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Cherry River Elementary

Nicholas County

Innovation Zone Planning Grant Application
Submitted: December 23, 2009



Information of Applicant:

Entity Applying for Innovation Zone Designation

A school

One or more schools acting as a consortia

A group of schools seeking designation across the same subdivision or department of the schools

A school seeking designation of a subdivision or department

A higher education institution

Name of Entity Applying: Cherry River Elementary

County: Nicholas

Superintendent: Beverly Kingery

Number of Professional Personnel: 21

Number of Service Personnel: 13

Staff Commitment

Information regarding notification of staff vote (80% assurance) and certification of vote is **attached**.

Evidence of Support

Supporting documents from a parent, student, county board of education president, Local School Improvement Council, and school business partner are **attached**.

Constraints to Implementation

There is no request for waiver to state law with this innovation zone grant proposal. There will be one waiver request to WVDE policy. Nicholas County Schools request a waiver to Policy 2510. The specific section to be waived is 5.5. This section specifically deals with middle level education. Cherry River Elementary is a Prek-5 school. With the current stipulated fifth grade daily content and time requirements, this becomes problematic in an elementary school attempting to wisely schedule, teach, and master content objectives with limited personnel. There generally exists more personnel at a middle school setting to fulfill the grade 5-8 program of study as stipulated in Policy 2510. The school needs greater flexibility to establish a schedule that would validate adequate mastery of content objectives in regard to student achievement. For example, all students at Cherry River Elementary participate in Walk to Intervention for reading and math. With the flexibility to schedule additional time, the students who need Walk to Intervention most desperately would receive additional time. In requiring that certain content areas be taught daily, the additional mastery time is not available. Policy 2510 is stifling students who need additional mastery time for literacy and numeracy.

The waiver of time and planning funds requested in this proposal will define learning by instructional need and not adherence to time constraints.

Needs Assessment/Project Design

Assessment Data - Cherry River Elementary School has failed to meet NCLB standards to achieve Adequate Yearly Progress for three consecutive years in both reading and math.

- 62% of the school's total 3-5 population scored proficient in Reading; 60% scored proficient in Math.
- Low SES students fared worse. 53% scored proficient in reading; 56% scored proficient in math.

Analysis of WESTEST data over the past five years shows no clear trends. Scores have been up and down in both Reading and Math as seen in the following charts. There are some positive indicators however. In looking at the same group of students' progress over several years, Math scores show an increase in almost every case. The most recent Reading scores for third grade are very encouraging; these students have been in a Reading First program since kindergarten.

Although the school does not have sufficient students receiving special education services to meet minimum cell size for AYP, there are a significant number of special needs students. Of the 42 students identified, 32 of them are in grades 3, 4, or 5. Special education students (MI and LD) make up 31% of the population in grades 3-5. A close examination of this subgroup's performance indicates that there is an increasing percent of special education students who are reaching mastery or better each year in both Reading and Math.

	WESTEST Reading Percent at Mastery or Better					WESTEST Math Percent at Mastery or Better			
	3 rd	4 th	5 th	ALL		3 rd	4 th	5 th	ALL
2004	59.09	69.04	85	69.69	2004	38.63	59.52	77.5	57.57
2005	72.41	55.1	71.42	71.33	2005	68.96	59.18	69.04	67.76
2006	56.66	85.71	56.52	66.41	2006	53.33	67.85	63.04	61.83
2007	61.54	57.69	78.26	64.77	2007	61.54	57.69	82.61	65.9
2008	69.23	63.89	51.85	61.79	2008	57.69	61.11	59.26	59.55
2009	41.03	39.13	51.52	44.21	2009	41.03	56.52	63.64	52.63

In addition to the school's improvement status, additional areas are revealed as areas of concern.

Student Attendance—In spite of an Average Daily Attendance of 97%, the actual "register" attendance is approximately 90%. While the school meets the attendance requirement for AYP, teachers recognize that whether an absence is excused or not, a negative impact on achievement is almost inevitable when there is a pattern of frequent absences. Data gathered from classroom teachers indicates that 20% of students have frequent absences affecting their achievement.

School Culture—There is significant difference in the degree of collaboration among Primary teachers and Intermediate teachers. A survey of the school's teachers indicates that there has been improved communication and collaboration between the classroom and support teachers, but many teachers report that things could be much better if they had a regular time to plan together during the school day. Primary teachers have benefited from stringent Reading First

requirements for faculty collaboration. In addition one of the primary teachers is certified in the implementation of CAN (Classroom Assessment Network). Intermediate staff members have not begun to work collaboratively nor have they been able to structure the school day in such a way as to effectively collaborate.

Based on academic, attendance, and cultural needs, the following two goals will guide the innovation at Cherry River.

Goal One:

- Restructure the school day to eliminate time as barriers to student achievement

Goal Two:

- Build effective Professional Learning Communities to support teachers with effective classroom instruction

Three objectives will provide a framework for achieving the established goals.

Objective One:

- Enhance Professional Learning Communities for all teachers to build professional knowledge that addresses student achievement, school climate, and school culture.

Objective Two:

- Structure the school day to provide capacity for Professional Learning Communities that work to unify and align a positive school culture leading to global learning for students and staff.

Objective Three:

- Utilize and strengthen components such as CAN (Classroom Assessment Network) to promote Professional Learning Communities to build Global 21st Century Learning in a school wide initiative and in a broader school community.

Successful school wide Professional Learning Communities will require that the school day be restructured in order to provide total staff participation. This innovation is necessary to address intermediate classrooms where students and teachers have to observe daily time requirements as stipulated by Policy 2510, section 5.5. The flexibility of a restructured day will not lessen content standards, but will instead allow relevant cross-curricular strengthening of those standards. School wide "Walk to Intervention" built into the school's master daily schedule will afford all students to receive either support or enrichment. One of the five scheduled "Walk to Intervention" days per week will be conducted utilizing support personnel and community support as instructors for students while teachers are meeting in PLC. Meaningful global studies lessons will be provided for students during this time. All professional staff will utilize this scheduled time in Professional Learning Communities to either analyze achievement/benchmark data, research professional literature, identify teaching resources, and/or plan for effective teaching.

In addition, Cherry River Elementary School staff will participate in a broader professional learning community that will initially involve collaboration with two West Virginia elementary schools undertaking a similar innovation, Beverly Elementary and Kellogg Elementary. Marshall University's June Harless Center will provide consultative support in

refining this project's design and inter-school collaboration and professional development/PLC opportunities. The ultimate vision will be realized when grade level teachers from all three elementary schools are able to meet via technology as a grade level team and experience differentiated professional development relevant to their grade level needs.

This project design will become embedded components of every students' and teachers' day at Cherry River Elementary School. The impact of this innovation will create a school culture that models consistent "back porch" meetings that allow the school's professionals to look at all aspects of student lives at the least on a weekly basis.

The proposed innovation affects approximately 230 students and 34 staff members (21 professional, 13 service) at Cherry River Elementary.

Scientifically Based Research

Necessity is stated to be the mother of innovation. In the case of Cherry River Elementary, one of the lowest performing schools in West Virginia, the statement can be rewritten that necessity mandates innovation. After several years of identification as a low-performing school, reality hit last spring with the staff, that "getting better" was no longer an option but a necessity. The school was once the "academic shining star" of Nicholas County. Many of the same staff have remained through the years and have a renewed sense of returning to the time period when they were proud to state they worked at Cherry River Elementary. In the spring of 2009, the school began to explore with the Superintendent of Nicholas County Schools and other leaders, both internally and externally, what innovation meant and entailed. One of the first priorities was to review and study the research on school innovation and change. Upon review of the research, the first difficult realization was that innovation was not tweaking a broken system but a revamping of broken ideas, philosophies, and cultures. From March 26, 2009 through November 12, 2009, the following research guided the growth the staff has experienced in recognizing the real meaning of innovation.

The words innovation and school reform conjure varying definitions with different people. Some believe innovation to be simply tweaking an old system to make it work more efficiently; whereas, others view it as a complete change or renovation to a failing system. The Center for Policy Studies (2008) indicates that innovation occurs when need and opportunity coincide within a system. Cherry River has the need and the opportunity exists with Innovation Zone Grant. *The Turnaround Challenge* (2009, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation) emphasizes that innovation is a fundamental rethinking of the system, not slight incremental change. Schools and school systems cannot take a model that has been negligent in producing student results and be naïve in believing that small changes in that model will result in greater student achievement gains. School innovation is not about system structures and the adults therein but what makes school an exciting, educational learning environment and opportunity for students.

In *The Turnaround Challenge* and *Turning Around Chronically Low-Performing Schools* (National Center for Education Evaluation 2009) several common themes emerge relevant to innovation.

- Schools and school systems must view innovation as a much larger process than merely securing funding.
- Innovation is not redoing old ideas but changing the culture of the school – the way we do things around here.
- Restructuring works best if it is a fluid plan of action that begins with a few manageable, workable initiatives. As a result, it may not be a total school innovation initially but may begin in certain grade levels and content spreading at a reasonable rate to the entire school.
- Honesty must prevail in all decisions accepting no excuses to impeding progress.
- It establishes practical and manageable, not generic and illusive, goals.
- Focus must be on specific learning targets such as curriculum practices, assessment practices, instructional practices, grading practices, homework practices, intervention programs, and team tasks.
- Essential for successful innovation are strong leadership, consistent and unwavering focus on student achievement, visible early improvements during the process, committed staff, and continual celebration of success.

This innovation zone planning proposal concentrates on two specific areas – Professional Learning Communities and restructuring of time within the school day.

To support these themes, Doug Reeves (2008) reflects on the importance of focusing on student achievement in underperforming schools. His research suggests frustrated schools spend too much time honing their data tools and too little time using them. He suggests that innovative schools pose a few data questions for a short period of time that can be evaluated with particular lessons or units of studies. Reeves states that once this process is well implemented in the short term (planning phase), the school would move the process to identifying two or three concrete examples of data analysis and increased student achievement on a yearly basis (implementation phase). This is exactly what the planning phase of this grant proposal seeks to accomplish in providing Cherry River teachers time to explore a model for sharing PLC growth within the school and collaboration across schools. The United States Department of Education (2009) Race to the Top initiative further reports that true innovation must be practical and easy to replicate.

Smith and Morgan in *Bringing Innovations to Education* (2009) state that true innovation challenges the long held and supported status quo of what works in schools. Three phases to true school innovation are identified.

1. “Lightbulb” – idea generation, results anticipated
2. “Getting it Right” – testing and refinement, small scale results achieved
3. “Making an Impact” – replicating at scale, large scale results achieved

Lezotte began to study school reform in the early 1980s with his first full research report published in 1985. His simple practices remain true today. However, the fallacy that many school systems experience is that they attempt to pick and choose one of the seven correlates of school improvement principles in believing it alone will reform a troubled and/or failing school.

From his initial work to the most recent work of his son, these seven correlates – instructional leadership, clear and focused mission, safe and orderly environment, climate of high expectations, frequent monitoring of student progress, positive home-school relations, opportunity to learn and student time on task - have not wavered. With the Title I School Improvement process, Cherry River Elementary has studied the seven correlates. This planning grant will provide opportunity to begin concentration on one particular correlate - studying and recognizing opportunities for students and teachers to learn and grow together given appropriate time. Those schools across America that conscientiously have applied each of the principles and continue to do so are the models and examples that remain prevalent as effective schools in 2009-2010.

In *Creating the Capacity for Change* (2004), Kolderie reiterated Lezotte's findings by stating that we must stop continuing to try what does not work and explore what can work even if it calls our traditions into question. Lezotte and Kolderie agree that schools that do not recognize the need for change from within will experience it coming from without. When change comes from without, it is more difficult and takes longer to implement within the school, thus delaying desperately needed improved student achievement.

This collective research points to an essential factor for school improvement and sustained school growth – time. In 1994 the *Prisoners of Time* report was released. Summarized, basic principles and strategies were identified in this report that must be established, prevalent, and sustained within a school to affect real student achievement growth. Sadly, after nearly twenty years of knowing what educators need to do to increase student achievement, educators continue to wrestle with the factor of time. This planning grant begins to address the issue of time in meaningful ways.

Things that are necessary tend to happen and happen quicker than the status quo of education. Reflecting on a previous statement, innovation occurs when opportunity and need coincide. Schools and school systems that recognize the need for change must have the capacity to change. This capacity comes from a collaboration of state education offices, local school boards, and schools recognizing true innovation and its necessity.

With federal and state initiatives in alignment, West Virginia is now capable of assisting schools like Cherry River Elementary that seek real school innovation, not a tweaking of an old system. Reflecting on the model presented by Smith and Morgan, Cherry River Elementary recognized the “lightbulb” in beginning innovation discussions in March 2009 and conducting regular sessions thereafter. Cherry River Elementary has moved to the “getting it right” phase in exploring shifts in scheduling, student data analysis, and global learning this school year. This process has not been without denial, struggles, and ultimately acceptance as to what must and needs to occur for growth within the school. Someone once stated that *courage is the power to let go of the familiar*. That is exactly what Cherry River has embraced this school year.

The school is excited to have the possibility to explore full scale innovation at the school and with other schools in West Virginia through a consortia effort with Marshall University June Harless Center for Rural Education and support from the West Virginia Department of Education.

Potential for Success

The designation of Cherry River Elementary as an Innovation Zone School will broaden the base for the school's improvement efforts. Cherry River's improvement status with regard to failure to meet NCLB standards has led to a realization that instruction at the school needs to change. Many discussions have taken place and plans have been developed, but this Innovation Zone proposal can transform the words into actions.

The staff of the school has been working since early spring to establish a partnership with Marshall University's June Harless Center and Kellogg Elementary School in Wayne County. The seeds of possibility were planted by Superintendent Beverly Kingery based on her knowledge of the work done at Kellogg Elementary in collaboration with the Marshall University June Harless Center. The discussions last spring between the schools, the county staff, and the June Harless Center led to a field trip to Kellogg Elementary by a team of teachers and administrators representing Nicholas County Schools and Cherry River Elementary. The result was a sense of excitement about the potential of actively pursuing a partnership.

Mrs. Kingery brings much experience and success to the county through her work in transforming classroom instruction. From the beginning, she volunteered to become the liaison between the school and the county office and has met many times with the school staff. Beginning last March, Mrs. Kingery has led a series of meetings at the school to define innovation and where Cherry River falls on the spectrum of understanding change and innovation. These discussions led to determining what was deterring innovation at the school. The opportunity to learn and grow through a partnership with Marshall University provides additional focus and a direction for the school's improvement efforts. The incorporation of technology and global studies into the daily instructional program fit in well with the plans developed at Cherry River as part of their Title I School Improvement grant proposals. The success of the model at Kellogg has developed over several years and has not been without challenges as their staff worked through the change process. The ability to be able to benefit from their experiences is a bonus for Cherry River Elementary.

The June Harless Center has been working to expand what they have done at Kellogg to other schools in West Virginia. They currently have a professional development partnership with Beverly Elementary in Randolph County. This Innovation Zone proposal would enable the three elementary schools to work together to improve teaching and learning under the umbrella of the June Harless Center. The Professional Learning Communities at each school will be linked together through technology, allowing ongoing collaborative work that is focused on particular grade levels, content areas and/or priorities determined by the participants. The possibilities for differentiated professional development are greatly increased through this partnership. No longer will there be one or two fifth grade teachers at one school working in isolation on how to use the data from an Acuity benchmark assessment to fine-tune instruction. Ideas for increasing student engagement and strengthening the connection between goals, instruction, and assessment can easily be shared with people at all three locations. The connection with higher education faculty and graduate assistants from Marshall University guarantees an ongoing influx of research-based innovative practices.

Since the first meeting at Cherry River to discuss the Innovation Zone last March, at least ten meetings have been devoted to developing this proposal. With everyone from parents and community members, to teachers, service personnel, administrators and coordinators on the school and county level involved in the discussions, the proposal has been gradually refined. There is widespread agreement that the Professional Learning Communities can be the vehicle for continuing the journey from dreams to reality.

Cherry River has a master schedule that incorporates weekly Professional Learning Community meetings within the school day. One of the teachers participated in the Classroom Assessment Network (CAN) training last year and has been instrumental in initiating the weekly PLCs. The School Improvement Coordinator and the Intervention Coordinator for the school have worked closely with the faculty at Cherry River to focus on using data from Reading and Math assessments to plan interventions that target specific deficits. Students are involved in a 45-minute Walk to Intervention four days a week, with the PLC meetings taking place during the same time slot on the fifth day. Another teacher at the school is involved in the CAN training this year and is using that experience to steer the intermediate grade PLC thinking. With this structure already in place, expanding the boundaries of the Professional Learning Communities to include partners at three other elementary schools can strengthen the work being done within the walls of the school. This planning grant will afford time and funds to make that possible.

Sustainability

Problematic with implementation has been specific concentration and mastery of literacy/numeracy that tends to diminish students and teachers connecting all avenues of 21st century learning. It is a fine balance to teach necessary basic skills and 21st century goals, but also sustain academic growth. Cherry River has implemented 21st Century skills to revitalize the curriculum and content by involving students and staff in community service projects, global studies, technology, professional learning communities (PLC), and assessment. These processes have been implemented and integrated in the 2009-2010 general curriculum, during early out days, and during teacher PLC weekly meetings.

Cherry River has set goals for each community service project and thus far exceeded them. From September-December 09, students raised money for UNICEF, cancer research, and supported the local community food pantry. Even though most students come from disadvantaged homes, they give back to those in need. Over \$500.00 was sent to UNICEF through the Trick or Treat campaign. 1200 pounds (\$600.00) of aluminum cans were collected for cancer and over 500 cans of food were contributed to the local food pantry. Future projects include coat/hat/gloves drives, nursing home baskets, Relay for Life, and Pennies for Pets.

In October 09, Cherry River staff took a school bus trip to visit partner school, Kellogg Elementary in Wayne County. One aspect of the highly successful Kellogg curriculum Cherry River felt would benefit students was global studies. Cherry River initiated a plan for students to view their world through project based grade level continent studies. Each grade level would adopt a continent for study and because of the spiraling effect complete their studies of all continents by the end of 5th grade. While just beginning the process, plans are being made to

involve the entire school and community in a study connected to the 2010 Winter Olympics in February. Classes and groups of students will research countries and make exhibits and demonstrations for an Open House.

All classrooms have access to the stationary lab where students complete Tech Steps, Writing Road Map, Acuity, Odyssey, Accelerated Reader, and Core Program Unit Assessments. There is however a discrepancy between primary and intermediate students relating to technology. Equipment is more available in primary grades due to previous grants and programs. Cherry River's goal is to fully equip every classroom with laptops, Elmos, projectors, and interactive white boards. Plans are in discussion to physically rebuild and remodel the computer lab to accommodate more students and to provide meaningful instruction during lab time. Soon the school will have access to two mobile computer labs. Professional development has occurred and will continue to integrate technology into the classroom. The staff is mentored by a full time Technology Integration Specialist (TIS). The TIS teaches teachers to integrate technology within their lessons and to help engage students in learning. Plans are also being made to place television monitors throughout the school to acknowledge student successes, inform the public of events, and build a positive school climate. Eventually monitor information would be prepared by a committee comprised of parents and students.

Two of our staff members have or are receiving training through the Classroom Assessment Network. Two school missions have resulted from this training: implementation of Professional Learning Communities and student ownership of assessment.

- Planning/Collaboration - Beginning with the fall of 2009 every classroom teacher has a daily collaborative planning period of 45 minutes with their grade level peer. The schedule was developed to support and implement professional learning communities every Wednesday for 45 minutes. Working as a primary team and intermediate team, the work consists of analyzing student data to inform instruction and to implement differentiated instruction in both reading and math. Data is also used to determine groups for Walk to Intervention. During Walk to Intervention student strengths and weaknesses are addressed by using every available staff member, including classroom teachers, special education teachers, Title I teachers, and instructional aides. A sister to PLC is the GLC (Global Learning Communities) for students. At least seven times a year students will participate in GLC's. During GLC's students select and attend two different cross-curricular activities provided by various faculty and staff members. Students work with their peers to complete activities and projects. Some topics include pod-casts, water coloring, photography, board games, "Girl Power," Lego's, etc. A GLC helps students make a connection to what teachers are talking about when they mention PLC – working collaboratively together to accomplish a goal.
- Student Data Folders - A priority has been placed on making students more accountable for their learning. Every classroom is expected to have a data folder of I Can statements for each student. Students are responsible for updating the folders and maintaining a profile of their progress on a regular basis with little teacher assistance. In most classrooms, students are also responsible for checking attendance, building graphs of DIBELS progress, reading rate and homework completion. The folders are used for student/teacher progress evaluation and student led parent conferences.

These above components are aligned with county goals. County goals include implementation of data folders and the establishment of professional learning communities (PLC's). Cherry River has realized these components are crucial to student achievement and school improvement. The staff has worked toward making these elements "standard procedure."

Cherry River is located in a rural, low SES community. In the past, it has been viewed as the anchor holding the community together and offering opportunities for parent involvement and student engagement. Because of the school's struggle to meet adequate yearly progress (AYP), some of these community building activities were replaced with more attention given to basic classroom instruction making parents feel less useful. With innovation, the staff will work toward both research based instruction as well as exploring ways to bring parents to school and make them partners. Several Title I activities have encouraged parents to become more involved. Opportunities for parents to attend literacy and math stations in the classroom, student led conferences, parent workshops, library and tutoring volunteers are just some of the events being held throughout the year to involve the community and form parent partnerships. A parent resource center has been formed and is easily assessable at the front entrance of the school for parents. An active PTO is functioning at the school. This year Cherry River Elementary initiated appreciation days for grandparents, parents, and retirees of the school. A fall work day involved parents and students working together to beautify the school grounds. Another day is planned for the spring. The fall work day was a huge success. In the future, the school will work to make the community both planners and implementers. Parents will become Global Learning Community Leaders sharing their expertise with students. Training parents to become involved with Walk to Intervention is in the planning phase whereas parents can serve as tutors to provide enrichment to accelerate, challenge, or broaden curriculum choices for students.

Innovation for Cherry River will be developed through a partnership with Marshall University June Harless Center. Further innovation will occur with an additional partnership with Beverly Elementary in Randolph County. The county leadership team of superintendent, school improvement coordinator, and Title I director will be fully involved in the transition and implementation to innovation. These individuals will ensure the county and school strategic goals are aligned. They greatly assisted Cherry River in solidifying a workable school strategic plan.

These initial collective efforts of community projects, school technology, professional learning communities, student global learning communities, student data folders, school and community parent project involvement, and partnerships with central office leadership and external sources prove that Cherry River is committed to improvement, innovation, and sustaining the opportunities that being an innovation zone school can bring.

Plan of Accountability and Evaluation

The Innovation Zone Planning Project for Cherry River Elementary School has three main goals. These goals and the means for measuring attainment of those objectives are given below.

Objective 1. Enhance Professional Learning Communities for all teachers to build professional knowledge that addresses student achievement, school climate, and school culture.

Evidence –

- a. Pre and post survey of teachers (**see attachment**)
- b. Data gathered from interviews by members of the Title I School Improvement and/or Statewide System of Support Team regarding school culture (scheduled to begin in early 2010)
- c. WESTEST 2 results for Spring 2009 and Spring 2010 with particular focus on weaknesses identified by the principal and faculty during the Fall of 2009. (WESTEST 2 results will not be available until after the planning period of this grant. This review will take place before school opens in the Fall of 2010.)

Objective 2. Structure the school day to provide capacity for Professional Learning Communities that work to unify and align a positive school culture leading to global learning for students and staff.

Evidence –

- a. Log of weekly meetings of Professional Learning Communities will document topics discussed, action steps, and results.
- b. Log of weekly activities conducted for students during the periods when teachers are meeting in their Professional Learning Communities will be maintained by the principal.
- c. Log of Global Learning activities for students on early-dismissal days will be maintained by the Faculty Senate chairperson. Attendance records for those days will also be used to measure students' level of participation and compared to attendance from early dismissal days in 2008-2009.

Objective 3. Utilize and strengthen components such as CAN (Classroom Assessment Network) to promote Professional Learning Communities to build Global 21st Century Learning in a schoolwide initiative and in a broader school community.

- a. Weekly meetings of Professional Learning Communities will be facilitated by faculty members who have received Classroom Assessment Network training. Sarah Weber will be the lead facilitator of the PLC for intermediate grades and Tony Nichols will be the lead facilitator of the PLC for primary grades. When the lead facilitator determines the group is ready, leadership of the weekly meetings will be rotated among team members.
- b. Team members will rotate responsibilities as recorder, timekeeper, and task master.

- c. Personnel beyond the school level who are involved in ongoing improvement efforts at Cherry River (June Harless Center, Kellogg Elementary, Beverly Elementary) will be invited and encouraged to participate in the weekly PLCs.

Evidence - A log of weekly PLC meetings will be maintained in a notebook. The log will include dates, attendance, roles, agendas, notes, and action steps. The agenda and roles for the next meeting will be decided by the team at the close of each meeting. Agendas will be shared through email and/or hard copies. These weekly meetings are typically held on Wednesdays and are 45 minutes.

Scalability

Cherry River Elementary established an innovation leadership team in March 2009 when legislation was pending for innovation zone. Even though the legislation did not pass in the regular session, the leadership team continued to meet as the principles outlined in the proposed legislation were solid principles to explore to move a school forward. After the passage of the innovation zone legislation in May 2009, Cherry River was in a position to move forward with the ensuing grant opportunity. The leadership team has kept minutes and attendance since March 2009. The leadership team consists of the following individuals.

- Superintendent – Beverly Kingery
- Board of Education Member – Barbara Taylor
- Title I Director – Linda Keeney
- School Improvement Coordinator – Susan Barrett
- Principal – Tim Bennett
- School Staff Members – Tony Nichols, Kacinda Russell, Linda Rader
- Middle School Liaison – Paula Bennett
- Consultant – Nancy Cook
- Parents/Community Members – Bob Johnson, Melinda Hillman, Tammy Bess, Kelly Adkins

The following chronology verifies meeting dates and discussions.

- | | |
|--------------------|--|
| March 26, 2009 | Leadership team orientation to innovation zone concept, idea generation |
| April 29, 2009 | Superintendent PLC team meetings to discuss individual questions, ideas |
| April 30, 2009 | Leadership team review of research findings – turning around failing schools |
| June 4, 2009 | Leadership team visit to Kellogg Elementary School – MU model school |
| August 4, 2009 | Recap of Kellogg Elementary visit with leadership team and entire staff, restructuring CRE – how, when, who |
| September 24, 2009 | Entire staff visit to Kellogg Elementary with select leadership team members |
| September 30, 2009 | Leadership and staff meeting – self and school analysis of strengths and weaknesses to proceed with innovation zone planning |

October 14, 2009	WVDE Innovation Zone meeting – leadership team attended
November 12, 2009	Leadership and staff meeting – recap of successes, needs, innovation
December 11, 2009	WVDE Innovation Zone meeting – Superintendent attended
December 14, 2009	Innovation zone leadership team work session

Susan Barrett has been the secretary. Mrs. Barrett keeps minutes of each meeting, action steps, and persons responsible for implementation. At the meetings, the leadership team evaluated and adjusted innovation zone plans. The same will be the process once innovation zone planning funds are secured. Mrs. Barrett will continue to serve as the facilitator in planning, analyzing, and evaluating the innovation zone success by holding regular meetings with the leadership team and where applicable school staff.

The Superintendent, Beverly Kingery, has attended every leadership team meeting. She has expertise in planning and curriculum development. She coordinates with Mrs. Barrett and the principal so all parties are available to attend all meetings. She continues and will continue to be an integral part of the innovation zone process. She serves as the primary liaison between Marshall University June Harless Center and Cherry River Elementary. Mrs. Kingery reports regularly to the Board of Education information from Cherry River innovation zone meetings.

The groundwork was laid in March 2009 for this innovation zone to be successful. The continued leadership team meetings since that time accentuate the probability that the innovation zone would be successful. This has been evident by leadership team and staff working through initial excuses and denials of why change was not necessary or why it would not work to a state of, “We can be the best school in Nicholas County and a model for others.” The process will continue monthly meetings where the leadership team reviews progress and makes necessary adjustments to ensure program success.

Nicholas County Schools (Cherry River Elementary), Randolph County Schools (Beverly Elementary), and Marshall University June Harless Center in cooperation with Kellogg Elementary are partnering to jointly participate in PLC. The MU June Harless Center has provided names of presenters and topics for potential professional development (**see attachment**) The three schools via technology will share quarterly a PLC session relevant to professional development common to both schools. These commonalities of need will be determined by an onsite visit by school personnel at the respective schools. Currently in both schools, grade level staff is small and makes it difficult to hold grade level PLC in a meaningful manner pertinent to grade level needs. This will afford all schools greater flexibility in sharing grade level content knowledge and differentiate professional development for teachers. This process begins to “build the professional back porch” across the state.

Concord University has written a letter of intent to participate in the scalability phase of the innovation zone school. The projected participation would be as a liaison with the June Harless Center to identify a school in Mercer, Raleigh, or McDowell County to participate in the professional development via technology (**see attachment**).

Once the innovation zone is fully implemented and deemed a success, the leadership team will present to Nicholas County principals and faculty senate chairpersons the process for becoming an innovation zone school. Nicholas County will develop a county internal application process whereas schools can apply to Nicholas County Schools to become an innovation zone school. Accepted schools would be provided a \$500- \$1,000 stipend for implementation. A county innovation zone team would be established to review grants and serve as liaisons for awarded innovation zone schools.

Further, the Superintendent has had inquiries from other counties in RESA Four to visit Cherry River Elementary once the school has fully implemented the innovation zone school process. The Cherry River Leadership Team will present to the RESA Four board of directors the innovation zone school concept and designate a liaison from the Cherry River Elementary innovation leadership team for any county interested in following the process.

Nicholas County Board of Education in the past and present has been gracious in allowing professionals to present and represent the county at regional, state, and national meetings. They will do so when Cherry River Elementary is requested to present their innovation zone program to other schools, agencies, and organizations and further will seek opportunities to present their successes.

Budget Justification

The budget incorporates three specific line items for innovation zone planning. The three line items are funds to visit Beverly Elementary in Randolph County, a one day job embedded PLC planning retreat at Cherry River Elementary, and a planning meeting with Marshall University June Harless Center. As stated in the research, Cherry River is moving from the “lightbulb” to the “getting it right” phase of Smith and Morgan’s work. This innovation zone grant will serve as a catalyst to solidify the bridge between the two phases.

GRANT OBJECTIVE	LINE ITEM	BUDGET REQUEST
Professional learning community	<i>One day PLC planning retreat for Cherry River Staff:</i> 22 staff members @ \$125.00 per day substitute teacher pay = \$2,850.00	\$2,625.00
Student achievement (increase grade level content knowledge and differentiated PD for teachers)	<i>Field trip to Beverly Elementary School to learn commonalities and differences of grade level professional needs</i> 1) 10 Cherry River staff members (one per grade level, principal, one resource teacher, two leadership team) @ \$300.00 – lodging, mileage, meals	\$3,000.00
PLC and student achievement	<i>MU June Harless Center visits to Cherry River Elementary to consult in defining and planning effective PLC and professional development between the three entities (Kellogg Elementary, Beverly Elementary, Cherry River Elementary)</i>	\$2,000.00

TOTAL \$7,625.00

Attachments:

Record of Staff Commitment

LEA Report of Support or Concerns

Support documents:

Student, parent, school business partner, LSIC

Professional development email – MU June Harless Center

Concord University participation letter of intent

Pre and post staff survey

THE BOARD OF EDUCATION
NICHOLAS COUNTY

BOARD MEMBERS

Dr. Lloyd K. Adkins - President
Jim Fitzwater - Vice President
Bob M. O'Dell
Barbara Taylor
Phillip Berry

400 OLD MAIN DRIVE, SUMMERSVILLE, WEST VIRGINIA 26651
TELEPHONE: 304-872-3611 • FAX: 304-872-4626
<http://boe.nich.k12.wv.us>

SUPERINTENDENT

Beverly Kingery

December 23, 2009

Donna Peduto
West Virginia Department of Education
Office of Organizational Effectiveness and Leadership
Division of Educator Quality and System Support
Building 6 – Room 617
1900 Kanawha Blvd, East
Charleston, WV 25305-0330

Dear Mrs. Peduto:

The staff vote was taken on Friday, December 18, 2009. Due to severe inclement weather and therefore the inability to certify the vote December 23, 2009 (the last day before Christmas recess), the certified staff vote will not be available until school resumes on January 4, 2009. The certified vote will be forwarded to your office at that time.

If you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact my office.

Sincerely,



Beverly Kingery
Superintendent

Beverly Kingery

From: twbennet@access.k12.wv.us
Sent: Tuesday, December 22, 2009 1:36 PM
To: Beverly Kingery
Subject: Re: Innovation Vote

Bev,

I got in the school. The unofficial vote was; 23 votes yes, one vote no, and three staff did not vote. Of the three that did not vote, two were absent all week. I will get the required stack holder to valadate the results when we get back to school.

----- Original Message -----

From: Beverly Kingery <bkingery@access.k12.wv.us>
Date: Monday, December 21, 2009 11:59 am
Subject: Re: Innovation Vote
To: "twbennet@access.k12.wv.us" <twbennet@access.k12.wv.us>

> BOE meeting postponed to Tuesday. If you can't get to school
> on Tuesday, call me at the office after 10 am on Tuesday we'll discuss
>
> plan B.
> Bev
>
> Sent from my iPhone
>
> On Dec 21, 2009, at 10:48 AM, twbennet@access.k12.wv.us wrote:
>
> > Bev,
> >
> > What will we do about the vote tally. I had two teacher out during
> >
> > the vote and one did not cast a vote. Do they need to vote? I
> went > by the school this morning the parking lot was not plowed, so
> I did
>
> > not get in the building. Even if I had, with school closed, there
> >
> > was'nt anyone to count ballots. Do you need the count for the BOE
> >
> > meeting this evening?
>

County Board or Boards
Report on Innovation Application/Plan

Use this form to report the county board or boards and superintendent's support or concerns, or both, about the innovation to the principal and faculty senate. A copy must be forwarded to the Innovation Zone Committee with the application and the plan.

School: Cherry River Elementary

Department (If Applicable):

Date of School/Department/Subdivision Receipt of Application:

1. Application/plan must be accompanied by Staff Commitment Certification (Phase 1 and 2)
2. Support evidence from students, parents, local school improvement council and school business partners for the application (Phase 1)

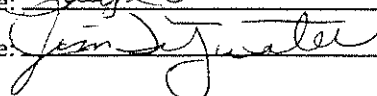
Date of Regularly Scheduled County Board of Education Meeting: December 22, 2009

County Board of Education Elected Officers:

President: (Name) Dr. Lloyd Adkins

Signature: 

Vice-President: (Name) Mr. Jim Fitzwater

Signature: 

Members:

Name: Mr. Phil Berry

Signature: 

Name: Ms. Barbara Taylor

Signature: 

Name: Mr. Bob O'Dell

Signature: 

Report:

Mrs. Kingery, Superintendent, provided a copy of the grant to all board members. She also provided an oral review of the grant.

Concerns:

None

Report of the local education agency must be forwarded to school/department/subdivision for submission to West Virginia Board of Education with their application/plan).

(This report certification is not required of institutions of higher education in their application or plan).

THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

NICHOLAS COUNTY

BOARD MEMBERS

Dr. Lloyd K. Adkins - President
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SUPERINTENDENT

Beverly Kingery

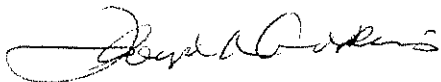
December 21, 2009

To Whom It May Concern:

The Nicholas County Board of Education has been aware of and supported Cherry River Elementary School application as a West Virginia Innovation Zone School. The Board of Education became aware of the intent to pursue such grant if it became available in March, 2009. The Superintendent, Beverly Kingery, informed the Board of Education as information regarding the Innovation Zone Grant developed. To substantiate the board's commitment, Barbara Taylor, board of education member, was appointed as a member of the Cherry River Elementary innovation planning team.

Nicholas County has a Superintendent, central office staff, and school eager and excited to be considered an Innovation Zone School. I respectfully request your utmost consideration of Cherry River Elementary as an Innovation Zone School.

Sincerely,



Dr. Lloyd K. Adkins, President
Nicholas County Board of Education

I think intervention is doing great.
Kids love PLC days. The ideas we made.
Made things better inside and out of school.
I asked the rest of the student council and
kids if intervention was doing fine they
really liked how we did the ~~paper~~ paper and asked
me a lot of questions. I think we are
doing fine. The students at cherry river hope
we will get money to help our school.

Your friend,
Caleb Harris

12-16-09

December 17, 2009

To Whom It May Be Concern,

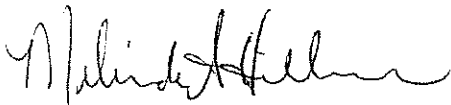
I am writing on behalf of Cherry River Elementary School in its pursuit to receive an Innovation Zone Grant. I am a member of our school's Local School Improvement Council and a regular parent volunteer. In an effort to improve our school and achieve this grant, meetings have been held between the faculty and LSIC to work on our school improvement plan and a meeting has been held with the county superintendent to discuss the visit to Kellogg Elementary and the possible partnership with the Harless Center. I have also collaborated with the Title I teachers to help revitalize the Parent and Community Volunteer Program. Just this week we invited parents and family in to participate in their child's classroom reading centers and we saw a three-fold increase in parent attendance since the last invite. We are very encouraged by this and look forward to finding other opportunities to encourage unity in our school, community, and parents.

A partnership between Cherry River Elementary and the Marshall University June Harless Center would provide Cherry River Elementary students with many new opportunities to learn. We recognize the need to prepare our students for the many diverse opportunities their futures will hold. This grant would help provide ways for us to maximize student learning through integration of content and technology.

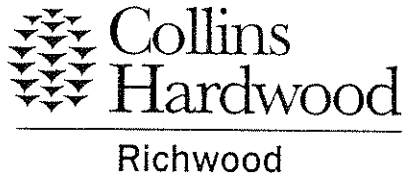
If we were to receive this grant and partnership it would also allow our teachers to share professional learning opportunities with colleagues across the state. This ability offers teachers the ideas and encouragement to inspire Cherry River Elementary students to achieve their dreams. This grant would give them the ability to enhance their Professional Learning Communities which, in turn, would benefit the students' overall education.

As a parent it is my desire to see Cherry River Elementary continue to grow and thrive in such partnerships. The financial and professional support that this grant offers our school can only advance our movement toward this end. I greatly support any commitment your group is willing to contribute to the success of Cherry River Elementary. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Melinda A. Hillman



December 15, 2009

Dear Grant Review Committee,

This letter is to affirm and support the efforts of Cherry River Elementary to apply for an innovation zone grant. Collins Hardwood Company has been a Partner In Education with Cherry River for many years. In that time we have witnessed their efforts to seek school improvement through funding and professional development. In the past, our company has provided support through an outdoor learning center focusing on the timber industry. We have also provided resources for career development and community involvement.

Our sincerest wish is to see our community school succeed. We fully encourage their efforts to apply for grants to make success a reality. We look forward to partnering with the school for future ventures.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ernest Lake".

Ernest Lake, Plant Manager

Cherry River Elementary School
Local School Improvement Council
190 Riverside Drive
Richwood, WV 26261

December 17, 2009

Dear Grant Review Committee,

The past two years I have been a member of the Local School Improvement Council at Cherry River Elementary School. As current president of our council, I am pleased that we have been invited to participate in several of the schools' improvement innovation meetings.

Recently, we were informed of a grant that is available to our school. I believe that this grant will be a wonderful asset to our school. The money will help us to restructure time for students learning needs as well as building professional learning communities.

If you have any questions regarding the support of our council, feel free to contact me at the school (304)846-6646 or through my email wdeaton@access.k12.wv.us. Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Whitney Deaton

Beverly Kingery

From: Maynard, Barbara [bmaynard@marshall.edu]
Sent: Thursday, December 17, 2009 2:30 PM
To: Beverly Kingery
Subject: Names of potential trainers

Bev, I hope your planning for the Innovation Zone proposal is going well. Here are some names of potential trainers that you might want to use for the professional Development:

Vickie Smith (Kindergarten) – Cabell County
Kim Hurley (2nd grade) – Wayne County
Elizabeth Lolathan (3rd grade) – Wayne County
Diana Whitlock (4th grade) – Wayne County
Annette Brumfield (1st grade) – Wayne County

All Harless Team members – math, reading, 21st Century Skills, classroom management, technology, project based learning, global studies, Spanish, etc.

Take care. Let us know when we can assist.

Barbara

Dr. Barbara Maynard
Program Development Director, June Harless Center
Program Director, Professional Development Schools

Marshall University
College of Education and Human Services
Office: Jenkins Hall 206
Phone: 304/696-2881
Fax: 304/696-6221
E-Mail: bmaynard@marshall.edu



DIVISION OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN PERFORMANCE

December 22, 2009

Beverly Kingery, Superintendent
Nicholas County Schools
400 Old Main Drive
Summersville, WV 26651

Dear Mrs. Kingery:

Concord University is excited regarding the opportunity to partner with Nicholas County Schools and Cherry River Elementary School in their West Virginia Education Zone application. The work that you have described is worthy of our support.

The Teacher Education Unit at Concord has agreed with Dr. Stan Maynard at Marshall University and the June Harless Center for Rural Educational Research and Development to work with schools in the southern regions of West Virginia, modeling the initiatives that his team has begun. We are currently in the process of identifying a school to join Cherry River Elementary and Beverly Elementary in Randolph County in their professional development network.

Again, we applaud and support the work that you have done and that you continue to do in Nicholas County. The resources of Concord's professional education faculty and of our teacher education candidates are here to assist you in your County's professional development needs.

Sincerely,

Richard S. Druggish, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of Education
Coordinator of Clinical Experiences

**Survey of Participants in Cherry River Innovation Zone Planning Project
(Before Grant Implementation)**

1. I have been invited to participate in discussions to plan the Innovation Zone project.
 Strongly agree Agree Unsure Disagree Strongly disagree
2. My ideas and suggestions have been considered in planning the Innovation Zone project.
 Strongly agree Agree Unsure Disagree Strongly disagree
3. I support the Innovation Zone proposal for Cherry River Elementary.
 Strongly agree Agree Unsure Disagree Strongly disagree
4. The Innovation Zone proposal has the potential to improve my knowledge and skills as a teacher.
 Strongly agree Agree Unsure Disagree Strongly disagree
5. The Innovation Zone proposal has the potential to increase student achievement at Cherry River Elementary.
 Strongly agree Agree Unsure Disagree Strongly disagree
6. Professional Learning Communities can impact student achievement at Cherry River Elementary.
 Strongly agree Agree Unsure Disagree Strongly disagree
7. Professional Learning Communities are valuable to my professional growth.
 Strongly agree Agree Unsure Disagree Strongly disagree
8. Connecting our Professional Learning Communities with the staff of Marshall University's June Harless Center will have a positive impact on our school improvement efforts.
 Strongly agree Agree Unsure Disagree Strongly disagree
9. Connecting our Professional Learning Communities with Kellogg Elementary's faculty will have a positive impact on our school improvement efforts.
 Strongly agree Agree Unsure Disagree Strongly disagree
10. Connecting our Professional Learning Communities with Beverly Elementary's faculty will have a positive impact on our school improvement efforts.
 Strongly agree Agree Unsure Disagree Strongly disagree

**Survey of Participants in Cherry River Innovation Zone Planning Project
(After Grant Implementation)**

1. I have been invited to participate in discussions to plan the Innovation Zone project.
 Strongly agree Agree Unsure Disagree Strongly disagree
2. My ideas and suggestions have been considered in planning the Innovation Zone project.
 Strongly agree Agree Unsure Disagree Strongly disagree
3. I support the Innovation Zone proposal for Cherry River Elementary.
 Strongly agree Agree Unsure Disagree Strongly disagree
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 Strongly agree Agree Unsure Disagree Strongly disagree
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 Strongly agree Agree Unsure Disagree Strongly disagree

Certification
School/Schools Staff Commitment
Department/Departments/Subdivision/Subdivisions
Staff Commitment

Use this form to report the staff commitment regarding the innovation application and plan. A copy must be forwarded to the Innovation Zone Committee with the application and the plan.

School: Cherry River Elementary

Department (If Applicable): _____

Notice of Meeting (Date Provided to Faculty or Department/Subdivision): 12/4/09

Meeting Date: 12/18/09

Faculty Senate Elected Officers:

President: (Name) Sarah Weber

Signature: Sarah Weber

Vice-President: (Name) Whitney Deaton

Signature: Whitney Deaton

Secretary: (Name) Pam Toburen

Signature: Pam Toburen

Treasurer: (Name) Ruth Barker

Signature: Ruth Barker

Other: (Name) Richard D. Caufield

Signature: Richard D. Caufield

Service Personnel Representative:

Name: Allyne Deloris Johnson

Signature: Allyne Deloris Johnson

Position: Sp. Ed. Aide

Parent Representatives:

Name: Nancy Casto

Signature: Nancy Casto

Name: Rosetta Hall

Signature: Rosetta Hall

Name: Kelly Adkins

Signature: Kelly Adkins

We certify that 80 percent of the faculty affected by the application/plan has voted to support the application/plan.

(This report certification is not required of institutions of higher education in their application or plan).