

## **Grant Impact Report: Enhancing Music Education at Cooper Elementary**

Reflecting on the past school year, I'm thrilled to report on the significant, positive impact made possible by the generous grant your group awarded to Cooper Elementary School. Before receiving this funding, our classroom often struggled with the availability and utility of existing technology. My grant proposal for six iPads aimed to address this challenge, specifically to leverage our existing software more effectively and overcome limitations with our current devices. The iPads have not only resolved these issues but have also opened up exciting, unanticipated opportunities for student engagement and learning throughout the year.

---

### **Overcoming Technical Hurdles and Boosting Learning Momentum**

Our school's current laptops, while useful for some tasks, presented significant hurdles. Their slow startup times and front-facing cameras made them cumbersome for quick activities and QR code scanning, often disrupting the flow of a lesson. With a curriculum that generates QR codes for seamless sharing of activities, this was a major roadblock. Lessons that should have been dynamic and interactive often lost momentum as students waited for devices to boot or log back in.

The introduction of the iPads has revolutionized this. Now, students can leave their laptops aside, minimizing distractions during the initial lesson. When it's time for small group or individual work, the iPads' rear-facing cameras make scanning QR codes a seamless, immediate process. Students, already assigned to teams, can grab a tablet and begin an activity in less than a minute. This efficiency has been transformational across all grade levels; even our 2nd graders can independently scan and start activities without my assistance. For instance, in December, a 2nd-grade class was able to play the Dreidel game on the tablets in small groups, a previously challenging task made effortless.



---

## Expanding Beyond Core Use: Unexpected Benefits

Beyond their primary use for quick activity access, the iPads have offered several other invaluable benefits. I've set up a convenient charging dock in the classroom, making the tablets easily accessible. They've become a reliable backup for students whose personal computers have dead batteries or password issues, allowing them to instantly access their accounts via the Clever app and continue with tests or assignments without interruption. With only one or two students typically needing this, the number of iPads granted has always been sufficient.

A particularly rewarding new application emerged this spring through a project with my older students. Last year, they expressed missing the stories I would sing at the end of music classes. This year, I transformed my choir into SongTale Singers for the spring, teaching them to sing these beloved stories. We then hosted a "SongTale Singers Picnic" on our field, inviting Kindergarten, 1st, and 2nd graders to sit on picnic blankets while the older students sang to them.

The iPads were instrumental in preparing for this successful event. During club times, after I introduced a story, students would scan a QR code on the board with an iPad to practice singing along with a video I had created. This routine allowed them to learn approximately 18 stories. As they progressed, I set up different iPads with various stories, enabling students to rotate through stations and practice them all. I also created a playlist for individual practice and used Microsoft Forms on the tablets for students to submit their favorite and least favorite stories, which helped immensely in assigning books for the event. Compared to paper reflections, using the tablets for end-of-session reflections was significantly easier, allowing me to view real-time results and read song requests without deciphering handwriting.





---

## Diverse Applications Across Grade Levels

The iPads also greatly benefited my 3rd-grade students learning recorders. They formed leveled groups, chose songs, and scanned printed QR codes to access their desired music on the tablets. They then played together, using the tablet as their sheet music and accompaniment.



For my 4th and 5th graders, the iPads enhanced their Rap and Commercial projects, respectively. Both projects require students to use our Quaver software for background music creation. Previously, this meant designating one student to manage the computer and ensuring they brought it on workdays. Now, groups can simply grab a tablet, and work can continue even if a team member is absent, by scanning a Clever badge. This significantly streamlined project organization. After creating their tracks, students used the Smartboard to play their compositions during performances. Here are a few screenshots of the program we used to make the background music on the tablets.



Finally, the iPads were crucial for our Ukulele club's beginner performance. Instead of a traditional concert, we held a "Fair-style" event. Students, still new to chords, could walk around with their families, choose a song from a tablet (each loaded with a different piece and a backup QR code), and click "play" to start a play-along video. This provided essential support, allowing them to share songs they were comfortable with and build confidence.



---

### **Continued Impact and Gratitude**

To further enhance their utility as computer replacements, I've recently purchased headphone adapters for the tablets. They are also scheduled for a district upgrade this summer to maintain their peak operating efficiency. I confidently anticipate that these tablets will continue to be well-used and cherished for many years to come.

My students and I extend our sincerest gratitude for this wonderful gift and the profound enhancement it has brought to the Music room at Cooper Elementary School.

---

Kathleen Messersmith \* Music Teacher K-5 \* Cooper Elementary School Spokane, WA