SALINA EDUCATION FOUNDATION
community connection
ACHIEVING EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE TOGETHER
salinaeducationfoundation.com 785-309-4729 Fall 2026
Classroom grants to enhance student learning • Exceptional teachers to staff our classrooms

The Salina Education Foundation celebrates 40 years!


Pam McIntyre

Greetings from Worcester, Massachusetts! Massachusetts is far from Kansas, but Salina and the Education Foundation are never far from my heart. On the foundation's fortieth anniversary, I would like to share some memories of my 24 years as director.

Choosing a favorite SEF program is like choosing a favorite child (or in my case, a cat), but I do have a front runner! I love the SEF's three teacher grant programs: the 21st Century Advantage Grant, the Outside-the-Box Grant, and the Sudden Opportunity Grant. When the trustees voted to prioritize project-based grants, I saw first-hand the joy and excitement on the faces of our students and their teachers. I hope you were able to attend a breakfast that showcased some of the grants-in-action. Sunset and Schilling drummers, South Middle's high altitude balloon launch in collaboration with NASA and Ft. Hays State, and Central High's Book Club are three examples of grants that were featured for our guests.


Connie Burket and Martha Rhea with Pam McIntyre.

And speaking of trustees, my goodness I worked with amazing people! They crafted a Grow-Your-Own Teacher program, named it LIFT (Loan Initiative for Future Teachers–kudos to Connie Burket), and solicited funds to support a million-dollar endowment to fund it. Keeping to our belief that project-based learning is most important, the trustees organized 305 LIVE!, a remarkable collaboration with the band Joe's Pet Project and the teachers and students of both middle schools and high schools (shout out to Gary Denning). Watching our talented students perform a full-out rock concert is a memory I cherish.

So, while I live far from you now (but close to my daughter Kate and her husband Joe), I will always be proud of the work I did for the teachers and students of Salina Public Schools. I will continue to support the SEF with my annual donation, and I hope you will, too. Happy fortieth birthday Salina Education Foundation!

Pam McIntyre
Salina Education Foundation
Executive Director, 1996-2020

40 YEARS
LEARNING TODAY. LEADING TOMORROW.
Salina Education Foundation

Grant Partners

The work of the Salina Education Foundation is supported 100% through the generosity of individuals and businesses in our community. Your support of our programs demonstrates a strong commitment to a healthy community. Local businesses seek employees who possess critical thinking skills and can adapt to the ever-evolving needs of their businesses. Perhaps this is the year you fund a specific grant. We can help you match the topics that are important to you with projects happening in Salina Public Schools.

Contact Kate at kate.lindsay@usd305.com or 785-309-4729.

Inspiring Innovation: Hands-On Learning in Middle School Libraries

A school library is more than a place to read and research—it's a place to imagine, create, experiment, and discover! Thanks to 21st Century grants from the Salina Education Foundation, students at Lakewood and South Middle Schools have new opportunities to explore technology, develop problem-solving skills, and bring their ideas to life.





Elizabeth Kinion, Library Media Specialist at Lakewood, guides students as they explore creativity and innovation through a library makerspace and 3D printer. Students can turn digital designs into real objects and learn through trial and error. Working side by side, they share ideas, offer feedback, and take turns, building the teamwork and communication skills that help them succeed in school and beyond. These experiences encourage critical thinking, creativity, and an understanding of how technology can be used to solve problems.









At South Middle School, Library Media Specialist **Jennifer Kay-Higgins** helps students uncover the excitement of STEM learning with Snap Circuits, Cubelets, and Sphero BOLT. These interactive tools introduce students to electrical circuits, robotics, and coding through hands-on exploration. As students build, program, and test their ideas together, they learn to cooperate, listen to different points of view, and celebrate one another's successes, all while developing analytical thinking and resourcefulness.





Both libraries share a common goal: giving students opportunities to explore their interests, build confidence, and find new possibilities. These hands-on activities strengthen cooperation and social skills, connect classroom learning to real-world applications, and may even spark an interest in future careers in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

Your support helps make these opportunities possible! Through grants funded by donors like you, the Salina Education Foundation helps Salina Public Schools educators provide innovative learning experiences that engage students and encourage them to think beyond the page.

Thank you to the generous donors who help equip our schools with the tools students need to explore, build, and imagine what's possible!

Welcome New Trustees



Kristin Blake is a lifetime resident of Salina and a graduate of Salina South High School who is deeply committed to serving the Salina community. She received her Associate of Arts in Accounting from Cloud County Community College and earned dual Bachelor of Science degrees in Accounting and Business from Kansas Wesleyan University. Kristin brings a diverse professional background, having spent 16 years in the agricultural industry and five years in the dental industry before transitioning into her current role as Vice President of Finance and Operations at the Greater Salina Community Foundation. Kristin and her husband, Wes, have two children, Betsy and Tate, and one fur baby, Rowdy. Their family enjoys attending Kansas State University games, children's activities, and traveling together. Kristin has also recently discovered a love of reading whenever she can find the time.



Brendan Burke is a lifelong Kansan with multiple family members who work in public education. He graduated from Pittsburg State University in 2004 and from the University of Kansas School of Law in 2006. After graduation, Brendan and his wife moved to Salina where he became a member of Norton Wasserman Jones & Kelly LLC. Brendan and his wife have two children who are currently attending Salina Public Schools.



Joe Turner – I am very grateful and excited to continue working alongside educators from USD 305 and giving back to the Salina community, in general. While I wasn't born in Salina, I have called Salina my hometown since 1998 when I began attending Lowell Elementary. Coming up through USD 305, graduating from Salina Central, I was instilled with a passion for education and harnessed that energy while attending Kansas State University. At Kansas State University, I completed a B.S. in Secondary Education in 2012 and took my first teaching job in Iola, KS. From there, I jumped back to Manhattan, KS where I taught 9th and 10th grades at MHS. In 2018 I earned my Masters in English, and I returned to Salina to teach senior English/LA at South High from 2018-2023. Working for a short time as a college advisor on the KSU-Salina campus, I am now hard at work at The Mortgage Company. I live with my fiancé, 2 children, 2 dogs, and 1 cat near downtown Salina – one of my favorite areas of town to hang out!

Retiring Trustees

During their annual meeting on August 19th, the board of trustees recognized the following retiring trustees: **Megan Dupy, Julie Richardson,** and **Samantha Romey**. Salina Education Foundation executive director Kate Lindsay and SEF Chair Jeff Maes thanked the trustees for their contributions. Their dedication has significantly benefited the Foundation and its mission to support students and staff. We extend our heartfelt thanks to them for their unwavering commitment to the Salina Education Foundation's vision.

Memorial Gifts

We honor the memories of Heike Daily, Diana Dierks, and Jesus Hernandez and thank their families for naming the Salina Education Foundation as the recipient of their memorial gifts.

Heike Daily was a beloved teacher at Heusner Elementary for many years. Heike loved her students dearly and could fondly recall their names years after they left her classroom. Her generous heart continues to inspire many. Her memorial is designated to benefit Heusner Elementary School.

Diana Dierks was a four-term Kansas Legislator from Salina who had a passion for education. She was an outstanding public servant who cared about schools, teachers, and students.

Jesus Hernandez taught for many years in USD 305, and his students and colleagues remember his generous spirit and sense of humor, which made everyone he met feel welcome.

Honoring a loved one's life, recognizing their work, or celebrating a special occasion is a wonderful way to support the Salina Education Foundation. Let us help you: kate.lindsay@usd305.com, or call 785-309-4729

Elementary Library Author Visit Fund

Imagine a child meeting the author or illustrator of their favorite book. Your designated gift to our Elementary Library Author Visits fund makes moments like that possible. Just note "Elementary Author Visits" when you give.

Our Mission

To promote & support educational excellence by providing resources to enhance opportunities for the students and staff of Salina's Public Schools.

As part of its mission, the trustees of the Salina Education Foundation:

Manage and grow endowment funds, grants, and gifts for specific schools, programs & scholarships

Award grants to teachers seeking to enhance instruction

Identify and support, through forgivable loans, outstanding Saline County residents seeking to become teachers in USD 305.

Build community awareness and support of the Salina Education Foundation

Our Vision

Unite the community to support excellent public schools.

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SALINA Education Foundation

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Grants and Programs

21st Century Advantage Grant: awarded annually for creative and innovative classroom projects

Sudden Opportunity Grant: quick turnaround grant for projects that come up unexpectedly

LIFT Program: awards up to $5,000 per year for Saline County residents who wish to become teachers

Outside-the-Box Grant: awarded annually for projects that take students outside the typical classroom setting

Partners in Education Fall 2026

Donors by Giving Level from 07/01/2025 to 06/30/2026

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