



A Union of Professionals

## AFT News Release

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### **AFT Announces Third Round of Innovation Fund's Return, Recover and Reimagine (RRR) Grants**

**WASHINGTON**—American Federation of Teachers President Randi Weingarten and Executive Vice President Evelyn DeJesus issued the following statement announcing the third round of AFT Innovation Fund RRR grants totaling \$200,000 to help support ongoing local efforts to keep schools open for full-time, in-person instruction and to meet the academic, social and emotional needs of students. This round of grants brings the total support to 35 AFT affiliates with an investment of more than \$1 million since the beginning of the pandemic.

Weingarten said:

"The COVID pandemic and its ensuing economic, educational and emotional disruptions affected so many of us. Our No. 1 goal remains working with parents, educators and students to keep schools open and help kids recover post-pandemic, which is why we wanted to have these school and local-based grants. These funds will help alleviate the trauma and stress our students and educators are feeling and will encourage the necessary collaboration to ensure our public schools are places where educators want to teach, parents want to send their kids, and students can truly thrive. On top of critical federal funding, these grants are helping classroom teachers navigate one of the most challenging school years, supporting reading instruction, teacher retention, and the important work of making schools safe, healthy and welcoming for all. We know educators, caregivers, parents and students are increasingly anxious and exhausted, and we're proud to invest in local efforts to make sure all our schools are equipped to meet those challenges, and move forward in preparing students to be engaged citizens of the world."

DeJesus said:

"We are so excited and inspired by the ongoing strength and commitment of our educators, as well as their students and families. Teachers are continually rising to every new challenge and going above and beyond in an effort to take care of their students; this has never been more evident than during the ongoing pandemic. Our educators are beyond being stretched thin; our children are shouldering a level of stress that is unprecedented; and their parents are more anxious than ever. To deal with these realities, our schools need

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The **American Federation of Teachers** is a union of 1.7 million professionals that champions fairness; democracy; economic opportunity; and high-quality public education, healthcare and public services for our students, their families and our communities. We are committed to advancing these principles through community engagement, organizing, collective bargaining and political activism, and especially through the work our members do.

Randi Weingarten  
PRESIDENT

Loretta Johnson  
SECRETARY-TREASURER

Evelyn DeJesus  
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT

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help. They need more resources and supports. The AFT Innovation Fund is proud to be awarding 'Return, Recover and Reimagine' grants to help support affiliates in their efforts to create safe, welcoming, and inclusive schools for students and educators."

Here is a list of the third-round grantees:

**Missoula Education Association (Montana)** will use the [Educators Thriving](#) framework and Second Step SEL to expand its work toward increasing teacher retention and job satisfaction in the Missoula County Public Schools.

**Northside AFT (Texas)** will supply culturally responsive books for all Title I schools in the district and create a professional development training in culturally responsive pedagogy.

**Rhode Island Federation of Teachers and Health Professionals** will partner with the Providence Teachers Union to plan, develop and pilot a professional learning program to help educators achieve the mandated proficiency of scientific reading and structured literacy instruction by the 2023-24 school year.

**Salmon River Teachers' Association (New York)** will partner with the [Holistic Life Foundation](#) to implement trauma-informed mindfulness practices and movement programming districtwide, to support students' and educators' health and well-being.

**San Antonio Alliance of Teachers and Support Personnel (Texas)** will expand culturally responsive professional development by piloting a youth participatory action research component, and engaging educators in community-centered cultural projects.

**United Teachers Los Angeles (California)** will create a social and emotional learning "clubhouse" for students and develop programming focused on a holistic approach to their physical, mental, emotional and academic needs.

**United Teachers of Lowell (Massachusetts)** will create professional development designed to address culturally responsive pedagogy, to enhance the understanding of the diverse cultures we serve and provide the background knowledge needed to further engage students in learning.

[See highlights](#) from Round 1 grantees!

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Follow AFT President Randi Weingarten: <http://twitter.com/rweingarten>