

ABSTRACT

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Buffalo Creek School (BCS) is applying for a combined pre-planning/planning grant (Year 0) with implementation taking place Years 1 and 2. It will operate as a small elementary school within Rockbridge County Schools, a rural division in western Virginia. The project arises from community desire to support the academic achievement of rural youth and it advances higher level thinking skills and academic excellence by integrating rigorous standards of learning with purposeful experiences in the students' own communities. With a collaborative but differentiated approach to instruction, BCS is designed to support the success of a wide range of K – 5 learners. It offers a compelling model for rural school divisions struggling between the competing demands of shrinking budgets and high-stakes testing on one hand and the needs of high-risk students and their rural communities on the other. A unique confluence of variables including an available ADA facility, an interested local school division and a highly skilled board ensure project success pending federal start-up investment. BCS will assist CSP in increasing understanding of the charter school model (especially in Virginia, where only three charters operate today), and expand the number of charter schools available to students (especially those in under-represented rural areas). Furthermore, it will provide of rich source data for CSP as it evaluates the effects of charter schools in a variety of settings and populations.

