



## Rural Educators Across Borders

### rec·i·proc·i·ty proj·ect

*rec·i·proc·i·ty: the practice of exchanging things with others for mutual benefit*

The Reciprocity Project is an ***I Am a Rural Teacher*** Pilot Program in collaboration with the Welsh Government, Rural Schools Collaborative, Teton Science Schools, University of Denver, and the University of Colorado—Denver.

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**Reciprocity Project Purpose:** To explore the feasibility of developing a *uniquely rural* network of international teachers and school leaders that will work together in support of place-based instruction that connects learning to communities and the world around us.

*“A Place-Based Education approach can serve as a framework to connect learning models, increase the power of our educational system and serve as the foundation for a thriving democracy.”*

- Nate McClennen, *Place-Based Education: Communities as Learning Environments*

#### **Project Goals:**

- Establish a cohort of international rural teaching partners who will participate in the pilot project.
- Establish a corresponding school leaders learning community, which will support the pilot project and participate in an international dialogue on the importance of local to global connections.
- Provide a facilitative framework that will provide direct assistance to teachers in support of project implementation.
- Provide direct assistance to school leaders and the learning community.

- Work with the *I Am a Rural Teacher Campaign* to create project narratives that will communicate the work of participating teachers, school leaders, and their respective students. This effort should strongly emphasize the uniqueness of this rural-based project.
- Secure funding support for a Summer 2024 Forum in Wales.
- Establish an appropriate assessment model for this project.

### **Project Description:**

- 20-30 rural teacher participants from the United States, Wales, and Northern Ireland will participate.
- The Project will include teachers who are working with students between the ages of 10-13, although there may be exceptions.
- Participating teachers will be paired with another teacher from a different nation, and together they will explore and develop curricular projects that will engage their respective students in shared work. Principals or headteachers from participating schools will participate in a rural leadership networked community.
- These “collaborative learning activities” will compliment existing curricula and should not be perceived as an “add on” or “extra burdens” for the participating teachers.
- *Student learning activities should be place-based and strive to promote rural resilience and sustainability.*
- The Reciprocity Project will occur during the 2023-24 school year and culminate in an in-person Forum, which will be held in Wales.

### **Facilitation Roles:**

- Coordinate the launch, development, implementation, and culminating events of the Reciprocity Project.
- Provide tangible assistance to participating teachers in curriculum and student learning development.
- Facilitate discussion among leaders around common problems of practice.
- Maintain open communication with Project lead partners, participants, and funders.
- Produce project narratives telling the stories of participating teachers, students, and school leaders.
- Provide content to the *I Am a Rural Teacher Campaign* and, subsequently, ensure that all project partners are informed of communications works and highlights.
- Coordinate the work of lead partners and potential funders in planning the 2024 Forum in Wales.
- Coordinate the development and implementation of a project assessment model.

### **Participating teachers will:**

1. Foster and maintain an open and collaborative relationship with their peer teachers/.international teaching partner.
2. Teaching partners will co-design appropriate place-based learning activities with their students, with support of project facilitators.
3. Explore appropriate student learning activities that focus on sustainability, community building, and rural resilience.
4. Agree to meet virtually with the project facilitators at times that are convenient for the teacher’s schedule and timeframe.
5. Be willing to share their stories and experiences with Project Facilitators.
6. Participate in the international Project Forum in Wales. More details will be forthcoming.

**School Leaders will:**

1. Support and endorse their schools' teacher's participation in the Project.
2. Participate in a virtual "Learning Community" of international school leaders. (All efforts will be made to ensure the "Learning Community" is respectful of people's time.)
3. Share stories about their schools and communities with Project Facilitators.
4. Consider attending the planned Summer 2024 Forum in Wales.

**Timeline:**

- September 2023—Facilitators will have hold planning sessions with all participating teachers. This may be done individually, in pairs, or in a larger virtual group.
- October 2023—Facilitators will begin providing narrative content to the I am A Rural Teacher campaign and lead partners.
- January 2024—Participating teachers and their students will be engaged in some level of shared instructional activity.
- March 2024—Final plans for the Forum will be in place.
- April 2024—Travel arrangements for Forum participants will be finalized.
- Summer 2024—Forum will be held!