

# Lights, Camera, Action!

## News Program Fosters Technology Ambassadors

*Amy M. Borders*

Libraries function as the central hub of the school, the place with the ability to inspire creativity, risk taking, acquisition of new ideas and skills, and camaraderie among students and throughout the school. Today, libraries are the centralized hub of all aspects of media, which now encompasses technology, an aspect that continues to grow in influence by the year.

Since becoming the media coordinator for C.F. Pope Elementary School, a rural elementary school located in the county seat of Pender County, North Carolina, I quickly learned that approximately 90 percent of our 425 students experience economic hardship and were not being challenged to attain many skills that are necessary for them to be academically competitive against peers their age, even within our own county.

This challenged me to create better opportunities for my students, where they could be challenged to build their skills in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM). While many STEM materials and lessons have been implemented, I have honed in on green screen technology as this technology was already readily available within the library when I began. This technology was utilized as a way to provide students with the ability to become leaders as they produce a daily live news broadcast called The Panther Report. The students' five- to seven-minute production broadcasts daily on CFP-TV, our in-house live-streaming network within the school.

A group of eight students work to develop their daily production, where they take turns with various jobs such as anchor, weather anchor, teleprompter manager, camera, and sound, which provides students with an opportunity to explore digital production, journalism, photography, technology, and student leadership all while reinforcing writing, typing, listening, and speaking skills. Students utilize green screen technology to deliver the live broadcast that is streamed to all desktop computers throughout the school, allowing all students and stakeholders to be kept up-to-date with the school's current events, announcements, and special recognitions.

This broadcast is created by the students, including the writing and proofreading of the daily script, which strengthens their skills and supports the core curriculum. This technology-based production also teaches students about leadership by staying current on school events, interviewing others throughout the school, and presenting in front of a camera with more than five-hundred students and staff members watching them in real time.

The broadcast consists of a community weather segment, as well as health and nutrition information, including daily menus, important announcements, staff and student recognitions and attendance recognitions. Students also record segments around the school prior to broadcast.

In addition to the writing, recording, and presentation of the broadcast, students also learn technology skills running the lights, camera, teleprompter, sound board, and broadcasting software. They also learn how to edit pictures and videos, operate within copyright and fair-use guidelines, and even troubleshoot technical difficulties.

All of these skills turn them into technology ambassadors for the school, so they are able to train and teach other students.

Through the creation of the student news program, many students who previously did not have a voice within the school—students who may have fallen into the shadows—have risen to the forefront as leaders, ambassadors, and integral parts of our school community.

In giving them a voice, this program has ignited the students to push themselves to grow and develop. In the context of this program, the students have focused on becoming the best at their job, without realizing how their work and determination strengthens their reading and writing skills.

**Amy M. Borders** is the Media Coordinator at C. F. Pope Elementary School in Eastern North Carolina where she has been a classroom teacher or librarian for the last eleven years.