



PROJECT LEVEL HANDBOOK

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OPENING STATEMENT

Project Level is a San Francisco-based arts education and training program that empowers the youth of color to identify their artistic abilities, to find their creative voices, and to discover their leadership potential. Our programs provide marginalized youth and young adults of color ages 6-to-24 access to training, performance, and employment opportunities, expand their awareness of social justice, enhance their self-confidence and resiliency and foster a strong sense of community. With a focus on San Francisco's Black community, *Project Level* employs the arts to advance cultural equity and

social justice. *Project Level* actively contributes to the artistic and economic development of the artists, the participants, and the community we serve.

Project Level is an equal opportunity community base program that believes that community building is key to social justice and to social change. We value the diverse voices of the artists our programs engage regardless of sexual orientation, sexual preference, place of origin, the color of skin or choice, ability, or disability. In other words, we don't discriminate and we treat everyone equally.

In 2013,
Richard
Bougere, a local

hip-hop artist who gained notoriety in the late 2000s, and producer Danielle Banks founded Project Level, a neighborhood-based arts education program for teenagers. The organization was founded after numerous shootings and incidents of gang violence took place in San Francisco's Fillmore District.

At that time, San Francisco's

current Mayor (London Breed) was the Executive Director of the African American Art and Culture Complex. She invited Bougere to begin teaching classes at AAACC. The co-founders (Richard "Big Rich" Bougere and Danielle Banks) developed Project Level in 2014 after pursuing successful careers in the hip-hop field. Growing up in San Francisco,

they both had an interest in the arts, but like many Project Level participants, they struggled to find mentors who understood their dreams.

It should be noted that Big-Rich was an independent rapper **before** PL, and he made a sacrifice to put his rap career on hold to help inner-city kids by forming PL. He uses his personal resources. If and when Big-Rich

decides to re-launch his rap career and business, that does not take away from the kids at PL, as a matter of fact, it brings more attention to the kids and provides a different and separate opportunity for the kids in PL.

Recruitment/Orientation

Process

1. Outreach

Project Level

begins our recruitment process with outreach. Our outreach is done primarily online on social media through our official Instagram page (@projectlevel), or our website (projectlevel.org). Prospective participants are able to either:

A. Respond to the social media post by following the instructions, and sending an email to projectlevelmusic@gmail.com

B. Enquire online using our application that can be found at projectlevel.org

2. Zoom Interviews

After we conduct our outreach, we

thoroughly go through every inquiry and invite individuals for an interview that is conducted via Zoom. The Zoom interview allows us to get to know you, as well as assess your talent through a short audition.

3. Orientation

Following the interview, select individuals will be invited to the orientation.

The orientation will precede as follows:

Project Level Orientation

- Welcome by Danielle & Big Rich
- What is Project Level/Our Mission
- Staff Introductions
- Department Breakdown
- Getting to Know You (Breakout Room with Departments) -
- Outro (finishing applications and other)

Open Door Policy

Project Level has an open-door policy to talk with all enrolled participants in our program about their: goals, interests, progress, and guidance for future assignments, and graduation from Project Level.

Department Expectations

All active participants of Project Level are expected to accomplish a set amount of work, depending on the department you are in. The expectation and productivity levels are stated below:

Music

- Weekly
Assignments:
write/record 1-2 songs, post 2-3 videos to social media
- Completion of a Final Project:
album, EP, music video, etc.

Fashion/Graphics

- Weekly
Assignments:
complete a minimum of 5 designs
- FINAL PROJECT:
product/brand launch

Social Media

- Weekly
Assignments: make a daily post to all social media channels
- FINAL PROJECT:
self-produced campaign, project portfolio, etc.

Film/Photography

- Weekly
Assignments:

- FINAL PROJECT:
portfolio, work reel,
etc.

Each student must individually showcase their project progress weekly to be emailed to projectlevelmusic@gmail.com

Productivity levels are subject to change. Changes in productivity levels will be directly communicated with participants.

Students are introduced to each department during Orientation. Following the Orientation students then complete a 2-week cohesive boot camp that allows them to gain an understanding of each

department, and where their skills can be best used/developed. After the boot camp students have the freedom to pick the department they will be placed in for the remainder of the cohort. Students are allowed to switch departments during the first two weeks. After two weeks it is then recommended to stick to a department in order to gain the most from the experience.

When expectation and productivity levels are not met as determined by the program director based on the level of expectation in the specific programs stated above, the program director will then discuss the next steps with the

participant which can include switching departments or dismissal from the program.

Program Completion

Each cohort of Project Level is project-based. Once participants have produced and completed their department's final project and list of hours, students will receive a certificate of completion at the end of each cohort. This certificate will signify as a completion for the cohort, and the participant has the option to apply for the following cohort.

Attendance Policy

1. Attendance policy overview

Participants are expected to be present for scheduled meeting times that are stated at the beginning of each cohort unless otherwise stated. Regular attendance hours will accumulate to make students eligible for opportunities. The attendance hours go as follows:

- 35 hours - Eligible for possible performance opportunities
- As an SF based program and

organization
, we **are not responsible**
for
transportation to or from
performances. A Release
of Liability must be
signed if
given a ride.

Rides are
not
guaranteed.

- 70 hours completed - Eligible for trips
- 1 whole semester completed - Access to equipment and spaces

- After 80 hours or the first semester - Students may continue in the department, or switch if they wish

Regular attendance and punctuality are important to keep your team and the program running smoothly.

To help aid students in their academic achievement, Project Level has a mandated progress report system for participation in the program. This includes:

- Weekly check-ins with a parent/guardian, and school of attendance
- Must maintain at least a 2.0 to stay enrolled in Project Level

- Participants can receive credits for attending Project Level (Must speak with PL directors and school counselors for permission)
- Participants are responsible for emailing bi-weekly progress report to projectlevelmusic@gmail.com

2. **Overview of disciplinary action**

Students are allowed to miss four days in a month with an unexcused absence. Students will receive a verbal warning after the first two unexcused missed days. Students will receive a written warning with notice of possible withdrawal from the program after three unexcused missed days. After the fourth unexcused missed day, students will receive a written notice stating they have missed four days of the program, and a meeting will need to take place with the

student, parent, and Project Level staff to determine the student's future place in the program. More than four days missed will result in you forfeiting your spot, and will lead to your removal from the program. Students are required to report an absence by communicating with their department lead via their agreed-upon method of communication (cell phone email etc.). Students must report each day they are absent.

3. **Attendance policy exceptions**

Absence because of medical needs, family emergencies, low performance in school, or other specific circumstances are exempt from the disciplinary act

Behavior and Conduct

As a Project Level participant, I will:

- Show respect to other participants and treat them as well as I would like to be treated.
- Show respect to staff and cooperate fully with their instructions

- Preserve the cleanliness of each space your program uses
- Discarding of all waste and use the correct waste bins
- Respect the rights and beliefs of others, and treat others with courtesy and consideration.
- Communicate in an appropriate manner; refrain from using foul language or gestures, harsh words, or tone of voice.
- Use program equipment, supplies and facilities properly
- Respect the property of others (authorized adults can search for belongings [like backpacks] if there is reason to believe Project Level's Code of Conduct has been violated).

- Refrain from use of electronic devices which are not a part of my program experience.
- Participate appropriately. I will not disrupt the program and hinder the learning experience of others.
- Refrain from deliberately causing bodily harm to other participants or staff. I understand that pushing, kicking, hitting or fighting are not acceptable and will not be tolerated.
- Be fully responsible for my actions and understand that failure to follow this Code of Conduct will result in disciplinary action or expulsion from the program.

CONDUCT MANAGEMENT

Minor incidents of code of conduct violations will be brought to the student's attention and suggestions will be made on how to correct the behavior. Continued violation will result in a notification to the parent. The staff will seek parental support to resolve issues and to encourage positive program participation. Participants who remain disruptive after consultation with the parents may be dismissed from the program.

PROGRAM EXPULSION

Although every effort is made to correct the Code of Conduct violations, at times it may be necessary for a participant to be

dismissed from a program to ensure that other participants receive the positive experience Project Level believes all participants should have.

Project Level is sensitive to the safety and positive experience of all participants and as such the following will not be tolerated:

- Fighting or threatening others (physical or verbal). Conduct which threatens or endangers the health or safety of any member of the Project Level community including physical abuse, verbal abuse, threats, verbal or nonverbal intimidation, bullying, stalking, or coercion.

- Possession of, distribution of, and/or use of tobacco, alcohol, illegal drugs, controlled substances, fireworks, weapons, or a replica thereof such as a firearm, knife, explosives, or any other instrument used or potentially used to intimidate, threaten, and/or injure any member of Project Level or Project Level community members.
- Attempted or actual theft of or damage to Project Level property or property of Project Level community members.
- Conduct that could result in the violation of any federal, state, or local law.
- Retaliation -- adverse action taken against a person because of the person's good

faith opposing, reporting, or threatening to report a violation of the Code of Conduct or for participating in good faith in investigations, proceedings, hearings, or remediation related to Project Level policies, including the Code of Conduct.

Refusing to follow the Code of Conduct or Project Level program-specific rules
In such cases, the parent/guardian will be contacted by Project Level staff and it is the responsibility of the parent to make immediate arrangements to pick up the student. In the case of dismissal from the Project Level program, refunds or

credits shall not be provided.

Thank you for taking the time to review this information with your child and helping to make Project Level's programs exciting and enriching for all participants.

HANDBOOK SIGN-OFF SHEET

The Project Level

Handbook identifies the responsibilities parents, guardians and students must accept in order for the directors and staff of Project Level to provide for the needs of the children entrusted to our care. Parents are asked to read this handbook in its entirety with their children and discuss with them those sections relating directly to

their daily lives at Project Level.

IMPORTANT

Read over *carefully* the entire Project Level Handbook with your child(ren).

***We have read and agree to abide by all the rules and regulations set forth in the**

**Project Level Handbook, as
well as with any amendments
made to this handbook for as
long as my child is in
attendance at Project Level***

**Signature of
Parent(s)/Guardian(s)**

X _____

Date

X _____

Signature of Student

X _____

Date

X _____