

Teacher Mentorship & Retention of Effective Teachers Grant Report Form

Instructions:

Please send an electronic copy of the Teacher Mentorship & Retention of Effective Teachers final completed report by June 30, 2020 to saba.teshome@state.mn.us.

Report components:

- Coversheet
- Teacher Mentorship & Retention of effective Teachers Program Narrative – Please describe how you have strengthened and/or supplemented your existing mentorship and retention efforts and how the awarded funds allowed you to do this work. Additionally, describe any specific work done to support teachers new to the profession or district, including teaching residents, teachers of color, teachers who are American Indian, teachers in license shortage areas, teachers with special needs, and/or experienced teachers in need of peer coaching. Finally, using the methodologies outlined in the “Progress Monitoring” portion of your original proposal, evaluate the effectiveness of the funded work.
- Program Data – Please provide data from the year funded by the grant. Please also describe how grant funding has impacted the data from the most recent reporting year. You are welcome to include graphs.
- Additional Reporting Requirements – Please provide information on any additional funding that was used to support mentorship and retention efforts. Districts and schools must also provide information on retention strategies that were developed as a part of the grant program.
- Teacher Mentorship & Retention of effective Teachers Grant Funds Expenditure – Please list all awarded funds, differentiating between funds spent and funds yet to be spent this fiscal year. Fill in the “method of progress monitoring” and “data” columns based on the information in sections VI of your proposal.

Teacher Mentorship & Retention of Effective Teachers Grant Report

Grantee Information

Legal Name of Applicant Organization **The Wildflower Foundation**
Total Grant amount: **\$25,000**
Category we applied for: **A coalition of schools, teachers or non-licensed educators**

Identified Official with Authority

Name of official with authority to sign	Daniela Vasan
Title	Partner
Address	1330 Lagoon Ave
City, State and Zip code + 4	Minneapolis, MN 55408
Phone Number and Email	612-462-2369, daniela.vasan@wildflowerschools.org

Primary Program Contact

Name of program contact	Daniela Vasan
Title	Partner
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Program Narrative

On behalf of the Wildflower Equity Initiative (WEI), we are grateful for the opportunity to partner with PELSB to develop and strengthen our retention, leadership, and recruitment efforts to support Black, Indigenous, and Teachers of Color across the Wildflower Schools.

The WEI, in conjunction with Wildflower Schools in MN, addresses the opportunity gap in three ways; 1) By supporting licensed Montessori teacher leaders in opening authentic Montessori schools, embedded intentionally within historically marginalized communities. 2) By increasing the amount of licensed Montessori-trained teachers of the global majority who are leading in Wildflower Schools, and 3) By forging a pathway for undergraduate students of color to gain exposure to the teaching profession and pursue Montessori Education as a viable career pathway.

Ultimately we are increasing the pipeline of teachers of color, helping professionals of color join the teaching profession, creating the conditions for teachers of color to stay in the teaching profession, and empowering teachers of color as leaders.

The focus of our work centered on the pathway for BIPOC undergraduate students to gain exposure to the teaching profession and pursue Montessori Education while simultaneously providing mentorship stipends and professional development for teachers supporting their leadership, retention, and professional growth.

The \$25,000 grant from PELSB provided the internship stipends to four student interns, all of whom identify as Black, Indigenous, or People of Color. The interns are either in their first or second year at the Dougherty Family College. Interns worked one full 8 hour day per week within their placement school, and were paid at a rate of \$15/hr. In spite of distance learning requirements and the COVID-19 pandemic, we fulfilled our commitment to pay interns through the end of their semester and teacher mentors worked closely to adapt and determine next steps and needs for the program.

The Wildflower School model centers around teacher-led, autonomous schools. Currently 60% of the Teacher Leaders in our network identify as Black, Indigenous or Teachers of Color. This does not include teaching assistants, of whom approximately 80% identify as BIPOC. Through our internship program, we were able to also provide stipends to our Teacher Leaders which provided compensation for their ideas, coaching, and time. We compensated six experienced teachers who are serving as mentors for all 4 of our teaching Interns. Mentor teachers were paid a stipend of \$2,500 for their work mentoring an intern.

Lirio Montessori supported two interns, one student in their first year and one student in their second year of the program. Each Teacher Leader (of which there are 2) mentored one intern and received \$2,500 each (\$5,000 total). Both **Acorn Montessori** and **Sweet Pea Montessori** supported one intern and split mentorship duties between two teacher leaders, and thus received \$2,500 to split between the two of them.

In terms of strengthening our mentorship and retention efforts, this partnership created the opportunity to expand our internship program and mentorship opportunities in the program's second year. More data is included in the subsequent section to acknowledge the strength and growth of our program.

Analysis of Data Progress Monitoring

Below are the four progress monitoring components we outlined in the Wildflower Equity Initiative's proposal.

1. Retention of BIPOC Teacher Leaders; Survey data from fellows and interns

All Teacher Leaders are interested in hosting interns during the 2020-2021 school year, of course pending guidance regarding the pandemic. Additionally, 100% of BIPOC Teacher Leaders will return to teach for the 2020-2021 school year. As previously mentioned, six of our six teacher mentors - 100%- are committed to remaining mentors for the next year.

We retained all four -100%- of our Interns throughout the year. Regarding the second year interns, 100% intend to declare teaching as their major, and have increased interest in becoming Montessori trained and certified. One of the two interns in their first year intend to declare teaching as their major while the second intern is open to the idea but not yet ready to commit. Interns reported feeling respected, affirmed and empowered as members of the school community in addition to feeling as though they were able to have a direct impact on students through their work, and vice versa.

2. Retention and Preparedness

The one Fellow working in our program completed her Montessori training during the grant period. She continued to work in the Wildflower Schools and has committed to working in our schools for at least one more year prior to opening her school. This allows her to gain Montessori experience, utilize her credentials, and receive payment for her work.

3. We will summarize the data gathered and utilize the results to learn and adapt as leaders and mentors in order to improve our process and approach.

Overall, considering both qualitative and quantitative data, the Wildflower Equity Initiative experienced tremendous success with our programming. Several elements that led to this success include intentionally pairing experienced teachers with interns. Teacher Leaders were able to support interns as guides while also supporting the needs of the students and administrative tasks required of being leaders. We prioritized engaging BIPOC Teacher Leaders first as mentors and ensured they were fairly compensated for their leadership, ideas, and more. As we move forward with our program, we will intentionally invite schools in their second year or beyond to participate as intern host sites.. A school's founding year is challenging and we want to ensure interns have a stable and strong experience.

We partner with Montessori training centers such as the Montessori Center of Minnesota to provide free teaching assistant training. This helps interns understand the basic practices, approach, and philosophy of the Montessori pedagogy. We look forward to continuing to offer this resource to interns in their first or second year.

We believe the regular check-ins between mentors and interns ensures expectations are clear with on-going reflection and also creates an opportunity to build strong, thoughtful relationships.

We are currently assessing the mentorship program for the fall semester and will respond to COVID-19 regulations once we receive clarity regarding teacher-student ratios, distance learning for interns, and more. Regardless, we will move forward with our fellowship pathway program and honor our commitment to a current fellow in the program and we intend to host interns entering their second year.

Based on our current results, we believe the internship and mentorship programs are strong and have confidence we could expand the programs offered. Again, we will respond according to government regulations.

4. We will use formative data based off of the check-ins with mentor teachers about performance, individual goals, and daily attendance

The Wildflower community is inclusive at its core, and through the Wildflower Equity Initiative, we lean even more intentionally on relationships and cultural relevance to shape the experience of our Interns and Mentor Teachers. There is a strong community and great potential at each school site, for mentors and interns alike to engage in community. In addition, both are invited to participate in our larger Community of Practice, where we share collective knowledge, build community, and share resources. This unique aspect of our educational design, combined with financial incentives for Interns and Teacher Leader's bolstered their participation within the Community of Practice. This increased investment in our charter-the Minnesota Wildflower Montessori School (MWMS)- and Wildflower as a whole has strengthened our work, and helped to increase the level of trust and transparency in our collective work.

There were zero reported disciplinary incidents on behalf of Mentor Teachers, and zero 'tensions' or grievances on behalf of Interns. Mentors and interns shared nearly 100% attendance for the semester.

As previously mentioned in the narrative portion of our report, the funding provided by PELSB allowed the Wildflower Equity Initiative to develop the internship program and offer paid stipends to six mentor Teacher Leaders during the spring semester of 2020. We grew this program from two mentors from the year prior. This scaling provided the opportunity to strengthen our systems and structures and to prepare for more mentors for the 2020-2021 school year.

The funding also provided the opportunity to host four student interns (two of whom began during the spring semester of 2020). Through our surveys and formative data collected we anticipate at least 75% of interns to declare Education majors and are interested in pursuing Montessori credentials. This is significant because the interns were either undecided or interested in a different career path prior to starting their internship program.

Teacher Mentorship & Retention of Effective Teachers Grant Program Data

Please provide the total expected numbers and percentages of total participants for each of the following groups that your program will involve. Numbers may reflect teachers in multiple categories being counted more than once. Each category's percentage is of the total number of teachers being mentored under this grant.

Table 1: Total number of teachers new to the profession or district that received mentoring as a result of this grant.

Teachers Mentored Using Grant Funding	American Indian or Alaskan Native	Asian or Pacific Islander	Hispanic	Black	White	Other
Tier 3 Teachers new to the profession or district						
Tier 2 new to the profession or district						
Tier 1 teachers new to the profession or district						
Teaching residents*			1	3		
Teacher in license shortage areas			4		2	
Teachers with special needs						
Experienced teachers in need of peer coaching						
Total: All teachers supported by grant funding		1	4	4	1	

*Teaching residents are those in a special in-service induction program, usually with a reduced instructional loads during the first year of employment and additional mentoring and/or professional development. For the purposes of this grant, residents are not pre-service candidates seeking initial licensure in their field and participating in a PELSB-approved residency program or student teachers completing other licensure programs.

Table 2: Total number of mentors who were paid stipends under this grants for providing mentorship to teachers.

Mentor Demographics	Paid a stipend as part of a larger mentorship program	Paid an additional stipend
American Indian or Alaskan Native		
Asian or Pacific Islander	1	
Hispanic	3	
Black		
White	2	
Other		
Total	6	

Additional Reporting Requirements: Retention Strategies

Per Minn. Stat. § 122A.70, a school district that receives a grant must negotiate additional retention strategies for teachers who are of color or who are American Indian in their beginning years of employment, such as financial incentives for working in the school/district for at least five years or providing collegial support through teacher placement. Please describe the strategies your organization developed.

A typical Wildflower school consists of two teachers serving 20-30 students in a single classroom environment. In addition to teaching in the classroom, teachers also manage finance, marketing, and operations. Handling all facets of school is very empowering; it leads to inspiring leaders and conceptually consistent schools. Each Teacher Leader must have Montessori credentials and commit to teaching Montessori with high-fidelity. They are also fully autonomous to make decisions needed for their community of students and families.

We believe these structures and approaches -autonomous teachers, highly trained with high quality Montessori pedagogy, administrative responsibilities- are critical for retention. Teachers do not need to leave the classroom to gain leadership experience. They lead on a smaller scale while remaining deeply connected to the community and classroom.

We also offer equity related training such as Embracing Equity to support the on-going development of BIPOC Teacher Leaders and white allies. This development honors both the individual's needs and provides a community of practice or cohort approach. While we offered Embracing Equity training, the cost to participate in the training occurred prior to the PELSB grant period began.

Additional Funding

Please list any and all additional funding you used to support teacher mentorship and retention efforts. Specify if these funds were used to support teachers new to the profession or district, including teaching residents, teachers of color, teachers who are American Indian, teachers in license shortage areas, teachers with special needs, and/or experienced teachers in need of peer coaching.

The amounts below reflect the project budget for the entire fiscal year. We are including funding sources and funds utilized during the grant period from March 2020 through June 2020.

Mentorship & Retention efforts

Amount	Purpose	Funder
25,000	Funds were directed to general operating costs associated with establishing the internship and fellowship program.	Sauer Family Foundation
100,000	Funds are allocated in FY20 and FY21 to support general operating costs associated with establishing the internship and fellowship program.	Spring Point
20,000	Professional Development --Conscious Discipline training, external facilitator for strategy and professional growth for leadership team at MWMS We partner with the Wildflower Foundation's very first charter school, the Minnesota Wildflower Montessori School (MWMS) which leverages federal, state, and local funding to provide professional development, tuition assistance, and coaching supports for Teacher Leaders including the Charter School Program (CSP), Title funding, and philanthropic support.	Minnesota Wildflower Montessori School (CSP, Title, general fund)
99,155	.9 FTE dedicated to MN Charter Teacher Leader coaching and support,	Charter School Growth Fund

	MN Charter Emerging teacher leader recruitment and mentorship provided through the WEI	Brandenburg Family Foundation
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Grant Funds Expenditure

Table 3:

Amount	Description of Use of Funds	Primarily Used for:	Methods of Progress Monitoring	Data
Funds spent \$5,000 \$2,000	Coaching/PD Montessori credentials for a BIPOC teacher new to the profession Mentors provided PD to interns	<input type="checkbox"/> Recruitment <input type="checkbox"/> Induction	Preparedness to lead a WF school Regular check-ins will also clarify roles and responsibilities and serve as a way for mentor teachers to model how to self-advocate regarding expectations.	Completion of Montessori training, fellowship experience in a Wildflower School
Funds spent \$8,525	Coaching/PD Professional development for 4 interns (worked 1 day/week for 8 hrs. Interns were paid \$15 per hour.) Pending invoice submission	<input type="checkbox"/> Recruitment <input type="checkbox"/> Induction	Formative data from check-ins End of semester surveys	qualitative data on experience (see Narrative) Quantitative data-100% retention in program 75% intent to declare Education major
Funds spent \$8,000	Mentor Stipends Paid Teacher Leaders (4) stipends for mentoring student interns. Interns worked 1 day/week for 8 hrs.	<input type="checkbox"/> Retention	Teacher Leader retention Retention in mentorship program	100% retention, especially within BIPOC teachers 100% retention with interest to expand offering to next year's internship cohort
Funds to be spent/carry forward	Coaching/PD	<input type="checkbox"/> Retention <input type="checkbox"/> Induction	Supporting BIPOC teachers with coaching, professional development (i.e. Equity, Conscious	

into FY21 TBD, pending invoices		uction	Discipline, etc)	
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