



Sample of a Winning Educator Initiative Grant Application

Glover Community Learning Center, Akron Public Schools

Grade Levels Encompassed by School: K-5

Team Leader Name: Dana Davis, Teacher—Kindergarten and Sandra Shoemaker Kindergarten Teacher

Project Title: The Big 3

Amount Requested: \$6,100

Brief Project Description

“The Big 3” is an expansion of our school’s social and emotional learning (SEL) initiative. The project, visually depicted with 3 apples, and our motto, “An apple a day will help you find your way,” helps students build resilience through 3 focused goals: Treat Others Right, Maximize Your Potential, and Make Smart Decisions. Our integrated approach uses research based best practices from the National Center for Child Traumatic Stress (NCTSN), includes monthly professional development from ACH, grade level sessions that focus on SEL competencies, and incorporation of key learnings from “The 13 Messages from Milo.”

Anticipated Project Start and End Date: August, 2018 through May, 2019

Please provide a description of your proposed project in 500 words or less. Provide the need for the project, what K-12 grades are served, and what data informs and supports the stated need. Include the Learning Standards that are addressed by your proposal.

“The Big 3” project was launched at Glover CLC in the 2017-2018 school year with the support of grant funding from the NoVo Foundation, Education First, and Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors. The project touches 280 students, 105 families, and 48 staff. We used this grant as “seed money” to bring in Christopher Milo (<http://www.christophermilo.com/>), a highly regarded motivational speaker, to work with our school community to embed Milo’s “13 Messages” of character counts, and to build parent and teacher resources to support SEL at our school. We connected Milo’s sessions with professional development provided by Akron Children’s Hospital (ACH) to address the key aspects of traumatic stress in children. We developed grade level appropriate lessons and parent engagement activities that focused on Milo’s “13 Messages” (<http://www.christophermilo.com/13-messages-from-milo/>).

This all-inclusive project engaged and challenged staff, students, and family/community members to embrace pro-active SEL strategies that would become instinctive and embedded, therefore impacting behaviors for years to come.

School data suggests that we have more SEL focused work to do. Data analysis of 128 behavior incidents from August 2017 through February 16, 2018 indicate that 50% of the infractions occur at the classroom



level. Our staff is highly skilled in addressing academic measures. We earned an “A” in the value added measure on the local report card for the third consecutive year. Fall to Winter MAP ELA and MATH data indicate upward movements of students throughout all tiers ranging from 3% to 8% growth in ELA and 4% to 8% growth in Math.

It is time to address non-academic influences starting at the elementary level and holistically address the educational needs of our students. We are well positioned to build on the pilot of “The Big 3” and take the project to the next level. CASEL (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning) reports that “ through decades of research, including long-term studies spanning 30+ years, we know that SEL is the most proactive and preventive mental health initiative available.” We intend to help our children and adults effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.

“The Big 3” primarily addresses the Social and Emotional Development domain in the Ohio’s Early Learning and Development Standards which focuses on the behaviors that reflect students’ emotional growth and their abilities to navigate their social worlds through interactions with adults and peers. Indirectly, content learning standards will be addressed at each grade level as we expect achievement to grow as a result of changed behaviors. Additionally, this project directly relates to Social Studies learning standards, expected to be mastered in kindergarten, aligned to children deepening their learning about themselves and being able to form an understanding of roles, responsibility for actions and decision making in the context of the group setting.

How does the project prepare students for college and career readiness? At what transition point on the cradle-to-career continuum does your project fit? Please limit your answer to 250 words or less.

CASEL identifies five essential aptitudes for success in life: self-management, self-awareness, responsible decision-making, relationship skills, and social awareness. These non-academic skills are vital to post-secondary success. Social and emotional learning is a critical piece to meet the expectations of college and career readiness standards, which increases the demands on students’ ability to engage in deeper learning and shift the focus and rigor of instruction (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices [NGA Center] & Council of Chief State School Officers [CCSSO], 2010a; NGA Center & CCSSO, 2010b) This project will plant the seeds early as we work to develop students’ sense of belonging and help them to realize their own personal identity. “The Big 3” addresses all benchmarks of the cradle-to-career continuum as it assembles the assets necessary for success, including being prepared for good beginnings (K-3), being passionate about their identity and future (8-12), and persistent in the face of new challenges (career and college). While we strive to ensure that our students are academically prepared for success along this continuum, this alone does not translate to success into college and career. In an age of ever-changing and expanding interactions through social media, it is even more imperative that we address the importance of knowing and trusting yourself. As educators, we are charged with ensuring that our students are socially and emotionally adept to handle any of the challenges that life sends their way.



Please explain the specific outcomes you expect from the project. How will you measure success? What evaluation tools will be used?

“The Big 3” project will continue with the start of the new school year and will become an embedded component of our daily schedule. The mission of the Akron Public Schools is “To prepare each child for success.” Our holistic approach, melding academics with social and emotional development, will have four major outcomes:

- 1) We expect our students to continue to show gains in reading and mathematics. We will use MAP data to monitor student progress quarterly.
- 2) We expect a decrease in classroom office referrals. We will use baseline data from Spring, 2018 and analyze the number of 2018-2019 behavior incidents monthly. This will become a focused goal in our school improvement plan, and disciplinary data will be reviewed in our PLCs. We will share best practice strategies and align supports as needed for individual teachers.
- 3) We expect our students to learn and apply social and emotional strategies that are necessary to achieve a healthy school and home life. They will be able to treat others right, maximize their potential, and make smart decisions. We will use pre and post student perception surveys to gauge the impact of “The Big 3” project. The surveys will be administered during the beginning, middle, and end of the school year.
- 4) We expect adult stakeholders to embrace the systems that we put in place to support academic and social and emotional development. We will use surveys throughout the year (e.g. following parent meetings, book club, training, professional development sessions, interim report cards) to monitor perception of “The Big 3” project.

Describe in detail any teacher professional development that will be a part of the project's implementation, including the use of one-on-one coaching.

The continuation of “The Big 3” will include an expansion to the trauma training we participated in 2017-2018 . ACH Community Education Program Coordinator Melissa McClain offers an intermediate series to further discuss the topic of trauma. 4 additional sessions will build on the initial trauma training we received. Moving forward, we will schedule the training which includes one-on-one observation and consultation feedback on the implementation of SEL strategies.

4 training sessions (60-90 minutes each) in September will include:

Incarcerating Families- Understanding how Adverse Childhood Events (ACEs) affect a child and learn strategies to ensure the best emotional and academic outcomes for the child.

Juvenile Incarceration- Understanding the prevalence of juvenile incarceration, emotional implications, and interruption to academic success; staff will learn strategies to ease the transition and get back on track for success.



An Introduction to Restorative Justice--Understanding ways to improve classroom and administrative discipline protocols

Classroom Restorative Practices in Action- Gaining practical tools that will help turn classroom discipline from punitive to positive

October: In depth training sessions with Melissa McClain on restorative practices.

After participating in this professional development, we will collectively practice and evaluate the adult implementation and student impact of restorative justice strategies. The reduction of behavior incidents is a goal in our 90 day school improvement plan. We will analyze disciplinary data monthly during PLCs and make adjustments, align supports, and share best practices. Melissa McClain will work with our staff one-on-one for classroom observation and feedback.

Additionally, Melissa will tailor ongoing professional development to our needs from December, 2018 through April, 2019.

We are conducting a Kindergarten pilot of the Choose Love program (<https://www.jesselewischooselove.org/>), an open source pre-K through 12th grade evidence based program. Scarlett Lewis, mother of Jesse Lewis, a 6 year old killed at Sandy Hook, was instrumental in gathering educators and counselors together to develop this program. The program focuses on four important character values – Courage, Gratitude, Forgiveness, and Compassion in Action – which cultivates optimism, resilience and personal responsibility. Based on pilot feedback, we may scale this program schoolwide in 2018-2019. In addition to using the program, we are reaching out to Scarlett Lewis to speak to our school community in fall 2018.

We will initiate a staff bimonthly book study of "Better than Carrots or Sticks," recommended by ACH as a prelude to the professional development. Time during each staff meeting will be allocated to review content and new learnings/understandings. We will stock our professional library with recommended SEL books and teacher leaders will conduct book studies for staff throughout the year to gain understanding of SEL, implement strategies, and offer supports.

Finally, all staff will receive an allocation of funds to purchase class sets of SEL books. These books will be integrated into the curriculum and used to support positive social and emotional growth in our students.

Please describe how technology will be integrated into the project and what instructional best practices will be implemented.

All APS students have Chromebooks, giving them 24/7 access to technology. We will introduce the open source curriculum from Wondergrove Learn and Choose Love Enrichment Program to supplement our SEL work. This resource provides teaching tools that include instructional videos, common core lesson plans, active learning materials, and practice exercises. These lessons can be introduced through whole-group instruction and repeated at home with student's families.

Grant funds would be used to purchase classroom one year subscriptions to "Wondergrove Learn" (<https://wondergrovelearn.net/products/1/1>) and "Habits of Mind"



(<https://wondergrovelearn.net/ascd>) to be used to teach our K-5 students critical thinking and problem solving skills through the use of engaging videos and activities.

Teachers may select to use the Choose Love Enrichment Program for additional SEL strategies. This has an at-home component that students and families will have access through their Chromebooks.

Teacher leaders will act as facilitators for ongoing, bimonthly book studies. For staff unable to participate, we will retain a “Group Journal” in our Google suite (Google classroom, Google Docs). This will allow for access to virtual conversations, reflections, and recommendations that result from the book studies.

Teacher leaders and PTA President will act as facilitators for ongoing parent/family/staff bimonthly book studies. We will use SEL story books and children’s literature along with “Kids Deserve It: Pushing Boundaries and Challenging Conventional Thinking” to promote family/school interaction and improve relationships for children at school and at home.

Additionally, we will expand the “I AM...” wall to become an “I AM... Mirror Wall”. In the fall 2017, students discussed stereotypes and misconceptions about themselves and each other. Then, they were encouraged to write I AM statements about who they are, seeing themselves in a positive light. They wrote statements such as “ I am an artist; I am good in math; I am important; I am a friend; and I am a thinker”.

The “I AM....mirror wall” takes the concept of the SEL confidence building strategy mirror technique(<https://letsreachsuccess.com/2016/07/10/the-mirror-technique/>) to the next level. The I AM Mirror Wall will be a permanent, interactive wall of mirrors that will have positive messages under them that students have written. The goal of the I AM Mirror Wall is to show students they have worth, they are someone, will be someone, and CAN BE someone. Confidence will allow our students to believe in themselves and will prevent negative outer influences from keeping them to achieve social and emotional and academic success.

We will promote and practice the following 10 teaching strategies that enhance student social and emotional learning competencies: (1) Student-Centered Discipline, (2) Teacher Language, (3) Responsibility and Choice, (4) Warmth and Support, (5) Cooperative Learning, (6) Classroom Discussions, (7) Self-Reflection and Self-Assessment, (8) Balanced Instruction, (9) Academic Press and Expectations, and (10) Competence Building—Modeling, Practicing, Feedback, and Coaching (Center on Great Teachers and Leaders at American Institutes for Research, January 2014)

We will administer student, staff, and family surveys which assess SEL as it relates to student environment and building climate.

How will the project be sustained and/or replicated by others after the funding has ended?

Healthy social and emotional development correlates with healthy cognitive development and therefore creates a strong foundation for school achievement and success in life. Our focus will be on sustaining the supportive SEL practices that we learn throughout this focused initiative to educate the whole child through the promotion of positive and safe learning environments. We will strive to create an environment that includes strong and engaging student, staff, family, and community relationships in which students feel safe, supported, and celebrated emotionally and academically. Our data driven



analysis will help us hone in on the most successful SEL strategies. As we work to resolve disciplinary issues in classrooms, we anticipate that this shift will reflect a more positive school climate. We will continue to tap into the training provided through ACH for the next 2-3 years. The majority of the resources identified in this proposal are evidence based and available at no cost. The professional books will become a permanent part of our staff library and highlights from book study sessions will be retained in our SEL Google folder. Age appropriate classroom book sets can be integrated into the curriculum and used year after year.

What Makes This a Strong Request:

Project Need & Purpose: 15 Points Possible

The project clearly conveys the need for the project, using data to inform and support the need. It also clearly identifies where it falls on the cradle-to-career continuum. The project's timeline reflects a logical sequence of activities and indicates clearly when each major activity will end. ***Try this: can you identify the data-backed need for this project?***

Educational Impact: 30 Points Possible

This project clearly identifies the significant impact on student achievement, is aligned with Ohio's Learning Standards, links directly with Ohio's Learning Standards for social-emotional development, and clearly explains the means that will be used to evaluate project outcomes. ***Try this: can you identify the specific learning standards this project will advance?***

Research-Based Professional Development: 30 Points Possible

This project clearly explains the professional development for the plan, the type of research-based program or model will be used, and who will be providing ongoing one-on-one coaching. ***Try this: can you identify the type of ongoing coaching the educators will receive during the implementation of this project?***

Best Practices: 25 Points Possible

This application identifies the long-term impact of the project. It also demonstrates the use of research-validated instructional practices, and shows evidence of creativity, problem-solving, and the integration of technology. ***Try this: can you identify how this project will be sustained after funding is exhausted?***