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## New Highland awarded more than \$600,000

TREY CRUMBIE The News-Enterprise 6 hrs ago

New Highland Elementary School has been awarded more than \$600,000 in a 21st Century Community Learning Center grant from the Kentucky Department of Education, Hardin County Schools announced Wednesday in a news release.

This grant serves the purpose of establishing before-school, after-school and summer learning opportunities for students. The program includes opportunities for academic support and enrichment that consist of a variety of clubs and activities that interests students.

The grant is awarded for a five-year period with a total pay out of \$662,500. The 21st Century Community Learning Center grants stem from a competitive program targeting Title I schools across the nation, the release said. Title 1 schools are schools with high percentages of children from low-income families.

According to the United States Department of Education, the 21st Century Community Learning Center grant serves to create “community learning centers” that provide academic enrichment opportunities during non-school hours for children, particularly students who attend high-poverty and low-performing schools.

“We are beyond excited,” Hardin County Schools Superintendent Teresa Morgan said in the release. “This grant allows us more time with students and helps us help them reach well beyond their goals. We are tremendously thankful for the community partnerships portion of this as well. Lots of people can come into New Highland and bring real-world experiences in a more relaxed learning environment.”

District officials said the money will be used to create reading programs and will allow for community members to interact with students before and after school later this calendar year.

“A good portion of students are a couple of months behind in reading when they return to school in August each year,” HCS Director of Federal Programs and Leadership Development Karen Lee said in the release. “This program will help students excel in safe and relaxed learning environments.

There is a mental health component and opportunities for successful men and women in our community to connect with students before and after school. This will allow students to see school in different and more unique ways than ever before.”

The grant also will help New Highland Elementary students in: creative processes, meaningful collaboration, critical thinking, problem solving, hands-on learning experiences, exploration of STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and math) fields with emphasis on female students, and unique ways to value the arts, the district said.

“We look forward to collaborating with our community partners to provide our students with exceptional learning experiences,” New Highland Elementary School Principal Chalis Packer said in the release. “The experience will be one that enriches the whole child. New Highland strives to provide excellence through education and the 21st Century Community Learning Center Grant is another resource that will help us reach that goal.”

United Way of Central Kentucky is a co-applicant on the grant. The organization will bring parent and family engagement activities, student literacy initiatives and mentoring opportunities for community volunteers.

“United Way of Central Kentucky is proud to fight for the education of our local students and is thrilled to partner with Hardin County Schools on the 21st Century Learning Center program,” UWCK President/CEO Ron Eppes said in the release.

Other community partners include the Hardin County Public Library, the Hardin County Cooperative Extension Service, the Hardin County Chamber of Commerce, HCS Family Resource and Youth Service Centers and faith-based organizations, the release said.

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