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Over the past decade, federal programs in the United States have largely addressed the well-documented problem of differences in basic access to technology between rural schools and their suburban and urban counterparts. Consequently, rural schools are better able to prepare their students for post-secondary education and the workplace where digital literacy is essential. As technology access improves, online distance education (ODE) is seen as a solution to significant challenges faced by rural schools, including a lack of highly-qualified teachers and declining population. However, ODE has high attrition rates, partly because participants' social needs are often neglected. Additionally, students' success depends on their abilities to engage in self-regulated learning, effective time management and self-reflection, skills that many high school students are still developing. This paper describes an experimental research study funded by the U.S. Department of Education, currently underway in rural high schools across the U.S. The research adds to a growing body of work that attempts to expand understanding of the digital divide. Increasingly, schools realize that this is no longer an issue of mere access to equipment; education technology projects should incorporate strategies that ensure the success of previously marginalized communities. Our intervention, based on the APA's Learner-Centered Principles, involves training on-site facilitators to provide social support for students involved in ODE. Preliminary findings indicate that the intervention group has a significantly lower dropout rate.