



05.21.26 • NEWBERRY HALL • AIKEN

2026

INNOVATIVE TEACHING

MINI GRANTS WINNERS

INNOVATIVE  
TEACHING

RECOGNIZING & CELEBRATING INNOVATIVE TEACHING METHODS

# INNOVATIVE TEACHING



The Savannah River Nuclear Solutions, LLC (SRNS) Innovative Teaching Mini Grants Program recognizes and celebrates innovative teaching methods by providing funds to enhance elementary, middle and high school classroom instruction. Today, we honor the 2026 award recipients.

## ***Dinner and Social Hour***

### ***Welcome***

**Taylor Rice**

*SRNS Education Outreach Programs Lead*

### ***Remarks***

**Jeff Griffin**

*SRNS President and CEO*

## ***Awards Presentation***

**Taylor Rice and Rebekah Trull**

*SRNS Innovative Teaching Mini Grants  
Coordinators*

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# \$1,125,000

**donated since 2009 from SRNS  
to fund local educators**

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## Recipients

### \$500 Grant Winners

#### **A Little Dirt Never Hurt**

*Sarah Kirkendohl, Merriwether Elementary*

#### **AI-Powered Learning with Miko Robots**

*Angelica Harris, Richmond Hill Elementary*

#### **American History Artifact Analysis Lab**

*Samantha Bentley, Edisto High*

#### **Bear Necessities**

*Lucille Prater, Westmont Elementary*

#### **Bins of Brilliance**

*McKenzie Dutton, Community Christian Academy*

#### **Bridging the Gap Between Math and Literacy through Integrated STEM Learning**

*Jamie Gillard, Garrett Elementary*

#### **Bright Minds – Hands-On Shape Discovery for Kindergarten**

*Suzanne Barden, Merriwether Elementary*

#### **Building Number Sense Through Daily Calendar Math**

*Epiphany Lee, Edisto Primary*

#### **Building STEM Thinkers in Special Education**

*Stephanie Ford, Immaculate Conception Catholic School of Special Education*

#### **Cells! Cells! They're Made of Organelles!**

*Pamela Bates, JET Middle*

#### **ChompSaw Toy and Game Design**

*Michelle Griffin, Town Creek Christian Academy*

#### **Closing the Gap with VersaTiles**

*Carlene Basciano, Lakeside High*

#### **Creating a Math Theme Park**

*Evelyn Whitley-Rogers, Allendale-Fairfax Middle*

#### **Discovering Culture Through Global Inquiry**

*Matthew Kennamer, Kennedy Middle*

#### **Early Engineering - Cultivating Future Problem Solvers**

*Kim Adams, Merriwether Elementary*

#### **Economic Skills for Sustainable Livelihoods**

*Juliet Joseph, Hunter Kinard Tyler Middle/High*

#### **Epoxy Explorations: A Study of Volume**

*Shanna Mae Bea, Blackville-Hilda High*

#### **Equipping Every Student for Success**

*Pamela Usry, Glenn Hills Middle*

#### **Exploring Life and Earth Systems: A STEM Learning Enhancement Project**

*Robbie Kythe Barcelona, Richard Carroll Elementary*

#### **First Flights: Launching STEM Skills with Drones**

*Lexi Tanner, Martinez Elementary*

#### **Flexible Seating, Flexible Minds!**

*Sharetha Dorch, Edisto Primary*

#### **Flexible Spaces and Focused Readers**

*Nicole Dorsey, Merriwether Middle*

#### **From Molecules to Meals: Using Hydroponics to Teach Real-World Chemistry**

*Andrea Matthews, Bethune-Bowman Middle/High*

#### **Full STEAM Ahead!**

*Angela Fallaw, Johnston Elementary*

#### **Fundamental Robotics**

*Charlette Epps, Macedonia Elementary Middle*

**Future Scientists: Inquiry-Based Learning in 6th Grade**

*Danielle Gaines, Glenn Hills Middle*

**Game On! Powering STEM Through Play**

*Mallory Walp, East Aiken School of the Arts*

**Gaming Headphones for Multilingual Learners**

*Cayce Spire, Ridge Spring Monetta Middle/High*

**Growing Little Readers: Building Strong Foundations in First Grade**

*Marquidria Jordan, North Aiken Elementary*

**Hands-On Learning Means Brains in Action**

*Misty Lee, Horse Creek Academy*

**Hands-On STEM Success!**

*Constance Frazier, J.D. Lever Elementary*

**Heat Transfer and Measurement**

*Tremel Britt, Barton Chapel Elementary*

**Immersive Minds: Enhancing Student Engagement and Wellness Through Virtual Reality**

*Simone Roper-Jackson, Allendale-Fairfax Elementary*

**Innovation Through Modeling & Design**

*Rajananthini Velumylylum, Edisto High*

**Jaguar Restore The Roar Project**

*Vernon Johnson, W.S. Hornsby Middle*

**Layer by Layer Learning**

*Shana Smith, Community Christian Academy*

**Learning Big Things With Little Hands**

*Babs Bowers, Oakwood Windsor Elementary*

**Let's Make The Gears Go 'Round!**

*Julie Greene, Clearwater Elementary*

**"Lettuce Grow!" A Hydroponics STEM Adventure**

*Peggy Lingard Moore, Carver-Edisto Middle*

**Lighting the Way to Learning in 4K**

*Laura Meteraud, Merriwether Elementary*

**Lil' Pottery Thangs**

*Lillie Dunning, Lockett Elementary and Branchville High*

**Little Hands, Big Discoveries: Learning with Hands-On Exploration**

*Allison Clark, Denmark Olar Elementary*

**Locked in Logic: An Algebra Escape Room**

*Khaleelah Stroman, Center for Innovative Learning at Pinecrest*

**Making Meaning with Hands-On Materials**

*Alison Wright, Episcopal Day School*

**Milestone Motivation: Tracking i-Ready Growth with Beads, Charms and Prizes**

*Angelika Davis-Raby, North Augusta Elementary*

**Project Innovate: Creating Hands-On Science Leaders**

*Danielle Abernathy, J.D. Lever Elementary*

**Promoting Mathematical Growth on the Patio**

*Dana Ergle, Aiken Intermediate*

**S.T.I.R. I.T. UP! - Scientifically Teaching Independent Research through Informational Text**

*Jennifer Powell, Mossy Creek Elementary*

**Seeing Science Up Close**

*Jada Todd, Savannah River Academy*

**SHAPE Up Our Learning**

*Megan Kennamer, First Baptist Church North Augusta Weekday Education*

**STEM Explorers: Hands-On Science  
for Diverse Learners**

*Lara Reyes, Sheridan Elementary*

**STEMulate Literacy in the Library**

*Lisa Cave, North Middle High*

**Strum and Store Station**

*Janel O'Dell, McBean Elementary*

**The STEM of Agamograph**

*Malissa Wright, William J. Clark Middle*

**Track and Learn, Love Every Turn**

*Laura Webster, Graniteville Elementary*

**Up, Up, and STEM Away**

*Alyssa Steadman, Community Christian Academy*

**Voices Through Play: Bridging Language Gaps  
with Puppetry**

*Denise Campbell-Gartrell, W.E. Parker and  
Johnston Elementary*

**Waves and Technology: How Digital Devices  
Transmit Information**

*Maria Atieza Collado, Guinyard Butler Middle*

**'You Can Count on Me!'**

**– Scientific Calculators for STEM**

*Amanda Waymer, Aiken Scholars Academy*

**\$750 Grant Winners**

**Adhesive Innovations**

*Michael Prandy, Silver Bluff High*

**Build Us Up with STEM**

*Kari Keck, Aiken Elementary*

**Composting for Soil**

*Melissa Beard, Freedom Park School*

**Courtyard Service Learning Project**

*Jessica Goss, Aiken Intermediate*

**Energy and Atoms**

*Denis Gichana, William J. Clark Middle*

**Energy Literacy: Nuclear Science in Action**

*Cherelle Washington, Lake Marion Middle*

**From Pixels to Plastic: Visualizing Data in 3D**

*Marshal Liebman, South Aiken High*

**From Seed to Sprout: Growing Outdoor  
Classroom Gardens**

*Janna Blane, East Aiken School of the Arts*

**Future Forecasters**

*Kendra Browning, Georgia School for Innovation  
and the Classics*

**Geography & Environmental STEM Lab**

*Olivia Butler, Glenn Hills Middle*

**Learning Physics with Toys**

*Ian Leonard, North Augusta High*

**Pinball Physics: The Geometry of Game Design**

*Linda Fountain, Westmont Elementary*

**S 5 Exploration Hub - A Hands-On Approach  
to Science**

*Stephanie Madison, Cedar Ridge Elementary*

**Stacking Success: Building Math Confidence in  
Kindergarten**

*Kristen Womack, W.E. Parker Elementary*

**Think, Tinker, SPLASH!**

*Alee Ashe, North Augusta Elementary*

**Touch to Learn: Improving Tactile Tolerance  
Through Sensory Integration**

*Uyen Griffis, Hammond Hill Elementary*

**Waves and Their Applications**

*April Tomkinson, JET Middle*

**Weather Watchers: Data Detectives in Action**

*Holly Roberts, Mossy Creek Elementary*

**\$1,000 Grant Winners**

**A Living Laboratory: STEM on the Nature Trail**

*Stephany Griffin, Tall Pines STEM Academy*

**Activities Related to Ideals, Facts, and Culture**

**Teaching Strategies (ARTIFACTS)**

*Hannah Johnson, Guinyard Butler Middle*

**Biology by Design: A STEAM Makerspace for Student-Driven Modeling and Scientific Fabrication**

*Maria Avesta, Lake Marion High School & Technology Center*

**Biotechnology in Action: PCR Integration**

*McKenzie Spires, Augusta Preparatory Day School*

**Coding and Robotics Systems**

*William Mills, Horse Creek Academy*

**Creating and Coding in Multi-Color 3D Printing**

*April Barbin, Cedar Ridge Elementary*

**Electricity and Magnetism: Two Sides of the Same Coin**

*Kimberly Coffin, Midland Valley High*

**Engineering Heat: Future Engineers STEM Lab**

*Rhapsody Holt, C.T. Walker Traditional Magnet School*

**Flight Club: Exploring STEM through Disc Golf**

*Matt Herring, Merriwether Middle*

**Fly Away with Drones: Help the CMS CTAE Department Succeed!**

*Dan Davis, Columbia Middle*

**From Brain to Behavior: Psychology in 3D**

*Tracey-Ann Wellington-Smith, North Middle High*

**From Soil to Sky: Vegetable Production and Pollinator Conservation**

*Jamie Hatchett, Fox Creek High*

**Future Ready VR: Connecting Students to Careers**

*Neshika Coney-Devine, Thomas Walter Josey Comprehensive High*

**Gifted Education / STEM (Grades K–5)**

*Renata Willingham, Bayvale Elementary*

**Glaze Science Lab: Art Meets Chemistry**

*Lara Buss, Richard Carroll Elementary*

**Hydroponics for Healthy Habits**

*Marco Villegas, A. Dorothy Hains Elementary*

**Illuminating Science Through Spectroscopy**

*Samantha Lytch, North Augusta High*

**Little Builders, Big Thinkers:**

**KG STEM Station Rotation**

*Elizabeth Anderson, Richard Carroll Elementary*

**Outdoor STEM Exploration: Discovery Tools for Young Scientists**

*Laura Nye, T. Harry Garrett Elementary*

**Reaching Even HIGHer for STEM Success**

*Christie Palladino, Aiken County Career and Technology Center*

**Reframing our World through Augmented Reality, Artificial Intelligence and Computational Thinking**

*Crystal McDowell, Greenbrier High*

**Robot Road Trips: Designing Smart Paths**

*Randall Williams, McBean Elementary*

**STEM Design and Prototyping Using 3D Printer**

*Kessia Moore, Strom Thurmond Career & Technology Center*

# MCG

## MINI GRANTS

### **STEM Discovery Using Lego Education**

*Paige Allen, Brookwood Elementary*

### **Strings, Strums, and Soundwaves: A STEM Ukulele Initiative**

*Laura Herring, Douglas Elementary*

### **Systems & STEM Investigation Lab**

*Tatyana Whitfield, Belair Elementary*

### **Taking STEM to the Air & Beyond**

*Jennifer McMillian, Horse Creek Academy*

### **The Growing STEM: Wellness Garden Lab**

*Wanda Brockington, Bethune-Bowman Middle/High*

### **The Sugar Code: Fueling the Cellular Engine**

*Alleyah Ransom, Bamberg-Ehrhardt Middle*

### **Training the Eye: Preparing Students for Welding Quality Control**

*Robert Fulmer, Barnwell County Career Center*

### **Vernier Thermometers with Charging Station and Graphical Analysis Pro Software**

*Madison Spires, Silver Bluff High*

### **Vertical STEM Robotics Integration with Sphero**

*Judy Blair Jackson, North Middle High*

## 2026 DATA FACT SHEET



329

GRANTS  
RECEIVED

GRANTS  
AWARDED

109



17,389

STUDENT  
IMPACT

EDUCATOR  
IMPACT

109



79

SCHOOLS  
RECEIVING  
AWARDS

