



Examples of past Catalyst for Change funded projects

Elementary School

- **Differentiated After School Reading and Writing Instruction for Lowest Quartile Students in Grade 3 – Talbot Elementary**

This project allowed Talbot Elementary to keep third grade students for additional instruction after school three times per week. The focus was on strengthening literacy skills by using IStation, a web-based program that provides students with interactive and individualized learning, and small group differentiated instruction by teachers. Two-thirds of the students showed growth in their reading skills and almost half of the students increased their grade in English Language Arts by a half or full letter grade.
- **Engineering Our Way to Brighter Futures – Irby Elementary School**

This project allowed a kindergarten teacher to purchase STEM materials for the school's science lab. Most of the focus was on engineering and the kits that were purchased, which allowed the students to have a hands-on learning experience. The results were very impressive and many of the students showed significant growth in their ability to build intricately designed structures. 100% of the students increased their interest in STEM, and as a result the school plans to host its first STEM day.
- **Leveled Literacy Library – Irby Elementary**

This project purchased leveled readers for Irby's leveled library. The sets of books were used by teachers, UFLI mentors, community mentors and other instructional personnel when working with students in small groups or individually to practice reading fluently aloud and to comprehend passages read independently at their instructional level. Overall, out of 291 participants, 286 students showed improvement in their reading skills.
- **Lighting Up Their World- Meadowbrook Elementary School**

This project allowed 5th grade students at Meadowbrook Elementary School to think about science and energy in a creative way. Students studied electricity in a unit called "How Does Electrical Energy flow and Transform" in the classroom and then designed lamp bases out of ceramic clay in Art. Once the bases were complete, students used wiring kits to make the lamps fully functional. 100% of the students succeeded in this project and the students increased their interest in STEM education.
- **Searching for the Seven Wonders Through Inquiry – Shell Elementary School**

Through a One Book One School project, the entire student body connected with the book *Seven Wonders of Sassafras Springs*. Using this literature about the fictional town of Sassafras, teachers were able to connect with students about the wonders that could occur in their own small town. Once the students read the book, they were tasked with developing a research project that centered on wonders, both locally and globally. The students took unprecedented ownership of their projects and it was displayed in their learning outcomes. Out of the 200 participating students, 165 showed an increased interest in performing well in school, and 135 improved their overall grades in school.

Middle School

- **Blast Off –Hawthorne Middle/High School**

This project centered on the memoir *October Sky*, formally known as *Rocket Boys*. Students read the novel in their Reading class, and in Social Studies they learned about the history of flight and the space program. Additionally, in Science class the students learned about the solar system and its effect on the earth such as tides and weather. The program culminated with an overnight trip to the Kennedy Space Center where students met and had the opportunity to talk to an astronaut, explore the complex and past methods of space travel. Through their experiences at the space center, they were able to make connections between the novel they read, science projects they conducted and understand how math and science can be used in the workplace. This project saw a 93% increase interest in pursuing a STEM career and 85% of the low performing students in the class improved their overall grades in school.

- **Make It Happen- Oak View Middle School**

This project allowed Oak View Middle School to purchase an Automated Response System for use in 6th-8th grade math classes. This system confidentially reported individual student answers in real time to the instructors in a manner that allowed teachers to immediately target the students' remedial needs. Students celebrated correct answers, shared correct mathematical processes and openly self-evaluated incorrect answers. This system saw an increase in intensive student participation from an average of 34% to 94%

High School

- **Calculating Our Success –Gainesville High School**

The purpose of this grant was to fund a class set of graphing calculators for a Geometry class at Gainesville High School, where most of the students were 11th graders with zero math credits.

With these calculators, the students had the opportunity to electronically graph circles, build a truncated cube based on equations they entered and use them for a variety of everyday tasks in class. 59% of these students earned a higher GPA than the rest of their high school experience, 81% raised or maintained their grades in geometry, and 84% of students were finally able to pass the Algebra I end of course exam. Additionally, math credit deficiency dropped from 90% to 25%.

- **The EntreEagles' Project – Horizon Alternative School**

This project allowed students at Horizon Alternative School to explore various career opportunities and be exposed to the process of becoming innovative business leaders. Throughout the course of the project, students participated in a Career Day that included many local business leaders and participated in field trips to visit local innovators. The culminating experience for the students was a mock Shark Tank competition where 11 teams competed for Best Venture idea with local business leaders. 85% of the students showed an increased interest in career/technical education and 82% of the project participants improved their grades in English and Language Arts.

- **Wi-Fi Technology: Unplugging the Modern Teacher – Gainesville High School**

The goal of this project was to increase teacher quality resulting in higher levels of student engagement and achievement in the core areas of math and science. This goal was achieved through the purchase of ten wireless tablet devices and four iPads for use with the interactive white boards already installed in science classrooms. This technology resulted in a change in teaching behavior for a large number of the participating teachers, which resulted in increases in student engagement and a reduction in classroom interruptions. This project benefitted more than 1,600 students, and many of the teachers have responded to the new technology very enthusiastically and are exploring new ways to integrate it into their daily instructions.