



Jewish Federation of Greater Naples

STAND UP FOR JUSTICE

Sponsored by the Jewish Community Relations Council of the
Jewish Federation of Greater Naples

Application deadline: February 2, 2026

Applicant's name: Tammy Simmons Applicant's email: simmonta@collierschool.com

Number of years in education: 21 Grade or subject taught: Elementary grade 2 -4

School: New Beginnings Naples School Address: 3710 Estey Avenue Naples, Florida 34104

Phone (daytime): 239-377-7533 Phone (evening): 239-289-6041 Principal's name: Stanley Bryant

Principal's email address: bryantst@collierschools.com Principal's Phone: 239-377-1054

- Describe the precipitating events that motivated you to initiate these lessons or activities
- Describe the lessons or activities; and if adapted from another source please reference
- Explain how the lessons or activities teach students the importance of respecting others no matter what religious, racial, cultural, or other differences exist
- Explain how it helped them counter bigotry and bullying and prepared them to stand up for Justice
- PROVIDE EVIDENCE/PROOF OF EFFECTIVENESS SUCH AS, BUT NOT LIMITED TO: A QUESTIONNAIRE, INTERVIEWS, DOCUMENTED ANECDOTAL CONVERSATIONS, AND STUDENT WRITINGS, VIDEO, ETC.

→All 5 bullet points must be completed, or applicant will be advised to submit the following year.

→Please number each page along with your name at the top of each page.

Complete the following if you have encouraged someone other than yourself to apply:

Your name: _____ Your email: _____

Phone (daytime): _____ Phone (evening): _____

Your relationship to this applicant: _____

Submit the completed form in writing, by email, or video format via email to azagier@jewishnaples.org

Or mail to

Alan Scher Zagier, Jewish Community Relations Council director, Jewish Federation of Greater Naples,
4720 Pine Ridge Road, Naples, FL 34119

Stand Up for Justice Grant Application

Applicant Name: Tammy Simmons

School: New Beginnings Alternative School

Precipitating Events That Motivated These Lessons or Activities

New Beginnings Alternative School serves elementary and middle school students who have been removed from traditional school settings due to significant behavioral challenges. Many students arrive academically behind, disengaged from learning, and impacted by repeated experiences of bullying, peer conflict, trauma, and social isolation. Our student population represents a wide range of cultural, racial, and ethnic backgrounds, and misunderstandings related to differences have often contributed to negative behaviors and a lack of belonging.

In response to these needs, staff currently implement literature-based lessons focused on empathy, respect, conflict resolution, and justice. These lessons have proven effective in helping students reflect on behavior, build emotional vocabulary, and connect learning to real-life situations. However, the school does not have a school library, and access to diverse, high-interest, developmentally appropriate books is extremely limited. This lack of resources restricts our ability to expand these lessons, provide consistent exposure to meaningful texts, and meet the varied literacy levels of our students.

The combination of ongoing behavioral challenges, social-emotional needs, and limited access to inclusive literature motivated the development of these lessons and highlights the need for grant support to strengthen and sustain them.

Description of the Lessons or Activities

The lessons and activities are currently embedded into the regular school day and use literature as a foundation for literacy development, social-emotional learning, and positive behavior support. Instruction includes teacher-led read-alouds, small-group discussions, and guided independent reading using the limited texts currently available.

Books are intentionally chosen to support students reading below grade level and include picture books, graphic novels, and accessible middle-grade texts when available. Lessons are structured around guided discussion questions that prompt students to analyze characters' actions, emotions, and choices. Students are encouraged to make connections between stories and their own experiences at school, particularly around fairness, respect, and problem-solving.

Students complete brief written reflections, drawing responses, or verbal check-ins to express understanding and personal growth. Teaching practices are used to ensure lessons feel safe, predictable, and supportive. While these lessons are effective, a lack of a school library limits the variety, consistency, and depth of instruction. Additional books would allow lessons to be expanded, differentiated, and sustained across classrooms.

How the Lessons Teach Respect for Religious, Racial, Cultural, and Other Differences

The literature used in these lessons reflects diverse religious, racial, cultural, and ethnic identities. Through guided reading and discussion, students learn to recognize both differences and shared human experiences. Seeing themselves represented in texts helps students develop positive self-identity, while learning about others fosters curiosity, empathy, and respect.

Classroom discussions emphasize listening respectfully, valuing different perspectives, and understanding how background and experiences influence thoughts and actions. These conversations reinforce that all individuals deserve dignity and fairness, regardless of differences, and help students practice respectful communication in real-life interactions.

How the Lessons Counter Bigotry and Bullying and Prepare Students to Stand Up for Justice

Many students at New Beginnings have experienced bullying or have engaged in conflict due to limited social-emotional skills. Literature provides a safe, non-threatening way to address bigotry, bias, and unfair behavior. Stories centered on kindness, courage, accountability, and justice help students identify bullying and understand its impact.

Through reflection and discussion, students practice strategies for standing up for themselves and others, resolving conflicts peacefully, and making respectful choices. These lessons reinforce school-wide behavior expectations and encourage students to act with empathy and integrity. By connecting story themes to real-life situations, students begin to understand what it means to stand up for justice in their school and community.

Evidence / Proof of Effectiveness

Effectiveness is demonstrated through multiple forms of evidence already observed and documented, including:

- Student reflection writing and responses showing increased empathy, self-awareness, and understanding of fairness
- Teacher observations of improved engagement, participation, and peer interactions
- Anecdotal evidence of students referencing characters and lessons during real-life conflicts

These indicators demonstrate that the lessons are effective and that access to additional literature through grant support would significantly strengthen their impact.

Recent student reflections:

***Student Reflection A -(Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.)** *“Martin’s Big Words” by Doreen Rappaport*

The book was about Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. He used his words to help people instead of being mean or fighting. I learned that he wanted everyone to be treated fair even when people were unkind to him.

This makes me think about my old school because sometimes people would say things to me that were hurtful. Dr. King showed me that I can stand up for myself by using kind words and telling an adult. I can also help other kids if I see something unfair. I want to try to make my school a peaceful place like Dr. King wanted.

Student Reflection B:

The book was about wodner wat and kids made fun of him because he couldn't say his R sounds right. That made me feel sad because he was still smart and brave. When the bully came, everyone was scared but Wodner used his voice to help the class. Even though he talked different, he helped everyone and they listened to him. This showed me that being different can be a good thing. I learned that bullying is wrong and words can hurt people's feelings. If I see someone being picked on, I should help them or tell a teacher. I want to be kind to kids who are different and not laugh at them, because everyone deserves respect.

Student Activity C:

