

# ETS and Ewing Township Schools Work Together on Education

*Editor's note: This article is the second in a series that explores relationships and partnerships ETS has formed with various local and national educational organizations. The [first article](#) looked at ETS's work with Trenton schools. The next article will focus on schools in San Antonio, Texas.*

In keeping with ETS's social mission, the ETS Social Investment Fund (SIF) works closely with local and national organizations to plan and create initiatives that support the communities surrounding ETS facilities.

## Support for Ewing Public Schools

SIF has an excellent working relationship with the Ewing Public Education Foundation (EPEF), an independent, not-for-profit citizens' organization that mobilizes community support, concern, commitment and resources to help improve the quality of education in Ewing.

ETS provides grants to EPEF, which have helped the district improve the use of assessment data, funded discussions and presentations on achievement gaps initiatives, and supported in-house professional development programs related to closing achievement gaps. Grants have also supported teacher- and staff-recognition programs and teacher grants for innovative educational programs in the classroom. ETS also hosts EPEF's annual retreat at the Chauncey Conference Center.

"By allowing EPEF, the Board of Education and the schools to use our facilities for strategic planning meetings, retreats and other events, we have made a significant impact on their ability to collaborate and work toward building better schools," says [Karl Clark](#), ETS Test Security Analyst and member of the EPEF board.

EPEF works closely with Superintendent of Schools Michael Nitti and members of the Ewing Township Board of Education to achieve its goals. "The continual support of ETS allows both the EPEF and the district to participate in programs and support endeavors that otherwise would not be possible," says Nitti.

## Teacher Grants

For more than 16 years, EPEF has provided grants to teachers for innovative educational projects. In 2010, EPEF named one of the grants for Eleanor Horne, a recently retired ETS vice president, for her "tireless dedication and support of the education community in general and Ewing Public Schools in particular," as Nitti wrote in April 2010.

ETS funds teacher grants awarded by EPEF in a wide variety of academic areas. In the 2009–10 academic year, 29 grants — ranging from one hundred dollars to several thousand dollars — supported literacy, community/leadership, math, science, technology and creative arts projects.

Grants supported literacy programs such as the use of SMART-boards in language-arts classes to connect those studies to technology and e-book resources to supplement the district's media center. Teacher grants have also supported community and leadership programs that foster community service such as a student voting program. Math, science and technology grants have supported programs like "Hands-On Science Night," which offers students real-life experiences with technology and science. Creative arts grants have been used to design programs to help foster art appreciation.

Christine Perkins, second grade teacher at Antheil Elementary School used a grant to create a courtyard garden at the school. Kindergarteners and their fifth-grade 'buddies' planted a strawberry patch and tulip bulbs, and over time they also added a fish pond and bird-feeding area.

## Odyssey of the Mind

ETS funds one of Ewing schools' flagship programs, "Odyssey of the Mind," an international educational program that provides opportunities for students to apply their creativity toward solving problems. Students bring their solutions to competitions on the local, state and international level. Thousands of teams from the United States and about 25 countries participate in the competition.

This year, the fourth- and fifth-grade team at Ewing's William L. Antheil Middle School competed at the New Jersey regional tournament in March and the state tournament in April. They won best in New Jersey and went to the world finals to compete against 52 international teams. They placed thirteenth, which was in the top 25 percent.

Wayne Staub, president of EPEF and a parent chaperone for the team, calls it an unbelievable experience. "Kids from Japan, Poland, Texas, Florida and New Jersey may look and sound different, but they really have a lot more in common than any one of them could have ever imagined. This could not be possible without the support we receive from ETS. I wish every kid who is involved with Odyssey of the Mind has an opportunity to have a world finals experience. I will never forget it and it inspires me to do more for kids and to help create opportunities for them."

Following up on the program, SIF's [Dave Hobson](#) and [Laurie Russell](#) participated in a public service announcement to help promote Ewing schools. "We talked about how Odyssey of the Mind promotes creative, outside-of-the-box thinking, and how important these skills are for today's students," says Russell.



Students and parent chaperones with OMER the raccoon, mascot of Odyssey of the Mind.

## The Ewing Talent Show

ETS has been a longtime supporter of the Ewing Talent Show, an annual event to highlight the talents of Ewing children in grades K-12. The relationship began in 2004, and since then, ETS has contributed \$5,000 each year to cover expenses such as prize money, trophies and refreshments, and has also printed the talent show applications and the program book, provided stage decorations, and funded the development of a website.

"There is no question that ETS has been extremely generous to Ewing and our most precious commodity, our children," says former Ewing mayor Jack Ball, who was the catalyst of the event. "For that I am and will remain extremely grateful."

The seventh annual Talent Show, which was held at Fisher Middle School in February, was dedicated to former ETS employee Robert Malinowski, who was a member of the Talent Show Committee, designed the annual program booklet, secured ads for the book and oversaw SIF's participation and support of the talent show. Malinowski passed away in January, about six weeks before this year's show.

In February, 57 children participated in the two shows — one in the afternoon and one in the evening. More than 600 parents, family members, friends and Ewing residents attended, including the superintendent of schools and the mayor of Ewing.

Ball, who continues to head the Talent Show Committee, says, "What we have done together for the past seven years is to give young people an opportunity to showcase their talent and increase their confidence while also affording the community an opportunity to come together for a most enjoyable and family-oriented day."

### **ETS's Continued Support for Ewing**

SIF supports the Ewing Schools in a number of other ways. ETS prints the Ewing Public School Calendar and Parent Handbook, which is distributed to more than 5,000 parents, public school staff and administrators.

ETS also sponsors and hosts the annual Ewing Parents' End Zone Club Awards Banquet to recognize the Ewing Township High School football team. Close to 170 parents, coaches and guest speakers share stories and bestow awards on student athletes.

Over the years, ETS has also donated SAT® study guides, fax machines, glare screens, desk organizers, white boards, easels, bulletin boards, binders and a host of other surplus items to the school district. "In this age of ever-shrinking funding, we appreciate all donations and offers of support," says Raymond Broach, former Superintendent of Ewing Schools, in a letter to SIF in 2009.

"There's no question that working together with EPEF and the superintendent, we are making a difference in Ewing Public Schools," says Russell. "We are truly partners in education."

[Back to ETS Inside Home](#)

Posted: July 19, 2011