

RREV's Innovative Pilot Template

As part of the **Innovative Mindset and Pilot Development** courses being offered through several of Maine's institutions of higher education, the RREV project uses a consistent template for the creation of all future pilots. Because every pilot created and tested with RREV funds WILL BE published in EnGiNE, we want all of Maine's educators to have the assurance of consistency.

This template provides an outline of the components required of an Innovative Pilot. The information in this template will serve as the basis for requests for school/district level project funding.

Section 1: Define the Need

A. Describe your innovation.

Consider what evidence supports the need for an innovation, and the evidence that suggests your innovation will improve the current situation.

What problem(s) are you solving? System map, insight and future mining and blue card.

There are concurrent reconsiderations of what high school graduates should know and be able to do, and reconsiderations of the mode in which students should learn based on newfound experiences of students and schools prompted by the pandemic (e.g., remote learning, increased technological capacities, increased normalization of atypical routes to success). These shifts require schools to provide learning experiences that are a blend of personalized and typical learning modes with skilled staff guiding students on what to learn next and prepare them for post-secondary pathways.

In Spring 2020, when all of Maine was forced into online remote schooling, many lessons were learned. First, and most importantly, we learned that it could be done. But almost as importantly, in Brewer we learned that it was extremely unpopular because it was overwhelmingly unsuccessful. A survey of 7th and 8th grade teachers found that 100% reported an increase in student disengagement as well as student absenteeism. A survey of Brewer 8th graders who experienced remote learning last spring as 7th graders (n=89) found that over 75% reported being disengaged during the remote learning process. Students reported many reasons for this, but the most salient, and the most addressable in the future, were: (1) teachers who didn't adapt their pedagogy to the online realm; (2) finding it hard to connect with teachers who were continuing to push academics despite such radically different educational circumstances; and (3) confusion over the organization of the online experience--every teacher used different methods of communicating, sharing work, sharing grades, and interacting during class time.

The problem in Brewer seemed clear: remote learning could work, but changes had to be made. We needed to find a way to connect with students, to communicate with students, and to educate students in new and engaging ways that were more appropriate for the online world. And feedback from the community that they wanted to see remote learning options in the future, when the world around us has "returned to normal," meant that we needed to create a plan that would address the needs of families who continued to want their children educated remotely.

In the beginning of the 2021-2022 school year, we identified a population of students where traditional in person learning or traditional alternative education does not meet their needs. They were in need of a pathway that not only helped them get the academic learning they needed but also a connection to school personnel where they did not feel “lost” in the school student population. These students were in great danger of not graduating without an alternative opportunity to complete their high school education. Attendance and social interaction was very poor which created huge barriers for them to access their learning. With the creation of our Nu Remote Program at the beginning of the school year, students that were the “square pegs trying to fit in the round hole of education” had a way that not only kept them engaged and attending school but also kept them connected to the school student life.

However, with this new program, we have had a “flood” of students wanting to apply to the point of needing to expand our capacity. In order to expand, we need to collaborate with districts in the area to provide a robust and self-sustaining program of instruction. With this collaboration, students not only in the Brewer community but in the greater Bangor area, will also be able to engage in a similar pathway. The coordination of multiple remote programs, will yield a Remote Course of Studies where students are able to access academic classes from different teachers throughout the area. By being able to access other districts’ offerings, Brewer’s Nu students will have a greater variety of courses to choose from and actual teachers that will engage them in the learning. This will also help our Nu Specialists free up time to not only teach courses of expertise but to case manage in making sure the Nu students are getting their academic and social/emotional needs met.

By expanding our Nu program and collaborating with other districts in the area, Brewer’s Nu students will have the opportunity to take a very personalized pathway to postsecondary life.

B. Identify which students would be impacted, targeted, or supported by the innovation.

Review the evidence – quantitative and qualitative data and research – that indicates this group of students is considered the most vulnerable and would benefit from the described innovation.

Data you can use to inform your innovation, rationale, and targeted student population include the performance of various groups of students (e.g., students in rural locales, students from low socio-economic conditions, students with disabilities, students who are EIs, students at risk for dropping out, student who are homeless) with regard to academic achievement, graduation rates, social emotional and mental wellness, economic data, and/or workforce participation.

System map, insight and future mining and blue card.

Based on our previous data and data from our current Nu student population, our middle and high school students are likely to benefit from the expansion of the Nu programming. At both the middle and high school levels, in the past two years we have seen a greater-than-normal population of home-schooled students (approximately 20).

Also our attendance data indicates that there is a population of students that are just not accessing the traditional schooling. Truancy is an increasing issue during the pandemic that, we worry, could harden into students permanently falling out of public education and eventually becoming dropouts.

Our counseling and administrative report that some of these students have reached out requesting remote learning options. Discussions with such students or their caregivers indicate that contributing factors include bypassing anxiety-prompting settings, greater comfort in their setting, home support, and avoiding some day-to-day “drama” that is causing or contributing to ongoing attendance issues.

It is a stated goal of the program to lower truancy rates.

Our current data shows that students with truancy issues within the traditional high school setting are now achieving greater success in the remote and hybrid setting where they are engaged in their learning and attending regularly.

With this data coupled with the fact that we have multiple students waiting to participate in an already “full” program, the need to expand is imperative.

Section 2: Describe the Innovation

A. Describe the goals of your innovation.

Consider how your innovation will meet the needs of the identified target student population(s) and how you plan to achieve your goals. Additionally, consider any changes in policy, practice or structures you expect as a result of the innovation.

Yellow card - Promise, proof and also data from some PDSA cycles.

The problem in Brewer is that families have not had a choice of what learning environment is best for their children. If parents did not want to send their child to school, they would have to homeschool and unenroll their child from the district. In person schooling has been the only option that Brewer families had, until this year.

With the implementation of Nu, families from Brewer and other area schools now have the option for their students to have a remote learning program. In the fall of 2021, we hired a remote specialist to teach some remote social studies courses and case-manage up to 15 students. In addition to instructing and monitoring progress with full on-line coursework, the specialist has a virtual meeting with each student on a weekly basis to make that connection and engagement in a remote atmosphere that is typically lost.

As families and other districts have become aware of Nu, we have had multiple applications and currently have a waiting list to attend. With the collaboration of other schools and the hiring of another specialist, we will be able to address the needs of more students in the area.

In addition to partnering with other area schools, not only will we expand our Nu programming but also include other alternative ed programming for younger levels. Middle school has the potential to really grow and in order to engage these students more, we will be adding school to work programming that will follow through to the high school. We will offer service learning and volunteering to integrate them into the community so that these students are learning the skills and knowledge necessary to be successful in society. It will also expose them to multiple career pathways for them to explore and potentially pursue.

Not only will Brewer families but families in the surrounding Bangor area will have a choice in pathways that ensures that students who didn't thrive in person--the anxious, the awkward, the easily distracted, those with incompatible home responsibilities, and more--will still have access to a high quality education while now engaging with curriculum in a modality that fits their needs.

B. Describe activities included in your plan for each stage – preparation (P) or implementation (I) – of your innovation. **Yellow card Proof.**

- **Preparation** includes building stakeholder awareness, establishing routines and processes, and coordination of logistics.
- **Implementation** includes planned implementation activities, as well as professional development for the educators participating in the innovation.

	Activity	Purpose	Stage (P or I)	Date of Completion	Person Responsible
	Consult with other consortiums on how they are delivering remote learning	to guide us in a model that is currently working	P	Fall 2021	
	Consult with area districts to gauge interest	to see if others want to participate in collaborating	P	Fall 2021	
	Consult with DOE to see if more grant money was available	to see if other districts could get grant money and if we can get more money too	P	Fall 2021	
	Participate in RREV Accelerator course	to qualify for additional grant \$	P	Fall 2021	
	Coordinate with area districts again to develop a plan of implementation	to help each other with details and future programming	P	Winter 2022	
	Hire another specialist	to be able to allow more students for 2021-2022 school year	I	Winter 2022	
	Both Nu specialists work together to expand programming	to increase Nu's capacity and attract more students	I	Spring and Summer 2022	
	Develop a course of studies that will include classes from other district remote offerings	to increase capacity within the greater Bangor area districts	I	Spring and Summer 2022	
	Create director position that oversees the alternative ed program	to oversee the administrative duties of programming	I	Summer of 2022	
	Develop programming that includes a school to work program/co-op	to integrate our Nu/Alpha students back into the community	I	Summer of 2022	

	Expand our alternative education to include 6-12th grade	to meet the needs of younger students	I	2022-2023 school year	
	Ensure there is time for ongoing collaboration and discussion partner districts	to increase capacity within the greater Bangor area districts	I	Ongoing	
	Continue to expand and include other alternative ed programs	to meet the needs of more students that need an alternative pathway and meet sustainability	I	On going	

Section 3: Define Innovation Outcomes & Measure to Assess Outcomes

- A. Identify the outcomes (*i.e., student outcomes, changes in instructional practices, changes in student practice*) that you expect to see as a result of your innovation.

Consider both short-term and long-term outcomes, at different points in the time (e.g., at 6 months, 12 months, 2 years and 3+ years).

Impact math game plan and yellow card promise and proof and PDSA cycles

There are several success criteria outcomes for the expansion of our Nu Program.

For student outcomes, we will use local and state assessments to track the growth of students compared to the growth of students that are in person. State assessments will be given both in the fall and spring using NWEA and local assessments will be given accordingly. For the first year, the expectation is that students in Nu will perform equivalently or higher than their peers that are in the other pathway according to NWEA scores. For the following years, it is expected that the growth of students from year to year will be the same or higher than peers in the traditional model.

Another outcome is to reduce truancy with students that have not been able to access a traditional model of education. With our alternative programming, students that have struggled with in person schooling will have a different avenue to reach graduation. Students will still be able to attend school but in a module that is more engaging for them.

In order to be fiscally sustainable, we will continue to expand our tuition base and create collaborations with districts in the Bangor area.

Another expected outcome will be to expand alternative education programming, both in person and remote, to middle school students. The design of this program will allow for students that have disengaged from the traditional model to re-engage into a more relevant pathway. Students will be involved in service learning or community volunteering to expose them to different careers that they may be interested in pursuing. This model will carry through to the high school level where a co-op/school to work program will give them the soft skills and work habits needed to be successful post graduation.

A. Describe your plan for collecting and reviewing data to assess your innovation outcomes. **Fermi estimating impact game plan.**

Potential data to collect includes qualitative and quantitative data (e.g., surveys, interviews, focus groups, observations, exit tickets, and on-demand assessment(s) that can be considered.

	Data Type	Baseline (B) System map Interim (I) Summative (S)	Frequency of Data Collection	Person(s) Responsible for Collection and Data Quality
1.	Academic Assessments: State and Local	B, I, S	The state standardized testing will be in the fall and spring windows. Local assessments will be throughout the year. We will track to make sure students are performing at the same level as their peers in the other pathways.	Teachers and administration
2.	2. Attendance to Reduce Truancy	B, I, S	This will be assessed yearly through the number of students participating. Also, throughout the year attendance will be tracked to make sure students are engaged in the pathways. Surveys will be given to students yearly to gain feedback on how to better meet their needs.	Nu Specialists

3.	Fiscal sustainability	I, S	Tuition money will be tracked yearly to make sure there is enough revenue to support the cost of teachers and curriculum supplies.	Director of Finance, Superintendent & Director of Instruction
4.	Recruitment of future students	I	We will advertise on our website this pathway so that if families are interested they can fill out the form and we will reach out to them.	Director of Instruction, Nu Specialists
5.	Teacher Evaluation	S	An evaluation of staff will be done yearly to make sure they are effective in their instruction, management, communication & planning. We are expecting that teachers will professionally grow in order to meet the needs of their students and be up to date in current practices.	Administration
6.				
7.				
8.				
9.				

B. Describe how you will **scale and sustain** your innovation, including necessary policy changes, changes in mindsets, capacity-building activities, and **long-term financial sustainability**.

Consider the systems changes that this innovation will require and promote.

PDSA and Fermi estimates (first year and long-term estimates)

Attached is a [projection of expenditures](#) that will be funded through grant money until year 2023 then funded through tuition from then on. Also, on this sheet we have potential tuition numbers for future years if the middle school alternative program were to grow even more. Based on projections, a total of 25 tuition students would be needed to sustain two teachers and the stipend for the coordinator.

If the program were to expand even more, we would look to set up a regional service center that would maintain its own fiscal responsibilities through tuition. Schools would agree to pay tuition to the regional center instead of to a district. This model will be similar to what the Western Maine Coalition has done.

- C. Describe the feasibility review you engaged in during the development of your innovative pilot plan, including which aspects of the plan for the pilot were reviewed, which stakeholders were engaged, feedback received and revisions made to the plan as a result of the feedback.

Summary of PDSA cycles (including prototyping PDSA cycles)

The first PDSA cycle was to determine if there was a way to get grant money in order to expand the Nu programming and hire another teacher. Our original grant funded 2 teachers but not until the following year. Because we were growing in size quite quickly, we needed to be able to add a teacher this year. We then reached out to Martin Mackey and Elaine Bartley to “pitch” our idea of how to expand the program by working with other districts in the area. We explained how if other districts also had a teacher in their own district, the teachers could offer different courses that would allow for students to sign up for and have a range of different options. We also felt that those teachers had to be “in district” as there is a great deal of case management that required the teacher to meet with administration and work closely with guidance. When we gave our idea, Mr. Mackey and Ms. Bartley liked the thought of a collaboration and came back with the idea of an accelerated course where Brewer could be eligible along with other districts in the area. The course would be accelerated in that the content would be condensed from the full course and that the districts could use Brewer’s model as a template.

The second PDSA cycle was to determine if other districts in the area were interested in collaborating with us to create an online “academy” where students could have a wider variety of courses through an instructor instead of an online curriculum. The Nu Specialist and Director of Instruction met with the Director of PREP to “pitch” our idea to her and to see if she thought other districts would be interested too. She thought the idea was very innovative and set up a meeting with area superintendents and curriculum coordinators. Brewer’s Director of Instruction presented how successful the Nu program was and the potential for expanding. Six different districts were represented during this meeting. Several had logistical questions that couldn’t be answered at that time, but showed a real interest in pursuing this grant with Brewer. After the meeting, the Director of Instructor met with Mr. Mackey and the instructors from UMO to determine if this could be possible for all interested districts and to set a date and time for the course. Once the course time was set, 6 different districts participated in the course to be eligible for the grant. After the course, 5 district representatives met to discuss how to implement the collaboration and how people were going to apply for the grant.

The third PDSA cycle was to determine sustainability with the expansion. With both grants ending in the year 2022-2023, there was a real concern of how the district was going to be able to “absorb” the continued costs of two teachers and a coordinator. Were there enough tuitionable students out there that would be interested in participating in this program? What would expansion look like in the next 5 years? What staffing would be required and spacing? To determine a long term plan that was manageable and fiscally responsible for the district, the Superintendent, Director of Instruction and Director of Finance all met to create a projection of costs and plan for expansion. Originally, the plan for expansion included two teachers and a coordinator to oversee all of alternative programs in the district. This plan also included a teacher that was specialized in creating a school to work program that would have a coop piece for all alternative education students. Also included was a plan to expand in person alternative education to the middle school. This could bring more tuition students from surrounding towns that would support sustainability. With this plan, however, the costs of employing three staff members with the projections of tuitionable students, was not sustainable. The plan needed to be scaled back to two staff members. Instead of hiring a full time coordinator, the plan now includes a stipend coordinator part with two staff members. One staff member would get a stipend to oversee the programming, recruit new students, and work with building administration to provide alternative programming for truant students. This stipend would also include an extended school year with an additional 10 days in the summer. This stipend is in close alignment with other stipend positions the district already offers, therefore, making this position contractually feasible.

The next concern would be spacing for the expansion of NU and how that will work with our other alternative education program, ALPHA. Currently, there is enough space where the ALPHA program is, however, walls will need to be built to separate the classrooms. Also, our Robotics team has been using this space for their work and that will need to be “cleaned up” and reorganized to accommodate both the alternative programming and the team. The district would use some of the grant money for the materials to add the walls to the space and have our maintenance crew put the additions in. This plan would create four classrooms that would meet the needs for 7-12 alternative education and 2 small offices.

Section 4: Identify Key Expenses

- A. Identify the key expenses associated with the preparation, implementation, and ongoing refinement of your pilot.

Expenses could include staff time, materials, professional development activities, facilities, and other related expenses. This section does not need to include specific costs, but rather list out the different costs that should be considered to implement the innovation.

Fermi estimation

Nu Specialist Salary: \$75,000

Renovation: \$15,000

Coordinator Stipend: \$10,000

Total: \$100,000