

Application for Vermont School Boards Association (VSBA), Vermont Superintendents Association (VSA), and Vermont Principals' Association (VPA) Equitable, Anti-Racist, and Inclusive Education Communities Mini-Grant

**Using the space below, please describe the project, initiative, or program that the grant funds will support.**

Braintree Elementary will partner with Clemmons Family Farm (a Vermont nonprofit located at a historic, African American–owned family farm) to provide students in grades K–6 with:

- exposure to a multidimensional curriculum on Black History and
- experiential arts learning facilitated by visits and lessons with Black artists from Vermont.

**How will the project, initiative, or program described above aim to create a more equitable and inclusive education community?**

From a young age, children will:

- understand how societal structures and their own actions can combine to contribute to a fairer and kinder society,
- appreciate the cultural contributions of Black artists and other People of Color in our society, and
- experience increased respect for and kindness to people from a variety of racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds.

**Please provide a simple overview of how the funds will be spent:**

Braintree faculty will partner with Clemmons Family Farm educational staff to develop a learning plan involving:

- Utilizing Clemmons Family Farm's multidimensional, piloted, age-differentiated curriculum—*Windows to a Multicultural World*—to help students prepare for and process their engagement visits with Black artists. Our access to an extensive “Window” in this curriculum for the duration of one year will cost approximately \$1000.
- Student engagement with Black artists and professionals who provide teaching visits throughout the year. Each teaching visit costs between \$250–500 plus a transportation stipend and involves up to 25 students. We estimate six to eight teaching visits for students at Braintree throughout the year and plan to allocate \$3000 toward this cost.

We will additionally pay management and support costs of \$1000 to Clemmons Family Farm.

**How will you collect feedback and/or measure progress of your project, initiative, or program? Grant recipients will be asked to give two brief update reports, which include this feedback or data.**

Two Braintree Elementary faculty, Claire Bates and Abi Gershon, plan to work on drafting a developmentally appropriate measure for all Braintree Elementary School children. This measure will help gauge the children's openness to and respect for people of various racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds. They plan to administer this measure at the beginning and end of the intervention year.

[Email Communication to Clemmons Family Farm Executive Director and Arts Learning Advisor,  
September 16, 2022]

Subject: Update on Assessment and Implementation

Hello Lydia and Kia'Rae,

I had the pleasure of joining a meeting with the Braintree School team today as they prepared for implementation of this project. We focused our meeting on pre- and post-assessment, and I wanted to give you an update. (The core team working on this project at Braintree is copied here.)

The absence of an easily accessed and well-developed formal measure spurred creativity! This team decided we will use several approaches to collecting data. I wanted to share this with you in case it helps with any other schools. We think this approach fits our local community well.

- A four-question qualitative survey will be addressed to every building staff member at Braintree Elementary to fill out at the beginning and end of the year. The questions address what the staff member has observed about: 1) students' attitudes about variation of various kinds in the student body (race, gender expression, socioeconomic class, ability, and more), 2) students' attitudes *specifically* about race, and 3) that staff member's own confidence in teaching about diversity and what supports they might need.
- Near the start of the year, each class will be read a book by the school librarian about welcoming everyone with a variety of qualities, and the groups will be asked a planned set of questions. An observer (possibly the principal) will watch each class and take notes on their responses.
- The above two steps will be repeated near the end of the year.

Our teachers also planned for addressing anticipated questions and pushback from families in the community.

- A note will be included in the school newsletter highlighting the strengths and intentions of the collaboration with Clemmons Family Farm.
- This note will include a link through which parents can express aspects of culture and heritage that are important to their family (as we will be emphasizing throughout the year that there are multiple cultures present in our school and in Vermont and that we can honor them all).
- This emphasis on cultural heritage will be further developed through a recipe-sharing project throughout the year.
- Complaints or pushback to the school about our learning engagement with Clemmons Family Farm will be documented throughout the year, so we will learn about the challenges to this education effort in our particular area.

We are grateful for your support in getting to this point so far. Also, please note that Kate Branstetter (copied here)—Braintree's librarian—will be the point of contact for coordinating artist visits to Braintree this year and will also be the holder of the data collected above.

We look forward to an exciting year of learning with Clemmons Family Farm. I was pleased to hear from Braintree's teaching team a passionate and curious spirit toward this work with Braintree students, and a willingness to contribute their own knowledge of our community to the effort.

We thank you for all you do! With peace and care,

Claire

Claire Bates, LMSW (she/her)  
New Strokes Counseling, Randolph, VT  
802-565-1833