

RGK: Letter of Inquiry (LOI)

All questions must be answered in order to submit the LOI. We recommend you copy the form and work on it offline, then paste your responses into the spaces below when ready. This website will not allow you to save your work and come back to it. Once you have completed the form, you will have the opportunity to review your answers and print a copy for your files before submitting the finalized LOI to RGK Foundation.

Please check here if your organization has previously received funding from RGK Foundation.

N/A

Organization Name:

Ben Franklin Academy

Mailing Address:

Post Office Box 5307, Englewood, Colorado 80155

Contact Name, Contact Title:

Bob Barber, Principal

Phone Number, Fax Number, E-Mail Address:

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Web site address:

www.bfacademy.org

Organization's mission:

The mission of Ben Franklin Academy ("BFA") is to develop young adults with character like America's founding Renaissance man, Benjamin Franklin: well-read, scientifically curious, and civically engaged.

Year established:

2011

Briefly state the organization's history (Maximum characters: 500) (at 498)

A group of local parents created the vision for BFA during the Winter/Spring of 2010. The Board and approximately 95 active volunteers continue to work diligently to open our doors. On February 1, 2011, the Douglas County School District ("DCSD") Board of Education authorized BFA to open in the Fall of 2011 as a public charter school serving students in grades K-6, adding one grade level each in years 2 and 3. I am actively recruiting and hiring staff and teachers for our first day of classes.

Briefly describe the organization's current programs and activities (Maximum characters: 1,500) (at 1,499)

BFA will provide a rigorous educational program, challenging all students at their own level. BFA will implement the Core Knowledge Sequence (the "CKS") with specific supplementation. Language arts and literature will be supplemented with *McGraw Hill's Treasures* (reading levels K-6), *Prentice Hall Writing and Grammar* (reading levels 7-8), *Step Up to Writing* and *6+1 Traits* (K-6), *Accelerated Reader* (K-8), *Word Masters Challenge* (3-8), *Sadlier Vocabulary Workshop Series* (7-8) and *D'Nealian Handwriting* (K-6). For civics and math, BFA will use *Pearson Learning Core Knowledge History and Geography* (K-8) and *Saxon Math* (K-8). For character education, BFA will use *Core Virtues* as aligned with Benjamin Franklin's Thirteen Virtues.

BFA's daily science curriculum, as supplemented by *Pearson Scott Foresman Science* (K-5) and *Prentice Hall Science Explorer* (6-8), will increase students' scientific literacy and expose them to the scientific method: teaching them to ask questions, hypothesize, make observations, collect and analyze data using various tools, draw conclusions and communicate results.

BFA will also create a dynamic learning environment by integrating technology into its curricula. Classrooms will have Promethean Interactive Whiteboards and document readers. BFA students will be able to access information, organize data, create and problem-solve using a variety of age-appropriate technologies, including iPod Touches (grades K-1), iPads (grades 2-6) and a technology lab.

Current annual operating budget:

\$4.2 Million (in year one of operations)

Project

Project title:

LIVING LABS

Brief project description that includes at least 3 specific measurable goals the project hopes to achieve. (Maximum characters: 2,500) (at 2,452)

BFA is committed to providing our students opportunities to explore, question and investigate the world. With funding from this grant, BFA will establish two living labs to provide students of all grade levels and abilities exciting, hands-on, relevant and interdisciplinary lessons.

The first lab, an on-site classroom size greenhouse, will provide endless unique opportunities for learning. As BFA students step into the greenhouse, so many senses will be stimulated that they can't help but become curious observers and active inquirers. Students will learn about plants as whole systems, experiment with water movement, pollination, nutrition and climate and explore relationships between plants, insects and the environment. The greenhouse will permit an incomparable opportunity to simulate different habitats, and understand how physical factors and climates relate to plant types and growth.

The second lab, composed of light and dissecting microscopes, will permit BFA students to explore the unseen microscopic ecosystems that are living on and around them. Students will observe rocks, insects and plants surrounding the school (and in the greenhouse), cells found in their cheeks and hair, organisms found in water samples and more.

These two living labs will enable students to develop crucial laboratory and science skills, understand the living world and further develop their mathematics, critical thinking, problem-solving and communication skills as they make measurements, record and organize data, perform calculations and interpret results.

Due to these labs and BFA's science curricula, after two years of attendance, (1) students in grades K-2 shall show an achievement increase of 10% in science as measured by curriculum-based assessments and teacher observation, (2) the average growth among students in grades 2-7 in science will exceed nominal annual growth as measured by the NWEA MAP and (3) the percentage of 5th and 8th graders who attain a CSAP score of Proficient or higher in science will exceed the average percentage for DCSD schools by at least 5%.

The National Science Education Standards emphasize that science should be taught through inquiry into authentic questions generated from students' experiences. These living labs will permit BFA students to conduct inquiry-based experiments, transcend limitations imposed by Colorado's arid environment and open their minds to explore the living world.

When was project established? (Maximum characters: 50) (at 46)

The living labs concept began in January 2011.

Please indicate choice that best describes how funds will be used:

Establish new project

Total project budget

\$51,644.54 plus greenhouse installation

Amount requested:

\$45,000

Percentage of total project budget requested from RGK.

87%

How will funds be allocated in the project budget? (Maximum characters: 250) (at 241)

BFA will use funds awarded towards the purchase of the greenhouse structure, necessary accessories, foundation, grow carts, work benches and acquisition of the microscopes. No funding is sought for installation and various other accessories.

Amount of funding committed to date

None. However, BFA is seeking alternative funding through other foundations, including but not limited to, the Daniels Fund, CH2M Hill and the Pepsi Refresh Project, as well as other monetary and in-kind donations.

Date Project begins:

October 1, 2011

Date Project ends:

December 1, 2011

Geographic region project will serve

Douglas County, Colorado

Target population project will serve

Pre-Kindergarten through 8th grade students at BFA

Type of Support Requested

Capital Campaign

Please select the program area that best fits your project

Pre K-12 Education