Grant Proposal

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**Current Educational Environment**

Huntington Elementary School is located in Brunswick, Ohio and serves 356 diverse students attending grades K-5. Huntington Elementary is one of seven elementary schools in the district along with three middle schools and one high school serving around six thousand students in total. Brunswick City Schools recently adopted a one to one chrome book policy for all students who are in third grade and above. Each student has their own personal chrome book that they are responsible for. Grades K-2 have a chrome book cart in their classrooms the class teacher is responsible for. Computers are used on a daily basis for each student attending Brunswick City Schools.

In 2015 the district transferred all software over to Google. Every student has their own personal Gmail account and use Google Apps for Education frequently in the classroom. Google Classroom is the main hub for most classes and is used to develop lessons and post assignments. With all students in the district using the Google platform, it allows for continuity and development of online skills at each grade level.

The district has eight instructional coaches who are also Google certified teachers that are assigned to different building that can be used as a resource for teachers to help with technology integration and appropriate use of Google Apps for Education. The instructional coach team meets every other week and publishes tech tools and newsletters to assist regular classroom teachers with technology integration.

Professional development is offered to all classroom teachers during the school year to help with successful technology integration in the classroom. Many topics are covered and presented with a focus on meeting the technology needs of all learners across the district.

**Limitations**

Brunswick City Schools regularly invest and support technology integration across the district. There currently are no tech leaders per grade level or per building that can be used to help other teachers. The instructional coaches act as a valuable resource but are spread thin trying to meet the needs of the many teachers in their assigned buildings. Building or grade level tech leaders would act as a valuable resource to help positively impact technology integration across all buildings and grade levels.

**Need**

Newsela PRO is a program used to increase students' ability for closed reading, improve reading level, reading fluency and ability to write constructive, cited responses. Newsela PRO allows teachers to individualize learning using high-quality, relevant, balance of fiction and nonfiction material for which meet the Ohio Department of Education standards. Newsela PRO provides immediate results for small group instruction opportunities. Newsela PRO is also a cross curriculum resource that can be used to develop language skills across all subjects.

Newsela PRO would be a fantastic resource to help all students at Huntington Elementary School improve their reading comprehension, fluency and writing skills. It would also help lead to student success and show evidence of growth towards the Ohio State end of year assessments and MAPS testing that takes place throughout the year to regularly collect data on students strengths and weaknesses. This technology resource would also help meet our building goal of improving MAPS scores across all grade levels in language arts.

**Goals of the Proposal**

Funding for this program will be sought from the Martha Holden Jennings Foundation for Educators grant program. Grant funding would help assist teachers in achieving building instructional goals of improving MAPS scores across all grade levels in ELA. As Newsela PRO is an online resource, students in all grade levels can access content at home using their district supplied chrome book and log in information. It can also be used during intervention time in the regular school day where students can select news articles or text sets of their own choice.

Student instructional goals are supported by Newsela Pro. Below are some features that also align with ISTE Standards:

* Differentiated texts and quizzes (Empowered learner)
* Data tracking
* Teacher provided feedback
* Level appropriate writing prompts that can be edited by teacher
* Annotate text for class discussions/comments (Creative Communicator)
* Text sets, articles, biographies, speeches and historical documents (Global Collaborator)
* Program access through Newsela apps, phones, I-pads along with chrome book

Currently, many classroom teachers use the free version of Newsela and have a decent understanding of its uses and functions. Newsela PRO provides students with five different reading lexile levels to select from. This allows students with many different reading levels to access an article catered to their lexile level. Each article contains the same main idea and central focus but the vocabulary is adjusted to meet each learner at their level.

Each article comes with an assigned four-question quiz to measure students’ comprehension of the content. Quiz scores are saved and both teacher and student can access scores to collect data on each student. Teachers can create flexible learning groups or provide grouping based on reading levels in the classroom. Newsela PRO is extremely user friendly and would require minimal training, which can be provided by the building instructional coach. Students are given a code to register for a certain class where they can access teacher assigned material in their binder or they can explore articles of their interest if allowed to by the teacher. The building instructional coach can meet with a representative of each grade level to train them in efficient use of Newsela PRO features. The instructional coach can provide a screen-castify video showing how they would use it from their own computer. The instructional coach is not required to hold quarterly trainings but instead act as a point of contact for each grade level representative as the technology is so user friendly, frequent trainings are not required.

**Technology Proposal**

With the district adopting a 1:1 policy for students’ use of chrome books, it makes sense to pursue technologies that assist in meeting the instructional and technology goals shared above. The technology proposal would include a subscription for Newsela for the 2019-2020 school year.

**Personal Qualifications**

I am half way through my fourth year as a science/social studies teacher at Huntington Elementary where I teach fifth grade. I completed my undergraduate degree in education from The University of Akron in 2013. I have a passion for both subjects and enjoy seeing my students become engaged and motivated to learn. I am currently finishing my first semester as I pursue a Masters Degree in Instructional Technology at The University of Akron.

**Implementation & Timeline**

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| --- | --- |
| April 2019 | Share goals of implementing Newsela PRO across all grade levels at Huntington Elementary at monthly school board meeting |
| May 2019 | Meet with representatives from Newsela for introduction and discuss/finalize building costs |
| June 2019 | Subscription purchased and news shared with teachers, students and parents |
| July 2019 | Initial meeting with principal, instructional coach and grade level representatives |
| August 2019 | Instructional coach presents to grade level representatives proper use of technology |
| August 2019 | Grade level representatives train other grade level members |
| October 2019 | Progress meeting: Principal, instructional coach and grade level representatives |
| January 2020 | Progress meeting: Principal, instructional coach and grade level representatives |
| March 2020 | Progress meeting: Principal, instructional coach and grade level representatives |
| May 2020 | Review meeting: Principal, instructional coach and grade level representatives to discuss possible renewal |

**Budget**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Item | Quantity | Cost |
| Newsela PRO | 356 | $18 per student = $6408 |

Each student will receive a subscription to Newsela PRO to use for one school year.

**Evaluation & Assessment**

All teachers and students will complete quarterly surveys highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of the technology. These surveys will help collect data throughout the year which will help analyze the success of the technology and to highlight any other needs the building may have.

Evaluation of instructional goals met will be through analyzing MAPS testing data, which takes place three times in the school year. Student growth on the Ohio State testing can be analyzed when results return in July of 2020.

**Continuation and Extension**

Newsela PRO will hopefully encourage students to take interest in real world events happening across the globe. The technology covers global issues covering all subjects and is updated with new content daily. It is the hope that students are encouraged to read about a variety of different topics that can encourage critical thinking and lead to the student becoming life long learners and global collaborators. The plan is to continuously add valuable technology resources to the daily classroom experiences.