

Laconia Middle School gets \$25K literacy grant

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Jason Chin, shown in a screenshot from a video, is one of the Children's Literacy Foundation authors and illustrators who visit schools. The Laconia Middle School has received a \$25,000 grant from the Children's Literacy Foundation. (Courtesy photo)

The Children's Literacy Foundation has awarded its \$25,000 Year of the Book literacy grant to Laconia Middle School for the 2019-2020 school year. The school is one of five New Hampshire schools selected, in addition to five Vermont schools. Representatives from all Year of the Book schools took part in a literacy conference at Lake Morey Resort in Fairlee, Vermont, last month to get ideas for incorporating literacy into their curriculum and to plan for the year ahead.

The grant provides:

- Interactive author/storyteller visits and writing or cartooning workshops with the 65+ VT and NH authors CLiF works with.
- Family literacy events, including a free meal with a discussion on ways to encourage a child's literacy development, storytelling, and new books for each child, as well as an ice cream social celebrating at least 80% of families committing to reading together at least twice a week.
- Mini-grants for teachers to implement special literacy programs connected to their curricula. A few examples from past Year of the Book schools include STEM units complete with visits from live animals, visiting theater troupes, and special field trips.
- New books for classrooms, the school library, and the local public library.

- Ten new books for each child to choose throughout the year

The Year of the Book is designed to create a culture of literacy, inspire a love of reading and writing, increase access to literacy programming and high-quality reading materials, and increase family engagement in literacy and education. Schools are selected based on a demonstrated commitment to literacy and creative ideas, as well as high percentages of low-income students and students underperforming on reading and writing assessments.

In their application, Laconia Middle School officials wrote: "This grant would support literacy at home and in the classroom. It would help us connect community and families with a more literacy rich environment. We know that a family that reads together helps improve enjoyment of reading and a love of literacy that carries over to life-long skills that students in Laconia need."

The Year of the Book will begin with a kick-off interactive storytelling presentation and first book giveaway at the start of next school year. There will be events and book giveaways throughout the year, culminating in an author visit finale and last book giveaway at the end of the year.