



## Call Recap: Improving Rural Achievement Webinar

June 18, 2018

[CALL RECORDING](#) (ADOBE CONNECT)

### Overview

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The i3/EIR Improving Rural Achievement Community of Practice (the Community) held a webinar to share information from the [Leading Education Innovations in Rural Schools: Reflections from i3 Grantees](#), a resource developed by the Community in 2017. The resource offers recommendations for designers, implementers, and evaluators working in rural schools. The guide is comprised of four major sections:

1. Relationship building with rural districts
2. Establishing and maintaining partnerships
3. Sustaining the innovation
4. Scaling up the innovation

The webinar panelists included two i3 grantees—the Building Assets, Reducing Risks (BARR) Center and the National Writing Project—as well as an evaluator from the RAND Corporation.

### Call Recap

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#### RELATIONSHIP BUILDING WITH RURAL DISTRICTS

Allocate time and effort to build genuine relationships with stakeholders. Examples of practices to foster stakeholder relationships in rural districts include:

- Collaborating with a trusted local connection to advocate for your intervention. Word of mouth from trusted sources, such as educators, and teacher peer-to-peer sharing are essential to build relationships and support for your innovation.
- Inviting schools that successfully implement your innovation to model the intervention to other schools.
- Collaborating with i3/EIR grantees to advocate for your model and to help connect you to rural schools and communities.

#### ESTABLISHING AND MAINTAINING PARTNERSHIPS

Establishing and maintaining partnerships with rural districts involves four levers:

- 1. Assess rural districts' assets and needs:**
  - Understand the district's needs and discuss how your innovation can support those needs.
  - Adopt a firm but flexible approach with your innovation, which includes things that need to be implemented for your innovation to work as well as things that can be adapted to meet the assets or needs of the community.



## 2. Clearly communicate innovation requirements and expectations:

- Assess a school's or district's capacity to implement a technology-based innovation.

## 3. Address challenges in conducting rigorous research in rural districts and schools:

- The What Works Clearinghouse offers limited research with a focus on rural settings, which indicates that there may be limited experience with rigorous research design in rural settings. Still, this shortfall provides opportunities for this work as well as challenges that need to be discussed at the outset of partnerships.
- The close-knit nature of rural communities can present a challenge when conducting randomized control trials, mainly having treatment groups not reveal the intervention to control groups. Thus, it is important to work closely with schools and evaluators to help schools understand the value of the research and why strict adherence to the rules is essential.

## 4. Maintain support and buy-in for the innovation:

- Regular stakeholder meetings are important to enable schools to discuss their challenges and successes.
- Encouraging transparent and frequent communication about successes and challenges is a must.

## SUSTAINING INNOVATIONS IN RURAL COMMUNITIES: FOUR BIG IDEAS TO SUSTAIN INNOVATIONS IN RURAL COMMUNITIES

### 1. Begin with the end in mind:

- Think of how to sustain the work from the outset.
- What do you want to keep when the project funding ends?

### 2. Build district- and school-level capacity:

- Who are the key stakeholders that can help sustain the work over time?
- Teacher leaders interested in the innovation and with the capacity to sustain the work can help with sustainability.

### 3. Align the innovation with district priorities:

- Begin with a needs assessment and assets review.

### 4. Consider adapting the innovation:

- Are there ways to adapt the innovation to meet the unique needs of teachers and students?

## SCALING UP THE INNOVATION IN RURAL COMMUNITIES

- Marketing and word of mouth are effective scale-up strategies. Educators hearing from their fellow educators about the merit of your innovation is a key lever to sustain the work.
- Use your network to connect with additional rural schools and districts to scale up your work.
- Conduct a roadshow with teachers, principals, and superintendents to discuss the innovation.
- Demonstrate the effectiveness of the innovation.
- Present research to demonstrate the efficacy of your innovation.



## For More Information

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### **BARR Center**

- i3 Community Profile: <https://i3community.ed.gov/i3-profiles/382>
- Project Website: <https://barrcenter.org/>

### **The National Writing Project**

- i3 Community Profile: <https://i3community.ed.gov/i3-profiles/78>
- Project Website: <https://www.nwp.org/>

### **The RAND Corporation (evaluator for the Kentucky Valley Education Cooperative)**

- i3 Community Profile: <https://i3community.ed.gov/i3-profiles/33>
- Project Website: <https://www.kentuckyvalley.org/>