



**WACO ISD EDUCATION FOUNDATION
COVER SHEET – PART II
Application for Grant:
2026-2027 Funding Cycle**

Assigned Grant Proposal #: 79

Project Title: The Social Studies Podcast

Grade Level(s): 5th Grade # of Students DIRECTLY involved: 200

Subject Area(s): Reading and Social Studies

Amount Requested: \$ 2,000.00

Grant Focus Area(s): In order to be considered, Waco Education Foundation Innovation Grant proposals must fall under one or more of the E4 focus areas: early childhood development, enhanced programming for advanced students, extended education for staff, and emphasis on student performance. NOTE: In addition to meeting one of the E4 focus areas above, grant readers are especially interested in creative and innovative grant requests that target fine arts, STEM, literacy, or enrichment.

(check all that apply)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Early Childhood Development | <input type="checkbox"/> Extended Education for Staff |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Enhanced Programming for Advanced Students | <input type="checkbox"/> Emphasis on Student Performance |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fine Arts | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> STEM |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Literacy | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Enrichment |

Grant Proposal #79 Provident Heights Elementary

The Social Studies Podcast

Project Description



The Social Studies Podcast is a student-led project designed to enhance 5th grade social studies learning through podcast production. Students will research, write, record, and publish podcast episodes that explore key topics such as U.S. history, geography, civics, and economics. Through this process, students will deepen their understanding of social studies content while developing valuable communication, technology, and collaboration skills.

Grant funding will support the purchase of podcasting equipment, instructional and research resources, social-emotional learning (SEL) curriculum materials, and teacher professional development to ensure successful implementation. Students will work in collaborative teams to plan and produce original podcast episodes, applying digital audio tools and basic sound engineering techniques.

The project integrates academic content with STEM learning and SEL development. Students will engage in critical thinking as they research historical events, evaluate credible sources, and solve technical challenges related to audio production. Creativity and innovation will be fostered through the development of original scripts and the use of digital media tools to communicate ideas in engaging ways.

Collaboration will be central to the project as students work together to plan episodes, assign roles, record segments, and revise their work based on feedback. Through these experiences, students will build confidence, practice responsible decision-making, and develop teamwork and leadership skills while preparing for the demands of a technology-driven world.

1. Rationale

The **Social Studies Podcast** aligns with the **Creative Classroom Project** focus area supported by the Waco Education Foundation. The project introduces an innovative, technology-based approach to learning that encourages students to move beyond traditional assignments and actively create meaningful content.

This initiative also supports District and Campus Improvement Plans by promoting:

- Increased student engagement in social studies
- Development of communication and digital literacy skills
- Integration of STEM tools into classroom instruction
- Strengthening of collaboration and social-emotional learning

Social studies content often becomes more meaningful when students have opportunities to analyze, discuss, and communicate ideas in authentic ways. Podcasting allows students to explore historical topics while practicing research, writing, and public speaking skills.

By giving students ownership of their learning and providing opportunities to share their voices with a wider audience, the project promotes deeper understanding of social studies concepts while fostering confidence and teamwork.

2. Goals

The **Social Studies Podcast** project aims to accomplish the following goals:

1. Strengthen Social Studies Knowledge

Students will deepen their understanding of U.S. history, geography, civics, and economics through research and discussion.

2. Develop Technology and STEM Skills

Students will learn the basics of digital audio recording, editing, and podcast production.

3. Improve Communication Skills

Students will practice writing scripts, presenting ideas clearly, and engaging an audience through spoken communication.

4. Foster Collaboration and Leadership

Students will work in teams to plan, record, and produce episodes while practicing teamwork and problem-solving.

5. Promote Social-Emotional Growth

Students will build confidence, develop responsible decision-making skills, and learn to respectfully consider diverse perspectives.

Expected outcomes include increased student engagement, improved communication skills, and greater confidence in presenting ideas.

3. Plan of Operation

Program Implementation

Students will work in collaborative teams to research and produce podcast episodes related to social studies topics studied throughout the year. Teachers will guide students through the stages of podcast development:

- 1. Research and Topic Selection**

Students select topics aligned with the curriculum and gather information from reliable sources.

- 2. Script Development**

Students write podcast scripts that organize information clearly and creatively.

- 3. Recording and Production**

Students use podcasting equipment to record episodes and learn basic audio editing techniques.

- 4. Review and Reflection**

Students listen to recordings, provide peer feedback, and revise episodes to improve quality and clarity.

- 5. Publishing and Sharing**

Completed episodes will be shared with classmates, families, and the school community.

Timeline

August–September 2026

- Purchase and set up podcasting equipment
- Teacher training on podcast technology and resources

- Introduce students to podcasting and research techniques

October–December 2026

- Students begin researching social studies topics
- Teams develop scripts and practice recording
- First podcast episodes produced

January–March 2027

- Students continue creating podcast episodes connected to curriculum units
- Students analyze feedback and improve audio production skills

April–May 2027

- Final podcast projects completed
- Student reflections and presentations
- Showcase of student podcast episodes for families and community members

Parent and Community Involvement

Parents and community members will be invited to engage with the project in several ways:

- Listening to student-produced podcast episodes
- Attending a **Student Podcast Showcase Event**
- Providing feedback and encouragement for student work
- Community members may be invited as guest speakers to share local history or civic perspectives

These opportunities will help connect classroom learning with the broader community while celebrating student achievements.

4. Communication & Dissemination

The project will actively recognize and include the Waco Education Foundation through:

- Invitations for Foundation representatives to observe podcast recording sessions
- Photo opportunities and classroom visits during project implementation
- Sharing updates through school newsletters and social media
- Featuring student podcasts through district communication channels such as WISD-TV

Additionally, results and strategies from the project will be shared with other educators in the district through campus meetings or professional development sessions, allowing other teachers to learn how podcasting can enhance classroom instruction.

5. Evaluation

The success of the **Social Studies Podcast** project will be evaluated through several measures:

- **Student-created podcast episodes** demonstrating understanding of social studies content
- **Teacher observation** of student engagement, collaboration, and communication skills
- **Student reflections** on their learning and teamwork experiences
- **Quality of research and scripts** used in podcast production
- **Feedback from listeners**, including peers, teachers, and family members

These evaluation methods will help determine how effectively the project supports academic learning, technology skills, and social-emotional development.

6. Long-Term Implications

The podcasting equipment and resources purchased through this grant will continue to benefit students beyond the 2026–2027 school year. Future classes will be able to expand the project by producing additional episodes on new social studies topics.

Over time, the project may grow to include:

- Cross-curricular podcasts connecting social studies with literacy and science
- Collaboration with other grade levels
- Opportunities for students to explore digital storytelling and media production

The long-term impact will include stronger student communication skills, greater confidence in presenting ideas, and continued integration of technology in the classroom.

7. Key Personnel

Project Lead Teacher

- Oversees project implementation
- Guides students through research, scripting, and podcast production
- Coordinates evaluation and communication efforts

Participating Teachers

- Support research activities and classroom discussions
- Assist students with collaborative work and recording sessions
- Help facilitate reflection and feedback

Campus Administration

- Provide support for implementation and scheduling
- Assist with communication and program visibility

These educators bring classroom experience, content knowledge, and a commitment to innovative teaching practices that support both academic learning and student development.

Waco Education Foundation

Grant Budget Form

Assigned Proposal #	79
Project Title:	The Social Studies Podcast
Number of Students Served by Grant:	200

Qty	Budget Item	Verify Vendor (Y or N)	\$ Requested from the WISD Foundation	Other Secured Source	\$ from Other Source (if applicable)	Total Amount
Consumable Supplies						
4	Movo Podcast Equipment	y	\$ 1,700.00			\$ 1,700.00
	Shipping and Handling	y	\$ 300.00			\$ 300.00
						\$ -
						\$ -
						\$ -
						\$ -
total Consumable Supplies			\$ 2,000.00		\$ -	\$ 2,000.00
Technology						
						\$ -
						\$ -
total Technology			\$ -		\$ -	\$ -
Long-Term Supplies / Equipment (items that will last beyond the grant year)						
						\$ -
						\$ -
						\$ -
						\$ -
						\$ -
						\$ -
total Long-Term Supplies			\$ -		\$ -	\$ -
Contracted Services						
						\$ -
						\$ -
total Contracted Services			\$ -		\$ -	\$ -
Personnel						
						\$ -
						\$ -
total Personnel			\$ -		\$ -	\$ -
Travel / Other						
						\$ -
						\$ -
						\$ -
						\$ -
total Other			\$ -		\$ -	\$ -
Totals			Total Requested from the WISD Foundation	Foundation Cost Per Student	Total from Other Sources	Total Cost of Project
			\$ 2,000.00	10	\$ -	\$ 2,000.00