

North Middlesex Regional High School awarded financial literacy grant

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North Middlesex Regional High School. (Julia Malakie/Lowell Sun)

By Submitted article

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TOWNSEND — North Middlesex Regional High School was awarded a financial literacy grant from the Healey-Driscoll administration.

In January, the school learned it had been awarded \$5,350 through an FC:104 Financial Literacy Planning and Implementation Grant. The grant program provides funding to support schools in the selection and/or development of materials, curriculum, professional development, and in-person or virtual learning related to financial literacy.

North Middlesex's application was submitted after three students proposed financial literacy initiatives at the November School Committee meeting.

Seniors Joshua Gallagher, Jackson Bailey, and Jack Amari presented their ideas on how to implement financial literacy initiatives to North Middlesex School Committee members.

As part of their Civic Action Project (CAP) last spring, the three juniors researched neighboring districts' Program of Studies, attended a local financial literacy fair and surveyed students and staff. Through their project findings, Gallagher, Bailey, and Amari identified a lack of financial literacy amongst students across Massachusetts.

Now in their senior year, the group decided to continue their CAP to bring the Credit for Life Fair to North Middlesex. They wish to provide their classmates and future students with real-life fiscal expectations and responsibilities, and money-management skills to better prepare them for life after high school. North Middlesex will use the grant funding to provide the Credit for Life Fair for students this spring.

The grant funding will also be used to offer a Financial Literacy course next school year. The course is designed to provide students with the essential knowledge and skills required to make informed financial decisions, manage their personal finances and build a strong foundation for financial well-being. Students taking this course will be empowered to navigate the complexities of financial life, from budgeting and saving to investing and planning for their future. By fostering financial responsibility, this course will also aim to equip students with lifelong skills that will serve them in both personal and professional contexts.

Credit for Life Fairs task students with building a hypothetical budget. Students are first assigned a monthly income, and then visit tables overseen by local banks and businesses, as well as community volunteers, and make financial decisions based on their income regarding topics including insurance, transportation, savings and retirement, career counseling, luxuries, cellphone plans and education. By walking through the process of building a realistic budget, students develop a better understanding of healthy spending choices, the importance of budgeting and how to make complex financial decisions.