

## RREV School Snapshot – Brunswick: Harriet Beecher Stowe Elementary

### Background

In June 2020, the Maine Department of Education (MDOE) was awarded a \$16.9 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education's Rethink K–12 Education Models program to implement the Rethinking Responsive Education Ventures (RREV) program. The overarching purpose of RREV is to support Maine educators to create, implement, and disseminate responsive and innovative educational models that help all students learn and thrive.

### Pilot Description

In Mat 2022, Harriet Beecher Stowe Elementary School received an award from RREV to implement its proposed outdoor learning spaces initiative. This pilot is in the Outdoor Education category.

The goals of this pilot are to:

- Allow all students at the school to participate in at least one or more extended outdoor learning experiences. An extended outdoor learning experience is a specific activity or project unique to the resources and opportunities presented by the new outdoor spaces.
- Provide all staff with professional development to help integrate the use of outdoor spaces into the standard curriculum.
- Give all students access to nature-based play areas.

Key activities of this pilot include:

- **The development and construction of various outdoor learning areas, greenhouses, and nature-based play areas.** These areas will provide more exposure to nature for students who generally live in an urban or suburban area near the school and will enable additional learning opportunities and safe places for students to express their creativity and cultivate interests.
- **Empowering staff with professional development and additional support to assist in integrating outdoor and hands-on activities into their teaching.** These efforts will involve all staff and will be held throughout the year in partnership with the Cathance River Education Alliance Education Center (CREA). While the priority in this training and implementation will be to start with science classes, the school will expand it to other subject areas in the future.

### Exhibit: RREV Award Summary

Category	Year 1	Year 2	Total
Personal Services – Salaries	\$5,400	\$0	\$5,400
Employee Benefits	\$1,350	\$0	\$1,350
Purchased Professional and Technical Services	\$213,000	\$0	\$213,000
General Supplies	\$30,250	\$0	\$30,250
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$250,000</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$250,000</b>

- 522 students in grades 3-5.
- All teachers at the campus will receive professional development.

### Responsiveness of the pilot

Harriet Beecher Stowe Elementary School's pilot is responsive to local needs and/or assets because:

- **The focus on outdoor learning connects well with community organizations that are experienced in this form of education.** With support from the CREA and the Maine Environmental Education Association (MEEA), staff will be able to take advantage of the knowledge and expertise of community members to help further integrate the resources Maine has to offer into an educational setting.
- **Outdoor learning addresses the local educational and socio-emotional needs of students post-pandemic.** Creating a safe space for outdoor learning is intended to support students' mental health and add engagement, especially for students who struggle in a traditional classroom.

### Innovativeness of the pilot

Harriet Beecher Stowe Elementary School's pilot is innovative because:

- **It engages teachers from the beginning, including the design and implementation of the outdoor learning model.** The pilot engages teachers in planning and developing these outdoor-related units, and then provides training and support in a way that builds their capacity to engage in the model. Engaging and supporting teachers throughout the process is intended to increase buy-in across the campus for when the models are ready to be implemented in other subject areas besides science.
- **Students in the area that come from underserved populations, or need special accommodations due to educational or behavioral difficulties, will have additional opportunities to engage in their learning through outdoor spaces.** In this urban area, students who have trouble with the traditional classroom may find increased opportunities for deeper learning and emotional regulation in outdoor learning areas.

### Sustainability of the pilot

Harriet Beecher Stowe Elementary School's pilot model's strategy for sustainability includes maintaining relationships with community organizations such as CREA and MEEA, finding and establishing no-cost partnerships, and utilizing community volunteers for various activities. Most structural costs will be one-time expenses and upkeep and maintenance expenses will be covered by existing school funds. As training in outdoor education will ideally be built into the school's culture, new staff and teachers will be able to be trained by existing staff, reducing the need for additional paid trainings.