

Glassboro Education Foundation, Inc.

Send the completed application to the attention of:

Mr. Craig Stephenson
Beach Administration Building
Joseph L. Bowe Blvd
Glassboro, NJ 08028

A. General Information

Applicant(s): Heather Rittman

School: Dorothy Bullock Elementary School

Principal: Kelly Marchese

Grade Level or Subject: Grades 3-5

Phone: (school): 856-652-2700 ext. 8218 (home): 856-469-3172 (cell)

E-mail(s): hrittman@gpsd.us

B. Statement of Assurances:

The applicant hereby assures the Glassboro Education Foundation that:

1. The applicant(s) meet(s) the eligibility criteria.
2. The activities and services for which the grant is sought will be implemented as written.
3. Any monies not expended within the school year shall revert back to the Glassboro Education Foundation, unless permission to carry it into the next school year is granted.
4. All publicity releases regarding a funded project will acknowledge the Glassboro Education Foundation and/or a particular mini-grant sponsor as the funding agency.
5. The grant recipient(s) will submit a final report summarizing the project's evaluation results.
6. The Board of Education authorizes the filing of this application.

We do hereby certify that all of the facts, figures and representations made in this application are true and correct to the best of our knowledge and that the assurances as stated above are understood and will be followed in their entirety.

Heather Rittman

Signature of Applicant

K Marchese

Signature of Principal

Please note: from this page on, please **do not include your name or your school** in any of your descriptions as all applications are coded to prevent bias.

C. Project Title and Description

Title of Project: Battle of the Books

Subject Area(s): Reading

Approximate Number of Students Participating: Estimated 60-100

Project Starting Date: October 19, 2026

Project Completion Date: March 3, 2027

Need: Describe the problem or deficiencies that exist which require the improvements described.

Reading is an essential skill for effectively engaging in society, but research also shows that across the nation, 69% of America's fourth graders are reading below proficiency levels (<https://ignite-reading.com/insights/4th-grade-reading-scores/>). Without a doubt, curriculum-based decision-making, proper interventions, and effective teacher training plays a monumental role in supporting students with foundational skills in order to help meet proficiency goals, but another key factor that cannot be neglected is that of motivation. Students who are motivated to engage in reading and thinking about reading are much more likely to take interest in reading, engage in reading, and continue to hone and develop their skills with a genuine intrinsic desire to succeed. This is a key focus of bringing Battle of the Books to our school.

Additionally, with a building of our size, there can sometimes be a disconnect between grade levels and classrooms scattered across the building. An important facet of a child's educational career should also take into consideration the need for community and connection. Students sometimes fly under the radar and may feel disconnected from the school due to lack of more personalized interaction. Being a part of a team with a teacher coach and teammates who rely upon each other and hold one another accountable can go a long way in supporting students in building a strong and positive learning community. In this way, Battle of the Books would help to develop "mini-communities" within the teams where the students can feel part of something valuable and exciting.

Finally, an essential ingredient for student success is parent involvement. Research demonstrates that greater parental involvement leads to better academic, social, and emotional outcomes for students (<https://www.edweek.org/leadership/does-parent-involvement-really-help-students-heres-what-the-research-says/2023/07>). As already indicated, the need to develop students' academic, social, and emotional needs is an important focus. Involving parents in the excitement surrounding the culminating Battle of the Books, proudly watching their children represent their teams, will be critical in this respect.

Strategy: Briefly describe your plan to alleviate the need/problem.

Battle of the Books is a national program that is intended to engage students in reading quality literature with the purpose of coming together to compete in a competition to showcase their comprehension of the texts read.

Students in the grade levels participating will have the opportunity to volunteer to be part of a team. Teachers and staff will also have the opportunity to participate as team coaches. Students will be placed into teams, and coaches will coordinate to meet with their team members frequently (ideally weekly or biweekly). Meeting goals will be to develop a fun team name and then distribute the Battle of the Books Reading List, encouraging each student to select a book from the list to check out and begin reading. When done reading the book, each child will submit a written report highlighting key story elements of the text to demonstrate knowledge of the book, as well as to report back to their team members. They will then be eligible to check out another book, continuing to do so until the day of the battle, which is currently scheduled for March 3, 2027. On the evening of the battle, families are invited to join and watch the competition, where teams will compete to answer questions about the books they have read. The winning teams (first, second, and third) will receive a prize (anticipated Scholastic Book Fair gift certificates, thanks to our district librarian).

To participate in the Battle of the Books, we will need to have a mini lending-library of the 12 key titles provided by the organization. This will permit students to check them out and read the required books. The hope is also that this will not be a one-time event, but rather, a yearly event, so establishing a key location (i.e. bookshelf) for this lending library will also be helpful. This program will allow students to get excited about reading quality texts (oftentimes, the same as other people on their teams – or even on different teams but in their same classes), hopefully sparking a desire to read more (several texts are parts of series). The excitement of the upcoming Battle will support motivation in reading texts, and it will also be a source of unity amongst team members (who will be students of varying grade levels), allowing them to get to know one another, as well as their team coach, and build lasting friendships. When participating in the final competition, students will need to defer to one another and act as a true team, allowing each team member to be their “expert in residence” on certain book titles (since most children will not read all 12 books, but rather, it will be split amongst different members). This will allow students to take pride in their own contribution, as well as to act with unity and inclusion of one another on the team.

On top of the excitement of the competition itself will be the family aspect. Families will be invited to attend and watch students compete, cheering them on, plus there will be several activities running in between the various rounds of the battle (typically, 3-4 rounds of questions will occur with an intermission between each before teams are gradually eliminated). These activities will include the chance for students and their families to design bookmarks, take photos together in a literary “photo booth” station, and select books donated from Book Smiles. At the conclusion of the event, all teams and their families will be invited to attend an ice cream social in the cafeteria to celebrate their hard work and dedication. This will provide an opportunity for families to interact together and build lasting

memories which will hopefully contribute to a positive impact upon students' academic, social, and emotional wellbeing.

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D. Objectives, Activities and Evaluation Techniques (This page may be duplicated if necessary)

Objectives	Program Activities to Accomplish Objectives	Completion Date	Evaluation Techniques
Students will be able to engage in reading quality literature and demonstrate comprehension of texts.	Students will check out Battle of the Books library texts to read in preparation for the battle; they will then write Battle of the Book Summaries highlighting key story elements of the text.	March 3, 2027	A check-in/check-out list will demonstrate that students have been utilizing the books, and their completed summary pages will demonstrate their comprehension of the texts.
Students will be able to take part in meaningful conversations about texts with peers and teachers and become part of a united team.	Students will attend frequent, brief, meetings with their team members and coaches to check in about their reading and provide updates about the texts. They will participate together as a team in the culminating Battle of the Books on March 3, 2027.	March 3, 2027	The teams will work together to participate in the final Battle of the Books on March 3, 2027. Their attendance and participation (as well as team scores) will demonstrate their unity in working together to answer questions and to act as part of a team.
Students will be able to engage positively with their families and friends in a fun, interactive environment.	On March 3, 2027, families will be invited to attend the Battle of the Books with their child. They will be able to cheer the teams on and encourage them, as well as participate in hands-on activities such as choosing new-to-them	March 12, 2027	After the evening of Battle of the Books, students will complete follow-up surveys regarding the event and their experiences. Families will also be emailed a link to share their own personal insights and experiences in a

	books from Book Smiles, designing bookmarks, taking photos at a literary themed photo booth, and enjoying an ice cream social at the end to celebrate the students' teamwork and dedication.		related survey.
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E. Itemized Budget

Materials/Equipment	Services		Evaluation Techniques
<u>item(s)</u>	<u>Item(s)</u>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>Item(s)</u> <u>Cost</u>
<i>Amazon List/Pricing</i>			
Bounty Paper Napkins, 500 ct.		6.38	
Amazon Basics Disposable Everyday White Spoons – 100 ct (order 3 packs @ 4.49 each)		13.47	
Dixie Small Paper Bowls, 10 Oz Disposable Bowls for Snacks, 280 Count		30.28	
Lieber's Rainbow and Chocolate Sprinkles Shakers		11.99	
120 pieces Inspirational Bookmarks, 30 designs (order 2 packs @ 8.99 each)		17.98	
2 pack rainbow backdrop curtains 3.28 ft x 7.05 ft metallic tinsel backdrop fringe curtains (order 2 packs @ 6.99 each)		13.98	
Reading Photo Booth Props for I Love Reading Books Club Party Decorations		9.49	
Sauder Beginnings 3 shelf bookshelf		40.99	
The Boxcar Children Book 1 (8 copies @ 5.94 each)		47.52	
Brothers at Bat: The True Story of an Amazing All-Brother		103.92	
	Sub-total:	\$55.00	Sub-total: n/a
			Grand Total: \$1,140.68

Baseball Team (8 copies @ 12.99 each)	
Be a Perfect Person in Just Three Days! (8 copies @ 5.99 each)	47.20
The First State of Being: Friendship, Family, and Time Travel Collide (8 copies @ 7.29 each)	58.32
Investigators (8 copies @ 9.18 each)	73.44
Boxes for Katje (8 copies @ 17.36 each)	138.88
The Lemonade War (8 copies @ 6.27 each)	50.16
Frindle (8 copies @ 7.45 each)	59.60
The Chocolate Touch (8 copies @ 7.99 each)	63.92
Tornado (Betsy Byars) (8 copies @ 5.59 each)	44.72
Freckle Juice (8 copies @ 4.79 each)	38.32
The One and Only Ivan (8 copies @ 6.00 each)	48.00
Total:	918.56

Sams Club List/Pricing

Members Mark Vanilla Ice Cream Pail, 5 Qts. (10 pails @ 8.12 each)	81.20
Hershey's syrup 2 pack	11.98
Members Mark Dairy Whipped Topping, 3 cans (2 @ 7.97 each)	15.94
74 oz. Royal Harvest Maraschino Cherries	11.28
Oreo 12 pk	10.98

Chips Ahoy Family Size 3 pk	10.28
M&M candies, 62 oz	16.98
Utz Mini Twists, 60 oz	8.48
Total:	167.12

Sub-total: \$1,085.68