

Final Funding Project

EDUC 870

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Abstract

The idea behind this funding proposal is to address the declining enrollment rates of home economics program and the lack of independent skills that the younger generation is facing. Many younger Americans need help beyond social media in learning how to budget, meal plan, and shop efficiently, all skills that are traditionally taught in home economics. The presence of these Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS) courses dwindled to 3.5 million students in 2012, a decrease in nearly 40%. This proposal also aims to target the decreasing math and science scores that American students are facing, with a widening performing gap happening right before our very eyes (Schwartz, 2024).

Our vision with this proposal is to get not just FCS classes back and integrated into the American public school system but also set students up for life, through an online web portal, integrate it, and make it as accessible to every student in schools as possible. To do this, we propose a web-based application that includes video recaps of lessons, interactive simulations, quizzes with immediate feedback, and various rewards for students when they achieve mastery of a unit. We predict an improvement in FCS test scores, motivation in students, and preparation for independent life. We would be asking for funding to launch an initial pilot program that would allow for improvements, gaining crucial data, and most importantly, support as many schools as possible.

Funding Source

The funding source in mind for this typing program would be The Chan Zuckerberg Initiative. The reason for choosing this source is because they “support people and organizations working toward [their] missions in Science, Education, and within our communities.” This philanthropic organization has grants dedicated to the advancement of education. In their “About Us” section on their site, under the “education” category, they state that their mission is to “bring learning science into the tools used every day by teachers and students, ensuring that technology reflects the realities of classrooms and strengthens teaching and learning.” I feel this product is exactly the kind of idea that the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative funds. This app is a way to modernize learning, increase literacy rates, and make it accessible to further advance education.

Proposal: LIFELAB

My name is Khatmin Thant, and I am proposing an innovative STEM home economics program for elementary students. The obesity crisis in the United States is continuing to worsen for adolescents across all grade levels. In 2019, around 35% of all adolescents were reported as obese. Looking at purely minorities, this percentage increases to around 50% (NIH, 2019). There has also been significant data that shows that 42% of young Gen Z adults report that they can’t cook, and 61% admitting they couldn’t even make an omelet due to a “takeout crisis” (DailyMail, 2025). There is most definitely a lack of independent skills where rising adults don’t know how to properly budget, meal plan, cook, and be knowledgeable about basic nutrition.

Solution

The proposed solution is to create a home economics web-based program that gamifies lessons for students, combines key lessons that home economics teaches with STEM lessons, and allows for mastery achievement in a comprehensive educational experience. This would be

accessed through school tablets or laptops, with students, teachers, and parents being welcomed by an engaging, interactive interface that makes learning feel like play rather than work. Not only is it accessible, but with the home economics portion, students are able to gain ServSafe certification which prepares students for either professional kitchen work or pure confidence in their skills.

Business Model

This software will be licensed to school districts on a per-student, annual subscription basis at \$15 per student per year. This pricing structure ensures affordability while providing sustainable revenue for continued program development and support.

Go-To-Market Strategy

Phase 1: Pilot Program (Year 1)

Launch with 3-5 partner school districts within a single state (in this case North Carolina), representing diverse demographics (urban, suburban, rural, varying socioeconomic levels). These local school districts include the Chapel Hill-Carrboro City School system, the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School system, the Durham Public School system, and the Wake County Public School system. This allows us to make improvements to the product based on real feedback, collecting case studies and data, establishing the best practices for implementation, and developing strong references for future use.

Phase 2: Regional Expansion (Years 2-3)

After the first phase, we would leverage pilot success to expand into neighboring states, focusing on school districts with similar demographic profiles. We would then build our sales

and customer care teams to support a growing customer base. Through this, we would get in contact with various educational literacy organizations and edtech organizations to expand word on our product.

Phase 3: National Scale (Years 4-6)

The final phase goes into the national scale. We would establish a presence across all 50 states with the goal of becoming the national standard. The expanded team that the company has developed would include implementation specialists, curriculum developers, and data scientists. With this, we would pursue recognition from national educational organizations and be considered for education grant programs.

Outcomes

Upon completion of this program, every student that enrolls will have a thorough understanding of basic FCS principles. They will also be able to create meals and dishes on their own, displaying the proper skills needed during independent, young adult life, as well as gain certification that allows them to work in and possibly run a commercial kitchen. We hope to produce a 100% increase between pre- and post- test scores for students that previously had little to no knowledge on the subject.

Ask

We are seeking \$300,000 in funding to launch the pilot program and build the foundation for national scale. The funds will be distributed as follows:

- MVP Development-\$80,000
- Staff-\$100,000

- Testing Case Studies- \$50,000
- Marketing & Sales- \$70,000

Unlike existing Family and Consumer Science (Home Ec) programs that focus primarily on traditional “home” skills, or STEM programs that ignore modern gamification elements, our integrated approach addresses the need for 21st century skills all while incorporating necessary STEM education, grabbing both student and admin attention.

Conclusion

The declining FCS course enrollment rates and widening skill gap represent not just an educational challenge, but an economic and social crisis that threatens America's competitive position in the global economy. Traditional approaches have failed to reverse these trends, but our integrated program offers an innovative solution that addresses root causes while preparing students for developing soft skills and further academic success.

With your investment of \$300,000, we will launch a pilot program that demonstrates measurable impact, builds a compelling case study portfolio, and establishes the foundation for national expansion. Within five years, we aim to serve over 1 million students annually, generating \$15 million in revenue while fundamentally transforming how America teaches.