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Gladstone preschool wins innovation grant

A county grant of nearly \$53,000 will allow the Gladstone Teaching Preschool to continue pioneering work providing inquiry-based, year-round preschool to low income and special needs children.

“Our school is a demonstration site for inquiry-based education,” said founding partner Catherine Willmott. “Students take an active role in shaping their own learning through storytelling, problem solving, conflict resolution, designing play environments, and collaborating with peers on long-term projects.”

Free to students, the preschool serves 20 children, a balance of students referred for special education needs and those drawn from the Head Start waiting list.

The Gladstone Teaching Preschool was created in 2014 through an innovative partnership between the Portland Children’s Museum, the Clackamas Education Service District, Gladstone Schools, and the non-profit Teaching Preschool Partners.

Located at the Gladstone Center for Children and Families, the school is surrounded by social service agencies, providing on-site services from counseling and health care to parenting support and nutrition.

Because only 41 percent of Oregon children attend preschool, project partners are hopeful that the state will soon find ways to support universal preschool to increase school readiness.

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