

**Pilot Name:** Trenton's Rethinking Experiential Education

**School/District Name:** Trenton Elementary School

**Contact:** Crystal DaGraca & Snow Ross



**Overview:**

This pilot seeks to innovate grades k-8 education, focusing on student's social emotional well being and mental health concerns.

The Trenton School is located in the school district AOS91 and serves approximately 150 students. Although we are in an unparalleled area for beauty and natural resources, many of our students have never visited our local parks, trails, and beaches with their families.

Numerous studies have shown that an integrated curricular approach that includes place-based strategies and outdoor learning, lead to academic success and positive social-emotional outcomes. Now is the time to transform our school into a place where the full scope of our student's development is prioritized, including the need to access outdoor spaces and places.

In order to develop a whole child approach to education that encompasses cognitive development, social-emotional development, and physical development we need to ensure we are developing relationships and utilizing mindfulness. A whole-child approach to education with outdoor learning as the central focus, is a way to strengthen educational equity and ensure every child reaches their full potential.

TREE-Trenton's Rethinking Experiential Education is a k-8 initiative that embeds outdoor learning into a child's school experience. We want to rethink how all of our students get their needs met, in a thoughtful way that increases independence, peer relationships, self awareness and overall mental health. We will integrate therapeutic services, STEM based learning, and outdoor collaborative experiential learning into the student experiences. We will use field work and place based learning in the living world in each child's school day. Students will participate in engaging, outdoor experiences that will help them to build social connections and increase their self esteem while reconnecting with our natural world. Our aim is to increase student attendance, engagement, and self-regulatory skills.

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