

# Freehold Township Education Foundation

## FTEF Grants: Building Blocks for Innovation Application

Project Title: *iCollaborate*

Lead Teacher or Teachers: Roseanne Kehr, Charlene Warren,  
Related Arts/Related Services Teachers

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School: Marshall W. Errickson School

Target Category: Technology Integration and Academic Support

Date of Event or Activity: 2011-2012 School Year

Project Description: The *iCollaborate* project is a multi-staged program designed to incorporate iPad technology into the curriculum of special needs elementary school students. This program harnesses the iPad's user-friendly touch screen technology to help students meet their learning goals, especially aiding students with physical and learning disabilities. The iPad is used as a tool to facilitate collaborative interactions between educators and special needs students, and enable special needs students to socially interrelate with their peers. Our successful pilot program illustrated the power of personalizing instruction via downloading age and ability-level appropriate learning applications. Teachers received iPods through a school incentive program and then researched applications addressing students' needs based on their Individual Education Plan (IEP). The program appears to be a success, meeting students' needs at their unique levels, and providing an innovative and cooperative way for students to learn.

*iCollaborate* has four potential stages. The first stage provides iPads to the special education team to use within the resource room. Teachers and students will *collaboratively* use the iPads and individualized learning applications. The use of headphone splitters allows multiple students to share one iPad. The second stage of *iCollaborate* expands the program to the Related Arts (e.g., art, music, health, Spanish, Physical Education, Library). Classified students can work collaboratively with their typically developing peers, using the iPad to learn Related Arts curriculum. The third and fourth stages of *iCollaborate* increases the number of

iPads available, first in the Related Services programs (e.g., occupational therapists, physical therapists) and then in classrooms.

Statement II: Benefits to Students

The child-friendly learning software applications for the iPad seem endless. As noted in the 2010 white paper on “Using Apple Technology to Support Learning for Students with Sensory and Learning Disabilities”, experts recognize their potential to help students with disabilities including dyscalculia, dyslexia, dysgraphia, autism, ADHD, deafness, and blindness. Our program is at the forefront of using these cutting-edge technology tools to help students remediate speech and language skills, provide fluency instruction and help emergent readers.

The beauty of the *iCollaborate* program is in how many students the academic enrichment program can serve, and how much fun these students can have while learning. Our school has a relatively high percentage of students with IEPs (over 16%, over 80 students). However, *iCollaborate* is designed to not only touch the lives of our special education students, but also to provide learning and meaningful instruction for all students (over 500 students). Special needs students can collaboratively use the iPads with peers, thus reducing existing barriers. The lightweight and portable nature of the iPad is especially advantageous to students with differing strength and motor control abilities. It is small enough to be toted throughout the school, yet the large iPad screen, adjustable font, and text-to-speech feature are ideal for students with visual impairments and fine motor skill deficits.

Grade(s) Participating: K-5

Total # Students Involved: 550+/-

|                                  |   |
|----------------------------------|---|
| iPads (9)                        | $\$599 \times 9 = \$5391$   |
| iPad protective cases (9)        | $\$ 39 \times 9 = \$ 351$   |
| Headphone splitters (4)          | $\$ 20 \times 9 = \$ 180$   |
| Airport express base station (3) | $\$99 \times 3 = \$297$   |
| Headphones (550)                 | $\$1 \times 550 = \$550$  |
| Learning software applications   | The remaining funds awarded would be used towards the purchase of applications. \$1,000 |
| Total                            | \$7,769.00  |

As stated previously, we currently have been using teachers’ personal iPads and have started a ‘library’ of free and inexpensive learning applications (\$5 to \$10). The following budget is based on the information provided to us in a price estimate

from Apple. Please note that this estimate was provided prior to the release of the iPad 2.

Goals/Objective of Project: To incorporate compact/portable technology for use as a tool of collaboration between special needs students and their typical peers.

Measureable Outcomes: Benchmark assessments, state testing and curricula evaluations will be employed to determine effectiveness of *iCollaborate*. A rubric evaluating the effectiveness of each application will be utilized.