

Rural Charter Schools: Unique Challenges, Unique Opportunities

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Beekman Charter School

Roy McCoy – Founding Principal

- School is in northern LA, close to Arkansas border.
- Conversion of a 100 year old traditional school to charter in 2013-14 – after successful teacher vote and parent vote.
- Goal: Create a high quality high school option and expand enrollment:

<i>Enrollment</i>	SY12-13	SY13-14	SY14-15	SY15-16	SY16-17	SY17-18
PK-8	350	538	558	565	565	565
9-12	-	114	209	288	340	360
Total	350	652	767	853	905	925

- First year academic assessment index aligns with “B” schools.

Slaughter Community Charter School

Dr. Linda Saucier – Executive Director (and former Principal)

- School is in rural parish north of Baton Rouge.
- Goal: Create a high quality middle and high school option (district only has one of each).
- Started in grades 7-8 and expand one grade per year:

Enrollment	SY11-12	SY12-13	SY13-14	SY14-15	SY15-16	SY16-17	SY17-18	SY18-19
7th Grade	60	53	61	67	55	66	66	66
8th Grade	45	62	48	66	66	66	66	66
9th Grade	-	39	53	45	66	66	66	66
10th Grade	-	-	37	48	46	66	66	66
11th Grade	-	-	-	40	48	47	66	66
12th Grade	-	-	-	-	41	47	46	66
Total	105	154	199	266	322	358	376	396

- In 3rd year was highest-performing school in East Feliciana Parish.

Common Characteristics

- Locally-authorized.
- Only charter in district.
- Highly experienced school leaders.
- Participate in teachers retirement system.
- Driven by need for high school option.
- Creative facility financing:
 - Beekman: Access to school district bond funds.
 - Slaughter: Leased modulars → USDA loan 3.5%, 40 years.
- Strong community engagement.

Rural Charters: Unique Challenges & Opportunities

Challenges

- Teacher recruiting
- Expectations for college matriculation
- Facility financing
- Insularity of board members
- Politics – impact on district
- School size/budget

Opportunities

- Blended learning
- Community engagement
- High quality governance
- Budget flexibility and creativity
- PK-12 school
- Maintain population and attract employers

Resources

Journals/Publications:

- Rural Education
 - The Rural School and Community Trust
 - [*Why Rural Matters*](#) - This is a biennial report that analyzes the conditions of rural education in each of the 50 states and highlights rural education issues that should be addressed by policymakers in their respective states.
 - Journal of Research in Rural Education
 - <http://jrre.vmhost.psu.edu/>
 - Rural Opportunities Consortium of Idaho
 - <http://www.rociidaho.org/>
 - National Research Center on Rural Education Support
 - <http://www.nrcres.org/index.html>
 - Education Week Blog - Rural Education
 - http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/rural_education/
- Rural Charters
 - [A New Frontier: Utilizing Charter Schooling to Strengthen Rural Education](#) by Andy Smarick
 - [Policy Brief: Idaho's Rural Charter Schools](#) by Bellwether Education Partners

Thank you!

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Presentation will be updated and uploaded to

www.charterschooltools.org

as well as NCSC site.