

That Could be ME! (TCBM)

A Pre-Professional Project for High School Writers and Illustrators

About the Project: The Foundation for the Art & Science of Learning conceived, supported, and directed That Could be ME! Journeys to STEM Careers. It is a project designed to inspire high school students through a pre-professional research, writing, and illustration book development project. The anticipated result is to inspire elementary students as they see themselves in the biographies of these STEM professionals. In a pilot project, high school student writers and illustrators from Montgomery Public Schools and Butler County Schools in Alabama created seventeen biographies for elementary school students. The books feature BIPOC STEM professionals with ties to Alabama. The post-pilot vision is for each state to create its own state That Could Be ME! project.

FASL is looking for more school districts to participate in two ways.

1. Create additional books, which requires a local student cohort of up to twenty student pairs (writers and illustrators) working in a given location.
2. Making the seventeen project books available for purchase for use in elementary school classrooms and libraries.

FASL is seeking grants to offset district costs and needs a list of interested districts to help in that effort. Some district-level funding will be required which could be in the form of in-kind support for transportation.

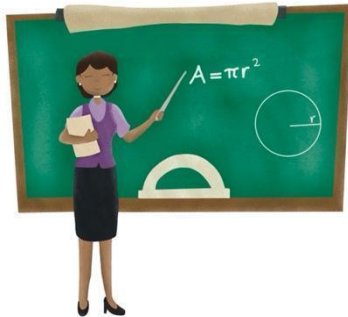
The goals of That Could be ME! include:

- to inspire elementary school students' interest in STEM by expanding the representation of BIPOC communities in Alabama in biographies
- to provide pre-professional experience for high school students that results in a finished product to be published
- to build critical collaboration, interviewing, storytelling, visual communication, and other skills for the high school student creators

The successes of That Could be ME! include:

- seventeen student-authored and illustrated books going into elementary classroom pilots in January 2023
- students pushing themselves to achieve their individual best in a STEAM endeavor
- students collaborating to conceive of and realize an artistic creation with their peers, reflecting the experiences of their elders, for the improvement of younger students
- students exploring and writing about difficult topics including those around identity, such as prejudice and discrimination; mental health challenges; and other examples of adversity; at the same time celebrating and writing about the breadth of individual experience, growth, and achievement

About the Process: Schools or school districts who express interest will be included in a grant application for a TCBM hub for summer 2024. A Public Library or other location will be selected as a partner in the project. Students will attend a four-day workshop at the selected location to learn about creating children's books. In the days following the workshop, writers and illustrators will interview subjects (already contacted and who have agreed to participate) whose stories they would tell. Afterward, they will meet regularly with creative mentors at the location, while working on their books. Students will be compensated for attending the workshop, completing a draft of their work, and completing their books, and own the copyrights.



That Could be ME! is managed by a former museum educator. The students represent seven MPS, two Butler County, one Covington County, and one Elmore County high school and the homeschool community.

All illustrations in the document are from student work on the project.

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