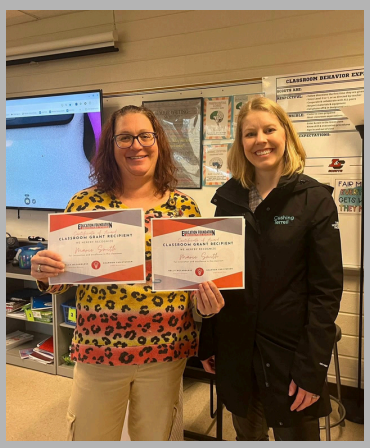

Questions?
Contact the Foundation
at 281-5149 or
foundation@billingsschools.org

EDUCATION FOUNDATION
BILLINGS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

SPARK AWARDS

Supporting-Possibilities-Achievement-Resources-Knowledge

SPARK Awards-What you need to know!

Welcome! We're excited you're interested in the SPARK Awards (formerly Classroom Grants) and in bringing a new idea to your students & classrooms. Please read the information below before you begin your application.

Who can apply?
All Billings Public Schools staff are eligible to apply for SPARK Awards. Applications may be submitted by individuals, teams, grade levels, departments, or on behalf of a school. Collaborative projects are welcome and encouraged.

What this opportunity supports
SPARK Awards are designed to support student-centered, classroom-focused ideas that enhance learning, engagement, and opportunity for SD2 students. Award amounts typically range from $250 to $5,000, depending on the nature and scope of the request. Projects of all sizes are encouraged, and funding decisions are based on project quality, student impact, and available resources.

Examples of the kinds of projects this opportunity can support include (but are not limited to):

- New or creative classroom activities and instructional approaches
- Hands-on learning projects or enrichment experiences
- Schoolwide or grade-level initiatives that improve student learning
- Classroom materials, equipment, or technology that directly support instruction
- Professional learning that will clearly change or strengthen your teaching practice

What we don't support
Spark Awards do not support the following types of requests:

- New curriculum
- Requests to support extra-curricular activities
- Replacement technology
- Items not approved by OPI

If you're unsure whether your idea is a fit, you are welcome to contact the Education Foundation to talk it through before or after you start.

Application Timing & Review Cycles
Applications are accepted year-round. Our review and funding cycles run three times per year:

- October (will open in late August)
- January (will open in November)
- April (will open in January)

When you submit your application, it will be added to the next upcoming review cycle. If your project is not funded in that cycle, your application will remain active for up to one year and will automatically be reconsidered in up to two additional cycles.

You may be invited to clarify or strengthen your proposal between cycles. You are also welcome to contact us if you would like guidance on revising an application that was not funded on the first review.

What you will be asked in the application
To help you plan, the application will ask you to:

- Describe your project and what you want to do
- Explain how the project will impact students
- Share how many students will be served and at what grade level(s)
- Outline how you will know if the project is successful (your evaluation plan)
- Provide a clear, itemized budget for the amount you are requesting
- Confirm you have principal/administrator support

You can save and return to your application before submitting. All required questions will be marked in the form.

How Projects Are Selected
Applications are reviewed by Foundation staff and a volunteer committee using a consistent rubric. Reviewers look at factors such as:

- Clarity of the project description
- Impact on students and learning
- Innovation or creativity
- Feasibility and planning
- Alignment with school and district goals
- Clarity of the budget
- Potential for lasting benefit and impact

You do not need to address these criteria with formal language—plain, clear explanations in your own words are encouraged.

How funding will be distributed
If your project is selected for funding, you will receive an award email with your funding amount and next steps. Funds will be distributed using a new platform called ClassWallet, a secure purchasing platform that allows you to order approved classroom materials. Items are shipped directly to your school. Detailed setup instructions will be included in your award notification. In some instances, the Foundation may need to order your project materials.

Reporting & Sharing Your Project
If your project is funded, you will be asked to complete a short end-of-project report and share 1–3 photos or a brief video showing the project in action. The report is intentionally simple and is required to remain eligible for future opportunities through the Spark Awards. Your photos and stories help the Education Foundation:

- Thank and update donors
- Show the community what's happening in SD2 classrooms
- Continue raising funds to support more projects like yours

If you need help with this step, the Foundation is happy to assist.

Need Help?
If at any point you have questions, get stuck, or want feedback on your idea or application, please reach out to the Education Foundation team at **281-5149** or **foundation@billingsschools.org**. We're here to make this process as simple and supportive as possible. Thank you for all you do for students in Billings Public Schools.

Thank you to our supporters who have made the SPARK Awards possible!

First Interstate Bank

PHILLIPS 66

SCHEELS BILLINGS

BBEX Builder's Exchange of Billings

ROTARY INTERNATIONAL

Downtown Billings Rotary

town pump