

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

“This should be how school IS!” - 2021 Genius & Joy Educator

Do you need to “refill your bucket”? To reconnect with the passion and potential that compelled you to become an educator? If your answer is “Yes!” (or “Hell, yes!!”), consider participating in Genius & Joy at your school this summer.

Genius & Joy is an opportunity to receive funding to offer one, two, or three weeks of culturally responsive summer programming at your school, for your students. This is a chance for ALL educators (teachers, ESPs, administrators, and support staff) to create experiences that spark joy, build critical understanding of our world, and develop strong literacy skills.

GENIUS & JOY 2022

The Phillips Family Foundation hopes to fund teams of educators from 6-9 MPS schools in North Minneapolis this summer. Educators will receive a \$1,500 stipend for each week of Genius & Joy programming they provide (Monday-Thursday). Most Genius & Joy programming will be offered in the first three weeks of August (8/1-8/18).

New for 2022:

- Learning and rejuvenation days will be scheduled on Fridays in July and August. These optional sessions will help G&J educators grow their skills and learn from peers while enjoying some well-deserved restorative care. Participants will receive a \$100 VISA gift card for each session they attend.
- Through a partnership with Groves Learning Organization, K-3 educators can receive mentorship and training in Groves’ evidence-based literacy instruction framework – a proven approach to boosting young readers’ abilities

WHAT DOES A GENIUS & JOY PROGRAM LOOK LIKE?

2021 was the first year of Genius & Joy. Overall, 49 educators from five schools helped to design and deliver summer learning that reached nearly 250 students.

Here are some of the experiences created by MPS educators last year:

- A Lucy Laney educator created a digital photography camp that culminated in a student exhibition.
- A team of Patrick Henry educators created a full-day camp that blended healthy food prep, sports, local field trips, and social justice. It attracted more than 20 high school students.
- Local musicians teamed up to run a two-week intensive marching band camp at North High School. It culminated in a community performance attended by more than 100 people and featured on the cover of North News.
- A team of Laney educators used concepts and characters from “Avatar: The Last Airbender” to engage students in conversations about brain development and emotional health.
- A team of Loring educators created a two-week, full-day program that included costume design, literacy development, gardening, and dance. More than 60 students participated.
- A team of Cityview educators (all ESPs) designed and delivered a dynamic, two-week, full-day camp that included weekly parent days. More than 40 children attended each week and nearly every student had a parent attend the weekly celebrations.

[Here is a video](#) that captures the experiences of the educators.

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. Ghody 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 neglect some essential aspects of this holistic approach to learning. Joy and identity development are often add-ons to the curriculum, if they are present at all. 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.

This summer, we invite educators to develop Genius & Joy projects that address all five of Dr. Muhammad's learning pursuits. But make sure you lead with **identity, criticality, and joy**.

SUPPORTS

Genius & Joy is an opportunity for educators to try out ideas and build skills while readying themselves and their students for the new school year. To ensure you have a great experience, we will provide:

- An optional paid application prep session from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. on Saturday, April 23.
- Individualized coaching and support during the grant proposal process, implementation, and public exhibition.
- Five optional, paid learning and rejuvenation days throughout the summer.
- Funds for materials and supplies.
- 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 (Monday through Thursday), full-day experiences at North Minneapolis schools during the weeks of August 1-4, August 8-11, and August 15-18, 2022
 - Full-day programming means 6 or more hours per day.
 - Applicants can also propose different schedules as long as they provide a similar instructional opportunity as a week-long, full day program, and are delivered during the summer of 2022.
- Cohorts of four or more educators from eligible schools should apply together. Each cohort is responsible for organizing one, two, or three weeks of Genius & Joy programming at their school.
- Educators are primarily responsible for participant recruitment. Families can also sign up for Genius & Joy programs through MPS Community Education.
 - Based on 2021 enrollment, a good rule of thumb is to strive for each participating educator to recruit a minimum of 10 students.
- Each cohort should identify one member who will serve as Site Coordinator to assist with procuring supplies, managing pick-up and drop-off, supervising food service, and taking care of other site logistics.
 - This person should not also serve as a classroom/program educator.
 - Based on our 2021 experience, we know the Site Coordinator role demands a significant time commitment. Therefore, Site Coordinators will receive a stipend of \$2,000 for each week that Genius & Joy programs are offered.
- Genius & Joy educators must participate in coaching, curriculum review, and evaluation activities as requested by the Phillips Foundation.
 - Coaching and mentoring will be provided by Nafeesah Muhammad, ELA teacher at Patrick Henry High School.

- Educators and Site Coordinators are encouraged to attend optional, paid learning and rejuvenation days. These will be scheduled on Fridays in July and August.
- Educators have broad discretion about how they design their Genius & Joy experiences, but we encourage the following:
 - Incorporate two 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.
- 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 cohort will also have access to a supply budget. While final budget amounts will be negotiated with each school based on their programmatic plans, a good rule of thumb is to anticipate having \$500 per week for every 20 students enrolled in your program.
 - Site Coordinators will be responsible for compiling supply lists and working with the Phillips Family Foundation to purchase supplies.
- MPS will provide food service for each Genius & Joy school site.
- Bussing will be available.
- 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.

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 more than \$3.5 million in projects at eight North Minneapolis MPS schools.