request for proposals

Sj Learns: Closing the K-3rd Grade Achievement Gap through Extended Learning After the School Day
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Introduction

Renewing San José’s promise of economic opportunity begins with our children and their education. While our teachers and school districts play the leading roles within the classroom, the City of San José can play a critically important supporting role by enabling every child to continue learning after the bell rings. Extended learning opportunities have a unique, positive impact on the social and academic development of low-income and at-risk children with working parents.

San José’s after-school homework centers of a decade ago provide a foundation for the City’s engagement in supporting quality, school-based programs that extend learning after school hours in ways that foster successful learners.

The focus of the SJ Learns Extended Learning Initiative is shaped by a few critical lessons from our collective experience in learning, as demonstrated by the academic research, as well as advances in policy and practice. First, ample studies demonstrate the crucial importance of learning by the third-grade threshold. That is, children reading at grade level and proficient in mathematics by the end of third grade demonstrate a substantially greater likelihood of academic success, including high school graduation and college attainment. Given the relatively large impact that extended learning at a young age can have on a child’s future success, this initiative will initially focus its efforts on elementary school students in kindergarten through third grade.

Second, well-designed and well-run extended learning programs can deliver consistent achievement gains and promote non-cognitive skills, such as resiliency, in younger students, particularly among English learners and children from low-income families. In light of ample examples of ineffective programs, a successful initiative must keep a rigorous focus on what the research reveals about best practices that will deliver the best outcomes.

Finally, San José’s persistent achievement gap remains entrenched along racial, socio-economic, and geographic lines. Prioritizing scarce resources to support innovative approaches in low-income communities can substantially reduce that gap. Making significant progress on raising student achievement by the third grade will require a commitment to innovation and to a partnership strategy that will leverage the talents, expertise and resources of all stakeholders – schools, students and parents, philanthropy, business and the City of San José.
The strategy of the SJ Learns Extended Learning Initiative has been shaped by the SJ Learns Working Group, a collection of educational experts and stakeholders that is co-chaired by Dr. Emmett Carson, CEO and President of Silicon Valley Community Foundation; San José Councilmember Magdalena Carrasco; and Matt Hammer, Executive Director and Co-Founder of Innovate Public Schools. The SJ Learns Extended Learning Initiative offers one strategy for confronting our achievement gap. Bringing together leaders from several sectors – community education, philanthropy and government – enables the creation of a roadmap for a sustainable and impactful initiative to substantially expand the reach and quality citywide of extended learning programs that happen after the school day. The San José City Council has approved Mayor Sam Liccardo’s request for $2 million to provide seed funding for this initiative. SJ Learns will leverage the expertise and resources from foundations, the private sector and school districts to expand high-quality extended learning opportunities that happen after school hours for low-income children in grades K – 3.

### Problem Statement

Today, less than 10 percent of San José elementary school children participate in state-funded extended learning programs after school hours. The lack of public resources leaves a large number of our neediest students without such learning opportunities, because their families cannot afford paid tutoring, sports or enrichment programs. Too many of our students lack the support to succeed academically, as seen in school districts’ data: some 62 percent of San José students entering public high school in our three largest districts will fail to meet the minimum entrance requirements for a public state university.

With support for school districts and their partners, the SJ Learns Extended Learning Initiative seeks to substantially increase the number of kindergarten through third grade students from low-income neighborhoods who participate in high-quality extended learning programs during the school year in order to reduce the achievement gap. With this Initiative, the City and community respond to the need to expand the availability of programs that nurture and foster confident and life-long learners.

### Initiative Strategy

- Enable substantial gains in reading and mathematics among San José K – third-grade students from low-income families through an Initiative that allows for flexibility and encourages innovation.
- Provide additional resources to school districts to increase the number of children
from low-income San José communities attending high-quality extended-learning programs during the school year that support academic goals and provide enrichment opportunities.

- Leverage public funding with matching commitments from participating grantees for an initial program and from corporate, philanthropic and public sector partners to substantially expand access and opportunity through a continuing initiative.
- Facilitate dialogue and learning among participating districts and the broader extended learning community to inform practice and policy, including strategies to scale successful programs and build sustainable funding streams.

**Proposal Eligibility Criteria**

- Proposals from school districts, charter school networks or established elementary school coalitions that fulfill the following criteria will be considered:
  - Serve K – 3 students in the city of San José.
  - Have approved Local Control Accountability Plans (LCAP) in place that include:
    - Support for students who are below grade level, English-learners or at-risk, with the goal of making accelerated progress toward grade level proficiency;
    - Extended-learning programs during the school year as a key strategy or activity for improving student academic achievement in reading and/or mathematics;
    - Specific, dedicated funding for extended-learning programs during the school year. These matching funds must equal at least 50 percent of the amount requested in the proposal.
  - Are able to report on student improvements in proficiency in reading and mathematics for all students and on quality improvement over the course of the program.
  - Demonstrate adoption or intent to adopt an evidence-based and field-tested quality assessment framework.
  - Proposals from religious institutions will not be accepted.

**Project Proposal Characteristics**

- We will consider proposals for high-quality extended learning programs that happen after the school day and incorporate the following characteristics:
- Provide a detailed description of a two-year program that is aligned with the K – 3 reading and mathematics priorities as indicated in this RFP for the 2015-16 and 2016-17 school years. Programs can include an initial planning and/or ramp-up period and minimum three-semester implementation period.
- Demonstrate net gains in the number of participating students as a result of the funding requested.
- Preference will be given to proposals with an implementation strategy that allocates resources where they are most needed to increase student proficiency in reading and/or mathematics.
- Exhibit leadership from district, charter network or coalition office for collaboration with school sites and service providers in developing the program design and implementation strategy.
- Demonstrate programming that is research- and evidence-based; align extended-

### Key Dates

- **July 24, 2015**  
  Application process opens
- **July 28, 2015 - 3 - 4 p.m.**  
  RFP informational call
  **Please register at www.sanjoseca.gov/sjlearns**
- **August 21, 2015 - 5 p.m.**  
  Proposal submission deadline
- **October 2015**  
  Announcement of grant awards
learning curriculum with in-school learning; and incorporate innovative strategies that promote students' active engagement in hands-on learning.

- Ensure the implementation of best practice in program design, as well as field-tested quality assessment tools that will positively impact proficiency in reading and mathematics.
- Demonstrate potential for scaling up and replication across district school sites.
- Incorporate rigorous monitoring and evaluation methods with capacity to measure changes in academic proficiency.
- Focus on developing key 21st century skills (communication, critical thinking, collaboration and creativity).
- Incorporate strategies that increase the relevance of learning through real-life applications.
- Engage with school staff, parents, and service providers to design and deliver programs that provide 10 to 15 hours per week of extended learning time and require students' daily attendance.
- Demonstrate commitment to share promising practices with districts and community partners funded by the SJ Learns Extended Learning Initiative.

Proposal Evaluation Criteria

- Clear description of project goals, activities, quality and outcomes. This should include description of and justification for the framework and assessment methods for quality and outcomes.
- Deliver innovations in program design, implementation and/or monitoring and evaluation.
- Achievable timeline with milestones.
- Leverage existing infrastructure and planning to produce net gains in the number of after-school students served.
- Demonstrate capacity and commitment to participate in and contribute to an SJ Learns grantee collaborative to share progress and learnings and inform ongoing strategies for sustainability and scale.
- Detailed budget demonstrating:
  - Matching funds of a minimum of $0.50 of identified funding for each $1.00 requested;
  - No more than 10 percent of City funds requested will be allocated for planning and/or evaluation;
  - Per-student implementation costs within district standards.

Award Amounts

Between $250,000 and $500,000 will be awarded per school district, charter school network or established elementary school collaborative.
Review and Selection Process

All proposals received by the deadline via the online system, applySVCF, will be reviewed by Silicon Valley Community Foundation (SVCF), the Initiative Project Manager, for alignment with Initiative goals and compliance with the criteria set forth in this RFP. Based on this review, the Project Manager will prepare a report to the SJ Learns Advisory Committee and the City of San José that provides a summary of each proposal. The Advisory Committee will help SVCF review all proposals recommended for funding. These recommendations will then be finalized with approval from SVCF’s board of directors.

Applicants will be informed of grant decisions in October 2015. Please note that disbursement of grants will correlate with the City of San José’s release of funds.

Evaluation, Monitoring and Grantee Learning Activities

Grantees will be expected to meet SVCF’s requirements for a final financial and narrative report. In an effort to further the overall program goals of this RFP, inform future RFPs related to this topic and contribute to larger field-building objectives, grantees will be asked to participate in periodic cohort meetings to share information on project activities and best practices as well as participate in evaluations. Thank you very much for your interest in responding to this RFP and in making our region a better place. We look forward to reviewing your proposal.
About Silicon Valley Community Foundation

Silicon Valley Community Foundation makes all forms of philanthropy more powerful. We serve as a catalyst and leader for innovative solutions to our region’s most challenging problems, and through our donors we award more money to charities than any other community foundation in the United States. SVCF has $6.5 billion in assets under management. As Silicon Valley’s center of philanthropy, we provide thousands of individuals, families and corporations with simple and effective ways to give locally and around the world.

Find out more at www.siliconvalleycf.org.

More Information

If you have questions, please contact us at grants@siliconvalleycf.org or call 650.450.5557

To get all the latest grantmaking information, follow us on Facebook and subscribe to our community e-newsletter at www.siliconvalleycf.org/enewsletters.

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