

**Mainstay Academy Grant Proposal**

Elizabeth G. King

University of West Georgia

MEDT 8462

## **Introduction and Statement of Need**

Mainstay Academy is part of the Georgia Network for Educational and Therapeutic Support (GNETS) and serves students with severe emotional/behavioral disorders who cannot be safely accommodated within the general education classroom. While academics are taught, the emphasis is on behavior modification and emotional support so that students can be transitioned out of the program. As of April 21, 2021, there are 10 elementary, 12 middle school, and 11 high school students served in-person, along with nine students with intellectual disabilities. There are also eight students (three elementary, two middle school, and three high school) who are served virtually.

For the Needs Assessment I relied on technology surveys and one interview. Based on the responses, one area of need clearly jumped out: increasing access to online educational websites and tool. Most staff rated themselves as intermediate or proficient users of educational websites, with moderate to heavy usage, and almost all respondents marked that they liked or extremely liked it. Inability to access online tools was one of the top limitations, and two out of the nine respondents listed it as the most important limitation. Thus, in educational websites, we had a technology tool that people felt comfortable using, used a lot, and had a highly favorable opinion of it, but just couldn't get the access they needed. Access was limited by: sites being blocked on the Chromebooks, sites being blocked district-wide, or lack of paid subscription to sites.

Because Mainstay is part of a state-wide program that serves students from multiple counties, funding for items such as site licenses can be tricky. For example, Lamar county schools might have a district-wide license for X website for all Lamar county students. Even though teachers at Mainstay teach Lamar students, we are not given permission to use the licenses because we

could, in theory, use X website to teach Butts, Upson, Spalding, and/or Pike students along with our Lamar students. As a result, our student population is not exposed to resources very common to their peers served in the general education setting. The proposed solution to this issue is to seek outside money via a grant to pay for website licenses. Staff were surveyed for suggestions of websites they would like to be able to access. Since Mainstay is such a small school, it can be more cost effective to sign up for individual teacher and student licenses instead of school-wide.

### **Goals and Objectives**

For each of these goals, please see the **Methods** section for more detail on how they will be achieved.

#### ***Student Goal***

By the end of the 2021-2022 school year, all in-person and virtual students not on the Georgia Alternative Assessment track will regularly (at least once to twice weekly) use an educational website and/or online tool to enhance their academic learning as measured by inclusion in lesson plans and teacher tracking.

-Self-reported data will be collected throughout the school year to see if students are meeting this goal.

#### ***Teacher Goal***

By the end of the 2021-2022 school year all teachers will use a minimum of five different educational websites and/or online tools for academic reasons as measured by inclusion in lesson plans, teacher self-report, Google Form, and end of year survey.

-Teachers will be informed about the project, given ad-hoc help on using/integrating sites as requested and self-reported data will be collected through the school year.

### ***Institution Goal***

By October 2022, using budget or grant monies, the school will purchase subscriptions for the top three most requested and most cost effective educational websites.

-After a cost-benefit analysis, a grant will be written to cover the cost of the top three sites.

### **Role as leader**

I am currently a full-time teacher, not an educational technologist, and the school that I teach at has no planning or lunch periods for teachers, and we must stay with our students all day, which means I am incredibly limited in my time. This project is ideal in that several key actions (surveying teachers for suggested sites by email, contacting vendors, writing grants, completing cost benefit analyses, etc.) can be completed after school hours. Since I will be the person completing most of the work, I can ensure that I meet my own deadlines. The two other members of my monitoring and evaluating technology committee – my director and another teacher interested technology – are both invested in the project and should not require much managing. If I had unlimited time and energy, I would very much prefer to be an instructional leader because I am concerned with the nuts and bolts of curriculum and instruction, but since I do not have that much time I would be limited to be more of a transformational leader and generally champion better technology integration.

### **Methods**

The first step to ensure the collection of quality data is to come up with a working definition/ clarification of what constitutes “educational websites and/or internet tools used for academics.” I do not have baseline data yet on student use, but based on casual observation, I most frequently see students using technology for not academic reasons, such as playing games,

watching movies, listening to music, going to non-academic sites, etc. Some sites, such as Youtube.com can be used for academic and non-academic purposes depending on the intentions of the teachers. A student may get on three different game websites, but that would not count for the purposes of this project. I would further use the restrictions that in order to count, students should work within the site or with the tool to complete an academic activity with the ability to track progress, which would also eliminate just Googling for information, quickly reading a webpage, or teachers using a site like EnchantedLearning.com to print out worksheets. While not a direct, identified goal, the hope would be that encouraging these sorts of sites/tools will encourage teachers to move past pure substitution level of SAMR.

Almost all of the data collected for the student and teacher goals will be based on self-reports, with option submission of lesson plans that document usage. As noted in the previous section, I am not an educational technologist, I do not have access to backend IT reports that could directly track internet histories to see which sites are being used, nor do I have the authority to “make” teachers turn lesson plans into me so I can see if sites/tools are being worked in. One tangible piece of data will be the teacher produced list of suggested websites and descriptions they will submit via Google Form.

By the end of the 2021-2022 school year, all in-person and virtual students not on the Georgia Alternative Assessment track will regularly (at least once to twice weekly) use an educational website and/or online tool to enhance their academic learning as measured by inclusion in lesson plans and teacher tracking.

Steps to achieve goal STUDENT GOAL	Data collected	Timeline
Baseline data will be gathered to determine that a) student regularly have	Self-report from teacher/student (if possible)	July-August 2021

access to Chromebooks, and b) how frequently they are accessing educational sites		
During the school year, teachers will log when students use an educational site or online tool	Self-report from teacher/student (if possible) Lesson plans (if possible)	August 2021 – April 2022
At the end of the year, use data to determine if goal was met		May 2022

By the end of the 2021-2022 school year all teachers will use a minimum of five different educational websites and/or online tools for academic reasons as measured by inclusion in lesson plans, teacher self-report, Google Form, and end of year survey.

Steps to achieve goal TEACHER GOAL	Data collected	Timeline
Use staff meeting to discuss the purpose of the project and share the definition of educational sites/tools	Staff meeting sign-in	July-August 2021
Over the course of the year, ad hoc assistance and training will be offered to teachers as requested if they need help using sites		August 2021 – April 2022
Over the course of the year, teachers will be encouraged to track their usage of educational sites/tools	Self-report from teacher Lesson plans (if possible)	August 2021 – April 2022
When finding a good site, teachers will be encouraged to fill out a Google form with the web address and description of activities on the site that their class completed to create a shared Google	Collaborative info on spreadsheet	August 2021 – April 2022

spreadsheet		
At the end of the year, use data collected to determine if goal was met		May 2022

By October 2021, using budget or grant monies, the school will purchase subscriptions for three educational websites.

Steps to achieve goal INSTITUTION GOAL	Data collected	Timeline
Survey teachers for site requests	Survey results (Google form)	March – April 2021
Contact sites for quotes	List of quotes	April 2021
Complete a cost-benefit analysis – who will use the site(s) and how frequently; is it more efficient to purchase a site that many people will use occasionally or one that only a few will use frequently, etc.	List of sites ranked from most cost-effective to least	April 2021
Apply for grants to cover the costs of site subscriptions/licenses and purchase them	Grant applications Completed purchase order forms	May-October 2021
In October of 2021, use a checklist of require steps to determine if goal was met	Checklist	October 2021
For the future – use student use data and teacher use data to determine if subscriptions/licenses should be renewed.		

### **Evaluation Plan**

A small technology committee including myself, my director (who will act as an external evaluator), and a fellow teacher will be responsible for overseeing the process. The committee's small number of participants is reflective of Mainstay's limited staff and (lack of) access to

supplemental staff such as media specialists and educational technologists. These members will be responsible for assessing the data gathered during the year (see the **Methods** section for the list of data to be collected) to see if goals were met (see **Goals and Objectives** section).

	Short term outcomes	Mid term outcomes	Long term outcomes
Student	All students will have access to Chromebooks on a regular basis		All in-person and virtual students not on the Georgia Alternative Assessment track will regularly (at least once to twice weekly) use an educational website and/or online tool to enhance their academic learning.
Teacher	All teachers will attend a staff meeting about the project and data to be collected	Teachers will use a Google form to submit site/tool suggestions to be included on a shared document	All teachers will use a minimum of five different educational websites and/or online tools for academic reasons.
Institution	A cost-benefit analysis will be performed to find the three websites	Grant money will successfully be aquired	The school will purchase subscriptions for three educational websites.

### Budget

Site	Cost	Total cost
Flocabulary.com	\$96/year per teacher, \$2/year student access	Two teachers @ \$96 = \$192 29 students @ \$2 = \$58
MobyMax.com	\$99/year per teacher	Three teachers @ \$99 = \$297
ABCmouse.com	\$29.95 per student for 6 months	13 students @ \$29.95 = \$389.35

**Total: 936.35**



After staff survey, discussions, and analysis, these three sites were determined to be the most cost effective in terms of price-per-student usage and teacher request. Since ABCmouse.com is the most expensive of the sites and will only be utilized by the elementary school, the decision was to purchase only six months' worth of access to begin with. The Flocabulary.com will be used by both middle and high school students (29 students total) and two teacher licenses will be purchased, although they will be a generic middle school teacher and generic high school teacher log in so that all teachers who teach these grade bands will have access. A MobyMax.com teacher account allows for unlimited students, so the purchase of three teacher licenses would mean one for elementary, one for middle school, and one for high school.

### **2-minute elevator pitch link**

<https://youtu.be/9NIGNyZaoks>

### **Grant agency guidelines**

The grant I am applying for is the Griffin-Spalding Partners in Education (PIE) grant. These grants are for a maximum of \$1,000, but an individual can apply for multiple grants. I have applied for and received PIE grants in the past. The actual rubric for PIE grants is located in the **Appendix**.

*Describe the request.*

Mainstay teachers are tasked with teaching students in multiple grades performing at multiple levels simultaneously. Resources that promote streamlined differentiated instruction are essential for reaching each student of her or his level, providing timely feedback, and keeping students engaged in academics. Subscriptions to Flocabulary (6-12), ABCMouse (K-5), and MobyMax (K-8) will provide these opportunities, delivered in a format students enjoy. Individual teachers

have trialed all of these resources and found them exceptional at increasing student retention of information and mastery of a variety of subjects, and this grant would allow even more students to have access to these important resources.

*To which standard(s) of the GPS and /or Common Core does your project address?*

Since this project will encompass multiple subjects and multiple grades, many standards will be addressed. For example, the grammar sections on Flocabulary would address ELAGSE6L1, ELAGSE7L1, ELAGSE8L1, ELAGSE9-10L1, and ELAGSE11-12L1. The differentiated physical science instruction on state change via MobyMax would address S2P1c, S5P1b, and S8P1b.

*Which School Improvement Plan objective does the project address?*

GSCS Strategic Plan: I.C.9.c. Increase opportunities for personalized learning through a Blended Learning, virtual, and school based.

1. An action plan will be developed to increase the number of technological devices and how they are to be used in the classroom.
2. Professional learning will be provided to teachers, instructional coaches and administrators on how to utilize technology/SAMR within the Rigorous Curriculum Design units.

*What do you expect your students to know or be able to do following the project?*

One incredible benefit of using these websites is their ability to reach so many different ages and levels of students in multiple subjects, so there is no one, specific learning outcome that would

apply to every student affected. Teachers will be able to develop expectations for students on an individualized level

*How will you evaluate your students' learning?*

Each of these websites has the ability to track students' individual academic efforts, with MobMax in particular offering differentiation and remediation. For several years, students have used the iReady program to administer diagnostics in reading and math and track increases or decreases. Using this, teachers will be able to assess whether or not the use of these additional websites are able to increase overall gains compared to previous years.

*How will this project increase your ability to provide more rigorous instruction and challenge your students?*

Ideally, all students should receive individualized instruction, and special education students benefit from this the most. Many Mainstay students are significantly behind their peers academically, which causes frustration and exacerbation of negative behaviors. No student wants it to be obvious that they are behind. By using generic sites to deliver specific instruction to students, meeting them exactly where they are, could potentially decrease the academic-frustration behavior and allow for more academic learning.

*How will this request alter your teaching practices or pedagogy?*

Student-led learning is a hallmark of 21<sup>st</sup> century learners, and these websites help foster that. Using these interactive sites to deliver individualized instruction helps to move teachers from substitution to augmentation and beyond. Furthermore, if these sites reduce academic-frustration

behaviors, that will literally allow for more instruction time and potentially foster even more teacher innovation if they are not constantly attending to negative behavior.

*What is your specific request (Budget items)?*

Site	Cost	Total cost
Flocabulary.com	\$96/year per teacher, \$2/year student access	Two teachers @ \$96 = \$192 29 students @ \$2 = \$58
MobyMax.com	\$99/year per teacher	Three teachers @ \$99 = \$297
ABCmouse.com	\$29.95 per student for 6 months	13 students @ \$29.95 = \$389.35

Total cost: **\$ 936.35**

*Do you have any other source of supplemental funds for this project (principal, PTO/PTA/PTSO, Partners in Education, fundraisers, etc.)?*

Not currently

## Appendix

Griffin Spalding Partners in Education Classroom Grants

Application Rubric

Note: Word counts are upper limits only.

Maximum funding request: \$1,000

Use 12 point font and stay within the word limits as shown on the application. ***Do not identify your name or your school name in the body of the proposal***

1. **Describe the request.** 150 words. 15 points

The description should provide a clear, succinct outline of the project and its participants and it should communicate a strong potential for having a positive impact on student performance. The description should tell the reader exactly what you are going to do and why. Points will also be given here for applications that follow all of the rules of the grant application and those that are error-free. A timetable should be included. Innovation and creativity should be highlighted.

2. **Which standard(s) of the GPS and /or Common Core does your project address?** 75 words. 15 points.

For each standard that is addressed by the project a clear explanation of how the project meets that standard should be provided.

3. **Which School Improvement Plan objective does the project address?** 100 words. 10 points.

Specific correlation(s) to school level and system goals should be included.

4. **What do you expect your students to know or be able to do following the project?** 100 words. 10 points.

Specific learning outcomes should be clearly noted. The project should affect an adequate number of students in a meaningful way.

5. **How will you evaluate your students' learning?** 100 words. 10 points.

A clear explanation of student goals including realistic, measureable, expected outcomes should be given. Projects will be graded on whether they are age-appropriate and support the classroom curriculum.

6. **How will this project increase your ability to provide more rigorous instruction and challenge your students?** 100 words. 10points.

Precise connections between the project and an increase in the rigor of instruction should be detailed. The application shows thoughtful planning of innovative activities that increase the depth of instruction.

7. **How will this request alter your teaching practices or pedagogy?** 100 words. 20 points.

Projects should change not only students but how teachers teach. Clear examples should be given that show how the project will inject new teaching methods into the classroom.

8. **What is your specific request (Budget items)?** 100 words. 5 points.

A clear itemized budget is provided that shows listed items that have a direct correlation to project implementation. The budget seems reasonable for the intended implementation of the project (related to the number of students directly affected by the project).

9. **Do you have any other source of supplemental funds for this project (principal, PTO/PTA/PTSO, Partners in Education, fundraisers, etc.)?** 50 words. 5 points.

If the grant does not cover all of the cost of the project, are other funds available? If the grant does cover all of the costs, are there plans for future activities that require supplemental funding? Even with no need for supplemental funding, give examples of involvement by Partners.