



Exhibit A



September 28th, 2016

Dear Rebecca Hornthal,

The Innovation Fund is pleased to inform you that a grant has been approved in the amount of **\$15,000** for the **Social Biographers After-School Program at Venetia Valley Elementary School**, as outlined in your proposal. This letter outlines the terms and conditions of accepting our grant.

Reporting and Participation

As a recipient of this award, you agree to work with and allow Teach For America to highlight you and/or your proposal on occasion in our communications channels (social Media, website, print, and in-person events). In addition, we will be requesting updates on the progress of your initiative at three specific points:

- Interim report (including budget): Late January, 2017
- Participation/Presentation at Bay Ed Summit: Spring 2017
- Final report (including site visit): May/June, 2017

Financial Terms and Conditions

The funds must be used specifically for the designated purpose as outlined in your proposal by 6/30/2017. You must submit a written request to us in advance if you wish to change the purpose of the grant or if the funds are not expended within that time period.

To receive this award, you must indicate whether you choose to receive the funds as an individual or through your school/organization. **Please initial in 1 of the spaces to indicate your preference in dispersing of funds.**

_____ (initial here) I agree that TFA- Bay Area disperse the funds directly to **Rebecca Hornthal** as a personal check. I understand that receiving the funds in this way is considered personal income, which is subject to federal and state income tax.

_____ (initial here) I agree that TFA-Bay – Bay disperse the funds of this award to **Venetia Valley Elementary School in San Rafael City Elementary School District** by check, and **Rebecca Hornthal** will work with **Venetia Valley Elementary School in San Rafael City Elementary School District** to ensure

funds are spent towards the proposed project. I understand that **Rebecca Hornthal** will be solely responsible for any reporting, budget, and participation requirements.

Please read all the terms and conditions carefully, sign, and return along with a filled out and signed copy of the attached W-9. After we receive this signed contract, we will mail a check within 10 working days.

Congratulations on this recognition of your important efforts! We look forward to learning from you and the work you are doing to drive forward personalized learning.

Sincerely,

Paula Fernandez-Baca
Manager, Grants
Teach For America – Bay Area

ACCEPTED AND AGREED:

(Name – Signed)

(Name – Printed)

(Date)

What is your proposal? *

Please describe the overall scope of the project, including the approximate number of students served.

In order to prepare students to serve as civic leaders in society, they require more than academic skills; they must develop their voices and own their stories and heritage. Students must be equipped to navigate our society's complex relationship with identity, race, immigration, socio-economic status and social biases. Venetia Valley School seeks to develop an after-school opportunity for students to immerse themselves in these pressing topics in self-driven ways, and to hone their skills as "Social Biographers." Venetia Valley is a K-8 public school with over 750 students - 86% of whom identify as Latino, and 80% of whom qualify for free/reduced lunch. Currently, the school's textbooks and curriculum focus on heroes and histories that do not reflect the background or culture of the student body, and thus the curriculum does not provide a framework to understand and own their heritage or develop their voices.

"Social Biographers" seeks to capitalize on students' personal experiences and culture and provide them with a platform to develop and explore their voices in profoundly personal ways. This after-school initiative would target students who read at least one year below grade-level and would focus on improving students' reading strategies and comprehension through analysis of stories of leaders who share their identity markers. The first component of the program will focus on students reading about and researching leaders with whom they identify. In the next part of the program, students will participate in presentations by local community leaders and then interview them about their life experiences. In the third component, students will write their own social biographies. This will culminate in a capstone event in which students will present their narratives/stories to peers, family and community members in the format of their choosing - poetry, essay, spoken word, etc.

"Social Biographers" would invite twenty upper-elementary students and ten 8th grade students to participate. The 8th grade students will serve as mentors to the elementary students. In this way, participating 8th graders will gain the opportunity to foster their identities as agents of positive change in their school community. The initiative would be led by four adults (one for every ten elementary students, one for the 8th grade mentors, and one overall program facilitator). The program would meet twice per week for two hours after school and would run from the early November 2016 until June 2017.

How does this project jump-start or increase personalized learning? *

Please consider in your answer how this project jump-starts or increases student agency & ownership, competency-based mastery, and/or the teacher's role as facilitator.

Through personalized learning approaches, "Social Biographers" would be set up to meet the individual educational needs of each participating student, allowing each to follow their own path through academic and creative learning. Through a host of learning approaches, such as self-directed research into community leaders, this program will yield an increase in student agency and ownership of their educational outcomes. In addition, students will select their own topics of study, in collaboration with their teachers and 8th grade mentors, and will establish personal reading goals and self-monitor their own progress towards them. SRI, Fountas and Pinnell and individualized feedback forms will inform the goal setting, progress monitoring and personal learning process.

To catalyze personalized learning for the 8th grade mentors, they will receive training from a local community based organization on developing personal narratives and community-based leadership. In addition to learning about creating social biographies and leadership, these students will also receive training on close reading strategies, goal setting and facilitation skills.

Participating teachers will also experience direct gains themselves as they have the opportunity to engage in professional development on cultural competency, “windows and mirrors”, instruction through facilitation, and progress monitoring.

What does success for this project look like? In two months? At the end of the school year? *

Please include any milestones that will help you track your progress throughout the year.

In “Social Biographers,” the process is considered as important as the outcome. In two months, students will participate in self reflection on the self driven nature of their learning, examine indicators of growth, including their work, written and oral personal feedback on their work from peers, mentors and adult staff. Through periodic SRI and Fountas and Pinnell assessments, including at the two month mark, program effectiveness will be measured in quantitative reading scores. Additionally, program effectiveness will be gauged through student surveys, parent participation at the capstone event, teachers’ pre/post surveys on cultural competency and through observation of students’ public speaking skills.

How do you plan to capture and share learnings to fuel broader impact? ***

*Broader impact can include you school, within TFA community, etc.

Participating adults and the program facilitator of “Social Biographers” will collaborate to develop and establish a curriculum and guide to support the project’s execution in years to come. In addition to compiling resources and building relationships with community-based organizations, the work would be captured on film with student, mentor and teacher interviews taking place throughout the initiative and footage being taken at the final capstone event. The goal for these interviews and footage would be to capture student voices as they grapple with challenging questions about identity and leadership. The program’s broader impact would include inviting more students to participate in the year to come and sharing the initiative at the school district level so as to make the “Social Biographers” program accessible to schools districtwide.

How would winning this grant help you pursue this project? *

Please include high level overview of how you would spend the funds.

The funds from this grant would enable the implementation for the vision, programming, and scalability for the “Social Biographers” initiative. More specifically, the grant would support youth and adult development in the named personalized learning approaches, which would be conducted in partnership with external community partners who specialize in reaching our programmatic aims. The funds would also allow for the necessary programmatic resources (compensation for facilitators, guest speaker fees, materials and leveled texts) to be available to the students and facilitators.