



CALIFORNIA STATE TREASURER JOHN CHIANG

# NEWS RELEASE

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## **Treasurer's Scholar Dollars Program Awards More Than \$300,000 In Grants to Fund Extracurricular Activities, After-School Programs**

**SACRAMENTO** – A solar-powered STEM center for conducting environmental experiments. A new set of Chromebooks and computer animation equipment for 6<sup>th</sup> grade students. An outdoor learning center focused on hands-on education about the natural world. Robotics instruction for 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> graders.

These are just some of the after-school and extracurricular programs that Scholar Dollars is helping to make a reality in 2018.

California State Treasurer John Chiang today announced the 20 winners of the Scholar Dollars Grant Program. Debuting last year with great success, Scholar Dollars is providing more than \$300,000 to help budget-squeezed schools pay for essential activities that are so vital to student achievement and a well-rounded education.

“Sports, music, computer labs—activities like these are a crucial part of any young person’s education and eventual success,” Chiang said. “But California school districts have been forced to curtail or cancel many of their after-school programs in recent years. That is why Scholar Dollars is so important. As part of the program, we also educate students and parents about our ScholarShare 529 College Savings Plan, which helps families save for college.”

A total of 465 schools up and down the state registered in the grant program and engaged with their communities to vote. All told, more than 405,000 votes were cast in an effort to win one of the 20 available grants.

Winning schools will spend their grants in a variety of ways:

- Alfred B. Nobel Charter Middle in Northridge will be awarded \$30,000 to purchase Chromebooks, music instruments, library books and equipment for its noontime sports program.
- La Paz Intermediate in Mission Viejo will receive \$25,000 to purchase new instruments for its talented jazz band and orchestra, which perform at major festivals and competitions across the state.

- And Leonardo Da Vinci School in Sacramento will be awarded \$20,000 to enrich its science program with hands-on learning opportunities, new curriculum, lab equipment, and teacher training.

“Our Scholar Dollars grant will be critical to enhancing our existing year-long STEM curriculum,” said Devon Davis, principal at Leonardo Da Vinci School. “It will allow our students to develop a deeper understanding of global issues and their impact on the planet, providing them with skills to make informed and responsible decisions to improve the environment.”

Seventeen other California K-8 public and charter schools will receive grants ranging from \$5,000 to \$30,000, depending on school size. Some grants will fund the purchase of materials like library books, projectors, and cameras. Others will support enrichment programs like music education and art classes.

Scholar Dollars is administered by ScholarShare 529, California’s college savings plan. ScholarShare 529 recognizes the critical role that California schools play in preparing students for college success by providing essential after-school and extracurricular programs that foster a college-going culture on their campuses.

“A Scholar Dollars grant will help to enrich and prepare our students to be college and career ready,” said Helen Lu, principal at Frank Vessels Elementary in Cypress, which will use its \$20,000 grant to purchase technology items such as new computers, laptops, iPads, SmartBoards, and printers. “In a world where technology is involved in most everything we do, it is our goal to put technology in the hands of every student in every classroom every day.”

Another grant recipient, Santiago Elementary in Santa Ana, will use its \$25,000 grant to purchase programmable LED stage lighting fixtures, a portable theater tech booth, and electronic media technology for researching, recording and editing student work and performances.

“These modernizations will enhance our classroom environments so that students can thrive and acquire the 21st Century skills needed for the future,” said Norris Perez, principal at Santiago Elementary. “We owe it to our children to develop their minds to imagine, learn, and discover solutions through the arts, and prepare them for viable jobs in a creative and collaborative workforce.”

Scholar Dollars is open to K-8 public and charter schools in California. ScholarShare 529, which sponsors Scholar Dollars, offers families a diverse set of tools to help pay for college, including low-cost investment options, tax-deferred growth and withdrawals that are free from state and federal taxes when they’re used for qualified higher-education expenses. Studies show that kids with a savings account in their name are seven times more likely to attend and graduate college.

During the next month, Treasurer Chiang will visit select campuses in Northern and Southern California to present winning schools with their Scholar Dollars grant awards. View the full schedule, below.

### **Schedule of Award Presentations for Scholar Dollars Grants**

- 5/2 – Sacramento, Calif. (Leonardo da Vinci K-8 School)
- 5/11 -- Cypress, Calif. (Frank Vessels Elementary School)

To learn more about the grant program and to see a full list of winners, visit [MyScholarDollars.com](http://MyScholarDollars.com).

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