

Young Scholars of McKeesport Charter School Implementation Grant

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Young Scholars of McKeesport Charter School (YSMCS) opened its doors to kindergarten through fourth grade students in the 2015/2016 school year. YSMCS, a multilingual and multicultural elementary school in the greater Pittsburgh area, is committed to providing a proactive environment for language acquisition that fosters a dynamic global learning environment for the intellectual and social development of its students. This model creates an ideal setting for reducing racial and cultural isolation and improving student academic outcomes. Success in achieving diversity has been documented with 3% of the school enrollment comprised of ELL students who are beginning the journey to English language proficiency and 90% of the students qualifying for free or reduced lunch. The school's innovative language concentration program requires students to become conversant in two world languages in addition to English Language Arts and bridges differences by requiring *all* students to be engaged in new language acquisition.

YSMCS has achieved the diversity sought to deliver its research-based model effectively. The leadership and staff of the school are highly experienced in working in the charter school environment and the school's governing and advisory board includes educational experts and community members with the strengths needed to govern and support a large public non-profit organization. The school is fully enrolled for the school year and has a substantial waiting list. To build upon this initial success in enrollment and diversity, YSMCS seeks an implementation grant to refine its academic program and to support professional development with staff, specifically around expanding curriculum to new grade levels and integrating curriculum across contents and through project-based learning. The school also seeks to improve faculty use of data-driven instruction to improve student outcomes, especially with disadvantaged and ELL students.