

**Arlington Education Foundation
Innovations in Education Grants
Grant Application**

Innovations Grant Applications must be submitted electronically. To submit, you must email your completed application (as a Word or PDF file), along with any supplemental files, to grants@aeafma.org. Note that applications are not complete until all required approvals/signatures are obtained – all applications must be approved by the building principal(s) or supervisor, and any proposals that request funding for technology must also be approved by the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction.

Project Title: Discovering Our Voices with Literature Circles

Applicant's Name: Melissa Heath

Total Funding Requested: \$2,138.00

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School: Ottoson/Gibbs **Position:** ELA 6

Other participants / applicants: Heather Mahoney, Rachel Grodman, Alyssa Napolitano

Printed Name and Signature of Applicant

Melissa Heath **Date:** Nov. 15, 2017 (resubmitted April 12, 2018)

Printed Name and Signature of Co-Applicant

Heather Mahoney, Rachel Grodman, Alyssa Napolitano **Date:** Nov. 15, 2017 (resubmitted April 12, 2018)

For all applications, the approval of the school principal is required, as evidenced below.

I support this application at the Ottoson School.

Eileen Woods

November 14, 2017

Printed Name and Signature of Principal and/or Supervisor

Date

For technology-related applications, the approval of the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction is also required, and is evidenced below.

_____ I support this TECHNOLOGY application at the _____ School.

**Printed Name and Signature of Asst. Superintendent for
Instruction**

Date Curriculum and

Program/Project Description

Project Title: Discovering Our Voices with Literature Circles

- 1. Provide a description of the project including key goals and anticipated outcomes and/or benefits for both students and teachers.**

The sixth-grade teachers are developing a unit designed to bring high-quality, high-interest literature to all sixth-graders through student-directed literature circles. In preparation for exciting changes in curriculum and school culture at the Gibbs, we want to address a gap in expectations around self-directed learning, collaboration, pursuing interests and responsible and respectful discussion. In the proposed six-to-eight week unit, students will take ownership of their learning by selecting a work of literature from seven classroom titles and participating in high-quality discussions with a group of peers.

The sixth-grade teachers think the students are ready for the challenge of self-directed learning, but understand in order for the students to be successful they need direct instruction, modeling, and feedback on how to be productive and collaborative. The Arlington elementary schools have worked to establish successful book groups, and we are eager to take those expectations and adapt them for a sixth-grade experience that will carry over to the curriculum of The Gibbs.

Outcomes/benefits: We expect that students will develop increased capacity to read with confidence, discuss with a broad understanding of the layered meaning, and collaborate with peers in meaningful ways. These traits will be useful for students in their English classes as well as in the work they do in other academic areas.

- 2. Approximately how many students and teachers will be involved in the project? If the project includes a classroom component and the applicant is not a classroom teacher, then the proposal must include the names of the teachers who will be involved and describe their roles and levels of involvement. (In this situation, it is advisable to have one of the teachers sign the proposal as a co-applicant.)**

All sixth-grade students, greater than 400 a year, and all four sixth-grade ELA teachers will be involved and directly benefit from the proposed literature circle unit. As noted above, classrooms and teachers in other areas of Gibbs and eventually Ottoson will be positively affected.

- 3. Describe the innovative aspects of the project.** This project builds on the work of literacy coaches and teachers in the elementary schools, asking students to work more honestly toward creating their own meaning and crafting their experience in the ELA classroom. Before proposing this project to you, the ELA teachers have worked many hours over the summer selecting books that address a range of social issues, interests and reading abilities and studying models of learning that turn ownership over to the students. The work we propose is innovative for three reasons: 1. It provides an explicit bridge between the work being done at the elementary level and sixth grade, 2. It provides explicit connection between the process of reading and personal ownership and 3. It allows students to experience two distinct methods of reading and discourse, expanding the traditional methods employed by teachers of sixth grade.

- 4. How does the project supplement existing educational programs within the school/system?** Literacy coaches and teachers in the elementary schools introduce book groups in the lower grades. For students in

the elementary schools, to study literature means to select a book and to fulfill tasks within a group to discuss their response to it. When those students get to middle school, rather abruptly, this shifts to a teacher-directed experience where one book is assigned to the whole class, and the teacher decides how much to read and what is worthy of discussion. While this model has its place and can elevate the level of discussion and introduce important terms essential for the classroom, it takes the responsibility and the wonder out of what could be a process of discovery for the students. This new unit will build on the principles of the responsive classroom--respect, goal setting, and responsibility--and the established norms of the elementary book groups to create a culminating experience for the sixth-graders. We believe this will better prepare the students for seventh-grade and beyond and help foster a love of reading and a respect for diverging points of view that will serve the students well. This unit will replace the current whole group reading of *Elijah of Buxton*. All 6th grade classes will run the unit concurrently in the spring. Audiobooks will be utilized for struggling readers to access a text independently and analysis of close reading work.

5. **Is this a pilot project that could be duplicated by other teachers, classrooms, or schools?** Our intention is to pilot the unit this year with the current sixth-grade students, and replicate it for students at The Gibbs. Once in place, it could serve as model for how this work could be adapted for seventh, eighth and beyond. Our department head has expressed interest in extending this work to Ottoson so that students moving from Gibbs to the middle school will find familiarity and continue their independence in reading.
6. **Provide an estimated timeline for the project, including start date, key milestones, date of completion, and date you expect to submit your final evaluation.**

July 2017: Teachers meet to discuss goals, evaluate merits of different literature circle models and select books. (completed)

October 2017: Meeting with Deb Perry, department chair, Sandra Bergantz, literacy coach, and Melissa Heath, ELA teacher, to discuss current book groups, reading expectations, and possible future collaboration in support of the new unit. (completed)

Winter of 2017: Set-up visit to Arlington fifth-grade teachers piloting book groups with a focus on how to model the group "tasks" or roles.

Spring of 2018: Order books and supplies.

Spring of 2018: Pilot the unit in all four sixth-grade clusters.

Summer of 2018: Meet as a grade-level team to submit final evaluation.

Summer of 2018: Reflect on process, make adjustments and prepare for 2018 Gibbs.

Project/Program Budget Request

A detailed budget must be provided by all applicants.

PROJECT TITLE Discovering Our Voices Through Literature Circles

TOTAL AMOUNT REQUESTED \$2,138.00

Please provide a *detailed* project budget. Include the total cost of the project, the amounts available or pending from other sources (including other grants submitted), and the amount requested from AEF.

Storage: https://www.amazon.com/IRIS-Quart-Stack-Pull-Pack/dp/BooCQGTGZQ/ref=sr_1_8?s=storageorganization&ie=UTF8&qid=1523388504&sr=1-8&keywords=storage%2Bbins&th=1

2 6-packs per teacher x 5 teachers x \$26.70 per 6 pack for a total of \$267

Binding tape for books:

https://www.amazon.com/Scotch-Book-Inches-Yards-845/dp/B00006IF5R/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1523388823&sr=8-1&keywords=binding+tape+for+books

Scotch book tape: 20 rolls @ \$5.59 a roll for a total of \$113.80

Headphones: https://www.amazon.com/SmithOutlet-Pack-Over-Head-Headphones/dp/B013M3PLUA/ref=sr_1_1_sspa?ie=UTF8&qid=1523389026&sr=8-1-spons&keywords=bulk+headphones&psc=1

\$119 for a pack of 50. 3 packs for a total of \$357

Refugee by Alan Gratz: 9780545880831

\$11.68 x 30 books = 350.40

Audiobook 17.49 x 5 = 87.45

Total 437.85

Shooting Kabul by NH Senzai: 9781613830673

\$7.48 x 30 books = 224.40

Audiobook couldn't find

Total 224.40

Inside Out and Back Again by Thanhha Lai: 9780061962790

Paperback: \$7.84 x 30 books = \$235.20

Audiobooks: \$9.95 x 5 copies = \$49.75

Total: \$284.95

The Night Diary by Veera Hiranandani: 9780735228511

Hardcover: \$11.44 x 30 books = \$343.20

Audiobook: \$21.95 x 5 copies = \$109.75

Total: \$452.95

Total for books, audiobooks, and classroom supplies: \$2,137.95

