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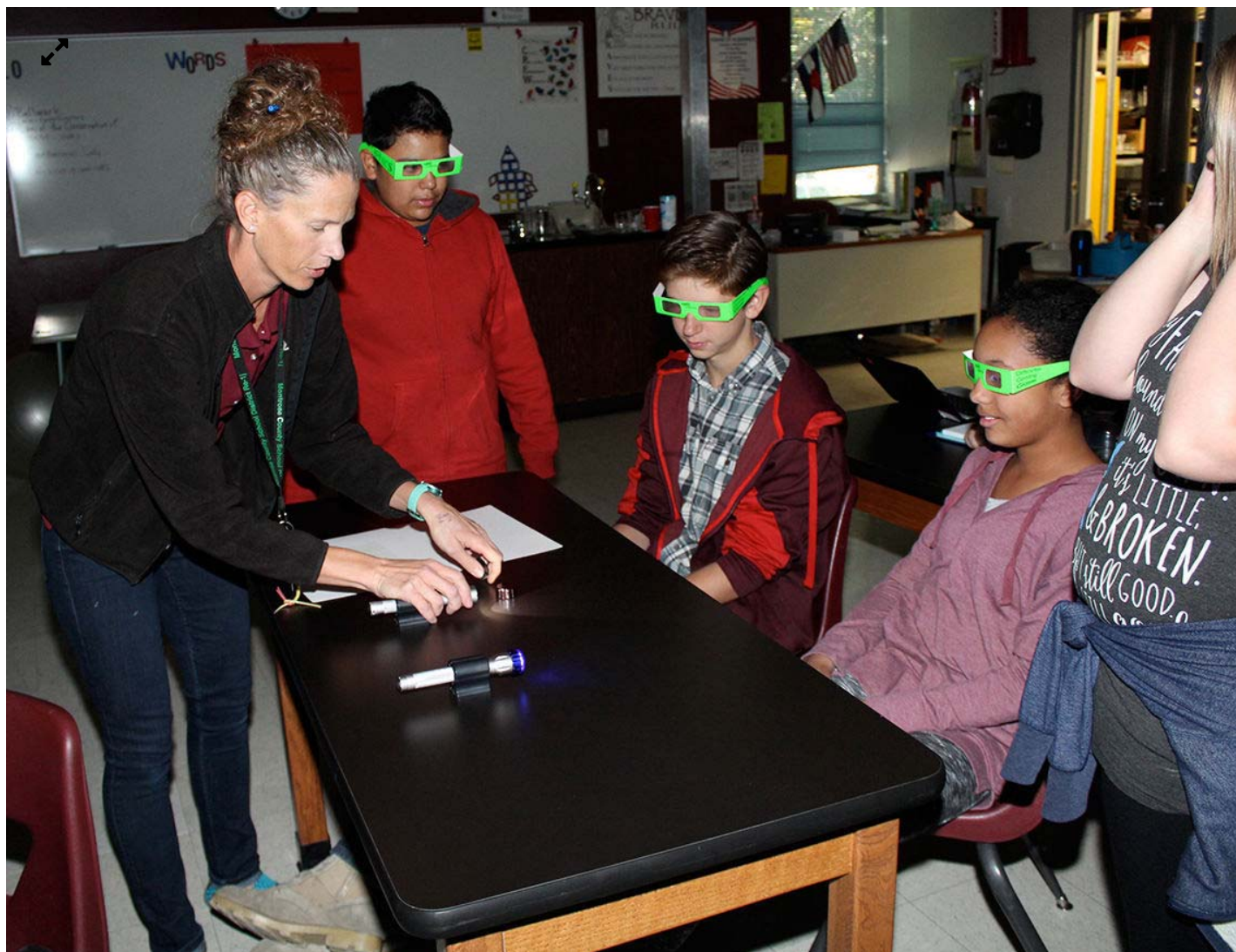
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FEATURED

Booster Club grant helps teachers with classroom needs

By Richard Reeder Montrose Daily Press Education Writer Sep 10, 2016



Richard Reeder/Montrose Daily Press

Centennial Middle School eighth-grade science teacher Meghan Waschbusch, left, shows her students the light optic kits she purchased with a grant from the Academic Booster Club.

For many years the budget has been tight around the Montrose County School District. Teachers have used their own money or have been creative in finding grants and donations for things they believe benefit their students.

One such avenue for teachers is a grant from The Academic Booster Club. The all-volunteer group raises money that it can then distribute in grants to teachers to use for classroom needs.

“We have small classroom grants we distribute to benefit students and recognize student achievement,” board member Barbara Bynum said. “We can give a little here and there to help teachers out.”

Board member Erika Story said the grants average \$400-\$500. The grants will not pay for teacher development. One such teacher who has benefitted from the grant program is Centennial Middle School eighth-grade science teacher Meghan Waschbusch. She received a \$1,500 grant last spring to purchase light optic kits. She said the new kits she bought replaced kits that were at least 30 years old.

“The kits allow students to investigate reflection and refraction of light,” she said. “I was able to purchase six of them and then had some more donated.”

Waschbusch said the expectation is for students to learn the properties of waves and the different aspects of light.

“The old kits had scratches on the lenses and were pretty beat up,” she said. “They were suffering from repeated use and being handled by teenagers.”

With the \$1,500 grant Waschbusch purchased the six kits plus the teacher material that goes along with the kits. The teachers have online access to many other resources to use.

Waschbusch said the kits expand what the students can do in the classroom

“We really like that there are different levels of projects. You can have one group working on something that is harder than another group,” she said. “The state test results came in and our students did really well on them. These types of things help in that regard.”

Waschbusch said her classroom budget is \$100, so she has found the ABC grant and others to help her buy the best equipment she can.

“I have received about seven grants through different opportunities,” she said. “DMEA has a program that we received money from to buy the 3-D printer we use for our engineering classes.”

Waschbusch said the administration is very supportive of her efforts.

“Principal Joe Simo gives us time to write grants,” she said. “To teach the new STEM curriculum we have to have the best equipment we can get.”

Bynum said this grant is a prime example of what ABC wants to do to help teachers and students.

“The board tries to benefit as many students as possible with the grants we give out,” Bynum said. “This grant to Centennial will benefit students for years to come.”

ABC relies entirely on donations. They don’t sell things or do fundraising events. They send out a letter each year giving people the opportunity to donate.

“A lot of teachers may not know that we have this grant program available,” Story said. “We want teachers to have access to the grants so we encourage them to apply.”

For more information on donating to ABC or becoming a volunteer visit montroseabc.org.