



**Beaver County Partnership for Community and Economic  
Growth Quality Education Council (QEC)**

## **Request for Proposals (RFP)**

# **Financial, Equity, and Systems Gap Analysis: Removing Barriers and Creating Opportunities in Education in Beaver County, Pennsylvania**

**RFP RELEASE DATE  
MONDAY, JULY 6, 2020**

**SUBMISSION DUE  
MONDAY, AUGUST 10, 2020 by 3:00 PM**

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**NOTE:** This RFP is available online at:  
<http://beavercountypartnership.com/quality-education-and-workforce-development/#tab2>

# PROJECT STATEMENT

## Vision

The vision of the Quality Education Council (QEC) of the Beaver County Partnership for Community and Economic Growth is to create a cost-effective system to enhance and maximize equitable opportunities for all students, and foster economic prosperity for all residents in Beaver County, Pennsylvania.

## Goals

Our goals of this project are to: identify comparable communities that have experienced similar economic and demographic trends as Beaver County, gather data from these benchmarked communities as well as their stakeholders, and define a strategy and implementation plan to achieve our vision. This is an exciting opportunity for Beaver County to become a model for educational transformation and success.

## BEAVER COUNTY GEOGRAPHY



Figure 1: Location of Beaver County in Commonwealth of Pennsylvania



Figure 2: Location of Beaver County relative to the Tri-State area: Pennsylvania, Ohio

Beaver County is located in the southwest part of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. It borders four other Pennsylvania counties. Allegheny County and the City of Pittsburgh border on the south, and the states of Ohio and West Virginia border on the west. Throughout its history, Beaver County experienced economic and population growth. However in 1981, when the steel mills of the region closed, the county experienced steep economic and population decline. Between 1980 and 2000, the county lost more than 23,000 residents. The US Census of 2010 showed a population of 171,000 residents; 2019 estimates show a decline to 164,000 residents. Approximately 90.7% of Beaver County residents are white, 6.4% are African-American, and 2.9% of other races.<sup>1</sup> Beaver County residents enjoy rural and small town living alongside rivers, natural attractions, and natural resources.

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Census Quickfacts. <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/beavercountypennsylvania>

In 2015, Shell Oil Company began construction of the Pennsylvania Petrochemicals Complex, a major petrochemicals plant that will soon process ethane from shale gas, of which southwestern Pennsylvania is a major producer. It will soon begin producing over a million tons per year of raw plastic materials for a variety of industries. Currently employing more than 5,000 construction workers, the plant is expected to permanently employ 600 people and lead to the proliferation of related supply chain industries.

Beaver County has 14 small traditional public school districts within its 2,586 square miles serving 20,500 students. Containing 14 middle schools and 13 high schools, the districts' student enrollment ranges from 260 to 2,300. There are nine districts serving fewer than 2,000 students and collectively have lost half of their student body since 1971. The county is also home to 12 private schools serving 1,800 students and three publicly-funded charter schools, including a cyber school.

Although much of southwest Pennsylvania has experienced stable demographic growth, current projections for Beaver County continue to show an additional attrition of 20,000 residents by 2030. Recognizing this trend, school districts and community leaders are collaborating and exploring options to enhance future educational opportunities for its young people, while enhancing the system to reduce legacy costs and be more cost-efficient.

Beaver Borough, the county seat, is approximately 40 minutes from the City of Pittsburgh, and 20 minutes from the Pittsburgh International Airport. According to the United States Census, Beaver County has several larger towns with populations of approximately 9,000 residents.

With growing industry and a community partnership committed to a world-class vision for education, Beaver County has a unique opportunity to maximize positive momentum and provide equitable access to high-quality opportunities to all students so they are college and career ready.

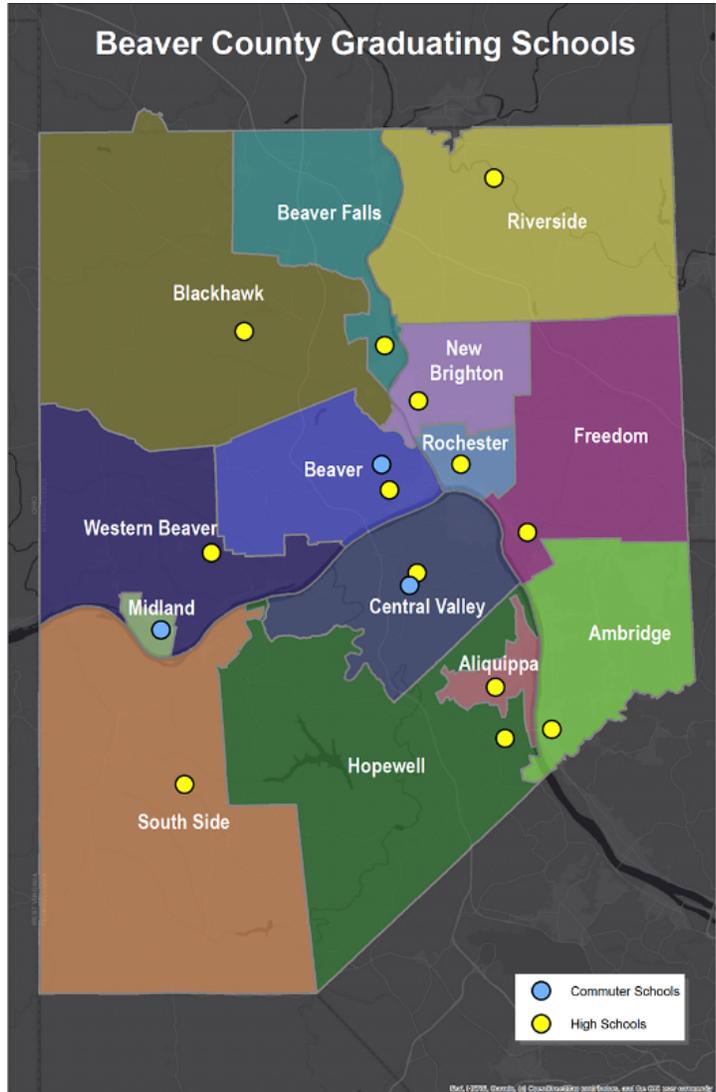


Figure 3: Beaver County with each School District and Graduating Secondary School highlighted

# PROJECT BACKGROUND

Formed in 2016, the Beaver County Partnership for Community and Economic Growth is an organization of more than 300 volunteer Beaver County leaders with the mission to facilitate the alignment of county agencies, municipalities and other organizations around principles that will influence population growth. The partnership established five pillars to improve the outlook of the region. These five pillars are:

1. Job Creation and Economic Growth
2. Desirable Housing
3. Quality of Life
4. Good Government
5. Quality Education

The Quality Education Council (QEC) emerged from the last pillar. The council recognizes the need to attract new residents and to ensure that all current Beaver County children, regardless of zip code, succeed personally and professionally in life. With approximately 50 members with diverse leadership roles in the community, the QEC is comprised of three committees:

1. Pre-K–12 Education
2. Bridges & Pathways College Partnership
3. Post-Secondary Workforce Development

More comprehensive information about the Beaver County Partnership for Community and Economic Growth may be found at the partnership website located at <http://beavercountypartnership.com>.

In 2018, the Pre-K–12 Committee of the QEC began a collaborative effort to learn more about the fiscal impact of current population and student enrollment trends in Beaver County. Through grant funding, the partnership commissioned a four-phase study to provide a high-level overview of the county’s current public education system within the context of demographic trends and fiscal sustainability. This RFP provides a brief overview of the phased process; please see Attachment 1 for the Executive Summary of this initiative.

Note that the QEC has been working closely with the Beaver Valley Intermediate Unit (BVIU) and the Allegheny Intermediate Unit (AIU) on these efforts. Intermediate Units are regional public entities established by the state that serve as educational service agencies and liaisons between the Pennsylvania Department of Education and schools.

To date, the following work has been completed:

## **Phase I – Data Collection**

This consisted of 1) a study of Population Migration and 2) its Economic Impact on Beaver County Public Schools.

- 1) “The Future of Education in Beaver County - Population Impacts.” Fourth Economy Consulting. 27 Feb 2020. <https://public.tableau.com/profile/jerry.paytas#!/vizhome/BeaverEducation-PopulationStory/PopStory>
- 2) “The Future of Education in Beaver County - Fiscal Impacts.” Fourth Economy Consulting. 27 Feb 2020. <https://public.tableau.com/profile/jerry.paytas#!/vizhome/BeaverEdFinance/Story1>

Phase I findings of fact include:

- There are approximately 20,500 students served by 14 school districts, and 2,500 students served by charter, parochial, and other schools.
- Overall population is declining.
- Overall student enrollment is declining.
- It cannot be assumed that costs for school infrastructure, as well as other operating costs, will decrease.
- Overall per pupil spending is increasing.
- Overall local tax effort is increasing.
- The population of residents with no school-age children is increasing.
- 44% of people who work in Beaver County live outside Beaver County.

## **Phase II - Marketing and Community Engagement**

This phase included:

- Retention of the services of the AIU's Communication Services Department to assist with public outreach and disseminating project information.
- October 9, 2019 - an informational meeting with Beaver County superintendents, the QEC and partnership members.
- October 24, 2019 - a BVIU Superintendent Advisory Council meeting with Beaver County superintendents.
- December 13, 2019 - an informational meeting with Beaver County state and federal legislators and staff members.
- February 1, 2020 - a joint meeting with school district superintendents and board members.
- Beginning in mid-February 2020, a media push to promote the March 2 public meeting. This effort included:
  - ✓ An op-ed<sup>2</sup> and paid advertising placed in the Beaver County Times newspaper.
  - ✓ Media interviews with local print, radio, online and broadcast news outlets.
  - ✓ Community outreach to legislators, school and municipal leaders, and community agencies.
  - ✓ Development of new partnership website to house information and materials<sup>3</sup>.
- March 2, 2020 - a public meeting held and attended by more than 200 participants, including representatives of each school district and members of the public.
- Materials from Phases I and II disseminated to the public and posted on the QEC website.
- Consistent outreach to school leaders and board members throughout the process.

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<sup>2</sup>“Be Part of the Conversation: We Want to Hear Your Voice.” Beaver County Times, February. 23 February 2020. <https://www.timesonline.com/opinion/20200223/guest-opinion-be-part-of-conversation-we-want-to-hear-your-voice>

<sup>3</sup> Be Part of the Conversation: We Want to Hear Your Voice.” Beaver County Times, February. 23 February 2020. <https://www.timesonline.com/opinion/20200223/guest-opinion-be-part-of-conversation-we-want-to-hear-your-voice>

Phase II efforts succeeded to:

- Begin a respectful, collaborative, honest, inclusive and open conversation about the future of public education in Beaver County.
- Present a global perspective, as opposed to a community-centric view, of the impacts of current trends.
- Share the results of the Phase I study, to enhance public understanding of current population and migration trends in the county.
- Share examples of how school districts currently collaborate and share services to enhance the quality of education and reduce costs.
- Help residents think about where Beaver County’s education system could be in the year 2030.

## PROJECT PURPOSE

This project is Phase III, the “Financial, Equity, and Systems Gap Analysis: Removing Barriers and Creating Opportunities in Education in Beaver County, Pennsylvania.” The purpose of this phase is to gather additional data and analysis, and identify ways to increase equitable access to educational opportunities for all students. The timeline for completion of Phase III is expected to be from nine to 12 months from the award of proposal. The consultant will be expected to:

1. **Benchmark** several communities with similar profiles and educational challenges as Beaver County.
2. **Engage** stakeholders to understand the Beaver County educational system, what is important to the community, their core values, and how to best leverage regional assets, community perspectives, and institutional experience.
3. **Propose** detailed recommendations and next steps to enhance Beaver County educational offerings, along with a cost analysis of the recommended structures and their implementation.

These activities will set the stage for the final phase of the project, which will be implementation.

The QEC seeks to make Beaver County schools an international model of educational opportunity and equity. To that end, we highly encourage proposers to review “The 9 Building Blocks for a World-Class Education System,” which is based on broad international research of high-performance school systems developed by the National Center on Education and the Economy. The full document is located here:

<http://ncee.org/9buildingblocks>. The QEC seeks to incorporate the following qualities of high-performing systems in our path to growth.

1. Provision of strong supports for children and their families before students arrive at school.
2. Provision of more resources for at-risk students than for others.
3. Development of world-class, highly coherent instructional systems
4. Creation of clear gateways for students through the system, set to global standards, with no dead ends.
5. Assurance of an abundant supply of highly qualified teachers.
6. Redesigning of schools to be places in which teachers will be treated as professionals, with incentives and support to continuously improve their professional practice and the performance of their students.
7. Creation of an effective system of career and technical education and training.

8. Creation of a leadership development system that develops leaders at all levels to manage such systems effectively.
9. Institution of a governance system that has the authority and legitimacy to develop coherent, powerful policies and is capable of implementing them at scale.

The QEC understands that not all initiatives within benchmarked communities may be suitable for wholesale adoption, but they seek to understand how other communities' experiences may support strategic adoption in Beaver County. It is also understood that state and federal regulations affect the ability to adopt all the building block themes. It is also important to note that the QEC is currently seeking new ways to leverage other public, private, and non-profit resources to reach these goals. As the consultant examines other educational systems, the QEC is looking for concrete data and examples of how barriers to equity were removed, and how the building blocks correlate to this.

In light of this, the QEC is open to an innovative, holistic spectrum of offerings to provide all young people a foundation for personal and professional growth, and to be civic stewards and economic contributors to our region. Note that Beaver County has universities and technical programs that may be considered amongst stakeholders and potential alternative scenarios for a student body that is college and career-ready.

## **SCOPE OF WORK**

### **Project Initiation**

The selected consultant must participate in a kickoff meeting that will be held at a location at the QEC's discretion. The date will be coordinated between the council and the consultant. At this meeting, the consultant will present a description of the project, budget, calendar of activities, including project check-ins, a description of the tasks to be developed, and the methodology to be implemented to meet the project's objective.

### **Project Components**

#### **1. Benchmarking**

Identify communities in similar size to Beaver County. The geographical size should be an area that includes coordination over multiple public, educational jurisdictions. The QEC seeks to understand how these communities turned their school systems into high-performing models of equity and excellence. The analysis may include summary level analysis for up to eight communities with more detailed analysis for four to six communities. Communities with similar economic and enrollment trends should be included for comparison.

Assess the solutions undertaken by other communities to enhance equity and access to high-quality educational opportunities for all students. Each example should include data, analysis, and discussion of the following topics:

**Educational Equity and Quality:**

- Actions taken to increase academic proficiency and growth, and increase access to opportunity across race, gender, ethnic origin, disability, geography, and socioeconomic standing.
- How the essential “9 Building Blocks for a World-Class Education System” were integrated into the system.
- How geographical challenges were addressed to remove barriers and provide opportunities for excellence, e.g. enhancing equity across rural, suburban, and urban areas with various cultures, histories, and industries.
- Types of different pedagogical or organizational models of education that were considered, e.g. centers of excellence, mergers, and/or a county-wide system, whether they were implemented, and why or why not.

**Cost-effectiveness:**

- Public cost savings accrued by changes in service delivery, and how those costs were redistributed or reinvested within the system in a different way.
- How cost savings enhanced opportunity and complimented the communities’ core values.
- Types of financial structures and operations of the communities’ secondary schools and how they may have become more cost-effective over time.

**Implementation Processes and Governance:**

- Types of governance structures and strategies put in place both for successful implementation of change, e.g. coalitions, processes, methodologies.
- Types of public engagement undertaken to ensure success.
- Timelines for implementation.
- Structures for continuous monitoring, evaluation, and feedback integration.

**Overall Concrete Data:**

- Explain the outcome of these enhancements with concrete numbers related to:
  - Changes in public spending
  - Changes in tax rates and revenue
  - Changes in facilities types
  - Changes in equity of access to educational opportunities and resources
  - Changes in various competitive rankings
  - Changes in school progress measures related to school and student success including assessments, readiness indicators that relate to student learning, growth and achievement in the classroom and beyond.

**2. Stakeholder Analysis and Engagement**

In order to best leverage community perspectives, it will be necessary to engage stakeholders to build trust in the process, and understand their core values and thoughts around current and potential educational offerings. Stakeholders include, but are not limited to, educational administrators (from both Pre-K–12 and local higher education), community leaders, public officials, trade union organizations (including teachers and potential career partners), business leaders, and current and potential programming partners. In addition, the consultant should review and prepare a list of federal, state and local government regulations that may be relevant for the implementation phase. The AIU’s Communication Services Department will work with the consultant and the QEC as a conduit with the public, disseminating project information and facilitating access to stakeholder groups.

### **3. Recommendations and Next Steps**

Considering the findings from the first and second components, the final step is to make recommendations on how some of these findings could fit the needs for Beaver County; this could include a mix of innovative and proven strategies, models, structures, guidelines, and programmatic offerings. Each recommendation should include the cost of implementation and long-term budgets within the context of Beaver County's current economic and fiscal realities. Each recommendation should also include next steps for implementation. All recommendations and next steps should be complimentary to the core values, regional assets, and feedback identified by the stakeholder analysis.

### **Project Updates**

The consultant shall develop a project timeline with milestones, and regularly update the QEC in writing on the progress of meeting these milestones. These updates shall review what has been accomplished and what will be accomplished in the next period of work. This will help the QEC affirm direction of the project and correct potential deviations from the goal. The council requests three check-ins at minimum. As noted earlier in this document, the project is expected to be completed not more than 12 months from the award of the proposal.

## **FINAL DELIVERABLES**

The QEC requires the consultant provides three items as part of its final deliverables.

**A final report**, inclusive of all clarifying changes made by the QEC in the second draft. The study and supporting material will include, but not limited to, the following:

- Benchmarked community profiles with attention to detail as presented in the RFP's Scope of Work.
- List of stakeholder engagements, types, and findings.
- A list of local, state, and federal regulations needed to be aware of during potential implementations.
- Final recommendations and their next steps for implementation.
- A cost analysis of the proposed recommendations' implementation and ongoing budgets.
- A color version of the final report with all components of the scope of work, consisting of five printed and bound color copies and an electronic copy in an easy-to-read and accessible format.

**A report summary** provided in electronic copy in PowerPoint format to the Committee.

**A presentation** of the report summary to the public, with engagement and discussion, to be recorded for internal and external dissemination.

The consultant shall work with the QEC on the public process for dissemination of all materials.

# BUDGET

The budget for this project is subject to the QEC’s approval of consultant selection and contract amount.

The consultant will perform the research, analysis, consulting, planning, facilitation, modeling, or other services necessary to complete this project for a total amount not to exceed the contract amount. This amount must and will also include the consultant’s fee for services and all direct costs incurred in fulfillment of the contract, including, but not limited to travel, communication, photocopying, and other terms as detailed in the final contract agreement.

# SCHEDULE

Important RFP dates (all in EST Time):

RFP Release Date	Monday, July 6, 2020
Questions on RFP Due	Monday, July 20, 2020 by 3:00 PM
Pre-Proposal Conference	Monday, July 27, 2020 at 3:00 PM
Responses to Questions Posted on the Website <sup>4</sup>	Monday, August 3, 2020 by 3:00 PM
<b>Proposal Due</b>	<b>Monday, August 10, 2020 by 3:00 PM</b>
Proposal Presentations/Interviews	Week of September 7, 2020
Best and Final Offers Due by September 15	Tuesday, September 15, 2020 by 3:00 PM
<b>Selection and Award of Contract</b>	<b>Tuesday, September 22, 2020</b>

The deadline to submit the final proposal is Monday, August 10, 2020 by 3:00 PM. Revisions in project scope, definition, cost, or schedule shall be made only by written mutual agreement by the authorized representative of the parties whose signatures appeared in the final contract agreement.

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<sup>4</sup> [“Pre-K-12 education Committee and Quality education council: Building Our Future – Together”](http://beavercountypartnership.com/quality-education-and-workforce-development/#tab2)  
<http://beavercountypartnership.com/quality-education-and-workforce-development/#tab2>

## PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

1. **Title Page:** Title page including the name of the proposing firm, address, website, name of contact person, email address, telephone number, and the date.
2. **Letter of Commitment:** The consultant's letter of commitment should identify the consultants, sub-consultants, and key staff who will be working on the project. The letter should also state that the consultant has read and understands the RFP requirements. This letter must be signed by a duly authorized official of the appropriate consultant.
3. **Narrative and Qualifications:** Narrative explaining the qualifications and interest of the consultant and staff to fulfill the RFP. Please also indicate the names of other firms if submitting as a team. Please include the resumes, biographies, or profiles of staff experience, from all firms, if applicable. Describe the consultant's plan to integrate this project into the consultant's present workload. Please describe previous experience undertaking similar studies, including benchmarking, data analysis, policy expertise, and stakeholder engagement and analysis.
4. **Methodology and Approach:** Provide a comprehensive description of how the Scope of Work will be completed and how milestones will be reached.
5. **Schedule:** Include a project schedule with an estimated timeframe for reaching milestones and deliverables.
6. **References:** Summary of the consultant's recent experience on similar projects and evidence of prior success. Provide names and contact information of three previous clients with a detailed description of the type of project completed and the consultant's role on the project, project timeframe, and date completed.
7. **Fees:** A budget, including a cost for each component and a lump sum cost for the entire project.

## EVALUATION CRITERIA AND PROCEDURES

The following is a list of weighted criteria that will be used to evaluate proposals:

<b>Quality and completeness of the response:</b>	<b>30%</b>
<b>Implementation schedule:</b>	<b>15%</b>
<b>Cost-effectiveness:</b>	<b>15%</b>
<b>Qualifications, experience, and reputation:</b>	<b>40%</b>

The QEC's evaluation will address the following:

- **Quality and completeness of the response:** The QEC will evaluate proposals based on their quality, clarity, and demonstrated understanding of the project objectives. The proposal must include a plan outlining how the components in Scope of Work will be addressed.
- **Implementation schedule:** The QEC will also evaluate proposals based on their ability to complete the project within the timeframe specified by the council, and on how the consultant delineates its timeline in its submission.

- **Cost-effectiveness:** A cost proposal outline must accompany the submission. Note that cost is not the only or sole indicator of success.
- **Qualifications and relevant experience:** The proposer must provide the list of people who will be assigned work pursuant to this RFP, including sub-consultants, as well as their resumes or profiles of their experience. The QEC will evaluate the capacity of the consultant to undertake this work.
- **Reputation among previous clients:** We encourage submission of sample reports or products from previous projects.

## **SUBMISSION DEADLINE AND INSTRUCTIONS**

Submit five paper copies and one electronic copy of the proposal in a sealed envelope that is clearly marked in the lower left-hand corner, “**PROPOSAL FOR ‘Financial, Equity, and Systems Gap Analysis: Removing Barriers and Creating Opportunities in Education in Beaver County, Pennsylvania’**” no later than 3:00 PM (EST) Monday, August 10, 2020.

### **Responses must be sent to:**

Eric G. Rosendale, Ed.D.  
Executive Director  
Beaver Valley Intermediate Unit  
147 Poplar Avenue  
Monaca, PA 15061  
eric.rosendale@bviu.org

Responses must be thorough, but concise. The response will be judged as an example of the team’s writing and graphic capabilities. The response should not exceed 25 pages (excluding cover page, letter of commitment, table of contents, resumes, and additional samples of work).

The QEC will not accept faxed or late proposals. The QEC reserves the right to reject any or all proposals or accept what is, in its judgement, the proposal which is in the QEC’s best interest. The QEC further reserves the right to waive any technical defects or irregularities in any and all proposals submitted.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

All proposals shall be treated as confidential during the selection process through the date of the award by the QEC. All documents relating to the formulation of the RFP including the procurement file, evaluation documents and communications shall be confidential. The release of such documents shall be in accordance with the Pennsylvania Right to Know Law and the exceptions to release contained therein. Any party submitting a proposal wishing to designate any material in the proposal as proprietary or not subject to release under any provision of law shall so indicate in the proposal. Parties submitting proposals shall be provided notice under the Right to Know Law of any request for release in order to provide them the opportunity under said law to assert any rights they may claim with respect to the proposal.

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

All questions regarding this RFP must be submitted by email to Eric G. Rosendale, Ed.D, Executive Director of the Beaver Valley Intermediate Unit at [eric.rosendale@bviu.org](mailto:eric.rosendale@bviu.org) by 3:00 PM (EST) Monday, July 20, 2020.

A pre-proposal conference will be held at the Beaver Valley Intermediate Unit at 147 Poplar Avenue, Monaca, PA 15061 (or via virtual meeting) on Monday, July 27, 2020 at 3:00 PM. Please contact Eric G. Rosendale to register to participate in the pre-proposal conference (in person or via virtual meeting.)

Responses to questions will be posted to the QEC website<sup>5</sup> by 3:00 PM (EST) on Monday, August 3, 2020.

## INTERVIEWS

The QEC will notify and require qualified finalists to give presentations. Selected firms will be notified of time, dates, and locations during the week of September 7, 2020. Presentations will provide an opportunity for the QEC to obtain a greater understanding of:

The extent of the firm's depth of knowledge of the subject matter.

- The firm's ability to draw together specialists and professionals with the necessary skills and experience to contribute to the overall project.
- The primary features and benefits of their proposal.
- The public presentation skills of the proposers.
- The ability of the consultant to communicate how the schedule, tasks, and budget will be met.

The presentation format will be at the discretion of the proposers and will be limited to a 90-hour period per respondent, which includes questions. The individual leading the project, as well as key managerial and other personnel working on the project, must attend the proposal presentation. Any costs incurred by the respondents in preparing or submitting a response to this RFP or interviewing for this project shall be the respondent's sole responsibility.

## NOTIFICATION OF AWARD

The QEC will notify the successful respondent by telephone or via email, followed by written confirmation. Each respondent whose proposal is not accepted will receive notification by mail.

The Beaver County Partnership for Community and Economic Growth will authorize the award of a contract to the successful respondent. If a contract cannot be finalized within thirty days of the award, the QEC reserves the right to enter negotiations with another respondent.

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<sup>5</sup> "Pre-K-12 Education Committee and Quality Education Council: Building Our Future – Together"  
<http://beavercountypartnership.com/quality-education-and-workforce-development/#tab2>

# **ATTACHMENT 1 to the document of “Request for Proposals (RFP) for ‘Financial, Equity, and Systems Gap Analysis: Removing Barriers and Creating Opportunities in Education’”**



## **Beaver County Partnership Quality Education Council (QEC) Feasibility Study EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

January 2, 2020

### **Introduction**

The Beaver County Partnership Quality Education Council (QEC) is pleased to provide the following Executive Summary outlining our request to seek grant funding to conduct a feasibility study on the current and future condition of Beaver County’s K-12 educational system. The partnership’s intent of the study is to research and analyze data to understand the challenges impacting the system, evaluate comparative educational situations, and most importantly, objectively present and communicate solutions to community leaders and residents. The project as a whole reflects efforts by school districts and community leaders to collaborate and explore options that enhance and maximize equity and access to educational opportunities for all students of Beaver County.

A former steel mill community representing a variety of cultures, Beaver County, Pennsylvania possesses 14 small school districts within its 2,586 square miles. Containing 14 middle schools and 13 high schools, Beaver County school districts range in enrollment from 258 to 2,335 students with nine districts serving fewer than 2,000 students. These districts collectively have lost half of their student body since 1971.

Beaver County was a growing area with many business and jobs. In 1981, when the steel mills closed, the economic decline and resulting population decline resulted in the loss of more than 23,000 residents from 1980 to 2000. Although much of southwest Pennsylvania has experienced stable or positive demographic growth, current projections for Beaver County continue to show an additional attrition of 20,000 residents by 2030. Recognizing this trend, school districts and community leaders are collaborating and exploring options to enhance and maximize future educational opportunities for the students of Beaver County.

The QEC is working to build community involvement and support for the feasibility study. The QEC has been actively engaged and communicating with public school district boards and superintendents. There is a growing support with over half of the school districts recognizing the need to conduct the study.

Beaver County is also in the midst of transformational economic expansion due to the Shell Cracker Plant construction and growing supply chain industries. The partnership recognizes that Beaver County has a unique opportunity to maximize this positive momentum to provide equitable access to high-quality educational opportunities to all students so they are college and career ready.

## **Purpose**

The objective of the feasibility study is to provide a high-level overview of the county's educational system and then, through analysis of the data, explore ways to enhance and maximize future educational opportunities for the students in Beaver County. The QEC believes that, with a properly implemented feasibility study, the data will be the point of the spear in identifying potential recommendations.

A thorough investigation of the problem statement requires funding to support the following activities:

- Data Collection - Data related to the educational systems in Beaver County including but not limited to enrollment, budgets, revenue sources, facilities and population trends
- Data Analysis
- Data Sharing to:
  - ✓ Build interest in solving the problem statement
  - ✓ Gain commitment for solving the problem statement
  - ✓ Gain cooperation to solve the problem statement
- Collective Action to solve the problem statement

## **Measures of Success**

The success of the project will be evaluated based on the following parameters:

- Data recognized as factual.
- Data accessible to all stakeholders.
- Data is actively shared and presented to all stakeholders.
- Data used by stakeholders to make objective decisions.
- Data used to support the collective action of stakeholders.
- Data to allow for flexibility in evaluating options.
- Stakeholders engaged in collective change to prepare for the future of education in the region.
- Creation of a cost-effective educational system to enhance and maximize equitable opportunities for all students in Beaver County.

## **Scope of Work**

The study will be conducted in four phases; Phase I – Data Collection, Phase II - Marketing and Community Engagement, Phase III – Financial, Equity, and Systems Gap Analysis: Removing Barriers and Creating Opportunities in Education, and Phase IV- Project Implementation. The Beaver County Partnership, under the guidance and recommendation from the QEC, will oversee the project, including contracting out portions of the scope of work to qualified consulting firm(s).

### ***Phase I - Data Collection & Summary Statistics***

The Phase I – Data Collection and Summary Statistics has examined the demographic trends, county population data, county migration data and tax base conditions (residential and commercial property values) that are impacting school enrollments in the county districts. Primary sources for data analysis include US Census National Center for Education Statistics, Beaver County demographic and population forecasting data from the PA State Data Center. Phase I also included a preliminary analysis and visualization of data at the county level and specific school district areas. The results of the study were made available electronically to the QEC in 2019.

### ***Phase II - Marketing & Community Engagement***

The Phase II - Marketing & Community Engagement will be the primary “sharing” process to proactively engage the residents, superintendents, school board members and community leaders. The partnership’s goal is to present the data and forecast models in a visual mapping format similar using GIS data mapping, interactive story mapping and visual dashboards. As a result, residents can visually connect challenges and suggest possible recommendations to maximize and improve the educational system. The desired intent of Phase II is a collective “wake-up call” to the community that serves as a springboard into Phase III – Financial, Equity, and Systems Gap Analysis: Removing Barriers and Creating Opportunities in Education. Presentations to various stakeholder groups were held in late 2019 and early 2020. Additional public information sessions are planned. Questions that may be generated out of this phase may include:

- What changes can be made to enhance and maximize equitable educational opportunities for all Beaver County students?
- How can the costs associated with the ideas generated be supported by the residents of the county?
- How are similar communities working the problem?
- What facility updates are needed to enhance and maximize educational opportunities for Beaver County students?
- Are there models we can learn from/implement/adjust to fit the needs of Beaver County?

### ***Phase III - Financial, Equity, and Systems Gap Analysis: Removing Barriers and Creating Opportunities in Education***

The Phase III is the collective action phase of the project and will require guidance and administrative support from the QEC and participating schools. Additional data collection and analysis will be needed to provide insight into questions and proposed solutions. Continued communications and public involvement will keep the education community, local leaders and the public informed of progress and findings. The desired outcome of Phase III is to develop several alternative scenarios and a cost analysis of educational structures to support the needs of Beaver County along with recommended solutions and implementation planning. These potential solutions would enhance the equitable access to high-quality educational opportunities for all students.

### ***Phase IV – Project Implementation***

The goal of Phase IV – Project Implementation is to make the plan developed in Phase III come to fruition.

#### **Project Timeline & Major Milestones**

<b>Phase I - Data Collection &amp; Summary Statistics</b>	1 Year (complete)
<b>Phase II - Marketing &amp; Community Engagement</b>	6 Months (complete)
<b>Phase III - Financial, Equity, and Systems Gap Analysis: Removing Barriers and Creating Opportunities in Education</b>	not to exceed 9 months from award
<b>Phase IV – Project Implementation</b>	TBD

### **Community Involvement & Partnerships**

The Community College of Beaver County’s (CCBC) High School Academy is a prime example of a collaborative partnership between CCBC and the 14 public school districts. The High School Academy is a CCBC sponsored program offering 11th and 12th grade students to take college level courses focused on designed career pathways such as Aviation, Healthcare, STEM, Criminal Justice and Construction. The program launched in 2015 with 22 students and now has expanded to 40 school districts in Western PA with over 300 students in Fall 2018.

Shell, with its cracker plant located in Beaver County, is also investing in Beaver County's educational system. Through a \$1 million donation, Shell is partnering with CCBC to expand CCBC's Process Technology Education program. The STEM program offers eligible 11th and 12th grade students the opportunity to earn up to 28 college credits while completing their high school degree. Mascaro, a major Pittsburgh based construction firm, has contributed \$500,000 to sponsor the Construction Management Academy and Beaver County based Heritage Valley Health System supports the Healthcare Academy.

### **Leadership & Organizational Structure**

Beaver County Partnership for Community and Economic Growth is a community based, non-partisan, 501 (c)4 non-profit organization focused on aligning leadership and collaboration to improve the county's communities and economic opportunity. The partnership includes more than 300 Beaver County-based community leaders engaged in five critical areas modeled on successful best practices for population growth, job growth, quality education, desirable housing, quality of place and good government. These "councils" ensure enhanced, proactive and complementary resources for business development, marketing and public relations.

The Beaver County Partnership, under the guidance and recommendation from the QEC, will provide the management and guidance of the project. The QEC's focus is to understand national best practices for equitable access to educational opportunities among county K-12 school districts in order to enhance our county's educational system in a manner that benefits all students.