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Lilly Endowment approves \$24 million for Marion County private schools

From building a small theater to developing an arts center, from dramatic upscaling of technology to establishing a spiritual development center, 14 private schools in Marion County and the Archdiocese of Indianapolis will use \$24.1 million in grants from Lilly Endowment Inc. to make exciting improvements to their curricula and facilities.

“Marion County’s impressive collection of private schools provides many attractive educational options for students in our community,” said Sara B. Cobb, Endowment vice president for education, “and the Endowment was pleased to offer this opportunity for them to consider their academic futures.”

The initiative is one of many kindergarten-through-college-and-beyond efforts of the Endowment to address Indiana’s near-the-bottom ranking in the percentage of citizens over 25 with a baccalaureate degree.

“Over the last few years, we have made major grants to Indiana colleges and universities and invited community groups to re-imagine their schools all over the state through the Community Alliances to Promote Education (CAPE) initiative,” Cobb said. “Also, the Endowment funds a statewide full-tuition scholarship program – now four years old – in which 950 Indiana students have been selected by Indiana community foundations to pursue their bachelor’s degree on Indiana campuses.

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“In each endeavor,” she noted, “the Endowment has asked for the best efforts and thoughts of those concerned about education. This initiative was no exception. We wanted school officials, teachers, students, parents, community representatives, and business and professional people to think about ways that the plans would make a strategic advancement in their school’s ability to prepare students for an increasingly competitive, knowledge-driven, global society.

“Obviously, the schools and their constituents put much thought and attention into how they could best use the funds to make the most difference in the areas they are concerned about for their more than 19,000 students. We believe they have done their jobs well – and we will be eager to see the results,” she said.

The competitive initiative, announced in November, was open to all accredited private schools in Marion County and offered grants of \$50,000 to \$2 million, depending on the amount of the schools’ budgets. (The Archdiocese of Indianapolis was asked to submit one proposal in this competition for up to \$10 million for its Marion County schools.)

The private schools were subject to a \$2 (grantor)-for-\$1 (grantee) matching condition, and each school needs to raise the full amount of the grant in the time frame (Aug. 1, 2001-Oct. 31, 2002) in order to receive the grant.

The Endowment has approved plans for the following programs:

Archdiocese of Indianapolis, \$10 million

The archdiocese proposes the EXCEED program (Excellence in Catholic Expectations for Education) for its 29 K-8 and four high schools serving almost 13,000 students. It plans to recruit, retain and reward Catholic school educators and

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administrators; assess and report on student performance and progress in achieving excellence, and serve the needs and enhance the performance of special student populations, such as Hispanic students.

Brebeuf Preparatory School, \$2 million

With an academic program stemming from the Jesuit tradition, Brebeuf now teaches about 765 students in grades 9-12 who come from nearly 50 schools in Marion and surrounding counties. Brebeuf plans to upgrade substantially its information technology systems, add “wired” classrooms and offer new classes that use the new technology. Brebeuf also will form a partnership with the Oaks Academy, an inner-city Christian school.

Calvary Evangelical Lutheran Congregation, \$152,227

The school on the city’s southeast side serves more than 300 students in preschool through eighth grade. The school plans to expand its technology capacity and hire a coordinator who will develop and deliver a progressive technology curriculum and work with faculty in doing so.

Capitol City Seventh-day Adventist School, \$200,000

Located at 21st Street and Boulevard Place since 1933, Capitol City serves 133 students in a K-8 school and expects to add ninth and 10th grades this year. The school plans to construct two classrooms so all students will be taught in single-grade classrooms. They also will upgrade science, mathematics and technology courses by adding three teachers and providing staff development for all teachers.

Cathedral High School, \$2 million

With 1,070 students in grades 9-12 on Indianapolis’ northeast side, Cathedral plans to enrich its academic programs through upgrading its technology and providing teacher training to use that technology. The school also plans to begin offering the

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International Baccalaureate degree and to develop a Student Life Center that will house the Learning Center, eight new telecommunications classrooms and the Spiritual Development Center. This center will be the focal point for all spiritual and leadership activities and community service opportunities and organizations.

Divine Savior Evangelical Lutheran Church, \$146,000

This school in eastern Marion County serves 106 students in preschool through eighth grade. Plans are to add a full-time science and technology teacher, upgrade the science classroom and provide professional development opportunities for teachers.

Greater Indianapolis Association for Lutheran Secondary Education (Lutheran High School), \$50,000

The school has a fast and full Internet connection, but students have only limited seating in the library and access to only one computer lab. The southside school with 275 students in grades 9-12 proposes to acquire a mobile, wireless computer laboratory, allowing flexible access to online resources in any classroom in the building.

Hasten Hebrew Academy, \$1,997,470

Indiana's only Jewish day school, Hasten Hebrew Academy, enrolls 265 students in preschool through eighth grade and provides a dual curriculum in Judaic and general studies. School officials plan to develop a multicultural arts center that will include programs in the performing arts, painting, sculpture, publications and broadcasting. The center will allow fine arts instruction to be woven throughout the curriculum.

Heritage Christian School, \$2 million

The interdenominational school on the city's northeast side was established in 1965 and boasts a 100 percent graduation rate. The K-12 school plans to create a shared technology resource center and multimedia hub through which its 800 students can expand their knowledge of technology and broaden their academic opportunities.

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Indianapolis Christian School, \$200,000

This school in the downtown Chatham Arch district has served the neighborhood for 27 years. Many of its 117 K-12 students come from impoverished circumstances, but they consistently score above grade level on standardized tests. The school wants to upgrade its technology, train its teachers in the newest teaching methods and hire three more teachers in language arts, reading and mathematics.

International School of Indiana, \$2 million

The 7-year-old school has grown from 38 to more than 400 students in preschool to ninth grade. Grant funds will be used toward construction of a permanent high school near the Indianapolis Museum of Art, Butler University and Christian Theological Seminary. The grant also will be used for start-up costs to institute the International Baccalaureate (IB) Program, a degree respected by colleges and universities throughout the world. Almost 1,200 schools internationally offer the IB, but there are only three in Indiana that currently do so – North Central High School in Indianapolis, South Side High School in Fort Wayne and Valparaiso High School – and a few more are contemplating offering it. The rigorous IB curriculum, followed in the junior and senior years, features the integration of international understanding in each subject area.

Orchard School Foundation, \$600,000

To address challenges in making the school a place that welcomes diversity, school officials plan to develop the Dignity Center, the centerpiece of which will be a revision of the school's social studies curriculum. Students and teachers will learn the strengths and accomplishments of various cultures. Orchard was founded in 1922 and enrolls 595 students on the north side in preschool through eighth grade.

Park Tudor Foundation, \$2 million

Funds will be used to establish a Learning Center to facilitate the school's practices of educating in ways more tailored to the individual student's learning needs and styles. The school will start significant outreach efforts to help students and parents

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at other Indiana schools who are interested in specialized learning strategies. The school also will establish a consortium of local schools interested in understanding better how students learn. Park Tudor enrolls 950 students in grades K-12.

Southport Presbyterian Christian School, \$80,000

The southside school, serving 190 students in grades K-5, will upgrade its technology system to institute a problem-solving curriculum that focuses on collaborative learning, computer literacy and critical reflection. Through this curriculum teachers will create group-oriented research projects. “Media helpers,” education students from Franklin College, will aid students with data searches, editing, researching and presenting.

Sycamore School, \$667,000

The second largest of eight independent schools for gifted children in a 15-state area, Sycamore School was founded in 1985 and now enrolls 425 students in preschool through eighth grade in the northwest part of the county. Funds will be used to expand and modernize the library, add a small theater, a portable planetarium, tutorial rooms, a distance learning room, a media production center and academic offices. The school also plans to share the planetarium in a collaboration with the Oaks Academy.

Several projects described in these programs were begun under an earlier Endowment initiative for Marion County private schools. In 1997 and 1998 the Endowment offered the private schools \$1 (grantor)-for-\$1 (grantee) matching grants for capital projects related to academic facilities and equipment. Under that initiative the Endowment awarded 22 schools with \$12.8 million (including \$5 million for the archdiocese).

Besides this private school initiative, the Endowment has a similar competitive initiative under way for the 11 public school districts in Marion County. Announcement of those awards is expected in the fall.