

**Employee Name:** Laura Herring

**School:** Douglas Elementary

**Year of Implementation:** 2018-19

**Project Title:** “Music to My Ears! Listening and Sensory Centers”

This grant enabled me to purchase modified instruments to meet the special needs of many of my students. My students with special needs require therapy instruments like Boomwhackers (drumming tubes), specialized glockenspiels, sensory jingles, egg shakers and cajons to meet their sensory needs as well as to accommodate for physical issues. At my school, we meet students’ special needs and we strive for student engagement. My students love playing instruments and exploring new tone colors. Most instruments typically do not fit many of the needs of my students who have unique sensory, learning, and behavioral needs. All of my students have enjoyed playing our new instruments.

At my new listening center, the students have been enjoying literacy sets such as “Sing-Along Read-Along Classics”. These book and CD sets help students enjoy reading outside of their classroom as well as instill an appreciation for various styles of music from around the world to celebrate cultural diversity. This listening center, as opposed to whole group listening aloud, has provided students with greater control over their personal learning pace. This center has also served as a “safe space” for students who need a break from the larger group. At such times, students have had the opportunity to listen to soothing music until they are ready to rejoin the class.

This grant has been effective, because it has allowed me to improve upon student participation, expanding literacy in music class, classroom management, and classroom environment. My younger students and students with special needs have been able to play a larger variety of percussion instruments. Students have also had the opportunity to dive deeper into our curriculum through exploring tone colors, observing and classifying the instruments by shape, size, sound, and utility. Students have been able to make deeper connections to curriculum outside of music class when spending time in the listening center. I hope students will continue to understand and appreciate the use of music as a tool for emotional balance as they have begun to discover in our listening center.