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CONCORD EDUCATION FUND GRANT PROPOSAL COVER SHEET

ACADEMIC YEAR 2002-2003 GRANTS

PROPOSAL TITLE : POET-IN-RESIDENCE AT THOREAU
SCHOOL

PROPOSAL APPLICANT NAMES

<u>BRAD BENNETT</u>	<u>ALEX POPP</u>
<u>THIRD GRADE TEACHER</u>	<u>PRINCIPAL</u>
<u>THOREAU SCHOOL</u>	<u>THOREAU SCHOOL</u>

PROPOSAL CONTACT

NAME BRAD BENNETT
WORK PHONE 978-318-1324 x-311
HOME PHONE 781-646-5032
E-MAIL ADDRESS bbennett@colonial.net

GRADE LEVEL AND ESTIMATE OF NUMBER OF STUDENTS WHO WILL BENEFIT FROM THE PROPOSAL

THIRD GRADE, APPROXIMATELY 75 STUDENTS

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL The Poet-in-Residence program
at Thoreau School would provide an opportunity for
third grade students to spend an extended period
of time working with a talented and inspiring
professional poet and poetry teacher, Judy
Steinbergh, of Troubadour, Inc.

TWENTY FIVE COPIES DUE NO LATER THAN 5:00 PM ON FEB. 1, 2002

PLEASE SUBMIT TO:

**STEPHEN ALLISON
92 ALCOTT ROAD
CONCORD, MA 01742**

CONCORD EDUCATION FUND

GRANT PROPOSAL:

POET-IN-RESIDENCE AT THOREAU SCHOOL

Project Leaders: Brad Bennett and Alex Popp

“... and I am shaken once more by the act of language, by the fact that words quiver the mouth, tighten the knot at the base of the throat, quicken the pulse, that what is crafted and spoken on tentative breath has the force of flood, can change the course of feeling; so it is hard to turn away, even when the body has had enough, the spirit longs to hear the poem inside the child.”

from “A Moment in Every Class” by Judy Steinbergh
Writing My Will: Poems and Prose

A. PROPOSAL GOAL

The Poet-in-Residence program at Thoreau School would provide an opportunity for third grade students to spend an extended period of time working with a talented and inspiring professional poet and poetry teacher. The quantity and quality of contact with the Poet-in-Residence would allow for a depth of poetry writing that would not be reached in a shorter visit by a poet. This is a unique opportunity for Thoreau students. The Poet-in-Residence program would benefit the entire third grade student population at Thoreau School during the 2002-2003 school year. Depending on enrollment, approximately 70-80 students would be participating in the poetry program.

The Poet-in-Residence program will address elements of the language strand, the

composition strand, and especially the literature strand of the Massachusetts English Language Arts Curriculum Framework. One of the primary learning standards in the framework emphasized in this program will be to “identify, analyze, and apply knowledge of the structure, elements, and theme of poetry and provide evidence from the text to support their understanding.”

B. PROPOSAL DESCRIPTION

The Poet-in-Residence candidate, Judith Steinbergh of Troubadour, Inc., would teach six sessions in each third grade class during the 2002-2003 school year. Each session would last one and a half hours. Scheduling of the exact dates of Ms. Steinbergh’s visits would be finalized in the event that this proposal is funded. Ms. Steinbergh would immerse the students in the reading and writing of poetry during her residency. Her goal in teaching poetry is “to encourage children to develop figurative language and metaphoric thinking, an ear for the cadence and music of language, and a willingness to speak from the inner heart and to take risks that deepen and give force to their own writing.” Students would produce several poems during the course of the residency. At the end of the residency, all or some of the third grade students would participate in a poetry reading assembly organized by Mr. Bennett and Mr. Popp.

C. EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

The success of the Poet-in-Residence program would be evaluated in three ways. During the program itself, Ms. Steinbergh, Mr. Bennett, and Mr. Popp would consult frequently as to the progress and implementation of the residency and alter its content if necessary. Secondly, after the residency has been completed, Mr. Popp, Mr. Bennett, and his third grade colleagues would meet to discuss the overall implementation and success of the residency. Finally, Ms. Steinbergh would engage the students in an assessment exercise so that we could collect their

impressions of the Poet-in-Residence program.

D. PROPOSAL BUDGET

It would be very important to reach all third graders at Thoreau. So the Poet-in-Residence proposal attempts to anticipate any fluctuation in population. At the present time, we are projecting that there will be three third grade classes during the 2002-2003 school year. If, however, there are four classes next year, we would want to make sure that the Poet-in-Residence is funded to visit all four of those classes. Ms. Steinbergh's fees are \$350 for a morning of two one and a half hour sessions. Thus, the total cost of six sessions each class for four classes is \$4200. It would then be adjusted if we have only three classes next year. Any equipment needed (e.g. overhead projector) would be furnished by Thoreau School. Paper and pencil supplies would also be furnished by Thoreau School.

E. QUALIFICATIONS

Project Leader, Brad Bennett, has been teaching third grade at Thoreau School for seven years. In that time, he has become increasingly more involved in the teaching and promotion of poetry. In November 1999, Brad participated in a Teachers as Scholars course entitled "Contemporary Poetry: Bridging History and Culture" and taught by Poet-in-Residence candidate Judy Steinbergh. He subsequently organized a TAS-sponsored workshop taught by Ms. Steinbergh for K-5 Concord Public School teachers in October 2000 at the Thoreau Club. Brad also participated in another TAS course in July 2000 entitled "The Inner Life: Writing Poems That Know More Than You Do," taught by poet Barbara Helfgott Hyett. Brad also writes poetry in his spare time, and his work has been published in *Teaching Voices: Newsletter of the Massachusetts Field Center for Teaching and Learning*, *Elysian Fields Quarterly: The Baseball Review*, and *The Concord Journal*. Brad is currently teaching a "Poetry Club" for third

through fifth graders under the auspices of Concord-Carlisle Community Education.

Project Leader Alex Popp is in his second year as Principal of Thoreau School. He has spent thirty-three years in education. He taught fifth and sixth grade for twenty-four years. He has always had an interest in integrating poetry into the elementary school curriculum. He has taught poetry lessons to classes at Thoreau School this year.

In the summer of 2001, Alex Popp and Brad Bennett participated in former Poet Laureate Robert Pinsky's "Favorite Poem Project Institute for Teachers" at Boston University. The experience reinforced for both of them the value of poetry in the elementary grades. Because of the Favorite Poem Project Institute, Alex and Brad consider themselves "ambassadors of poetry" at Thoreau School and the other Concord schools. They are currently in the process of organizing a series of Favorite Poem events at Thoreau School scheduled for April 2002. They are also co-leading a poetry teaching workshop with Thoreau teachers Mehrnoosh Watson and Merrie Najimy at a Professional Day on March 15. In addition, Brad has been invited to sit on an upcoming panel at B.U. in March on the topic of the Favorite Poem Project Institute.

The Poet-in-Residence candidate, Judith Steinbergh of Troubadour, Inc., has worked since 1971 as Poet-in-the-Schools throughout Massachusetts. She has taught poetry reading and writing to students in grades K-12 throughout the Boston area and has trained teachers of all grade levels as well. She is author of *Reading and Writing Poetry: A Guide for Teachers* (1994). She co-authored *Beyond Words, Writing Poems with Children: A Guide for Parents and Teachers* with Elizabeth McKim (1983), now in its third edition (1999). Both are popular resources for elementary school teachers. Ms. Steinbergh has published four collections of poetry and she won the 1983 Washington Prize. She was a Bunting Institute Fellow at Radcliffe in 1996/97. Ms. Steinbergh is a co-founder of Troubadour, Inc., a nonprofit program of poetry, music, and song. Her extensive experience and her gentle and inspiring style combine to make her an outstanding candidate for Poet-in-Residence at Thoreau School.