

**DESCRIBE THE PROGRAM/PROJECT FOR WHICH YOU ARE REQUESTING FUNDING.**

Our project is called The Falcon Report, a live-stream television studio at Fernbrook Elementary School where students broadcast daily news shows to our school community and beyond. At The Falcon Report, fifth grade students would be news scouts, responsible for investigating, producing, and reporting a daily news program that will be viewed by the entire student body and staff in our school. In addition, since this broadcast will be produced utilizing Internet technology, the newscasts will be accessible to our township residents as well, providing a unique opportunity for other students and citizens throughout our school district to experience the activities and learning opportunities at Fernbrook Elementary School.

The Falcon Report brings a fresh, interesting approach to studying current events and allows our students to engage in the use of technology in exciting, interesting ways, outside of their ordinary experience. The Falcon Report is an active instructional approach that will make learning about current events a fun, entertaining activity that will make students eager to see and hear what is going on in their world. In their classrooms, students will be thrilled to see schoolmates on the computer or SmartBoard screen and will look forward to each day's broadcast and opportunity to talk about it with their peers and teachers.

Ultimately, this project will enable students to not only connect with each other and the events of their world, but also provide a virtual bridge with audiences throughout our state, nation, and perhaps the world. Our student and staff population at Fernbrook Elementary School is diverse and represents many nations and cultures; we are connected with family, friends, and ancestry throughout the world. Through The Falcon Report, such cultural and worldly connections, as well as valuable lessons about the similarities and differences in people, can be brought into our classrooms through Internet connectivity.

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**WHAT ARE THE GOALS OF THIS PROGRAM? WHAT WILL YOU ACHIEVE?**

Several goals will be met through The Falcon Report. Using the standards of the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) as a guide, the goals of The Falcon Report are to use technological resources to accomplish the following: 1) to promote creativity and innovation in the classroom; 2) to improve student competence in the areas of communication and collaboration; 3) to help students improve research skills and develop information fluency 4) to enhance students' critical thinking, problem-solving and decision-making skills; and 5) to afford opportunities for students to engage in digital citizenship (summarized from www.ISTE.org).

The creativity, research techniques, and communication skills of the fifth grade students will be enhanced as they produce the copy of their news broadcasts from start to finish. They will be responsible for researching current events in a timely manner, developing

their stories, and broadcasting them in front of a video camera. Students will have unique, fun, and exciting opportunities to learn presentation skills, poise, and how to work as a team. In addition, the students working in teams will be faced with making decisions on what news is going to be broadcast and what would be cut, as they reach production deadlines. Such real-time issues will be great opportunities for students to learn how to work in groups and learn how to negotiate, build consensus, and solve problems.

In addition, The Falcon Report project will be an excellent way for Fernbrook Elementary School to meet the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards for 21<sup>st</sup>-Century Life and Careers which involves ``using digital media and environments to communicate and work collaboratively, including at a distance, to support individual learning and contribute to the learning of others`` (from the NJ Core Curriculum Standards). The fifth grade students will learn important technological skills and gain critical social skills by taking part in The Falcon Report project. They will also gain valuable knowledge about current events and will enable the rest of the school community to have new opportunities to connect with others by accessing new information and/or making virtual connections with the world around them.

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### **WHO WILL BENEFIT FROM THIS FUNDING?**

Our entire school community will benefit from the funding of this project. While our fifth grade students will initially learn to use the production equipment and technology tools, their presentations and news reports will benefit all of our students and staff, as well as their families and the rest of our community who will have the opportunity to view the news programs on the Internet. In addition, each successive fifth grade class will have opportunities for hands-on experience with news and video production.

Another benefit of this project is that students will be able to appreciate and experience the enormous scope of technology and its impact and reach throughout the world. While we, as a nation, work toward global citizenship, our students have a vested interest in multicultural awareness and seeing themselves as members of an international community. Our students can truly feel connected to their cultures and can learn to recognize and celebrate their similarities and differences with children across the globe.

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### **HOW WILL TECHNOLOGY BE USED TO ACHIEVE YOUR GOALS?**

Technology will be integral to achieving our goals and will be used in every part of the project experience. All students and staff will be able to learn about current events in a new and exciting way, as technology becomes a dynamic part of the daily learning experience at Fernbrook Elementary School.

During the research component of the project, students will use laptops and computer stations to access online tools, websites, and databases to find information about current events and develop their story lines. Students will be guided by teachers to better understand how to best utilize the vast compilation of information available on the Internet safely and efficiently.

The production aspect of the project will provide great opportunities for students to have hands-on experiences using many technological tools such as webcams, digital recorders, creative software for video recording, and video editing technology.

The Falcon Report is a creative and innovative program made possible by technology. It allows students to use technology tools to address local, state, national, and international events and provide new opportunities for the students to engage in critical thinking activities about current events. Since technology can be so far-reaching, The Falcon Report will provide new opportunities for Fernbrook Elementary School students to build relationships with others in different parts of our community, broadening the definition of community to local, national and international levels.

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### **HOW WILL YOU MEASURE RESULTS?**

The effectiveness of the program will be demonstrated by the levels of competency that students throughout the school exhibit related to local, national, and international current events and their understanding of digital citizenship. This can be assessed classroom discussion and various projects that teachers will assign to students related to broadcasts by The Falcon Report. For example, teachers may assign group projects related to a current news story, so that students might gain deeper knowledge concerning the story and discuss the ways in which these stories have an impact on their lives.

Those fifth grade students involved in the production of broadcasts will be monitored through ongoing assessments by their teachers. If The Falcon Report project is successful, the participants will show increased competence and skill using the technological tools for the various aspects of news production. For example, positive results from The Falcon Report project will be evidenced by the students` abilities to master web-based Internet research tools and video production software tools. Also, at the close of the school year, the fifth grade production teams will be required to provide some tutorials and demonstrations to the fourth grade students who will have the opportunity to produce The Falcon report in the next school year. Other measurements of the project`s success may be whether students.

In addition, the students` development of skills in the areas of communication, problem-solving, and group process can be measured by teachers through the use of evaluative tools in the beginning of the project and at the end of the project. Student growth may also be measured by comparing early production recordings to those done later in the school year.

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**HOW WILL YOUR STUDENTS RECEIVE AN EDUCATIONAL BENEFIT FROM THE PROJECT?**

Students will receive many educational benefits from The Falcon Report. Firstly, the students will be gaining knowledge about local, state, national, and international current events. Secondly, the students will enhance their research, writing, and presentation skills. Thirdly, students will gain hands-on experience and knowledge about technology tools, including the Internet, digital cameras, and video editing and production software. Fourthly, the students will improve their oral presentation skills, and learn how to work in front of and behind a camera. Finally, the students will learn critical skills needed in order to work collaboratively on group projects.

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**WHAT ROLES WILL STUDENTS PLAY?**

Fernbrook Elementary School's fifth graders will have very active roles in The Falcon Report project. They will be responsible for the production of the school wide broadcasts of news programs from start to finish. They will be required to research the various news topics and write and edit copy for the video productions. They will need to learn how to operate the technological tools, such as video cameras, editing and production software, and other devices such as microphones, lighting, and green screens. In addition, the rest of the student body will participate in the project by taking part in class discussions and projects and assignments related to some of the current events discussed, as they pertain to the subjects being addressed in their particular classrooms.

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**HOW WILL IT PROMOTE DISTANCE LEARNING?**

When The Falcon Report broadcasts the day's current events throughout Fernbrook Elementary School it will promote distance learning in a very basic way, as the fifth grade students bring news via the Internet to the rest of school community throughout the building. Distance learning can also take place as The Falcon Report reaches beyond the school walls, and the Fernbrook Elementary School students are afforded opportunities to connect with others in our state, nation, and world and a virtual community is created. The essence of the student-produced project also captures many of the concepts outlined by the United States Distance Learning Association (USDLA), including the use of visual presentation to engage learners, encouraging students to take on more responsibility for their learning through learner-centered activities, and promoting interactivity and the development of a supportive social learning environment via broadcasts (summarized from usdla.org).

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**HOW WILL IT CREATE NEW SCHOOL INITIATIVES BASED ON NEW TECHNOLOGY?**

The Falcon Report project has the potential to branch out into other types of student-run video productions at Fernbrook Elementary School. Students may become interested in producing other types of shows, such as staff interviews, art exhibits, or music performances which would showcase the special talents and skills of members of the school community. Other uses of the new technology might be to produce programs to address character education in the school, e.g. a student production on developing good self-esteem or an anti-bullying campaign. Another use of the technology would be to have video recordings of various class field trips developed into shows that can be shared with other classes or with parents at various events such as Parent-Teacher Conferences, school civic events, or fundraisers. The video streams could also be used to broadcast important public service announcements, such as reminding students of healthy habits to keep germs from spreading during cold and flu season.

The realm of possibilities is limitless with the new technology and could be extremely meaningful and exciting for the Fernbrook Elementary School community, as it forges ahead in providing quality education to students of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. In addition, the other types of student productions could be shared throughout the local community and in different parts of the country and world to help build relationships with others.

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**WHAT GRADE LEVELS ARE IN YOUR SCHOOL?**

Fernbrook Elementary School educates students from Kindergarten through Fifth Grade.

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**ARE THERE ANY OTHER COMPANIES FUNDING THIS PROJECT? IF YES, LIST NAMES.**

No, there are no other companies funding this project.

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**PROVIDE A BREAKDOWN OF HOW THESE FUNDS WILL BE UTILIZED.**

The following is an estimated breakdown of costs for The Falcon Report project in rounded figures:

Two (2) MAC Desktop Computers:	\$4,100
Three (3) iPad Computers:	1,515
Video Switcher:	1,005
Two (2) digital camcorders:	885
Installation Fee:	570
Five (5) Microphones:	405
News Desk:	370
Lighting Set-up:	240
Two (2) Tripods:	165
Speaker System:	155
External Hard Drive	145

Two (2) Office Chairs:	110
Green Screen	55
Firewire Card and Cable:	<u>45</u>
TOTAL:	\$9,765

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**WHEN WILL THIS PROJECT TAKE PLACE?**

The Falcon Report project will take place effective immediately. An anticipated start date would be in late November, beginning with an introductory session with the fifth grade students about the project goals and objectives. As soon as necessary equipment is purchased, fifth grade students will be given an overview about the technology involved in the actual news broadcasting and how the various tools and devices would be used. Once the equipment and studio is set for production, students will be able to initiate their schoolwide news broadcasting via The Falcon Report.

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**DESCRIBE HOW YOU WILL SUSTAIN THIS PROGRAM IN THE FUTURE WITHOUT THIS FUNDING?**

The Fernbrook Elementary School Parent Teacher Association (PTA) is supportive of educational initiatives and has shown continued financial commitment to technology advancements at the school. In addition, the Randolph Township School District remains committed to the use of technology to enhance and improve education. To that end, the District supports maintenance of two other newsrooms in the school community that were developed with funding from personal donations, PTA support, and Randolph Township School District funds.

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**IF THIS PROGRAM DID NOT EXIST HOW WOULD THAT IMPACT YOUR STUDENT BODY?**

If The Falcon Report project did not exist, the Fernbrook Elementary School community would lose an amazing opportunity to help students increase their knowledge and interest in current events through a unique use of technology. Many learning opportunities would be lost, including ways for students to improve research skills, writing skills, public speaking, and group process, and problem-solving, if there was not a chance to bring The Falcon Report project to our students. Also, if the project did not exist, students and staff would not have access to and instruction in the use of new technology tools and hands-on experience with webcams, digital recorders, and creative recording and editing software. Finally, an excellent source of positive student role models would be lost if The Falcon Report did not become a part of the Fernbrook Elementary School routine.

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**SUMMARIZE YOUR STRONGEST ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE PAST 3 YEARS USING TECHNOLOGY.**

Over the past three years, Fernbrook Elementary School has, with the support of the PTA, installed SmartBoards in every classroom in the school. This initiative has enhanced teachers` abilities to create an exciting and interactive learning environment for their students. The SmartBoards have also opened up many opportunities for teachers to include various forms of technology and help students develop skills with 21<sup>st</sup> Century tools.

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**WHAT TECHNOLOGY ARE YOU CURRENTLY USING?**

The technology that Fernbrook Elementary School is using includes SmartBoards, a SmartResponse system, a document camera and projector, a computer lab with PCs and Microsoft Office software, and Rosetta Stone language software.

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**WHO IS YOUR CURRENT PROVIDER?**

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**HOW DID YOU HEAR ABOUT THE OPTIMUM LIGHTPATH TECHNOLOGY GRANT?**

We were given the information about the Optimum Lightpath Technology Grant by one of our Randolph Township School District Board Of Education members who found it while researching information on school technology programs on the Internet.