

Horace Mann Elementary School

Grant Proposal

Verizon STEM Grant

Prepared for
Jennifer Young

Prepared by
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Jennifer Young
Regional Manager
Verizon Foundation
Woodbury, NJ

Dear Jennifer Young,

I am writing to express our deep appreciation for the opportunities provided by the Verizon Foundation through the STEM(Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) grant program. On behalf of Horace Mann School, I would like to formally submit our application for consideration for the Verizon Foundation to support our STEM education initiative.

Horace Mann School hopes your foundation will respond favorably to our proposal to help improve education in our community.

Sincerely,

Gizelle Minervini
3rd-grade teacher

SUMMARY

Horace Mann School, like many other schools, is facing crucial setbacks in academic achievements since the pandemic. Students have lost their motivation to learn and are severely behind in their learning. Starting a podcasting program in school can offer numerous benefits to students, educators, and the school community. Podcasting will provide a creative platform for students to develop essential skills in communication, research, writing, and digital media production.

It is proposed that an after-school program centered around podcasting can increase student engagement, communication skills, and technology proficiency. The project involves meeting weekly to plan and record podcasts related to the school environment, purchasing podcasting equipment, and training all participants. The program will be conducted under close supervision of professional educators, with request funds totaling 1,400. Future maintenance of the program will be possible through volunteer fundraising efforts and donor choice.

INTRODUCTION

Horace Mann School is home to over a thousand students. The school ranges from first grade to eighth grade. The school is a Title One school with fifty-eight percent of the students attending on reduced lunch. Only thirty-nine percent of its students are at reading proficiency and thirteen percent are at the proficiency level for math. With statistics like these many will overlook this school and its potential to include STEM programs that will become successful. Although students are low in their academics, students are still achieving and learning every day. These statistics are post-pandemic which will reveal how much of a negative impact virtual learning had on the students.

This after-school program is designed to enhance students' motivation to learn. The podcast will have an audience that will range from six years old to thirteen years old. It will give students a creative outlet to express and demonstrate their knowledge. Podcasting encourages research and critical thinking when investigating topics, gathering information, and presenting their findings in a structured manner. When working with podcasting it often involves teamwork, it promotes collaboration, delegations, and interpersonal skills among students. This program will also help the school communicate with the community by connecting with parents and alumni. This program will help share news and events with parents and alumni. Podcasting provides real-world context for learning which will prepare students for future career opportunities in media, journalism, and communications.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

In today's rapidly evolving educational landscape, there is a growing demand for innovative and engaging learning experiences that implement critical thinking, communication skills, and technological proficiency. Traditional classroom settings often struggle to fully capture students' engagement and enthusiasm for learning leaving them unprepared for the modern world. Students are not being given the opportunities to establish 21st-century skills that will further their careers in digital media careers.

Our community faces challenges related to inadequate resources for creative expression. These challenges obstruct our students' personal and academic growth, limiting their potential to become well-rounded, future-ready individuals prepared for success in the modern world. After the pandemic, students have struggled with expressing themselves and understanding their emotions. It is a reason why SEL has been implemented into our learning. Students are usually told what to do, how to do it, and when to do it. Their own story is constantly being taken away from them as educators we need to create an environment where they can share and be open about their thoughts and feelings. This creates a closer connection with educators and students.

Acknowledging these needs, we propose the establishment of a podcasting program with Horace Mann School in the North Bergen School District. This program will help serve as a dynamic solution to engage students in meaningful learning experiences. It will help empower students to develop crucial skills and address the unique challenges facing our community.

OBJECTIVES

- A. Enhancing students' learning and skill development
 - a. By the end of the first year, students' digital media literacy skills will increase by 30% through podcast creation and production workshops.
 - b. Students research and critical thinking abilities will improve by having them create a podcast that requires in-depth investigation and analysis of complex topics
- B. Promote creative expression and communication
 - a. Encourage students to share their unique voices and perspectives through the creation of original podcast content
 - b. Increase students oral communication and presentation skills as they write, record, and edit podcasts
- C. Engage the school community
 - a. Increase listeners' engagement and participation within the school community by having at least 500 monthly listeners
 - b. Create dialogue and discussions among students, educators, and parents by talking

about diverse topics.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The program is designed to enhance students' digital media literacy, critical thinking, communication, and teamwork skills through hands-on podcast creation.

A. Curriculum

- a. The program will offer a structured curriculum that covers podcast essentials, including script writing, recording techniques, audio editing, and storytelling strategies
- b. Students will be working alongside experienced podcasters

B. Podcast production

- a. Students will have access to recording equipment, editing software, and resources to produce their podcasts.
- b. Students will work in small groups to brainstorm, write, record, and edit their podcast episodes which will help them gain valuable project management and collaboration skills.

C. Community Engagement

- a. The podcast produced will be published on a platform that the school will have access to, enabling students to engage with parents, educators, peers, and the community.
- b. Podcast releases will encourage participation and discussion among listeners.

BUDGET

Equipment	Price
Rode Pod Microphone (2)	\$184
Boom stands for Microphone (2)	\$80
Sony Headphones (2)	\$180
XLR Cables(Connection for microphones) (2)	\$30
Rodecaster Pro	\$379
Pelican Air 1615 Case	\$322
Portable Battery Power	\$209
Editing software (Yearly)	\$16
Staff will be volunteer hours	Total \$1,400

EVALUATION

Students participating in the program will be required to take a pre and post-assessment which measures their development in podcasting, recording, editing, and storytelling. The program will require a portfolio project containing scripts and audio recorded throughout the sessions. Each recorded session will be evaluated by a rubric assessing podcast episodes, audio quality, creativity, and storytelling. As for the audience, we will track the total number of listeners and analyze trends to attract popularity for the program. We will also encourage the students and staff to participate in a survey to determine what needs to be improved and what helped the podcast achieve success.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the podcasting program proposed will be used as a transformational outlet in teaching. This program will encourage students to find their unique voices and engage with their school environment. Students will be better equipped with digital content and hopefully motivated to pursue a career in journalism and technology. By supporting this program you are investing in our students' future and making digital media a place where education can flourish.

Thank you for your time in reviewing this proposal for the STEM grant. We are eager to partner up with Verizon Foundation to bring podcasting to life. We will be able to empower our students to critically think, become creative storytellers, and be proficient communicators.