



## Sample of a Winning Educator Initiative Grant Application

### **Cuyahoga Falls High School**

**Grade Levels Encompassed by School:** 9-12

**Team Leader Name:** Ashlynn Schindler, Science Teacher

**Project Title:** Tiger Time News: Inspiring Innovation in Youth and Professionals

**Amount Requested:** \$15,000

### **Brief Project Description**

Video Announcements was established last year to empower students to disseminate information to their peers and learn career and technical broadcasting skills, impacting a culture of change in their school and larger community by allowing students to expand the scope of their reporting. Students will continue to expand their scope by reporting on larger community issues that take place off of the school campus. Through field trips and mentors, students will make connections with local news and media community that can later be utilized in a college and career setting. Professional development will also be implemented at a district level.

### **Anticipated Project Start and End Date:**

The project began July 1, 2017 and will continue as an English elective until further notice. An additional level class will be developed and added to the electives program for the school year 2019-2020, in which students will learn basic film, editing, and broadcasting skills before they are able to join the announcements production class in which students will be solely responsible for the creation of content for school information dissemination in a 21st century learning environment.

**Please provide a description of your proposed project in 500 words or less. Provide the need for the project, what K-12 grades are served, and what data informs and supports the stated need. Include the Learning Standards that are addressed by your proposal.**

Video Announcements and Production is a daily school announcements program that promotes career and technical broadcasting skills. This program impacts school culture through the distribution of information to the school district and the larger community on the YouTube channel.

One need is the need for more English electives based on the Ohio Revised Learning Standards for Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, and Informative Writing Standards. Students who take higher level English courses are in need of a variety of English electives during their 11th and 12th-grade years in order to improve mastery of Revised Learning Standards.

According to MAP testing data for the High School, 28.5% of 9th and 10th-grade students scored below average on Informative writing. Meaning a third of 9th and 10th graders are not able to demonstrate



their ability to write in an informative manner. By introducing an elective in which these standards are directly addressed, students will be able to learn these standards.

The second source of data providing evidence for the need of this program is a survey that was given at the beginning of the 2015-2016 school year and evaluated how students with depression related to the school culture currently in place. Since suicide remains the 2nd most common cause of death for youths age 9-18, school culture is a major concern for any school district, especially considering that a student committed suicide last year. Youth View is a social-emotional survey developed by Summit Education Initiative to contribute something other than grades to conversations about youth development. By reflecting on this data, we can assess how school culture is impacting students' emotional well-being. The data gathered in 2016 shows students scored low in the sense of safety category, with 26% answering that they do not feel safe at school. By providing a place for students to express themselves, and directly address needs and issues within the school building, students have a way to create change in themselves, their peers, and even the staff. They can take part in improving the school culture and foster a sense of safety and inclusion. In addition, they can gain a "College-Going Identity" by being exposed to a previously underserved career field.

Announcements are required viewing at the beginning of the day. The class is available to all students 10-12 and will be viewed by all students attending the high school, spreading the impact of this program to the student body of 1520. The announcements are watched by the elementary and middle schools as well, spreading the service to almost 5000 students. The first year of the program 11 students signed up for the class. So far over 40 students have requested to take the class during the coming school year, quadrupling our numbers from our inaugural year.

This elective class will be based on the common core ELA Literacy standards focusing on the presentation of knowledge and ideas, as well as the informative writing standards. The standards are listed below.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.4-.6

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.2 A-F

**How does the project prepare students for college and career readiness? At what transition point on the cradle-to-career continuum does your project fit? Please limit your answer to 250 words or less.**

The program focuses on developing ELA Skills in informative writing, but also emphasizes students' ability to make strategic use of digital media to enhance understanding, but also to develop practical hands-on marketable skills that can be applied in almost any field or job market. Through this class and program, students will establish a professional portfolio of materials they have produced, edited, or created that they can take with them to present to industry professionals, potential employers, or career programs and colleges in order to establish the extent of their skills and abilities in this realm. In addition, communication skills apply to any field in which students must present information to a group. Students will leave the program after having created a portfolio of projects, work, and broadcasts they created. This portfolio can be taken to employers, colleges, or career programs to demonstrate these valuable skills allowing the students to successfully transition into the college or career stage of their



life, improving their chances of being employed or enrolled in a degree program. The class also holds the students to a higher level of accountability than any other class in the building, given that the students have a daily deadline in which the announcements must be created in order to be shown the following day as occurs in real careers. This project fits into the College and Career Readiness stage of the cradle-to-career continuum and further fosters a "College-Going Identity" for students that previously had not considered post-secondary education.

**Please explain the specific outcomes you expect from the project. How will you measure success? What evaluation tools will be used?**

In short, the expected project outcomes include logically presenting information to a school body, video segmenting and editing mastery, producing formal writing into broadcasts, and developing school awareness and action. The project will be evaluated on the achievement of expected mastery of outcomes using the Revised Learning Standards for Ohio. Formative assessments will focus on the organized presentation of information to the student body by practicing communication skills and editing information using a variety of technology. Formative assessment rubrics based on the standards will be created to evaluate student academic achievement. Students will complete self-assessment rubrics each week in order to address needs for reteaching, and mastery of skills. Teachers will use student self-assessments as data for instruction and differentiation. Formative assignments will promote differentiation based on student choice and interest. Formative assignments will also be scaffolded to teach students skills needed for editing video segments that will document the student's application aptitude for his/her final individual portfolio assignment. Students will also facilitate a survey of the student body in order to self-assess their impact on the outcome of school awareness and action.

The entire student body and staff will be impacted by the broadcast journalism aspect of the project. The project is a course that will be offered to all students grade 10-12, but every student and staff member in the building will interact with the final products displayed every day on the announcements. Any special segments produced by the students involved in the project also have the opportunity to reach the community that subscribes to the YouTube channel. This level of engagement and impact on the community will be used to measure the success of the program as a whole. Announcements are required viewing at the beginning of the day, however, our subscribers and viewership continue to increase far beyond what simply the high school homeroom viewership should be. The class is available to all students 10-12 and will be viewed by all students attending the high school, spreading the impact of this program to the student body of 1520. The announcements are watched by the elementary and middle schools as well, spreading the service to almost 5000 students. The first year of the program 11 students signed up for the class. But so far over 40 students have requested to take the class during the coming school year, quadrupling our numbers from our inaugural year. The reason for this is that students see the impact it is having and they want to be a part of it. They see their peers learning a skill, and having an impact. Our students want more.

The following assessment methods will be used to evaluate student outcomes and achievement of stated objectives.



**Presenting Ideas:** Students will demonstrate proficiency in the appropriate Ohio Revised Learning Standards for English in Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, and Informative Writing Standards.

**Video Segment Editing and Technology Usage:** Students will be able to develop a video segment using an objective and formal tone to be aired on the announcements highlighting a social issue impacting the high school population. The students will develop this independently from concept to the final cut and will be responsible for researching, writing, filming, editing, and disseminating it to the school via the daily video announcements.

**Combining Presentation of Ideas and Using Technology:** Students will establish a professional portfolio of materials they have produced, edited, or created that they can take with them to present to industry professionals, potential employers, or career programs and colleges in order to establish the extent of their skills and abilities in this realm

**Student Awareness and Action:** During the 2015-2016 school year, students completed a school needs assessment survey asking students about their attitude towards their school environment, culture, and personal mental health status. The data collected indicated that, of the students surveyed, 28% agreed with the statement that “I have a hard time making friends and feeling connected to the school community”. With a third of the students surveyed indicating that they do not feel included in the school community, a student-run announcements program would provide a way to make the culture more welcoming to a wider range of students. One outcome expected from having daily video announcements produced by students is that by recognizing social ills affecting the student population of the high school, the students will take steps as a whole to address them, leading to an improvement in school culture. By feeling recognized and validated, it is hoped that the same survey, given annually, will reflect a decrease in students experiencing anxiety (57.75%), depression (46%), and bullying (17%), and an increase in students that are able to work on a team (60%), that feel engaged and motivated (44%), and students that are involved in their community (62%).

**Describe in detail any teacher professional development that will be a part of the project's implementation, including the use of one-on-one coaching.**

During July of 2017, myself, Ashlynn Schindler, and Katelyn Ferrara (the core team and co-teachers of the class) attended a week-long workshop hosted by the Academy of Scholastic Broadcasting in Hartford Connecticut in order to acquire curriculum, as well as acquire the required video production skills to effectively design, create, and implement a broadcast journalism class complete with editing skills. Throughout the weeklong course, we played the part of students completing projects while also developing lesson plans and course outlines for the programs that we led. It was a wonderful opportunity to network with professionals in the industry and also gain helpful skills and insights required to execute a program neither of us had professional training in. We used several of these projects for our students in our class to improve specific skills, such as storytelling, having them create a silent film to communicate a statement, editing pre-filmed footage to create a new story to teach them essential news vocabulary and applications, and finally allowing them to find a story they want to explore and create a full segment which will be shared with the school at large.



As part of our implementation of the project this year, we will be conducting a workshop session during one of our districts professional development days in which we inform teachers of the district technology resources available and teach them basic skills in editing, as well as showing them applications that can be used in their own classes to engage their students while also sharing a valuable skill. I have taught several teachers these skills one on one throughout this year in order to further their professional education for graduate courses, and also teachers that were curious. We have also been assisting other teachers in their applications for this same grant in hopes that their innovative ideas have a chance to enrich our school and students the same way we have been able to with the video announcements class.

In addition to this one on one assistance, we are dedicating 40% of our grant this coming year to bring the same workshop we attended to our district, so that our teachers and teachers from surrounding districts can also take part in this amazing opportunity and professional development that is so well structured and offered a wonderful hands-on opportunity for the teachers to learn how to implement this technology and pedagogy in their own classroom. Up to 27 teachers from our school district and surrounding school districts will be invited to take part in this professional development at no cost and will be able to disseminate the knowledge they gain at their respective buildings and districts, further increasing the impact that has been created through this interdisciplinary approach to broadcast journalism and media education at the secondary level.

**Please describe how technology will be integrated into the project and what instructional best practices will be implemented.**

This project allows students to learn how to use technology not commonly found in classrooms in low socioeconomic status districts, but that is becoming essential in many professional settings. Students have learned camera operation at an advanced level that not only understands the artistry of film and cinema but also the practical application of these skills to high level cameras, editing software (Adobe Premiere Pro), generating their own video graphics from Adobe after effects to communicate information in an engaging and appealing manner, and also utilizing social media in a more advanced way than their current passive level of social media interaction. Students have been using high-end laptops and monitors, while also learning audio skills during voice-overs and recording. The students have also learned special effects techniques, especially in regards to green screen and visual effects generated within the previously mentioned editing program and graphics program. Technology is at the center of this project, but it is the skills, understanding, and judicious use of it that allow the students to create a program that enriches the students and augments their ability to effectively disseminate information in a 21st-century world to their peers and community at large. Often students are criticized for perpetually being engrossed in technology. By empowering students to use these technologies in a productive way, we equip them with valuable skills and a different perspective and appreciation for the media and technology around them.

Student objectives include logically presenting information to a school body, video segmenting and editing mastery, producing formal writing into broadcasts, and developing school awareness and action.



The students will be evaluated on the achievement of expected mastery of outcomes using the Revised Learning Standards for Ohio. Formative assessments will include self-assessments, and job performance evaluations by the teachers, and will assess skills such as presenting logically organized information to the student body by practicing communication skills and editing information using a variety of technology. This data will be used to differentiate instruction and assignments based on student needs and interests. Summative assessments will be in the form of projects or broadcasts created by students for their professional portfolio. This self-directed learning will allow students to engage in the creation process and take ownership of the product and their own learning, creating impactful lessons and skills the students will be able to use in many different settings.

### **How will the project be sustained and/or replicated by others after the funding has ended?**

In order to sustain the project after the grant expires, teacher collaboration during weekly professional development sessions will be used to train a large group of teachers to be able to use the necessary technology. This will allow more teachers to utilize video editing and production for class projects in multiple applications. This will also allow the program to be continued if the original teachers of the core team are unable to teach this particular class in the future. The project will be offered as a class and therefore the activities in the project will continue to be implemented every year the course is offered. The large teacher workshop hosted at the district over the summer, as well as the many grants and programs inspired by our initial video announcements class, will have far-reaching impacts beyond the grant funding period, beyond our building, and beyond our district.

The positive impact resulting from student-chosen topics dealing with social issues will create awareness and actions steps within the school and community and will be ever changing due to the needs of students each year beyond grant expiration. By the special interest segments being available in perpetuity on the school YouTube channel, they can be used within classrooms as resources and in the community as ways to raise awareness of social issues that impact the civic needs of Cuyahoga Falls.

These impacts will also last well beyond the grant's expiration due to the individual portfolio projects becoming examples of the student's skills they can show to employers and colleges.

## What Makes This a Strong Request:

### **Project Need & Purpose: 15 Points Possible**

The project clearly conveys the need for the project, using data to inform and support the need. It also clearly identifies where it falls on the cradle-to-career continuum. The project's timeline reflects a logical sequence of activities and indicates clearly when each major activity will end. ***Try this: can you identify the data-backed need for this project?***

### **Educational Impact: 30 Points Possible**

This project clearly identifies the significant impact on student achievement, is aligned with Ohio's Learning Standards, links directly with Ohio's Learning Standards for social-emotional development, and clearly explains the means that will be used to evaluate project outcomes. ***Try this: can you identify the specific learning standards this project will advance?***



**Research-Based Professional Development: 30 Points Possible**

This project clearly explains the professional development for the plan, the type of research-based program or model will be used, and who will be providing ongoing one-on-one coaching. ***Try this: can you identify the type of ongoing coaching the educators will receive during the implementation of this project?***

**Best Practices: 25 Points Possible**

This application identifies the long-term impact of the project. It also demonstrates the use of research-validated instructional practices, and shows evidence of creativity, problem-solving, and the integration of technology. ***Try this: can you identify how this project will be sustained after funding is exhausted?***