

Apply for a Genius & Joy Grant!

“Our youths are geniuses. They are not all those things that systemic oppression has created. And young people deserve to be taught by geniuses, those who seek knowledge and deeply love the students in their classes.”

- Dr. Gholdy Muhammad

There has been a great deal of rhetoric around learning loss and the kind of transformative change needed in education right now. We believe educators need adequate time, resources, and support to reimagine what their classrooms can be.

With support from the Phillips Foundation, your school has the opportunity to offer 1 or 2 weeks of culturally responsive summer programming to your students. This is a chance for ALL educators (teachers, paraprofessionals, administrators, and support staff) to create learning experiences that cultivate learners' language and literacy development while keeping identity, joy, critical thinking, and cultural affirmation at the center.

Let your passions be your guide! We are looking for creative, hands-on learning opportunities that will spark interest and joy in students. Learn a new skill! Explore the neighborhood! Create and build! Tell stories!

HERE ARE A FEW EXAMPLES:

- Digital storytelling: Journalism, Podcasting, and Video
- Building collaborative curriculum with youth and then teaching it to a targeted audience
- Personal Narratives (Students can start with their earliest memories of traditions, education, religion, triumphs, defeats, and so on.)
- Visual Arts: Painting, Photography, Mural-Making
- Outdoor exploration and reflection
- Exploring the Mississippi riverfront in North Minneapolis
- Poetry
- Gardening
- Outer Space exploration
- Gaming
- Dance
- Book Club
- Maker Space
 - [Maker-Centered Learning and Thinking Routines](#)

PRIORITIZING IDENTITY, CRITICALITY, AND JOY

“Listen, we need joy, you all, and when you are teaching about people of color, you start with their genius and joy first... Anything painful, you don’t start with what the oppressor or somebody did to a group of people. You start with who they are at their core and that calls for you to unearth knowledge that you may or may not have.” - Dr. Gholdy Muhammad

Genius & Joy Grants will provide teachers and school staff with the opportunity to create learning experiences for Northside youth. We are inspired by Dr. Muhammad’s internationally acclaimed book *Cultivating Genius: An Equity Framework for Culturally and Historically Responsive Literacy*. This book will be the central reference point for educator coaching and other professional development.

Dr. Muhammad’s framework is essential for all students, especially youth of color, who traditionally have been marginalized in learning standards, school policies, and classroom practices. The framework promotes five learning goals or pursuits. As you begin to think about the summer programming your team wants to offer, keep her five learning goals in mind:

- **Identity development:** defining self; making sense of one’s values and beliefs
- **Skill development:** developing proficiencies through reading and writing meaningful content
- **Intellectual development:** gaining knowledge and becoming smarter
- **Criticality:** developing the ability to read texts to understand power, authority, and oppression
- **Joy:** developing students’ happiness by elevating beautiful and truthful images, representations, and narratives about self and others while centering belonging, self-acceptance, and self-love

In many ways, our education system tends to focus on skill and intellectual development but neglects other essential aspects of the whole child. Joy and identity development are often add-ons to the curriculum, if anything. Dr. Muhammad argues that these learning goals should be the starting point of all education and integrated throughout the learning process. She says that teachers need adequate resources to uncover new ways to share meaningful learning experiences with students, their families, and communities. This creates a mutually beneficial relationship, one where the students are prepared for rigorous literacy instruction while teachers learn more about their students.

Although we believe all five learning goals or pursuits deserve time and attention, **we are prioritizing identity, criticality, and joy**. Skill and intellect pursuits have already been prioritized by educators and district leaders for many years.

SUPPORTS

This grant opportunity will also serve as professional development, positioning teachers to lead this work. You can expect the following from the Phillips Foundation:

1. Coaching and support during the grant proposal process, implementation, and public exhibition.
2. Funds for materials and supplies.
3. Fair pay for your labor and services.

HOW GENIUS & JOY GRANTS WILL WORK

- Grants will support the following types of summer learning programs:
 - Week-long, full-day experiences at North Minneapolis schools during the weeks of August 2-6 and August 9-12, 2021.
 - Week-long, part-day experiences that enhance programming at North Minneapolis Community Education sites (Franklin Middle School, Cityview Elementary)
- Cohorts of four or more educators from eligible schools should apply together. Each cohort is responsible for organizing one or two weeks of Genius & Joy programming at their school.
 - Programming should be provided for 6 or more hours per day, five days per week.
 - If Genius & Joy Grants are enhancing Community Education programming, they can support week-long, half-day (2-3 hours) experiences.
- Each cohort should identify one member who will serve as Site Coordinator to assist with procuring supplies and other site logistics. This person can also serve as a Genius & Joy Educator.
- Educators have broad discretion about how they design their Genius & Joy experiences, but each will:
 - Incorporate one or more strategies to develop students' literacy skills
 - Draw upon [Gholdy Muhammad's framework](#)
 - Culminate in an exhibition or performance that families, educators and MPS staff can attend.
- Genius & Joy Educators must participate in coaching, curriculum review and evaluation activities as requested by the Phillips Foundation.
- Participating schools must secure the approval of their Principal. The Principal does not need to serve as a Site Coordinator or Educator, although they are welcome to do so.
- Each Educator in a Genius & Joy cohort is responsible for developing and delivering a week-long learning experience lasting 2-3 hours per day, with the cohort working together to schedule and coordinate a week-long, full-day program for students. The grant amounts are as follows:
 - Each Genius & Joy Grant will provide a stipend of \$2,000 to each Educator in the cohort and an additional supply budget of up to \$500.
 - This stipend can be split among two or more collaborating Educators.
 - If a Genius & Joy experience or "class" is offered a second time, Educator(s) will receive an additional \$1,000 stipend and have access to an additional \$500 supply budget. This may occur if a school provides two weeks of programming in August.
 - The Site Coordinator will receive an additional stipend of \$1,000 for each week that they serve in this capacity.
- Genius & Joy stipends will be paid out in two installments. Educators and Site Coordinators will receive half once they have confirmed their participation, and the remaining half after their programming is delivered. Payment will be untaxed, and recipients will be responsible for relevant state and federal taxes.

Find more information and the application form here: phillipsfamilymn.org/genius

ABOUT THE JAY AND ROSE PHILLIPS FAMILY FOUNDATION

The Jay and Rose Phillips Family Foundation has supported MPS schools in North Minneapolis for the past five years. Phillips works with an Advisory Committee of Northside educators, parents, and students to review and recommend funding for schools. Since 2016, this Committee has helped the Foundation invest over \$3 million in projects at six North Minneapolis MPS schools.