grants	\$ 600.00
Club Grants	\$ 8,981.47
Study Hall Grants	\$ 850.00
Total Grant Disbursements:	\$35,651.55

Afterschool Enrichment	\$ 1,658.00
Administrative Expenses	\$ 6,079.77
Fall Fundraiser Expenses	\$ 0.00

Special Projects

COVID Expenses	\$4,134.22
Total Expenses:	\$47,523.54

Net Proceeds for the Year: \$ 8,583.83

Fund Balance June 30, 2020: \$65,793.46

Fund Balance June 30, 2021: \$82,078.81

Grants Approved

Annual School Musical

The Foundation approved a grant to fund the annual school musical for grades 4th-6th. The musical was a movie production of *Aladdin, Jr.* Although typically performed live, this year the students' performances were recorded and compiled into a movie video that was shared with the EFS community.

Art Club

The Foundation approved a grant request to fund a project for sixth graders to create ceiling tiles to place on the ceiling of the library.

Book Club

The Foundation approved a grant request for a book club for a max of 15 students from grades 2 & 3 to foster their love & engagement of reading with literary experiences.

Book Nic

The 1st grade has a Book-Nic every year where each student selects a book and creates a small display about the book. This year the event was done in the classroom due to COVID without visitors.

Broadcasting Club

The Foundation approved a grant request for the Broadcasting Club. The students write, direct, and produce weekly segments, which air on bimonthly mornings during announcements.

Laptop Cases

The Foundation approved a grant request to fund 20 Macbook Pro laptop cases to support student technology needs.

Picnic Tables

The Foundation approved a grant request to contribute picnic tables to the school. These tables were used for outside classrooms.

Rigamjig Initiative

The Foundation approved a grant request to fund the Rigamajig, a large-scale building kit for hands-on free play and learning. The collection of wooden planks, wheels, pulleys, nuts, bolts and rope allows children to follow their curiosity through play. This will be used as part of a STEAM lab for all grades.

Social Emotional Well-Being Group

This grant provided an art directive, question and answer time, and a social time for K-6th students who might need additional support prior to the school year. This was designed to support the social emotional well-being of students to help with the transition back to school.

Study Hall

The Foundation approved a grant request to continue funding Study Hall for the 2020-21 school year. Study Hall provides a time for students in Grades 4th – 6th to work ahead on homework, make up schoolwork they are unable to complete during class time, and/or study for upcoming tests and quizzes. This was offered 3x weekly, outdoors, during lunch.

Survivors Speak

The Foundation approved a grant request for a virtual presentation on the Holocaust for 5th graders and their parents. This allowed them to hear from an eyewitness speaker at the conclusion of their study of the Holocaust.

Upgraded Broadcast Equipment

The Foundation approved a grant request to purchase I pads & an Ipad Podcaster Studio for the Broadcast Club. This equipment will also be used for other school projects, such as the Variety Show and School Musical.

Upper Grade Novels

This Foundation approved a grant request to provide individual books to students since sharing was not possible this year due to COVID. The novels were used to teach the various themes/skills in the 4th & 6th grade curriculums.

Variety Show

The Foundation approved a grant request to fund the annual Variety Show with participants from grades 4-6th. The students recorded their performances outside of school and submitted them to Mr. Trogani, who compiled them into a video shared with the EFS community. Students showed off their best talents either in a solo act or with a group: singing, dancing, comedy, gymnastics, and more! This event helps build student confidence through performing.

Video Editing Software

This grant funded the purchasing of video editing software that can be used for various school events and clubs for all grades.

Virtual Earth Day

The Foundation approved a grant request for a virtual field trip for all grades, held by the Essex County Environmental Center. The presentation had a focus on trees.

Wireless Scanner

The Foundation approved a grant request to provide a wireless scanner for the media center. The media center was on a cart for the 2020-2021 school year and required scanning of books in multiple locations. The wireless scanner ensures that all students can check out books no matter where the classes are at the school. The scanner will also aid in completing inventory as it is compact and can easily be carried through the shelves.

Yearbook Club

The Foundation approved a grant request to continue the Yearbook Club for the 6th Grade students as they work together to produce the yearbook.

The Essex Fells Foundation for Educational Excellence thanks the following patrons* for their generosity and continued support during the 2020 – 2021 fiscal year (July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021):

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*This list has been prepared with great care. However, despite our sincere efforts to avoid omissions we know they can occur. If any omissions are noted, we hope you will accept our apology and advise us of the error by emailing info@effee.org.