RETHINKING RESPONSIVE EDUCATION VENTURES: YEAR 2 REPORT

Prepared by ICF for the Maine Department of Education

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Executive Summary

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 promote innovation and systemic change in Maine schools so that all students across the state have access to high quality and responsive learning opportunities.

RREV promotes the creation, implementation, and dissemination of innovative education models by providing funding and support to School Administrative Units (SAUs), referred to as "Adopter Schools," to pilot new educational approaches. Between August 2021 and September 2022, MDOE awarded funding for 39 RREV pilots across four rounds of funding.[1] These pilots fall into four broad categories of innovative education models:

- Extended Learning Opportunities (ELOs)
- Multiple Pathways
- Online Learning
- Outdoor Education

ICF is a research firm hired by MDOE to provide an external evaluation of RREV that documents lessons learned from program implementation and assesses the extent to which it has changed the educational environment in Maine. This report summarizes ICF's evaluation findings for the 2022–23 school year and addresses:

- The implementation and outcomes at the 39 pilots funded in Rounds 1–4.
- Educator attitudes toward innovation and satisfaction with the support provided to implement their pilots.

Key Findings

Implementation and outcomes of innovative education models

Goals and activities of RREV pilots

Across the four categories of innovative education models, Adopter Schools share common goals focused on the "whole child." These goals target not only academic growth but also socio-emotional wellness and improved relationships between students and their peers, educators, and communities. Pilots within the ELO, Outdoor Education, and Multiple Pathways categories tend to prioritize place-based and inquiry-based learning. Pilots in the Online Learning category focus on creating opportunities for students to learn primarily online and to develop deep relationships with each other, school staff, and their communities through hybrid learning opportunities and field trips and events.

[1] MDOE funded six additional pilots in March 2023, but these are not included in this report because they will begin implementation in the 2023–24 school year.

Pilot activities in all categories often included the development of new curricula or classes. These new curricula or classes were usually designed to provide experiential interdisciplinary learning opportunities that integrate local assets and resources. Other common activities included filling full- or part-time staff positions, providing transportation, and investing in new infrastructure such as outdoor learning spaces, equipment or supplies to enable the pilot's implementation, especially by expanding access to outdoor learning even during cold or inclement weather. Some RREV pilot teams worked to align school policies more closely with the educational model. For example, Outdoor Education pilots adjusted the school schedule to accommodate outdoor learning sessions better, and Online Learning pilots worked to change policies restricting remote learning.

Responsiveness and innovation

Each model was designed to expand access to diverse and personalized learning opportunities. ELO pilots situated learning opportunities within their community's cultural, social, and economic contexts, often by offering students opportunities to develop relationships and gain hands-on experience with local businesses and organizations. Outdoor Education pilots expanded students' access to Maine's natural resources by creating accessible outdoor learning spaces and programming for students of different physical abilities and social and economic backgrounds. Online Learning pilots responded to students' experiences during the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, often by expanding opportunities for students who were more comfortable with remote and hybrid learning activities to access individualized support and foster relationships with peers and educators. Multiple Pathways pilots offered students new opportunities to connect their learning with their cultural backgrounds and personal interests, sometimes by introducing a non-Western lens and balancing curricular requirements with a recentering of Indigenous identity.

All pilots focus on empowering students as learners and connecting core content to out-of-classroom experiences. Approaches to increase student agency included soliciting student input for designing new curricula and infrastructure, providing more flexibility in course scheduling and requirements, and integrating more experiential learning opportunities. Increasing community connections and the exposure to local cultures and careers was a key tactic used by many pilot projects for making learning more relevant and helping students understand that they are valued in their communities.

Implementation experience

Across all rounds of RREV awardees, the pilots were mostly on track for implementing their plans to develop new courses and curricula and build community connections. Almost all pilots had established new partnerships with other schools, nonprofit organizations, government offices, and local businesses; and created opportunities for guest speakers, field trips, hands-on projects, mentoring, job shadowing, and internships.

Pilots that received Round 1 RREV awards were unsurprisingly farther ahead than other pilots in the implementation of more complex program components. This group of nine pilots had largely completed the planned construction, equipment purchases, and professional development for teachers. They also had typically addressed their staffing needs for implementing the respective models, and in several cases hired new staff to support expanded access to their pilots.

Pilots awarded in Rounds 2–4, especially Outdoor Education pilots, faced common challenges related to building delays, administrative barriers, and staffing shortages or turnover. Unexpected barriers include higher-than-expected building costs, shortages of local tradespeople to perform the needed tasks, a lack of consensus within the school community on the placement or design of proposed structures, and delays in permitting processes. Some pilots also experienced delays in recruiting staff to fill new roles to implement their pilots, both because of administrative approvals required to hire new staff and because the positions required candidates with hard-to-find skills and experiences. In particular, Outdoor Education pilots required more time to fully implement their pilots, especially when they involved building outdoor learning spaces. However, in most cases these pilots made progress in other aspects of their programs, such as forming community partnerships and making more use of existing outdoor areas, while waiting for the physical infrastructure to be completed.

Outcomes

ICF gathered outcome data from the 39 pilots being implemented during the 2022–23 school year. As noted earlier, pilots from award Rounds 2–4—especially in the Outdoor Education category—were in the early stages of implementation and thus outcome data should be considered preliminary. ICF collected data through surveys distributed to all students and families involved in pilots as well as interviews and focus groups with students, parents, educators, and community partners. Adopter Schools also provided performance objective data based on measures they selected to align with their pilot and local context.

The vast majority of students and parents were satisfied with the RREV pilot at their school. Across all students who participated in a RREV pilot, 80% agreed or strongly agreed that they liked their experience with their school's pilot this year. This proportion was highest among students in ELO pilots (91%), followed by students in Multiple Pathways (82%), Outdoor Education (80%), and Online Learning (78%). Data from the family survey was similar, with 84% of parents satisfied overall with their child's experience in the pilot. However, one difference between student and parent satisfaction was that parents were most likely to be satisfied with an Online Learning pilot (89% satisfied), whereas those pilots had the lowest *student* satisfaction (78%), although this was still the vast majority of students. Parent satisfaction for other pilots was 86% for ELO, 85% for Multiple Pathways, and 83% for Outdoor Education.

Most students showed progress over the course of the year on school-selected educational growth measures. Every pilot was required to report on at least one student-based educational growth measure, and had flexibility to choose a measure suited to their context provided it could demonstrate changes in individual students' educational growth. School-selected measures included increases on state assessments between fall and spring, improved grades earned between semesters, or increased number of credits earned per year, among other measures. Across all pilots that reported data, 67% of students involved in a pilot showed academic growth. Among students at Round 1 pilots, which were in their second year of implementation, 91% showed academic growth, while only 42% of students in Round 4 pilots—which were awarded in September 2022—showed academic growth. This suggests that schools with more time to implement their programs were more likely to achieve their academic growth measures. When analyzed by innovative model, the data show that students were most likely to show academic growth in Multiple Pathways pilots (91%), followed by ELO pilots (85%), Online Learning (76%), and Outdoor Education (62%).

Most students and parents agreed the pilots were beneficial to learning. Across all pilots, 66% of students agreed that participating in the pilot helped them learn this year. This proportion was highest among students in ELO pilots (87%), followed by students in Online Learning (78%) and Multiple Pathways (75%). Students involved in Outdoor Education pilots (63%) were least likely to credit the program with helping them learn, although this was still a majority of students who said being outside helped them learn. Qualitative data from students' open-ended survey responses and interviews showed that students in ELO and Multiple Pathways pilots liked seeing connections between what they learned in their pilot programs and their community's social and economic context, especially when pilots offered opportunities to gain hands-on experience with local employers or other community organizations. Many students in Online Learning pilots drew connections between their academic progress and their social, emotional, and mental well-being, which they felt was better supported in their online pilots. For example, students in Online Learning pilots often described challenging themselves academically because they felt less stress about social aspects of their education. Students in Outdoor Education pilots told evaluators they appreciated hands-on learning opportunities, especially in science classes. Data from the family survey was even more positive, with 84% of parents agreeing that their child "learned a lot" by participating in the pilot. Parents of students in online programs were the most likely to say their students learned a lot in the program (85%), followed by Outdoor Education (84%), Multiple Pathways (81%) and ELO (79%).

A majority of students, and the vast majority of their parents, credited the pilot with improving their mental and emotional well-being. Across all pilots, 58% of students said the pilot made them "a happier person" this year. Students in ELO pilots (76%) and Online Learning pilots (70%) were most likely to agree with this statement, followed by those in Multiple Pathways (65%) and Outdoor Education (56%). One reason for this pattern may be that outdoor education pilots tended to involve the entire student body, whereas the other models often targeted a smaller group of students with programs that often included mental and emotional wellness supports tailored to individual students. Interestingly, parents' perceptions of the pilots' effects on their children's mental and emotional well-being was even more positive than students'. Across all pilots, 81% of parents agreed that participating in the pilot improved their child's mental and emotional well-being, including almost all (93%) parents of Online Learning students, 86% of ELO students, 81% of Multiple Pathways students, and 80% of Outdoor Education students. Qualitative data from students and parents offered additional insights into pilots' impact on students mental and emotional wellness. For example, one student stated that participating in the pilot "made me feel like I was part of something bigger than me … and helped me discover the best parts of me." Many parents across pilot programs said their students seemed more confident because of their participation and more excited about school.

Scaling and sustainability

Most RREV pilots across all categories expect to expand their educational model during the 2023–24 school year. Specific plans included adding additional courses or content into the new curriculum, engaging a larger group of students, increasing the number of grades served, or rolling out the activities to other schools in the district. Several pilots have also showcased their innovative models to broader audiences. For example, a delegation from Maine School Administrative District (MSAD) 17 (Agnes Gray Elementary School) presented to the Maine State House to promote Outdoor Education for all Maine students. Regional school unit (RSU) 71 (Belfast) Area High School Marine Institute received the 2022–2023 Excellence in Environmental Education Award from the Maine Environmental Education Association in

recognition of its "innovation and creativity in providing the highest quality environmental education programming in the State of Maine."

Plans for sustainability are still emerging but typically include building community partnerships and relying on the school budget process to support implementation of the new curriculum. RREV funding was used predominantly for investments that would endure beyond the pilot period, such as infrastructure improvements dedicated to the new innovative design needs, equipment and supply purchases, and new curriculum development. Pilots that funded new staff positions tended to face greater challenges in their strategy for sustainability, with most planning to leverage their RREV experience to raise additional funds. Nearly all pilots recognized the importance of finding complementary funding sources and community partners that could help to maintain the process of transforming education to be more responsive and innovative over the longer term.

Educator attitudes and experiences around innovation

The vast majority of educators at Adopter Schools who met with RREV coaches agreed that the coaching was valuable. Every Adopter School was assigned a RREV coach to help them conceptualize their innovation, choose appropriate data to track their impact, engage stakeholders, troubleshoot challenges, identify new opportunities, and plan for the future. The vast majority of educators who met with their RREV coach (83%) agreed that these meetings were a valuable use of their time, and three quarters (76%) agreed that the meetings improved their ability to implement their pilot. Qualitative data from educators at Adopter Schools showed that they appreciated coaches for helping them think through new innovative ideas; troubleshoot implementation challenges; and strategize ways to build support for the pilot with administrators, teachers, and the broader community.

Educators involved in RREV pilots exhibit high degrees of flexibility and iteration, collaboration, self-reflection, and engagement in their professional practice. Surveys administered to educators at the beginning and end of the 2022–23 school year showed that the vast majority of teachers involved in RREV pilots actively seek out new ideas and practices to improve their practice, talk to their colleagues about their teaching and implement their suggestions, set aside time to think deeply about their teaching and how they can improve, and fully commit themselves to their work. High baseline levels of these attitudes and practices made it difficult to detect changes in attitudes over the course of pilot implementation, but open-ended feedback provided by educators supports the conclusion that RREV influences teacher attitudes. For example, one educator wrote that as a result of the pilot "I can't go back to the old way, even though this work is tough … [because] I'm thinking differently." Another educator wrote that they were "reinvigorated" by the pilot, and others shared similar sentiments about the positive effects of the pilot on their attitudes toward innovation and engagement in their profession.

Most educators involved in RREV want to push for systemic change at their schools and believe their school leadership encourages innovation, but only a minority believe their leadership encourages them to try new things. About three-quarters of educators on both the fall and spring surveys reported a desire to "push systemic change" at their schools, but a smaller proportion (67% and 66%, respectively) said they felt "empowered to push for systemic change" at their schools. On the spring survey, 80% of educators agreed their school's leadership encourages them to try new things, but only 35% agree that their school's leadership

rewards innovation. Qualitative data indicate that turnover among school and district leadership inhibited innovative environments at some Adopter Schools, especially when new leaders were not involved in pilot planning or were not sure about the administrative requirements associated with the award.

Recommendations for Next Year

The U.S. Department of Education grant funding RREV will end after the 2023–24 school year. As MDOE moves into the last year of federal funding for RREV, it should focus on solidifying the systemic change achieved since 2020. To do so, ICF recommends MDOE:

- **Support all Adopter Schools in the development and implementation of sustainability plans.** ICF can support MDOE by collecting additional data from Adopter Schools during the 2023–24 school year about the steps they are taking and intend to take to sustain their innovative model and school feedback about how MDOE can best support these efforts.
- **Document best practices across the four innovative education models that other schools can apply in their own context**. ICF can support MDOE by creating tip sheets and other materials, based on our evaluation findings, that other schools can use to guide their development and implementation of similar models.
- **Continue to strengthen and refine the Coaching Framework**. ICF can help MDOE continue to learn about what works well with coaching and consider how these practices could apply to other MDOE programs or initiatives involving new or complex programs at schools.
- **Establish statewide systems and structures to foster innovation and design thinking going forward.** ICF can support MDOE by collecting additional data from educators, including teachers and school and district leaders, about ways to recognize, promote, and reward innovation in Maine schools.

Introduction

Background and Theory of Change

In June 2020, the Maine Department of Education (MDOE) was awarded a $16.9 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education's Rethinking K–12 Education Models program to implement the Rethinking Responsive Education Ventures (RREV) program. RREV provides funding and coaching to schools to support the creation, implementation, and dissemination of education models that are responsive to student and community needs and innovative in their approach to teaching and learning. Ultimately, RREV seeks to promote systemic change in Maine schools, such that responsive and innovative education models are continuously developed and refined in response to emerging student needs so that all students across the state have access to high quality and responsive learning opportunities. Exhibit 1 provides a visual logic model of RREV's theory of change.

EXHIBIT 1. RREV LOGIC MODEL

Resources	Strategies & Activities	Outputs	Short-Term Outcomes	Long-Term Outcomes	Impact
• Maine educators' ideas and experience • Maine's natural resources and environment • $16.9M grant from the U.S. Department of Education Rethinking K–12 Education Models program • Institutional support from the Maine Department of Education	• Implement Innovative Mindset Pilot Development (IMPD) to help educators strengthen knowledge of design thinking and create innovative and responsive education models • Provide $250,000 awards to school administrative units (SAUs) to implement innovative and responsive education models • Offer awardees services of a RREV coach to support pilot implementation • Host the EnGiNE online community of practice where educators post pilot plans and resources	• # of IMPD courses • # of educators who complete an IMPD course • # of innovative education models created • # of SAUs that receive RREV awards • # of RREV coaches hired • # of teachers involved in an innovative education model • # of students served by an innovative education model • # of pilot plans posted on EnGiNE • # of educators who are active on EnGiNE	• Improved educator knowledge of design thinking • Improved educator attitudes toward innovation • Increased SAU support for innovative ideas and programs for education • Increased parent satisfaction with availability of responsive education models • Increased student access to innovative and responsive education models	• Maine educators integrate design thinking and innovation in their regular practice • Maine educators understand that educational success need not look the same for all students • Maine schools systematically support and reward innovative and responsive educators • Increased parent satisfaction with their children's education • Improved student educational growth and engagement	• There is a culture of innovation in Maine schools where responsive education models are continuously developed, refined, and disseminated • All students across Maine have access to high quality and responsive learning opportunities

Program Description

RREV supported the *creation* of innovative education models through the **Innovative Mindset Pilot Development (IMPD)** courses, which were offered at no cost to educators through Maine Institutes of Higher Education between fall 2020 and summer 2022. During IMPD courses educators learned how to apply design thinking concepts and ultimately created a pilot plan that outlines the activities and expected outcomes of an innovative education model. ICF described the implementation and outcomes of IMPD courses in its Year 1 evaluation report.

RREV supports the *implementation* of innovative education models through awards made to **Adopter Schools**. A "full" RREV award provides up to $250,000 to a school administrative unit (SAU) to pilot an innovative education model that was developed during an IMPD course. An "Accelerator" RREV award provides up to $100,000 to adapt an existing innovative education model for the Adopter School's specific context. To be eligible for a RREV award, at least one teacher and one administrator from an SAU must have completed an IMPD course and developed a pilot plan. At least 67% of RREV funding must be applied toward direct instruction, and may be used for expenses such as infrastructure development, purchase of materials or services, or staff salaries and benefits that directly support the innovation model. In addition to financial resources, RREV also supports implementation of pilot models by offering Adopter Schools access to a RREV coach, who is an individual who is familiar with RREV and has expertise aligned with the innovative model (e.g., Outdoor Education). RREV coaches meet with educators at their Adopter Schools to discuss opportunities and help solve challenges as they implement their pilot plan.

RREV supports the *dissemination* of innovative education models through an online community of practice called **EnGiNE**. MDOE has spent the last two years developing and programming EnGiNE, and the site became available for use in April 2023. An integral component RREV, EnGiNE serves as a "one stop shop" for educators, administrators, RREV coaches, and MDOE staff to find pilot plans and other resources such as curricula, class activities, and assessments. EnGiNE also provides a place for educators throughout the state to discuss their ideas and experiences with innovative education, including but not limited to those directly involved in RREV pilots. MDOE will continue to develop EnGiNE during the last year of the grant, and the resources and discussions hosted on EnGiNE will persist even after RREV grant funding has been spent, thus serving as an ongoing resource supporting a culture of innovation in Maine schools.

Evaluation Goals

In July 2021, MDOE engaged ICF as external evaluator for RREV. ICF submitted its first evaluation report in September 2022, which focused on the creation of innovative pilots through IMPD courses and the implementation of the nine Round 1 awardees. This report summarizes implementation and outcomes during the 2022–23 school year, and consists of two chapters:

- **Chapter 1** describes the implementation of RREV pilots during the 2022–23 school year. This chapter is divided into four sections aligned with categories of innovative models: Extended Learning Opportunities, Multiple Pathways, Online Learning, and Outdoor Education.

- **Chapter 2** describes the results of an educator survey conducted by ICF that measured educators' attitudes toward and experiences with innovation in education during the 2022–23 school year.

Chapter 1: Implementation of RREV Pilots During the 2022–23 School Year

Background and Methods

RREV funding supports the implementation of innovative education models developed through an IMPD course and outlined in a pilot plan. To be eligible for a RREV award, an SAU must have a pilot team, including at least one teacher and one administrator who have completed an IMPD course and submitted a pilot plan with a budget. During the 2022–23 school year, there were 38 Adopter Schools actively implementing their pilots.[2] These pilots included nine that were awarded in August 2021 and began implementing their pilots during the 2021–22 school year. The other 29 pilots were awarded in Round 2 (March 2022), Round 3 (May 2022), and Round 4 (September 2022) and began implementation during the 2022–23 school year.[3] Each pilot is unique and responsive to its community's specific needs, but all fall under one of four categories of innovative models: Extended Learning Opportunities, Multiple Pathways, Online Learning, and Outdoor Education.

EXHIBIT 2. RREV AWARDEES BY MODEL & AWARD ROUND

School	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
Extended Learning Opportunities				
Harpswell Coastal Academy	■			
Regional School Unit (RSU) 71 (Belfast) Area High School		■		
RSU 44 (Telstar) High School		■		
Kittery's Traip Academy			■	
Multiple Pathways				
St. George Public Schools	■			
EAU 84 (East Grand)		■		
Lee Academy			■	
Falmouth			■	
Maine Indian Education			■	
RSU 21 (Kennebunk)			■	
Maine School Administrative District (MSAD) 49 (Lawrence)				■
Wayfinder Schools				■
Online Learning				
Brewer Public Schools – Year 1/Year 2 Accelerator	■		■	
RSU 60 (Noble) – Year 1	■			
RSU 25 (Bucksport) High School – Year 2 Accelerator		■		
RSU 22 (Hampden) Academy – Year 2 Accelerator		■		
RSU 71 (Belfast) Area High School – Year 2 Accelerator			■	
MSAD 6 (Bonny Eagle) – Year 2 Accelerator			■	

[2] Brewer Public Schools received two awards: A full award in Round 1 and an Accelerator in Round 3.

[3] An additional six schools received funding in March 2023, but are not included in this report because they will begin implementation during the 2023–24 school year.

School	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
RSU 34 Old Town – Year 2 Accelerator			■	
Outdoor Education				
MSAD 17 (Agnes Gray Elementary School)	■			
MSAD 28 (Camden)	■			
RSU 89 (Katahdin)	■			
RSU 9 (Mt. Blue)	■			
School Union 76 (Deer Isle-Stonington)	■			
Portland Public Schools		■		
RSU 25 (Bucksport) Middle School – Full Award		■		
Brunswick			■	
RSU 1 (Bath)			■	
RSU 20 (Searsport)			■	
Gorham (High School)				■
Limestone (Community School)				■
Maine Academy of Natural Sciences (MeANS)				■
MSAD 11 (Gardiner)				■
RSU 35 (Marshwood) Great Works School				■
MSAD 59 (Madison)				■
MSAD 61 (Lake Region)				■
RSU 13 (Oceanside)				■
RSU 73 (Spruce Mtn.) Elementary School				■

This chapter is divided into four subchapters aligned to the innovative model categories. Each chapter describes:

- The goals and activities of pilots in its category.
- The reasons why these pilots are innovative and responsive.
- The implementation challenges and successes experienced during the 2022–23 school year.
- The outcomes achieved during the 2022–23 school year, including parent and student satisfaction with the pilots, student academic progress, student mental and emotional well-being, and other outcomes unique to pilots in these categories.
- Pilots plans for sustainability, dissemination, and scaling.

Each subchapter was written by a 2–4 person ICF team assigned to focus on pilots in their category. Each ICF team reviewed the pilot plan and budget and conducted fall and spring interviews with the primary point of contact at every pilot in their category. These data were used to create “Snapshots” summarizing the goals, activities, innovations, and implementation progress at every Adopter School. Every pilot’s point of contact had the opportunity to provide feedback on their snapshot. Snapshots are included in Appendix A.

In addition to the snapshots, data for this chapter was obtained during thirteen in-person site visits in April and May 2023. Schools were selected for in-person site visits based on their implementation progress to date and in consultation with MDOE and the RREV coaches. During an in-person site visit, the ICF team observed pilot activities in their natural setting and conducted additional interviews with educators, students, parents, and community partners.

Finally, each subchapter contains quantitative data from student and parent surveys. These surveys focused on parent and student satisfaction and perceptions about the pilot's effects on student learning and mental and emotional well-being. Student surveys were administered to students directly involved in the pilot in 3rd–12th grades using paper or online versions at the discretion of the pilot point of contact. Parent surveys were distributed by pilot staff via an email link.

Innovative Education Models – Extended Learning Opportunities

Background

Four Adopter Schools received RREV awards in the Extended Learning Opportunities (ELO) category, including one Round 1 award, one Round 2 award, and two Round 3 awards. The ELO concept was already being implemented in various forms throughout Maine to provide hands-on credit-bearing experiences for students outside of the traditional classroom, and the RREV awards supported schools in rethinking how to design or expand activities that could better leverage local assets and address students' learning needs. Overall, a total of 1,055 students in 9th–12th grades and 70 in 5th–8th grades gained access to nontraditional learning experiences through the ELO RREV awards, such as through one-off field trips, afterschool workshops, and sessions with visiting experts. Of these students, 289 in 5th–12th grades were identified as direct participants of RREV-supported activities during the 2022–23 school year (Exhibit 3).

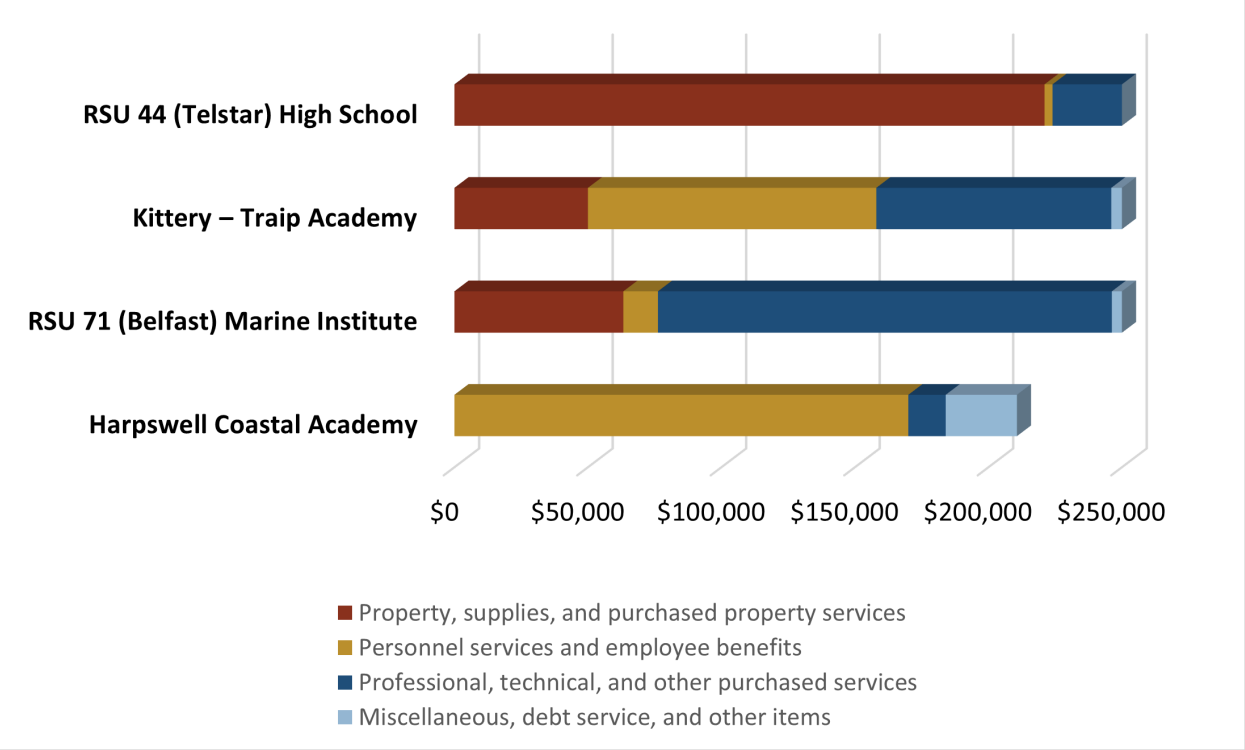
EXHIBIT 3. OVERVIEW OF ELO PILOTS

School	Award Round	Number of Direct Participants	Grades Served
Harpswell Coastal Academy	1	175	5th–12th
RSU 71 (Belfast) Area High School	2	27	9th–12th
RSU 44 (Telstar) High School	2	45	9th–12th
Kittery – Traip Academy	3	42	7th–12th

The allocation and emphasis of the RREV budget varied by ELO school. Harpswell Coastal Academy and Kittery's Traip Academy allocated the largest share for personnel services such as salaries and stipends along with employee benefits (Exhibit 4). Regional school unit (RSU) 44 (Telstar) High School focused mainly on investments in property, property services, and supplies while the RSU 71 (Belfast) Area High School Marine Institute allocated the highest share for purchasing professional and technical services to support new curriculum

development. Another common, smaller miscellaneous expense was budgeted for instructional field trip transportation, a category allocated by three of the four schools.

EXHIBIT 4. ALLOCATION OF RREV BUDGET BY ELO SCHOOL



While each pilot had unique goals (described more fully in Appendix A), there were common themes across schools in this category. These included:

- **Empowering students as change agents** in their local communities to help address social, economic, and environmental challenges.
- **Developing experiential, interdisciplinary learning opportunities** that increase student engagement by applying traditional academic concepts to a real-world context.
- **Increasing the opportunities for community-based learning** to help students understand local career options and develop relevant job skills and connections.
- **Creating sustained connections between the high school and the community** to support ongoing responsive education that prepares students for local opportunities and challenges.

Activities

RREV activities at all four schools focus on building community connections to expand community-based learning opportunities for the respective school programs. This included connecting with organizations, businesses, subject matter experts, and local government to create internships, job shadowing arrangements, work study opportunities, and field visits. The RREV award helped support a dedicated staff position to build these connections at two schools, either through a new full-time position (the new community-based learning coordinator for Harpswell Coastal Academy) or half-time (expanding the existing ELO coordinator position at

Kittery's Traip Academy from half-time to full-time). The other two schools received complementary support through MDOE's separate ELO grant program and leveraged synergies between these two programs to enhance student's access to nontraditional learning arrangements.

A common focus among the ELO RREV pilots is on developing a new, interdisciplinary curriculum for place-based learning. Three schools established new credit-bearing courses with expanded offerings and content expected for the next school year:

- RSU 44 (Telstar) High School developed the Local Ecology and Aspirations Pathway (LEAP), linking science and social studies courses to the local economy and history by having the ELO coordinator and department chairs develop a sequence of alternative core courses with an experiential focus and opportunities for off-campus independent projects.
- The RSU 71 (Belfast) Area High School Marine Institute requires students to complete a combination of core academic credits, internship hours, community service, and a capstone project. The program includes a marine studies course block meeting every other day and various electives that enable students to receive credentials and certifications for marine-based activities.
- Kittery's Traip Academy started offering the semester-long, marine-focused Changemaker elective, in which students learn about the effects of climate change and then design a new sustainable product and marketing plan to help address a local social or environmental challenge.

Acquiring or upgrading infrastructure, equipment, and supplies was another common activity. Both RSU 71 (Belfast) Area High School and RSU 44 (Telstar) High School invested in new physical structures that could serve as self-contained outdoor classrooms. Kittery's Traip Academy and RSU 71 (Belfast) Area High School purchased equipment and supplies to support learning related to marine sciences. For the RSU 71 (Belfast) Area High School Marine Institute, this included equipment for students to grow and harvest kelp from three 400-foot kelp lines in Penobscot Bay. Kittery's Traip Academy invested in supplies for a classroom-based kelp nursery and an underwater remote operated vehicle (ROV) for a "State of the Harbor" underwater mapping exercise.

Responsiveness and innovativeness of models

Each ELO pilot was unique, but the four schools shared common design elements and approaches in trying to leverage local assets, address challenges, and respond better to students' learning needs. All four identified the need for more hands-on place-based learning opportunities for students and explored innovative ways to respond to this need through improvements in the physical learning environment, curriculum, and community connections.

> "Students need to be pulled away from their phones and scrolling through their virtual lives to focus on the here and now. They need to gain awareness of and interest in their own community."
>
> ***Science teacher***

Making learning more student-driven was a priority for all four schools to help ensure adequate engagement and motivation among students. At RSU 71 (Belfast) Area High School, interviews with students informed the program structure, and student interest was reinforced through activities such a Marine Institute logo contest and an elective fair held before fall registration. Telstar students in a design class surveyed the student body (9th–12th grades) to explore preferences for place-based learning and inform the design of the outdoor learning spaces. Traip students design and implement their own projects while the ELO coordinator and science teacher continually plan and adapt activities in response to students' interests. At Harpswell Coastal Academy, some students embarked on a structured community-based learning experience that included a community-based learning seminar, a reflective journaling component, and an individual capstone project articulating how the experience links to longer-term plans. The Harpswell Coastal Academy model evolved after the school charter was not renewed in October 2022, and the customized support for students focused instead on helping them plan their transition to another academic setting or identify potential employment opportunities.

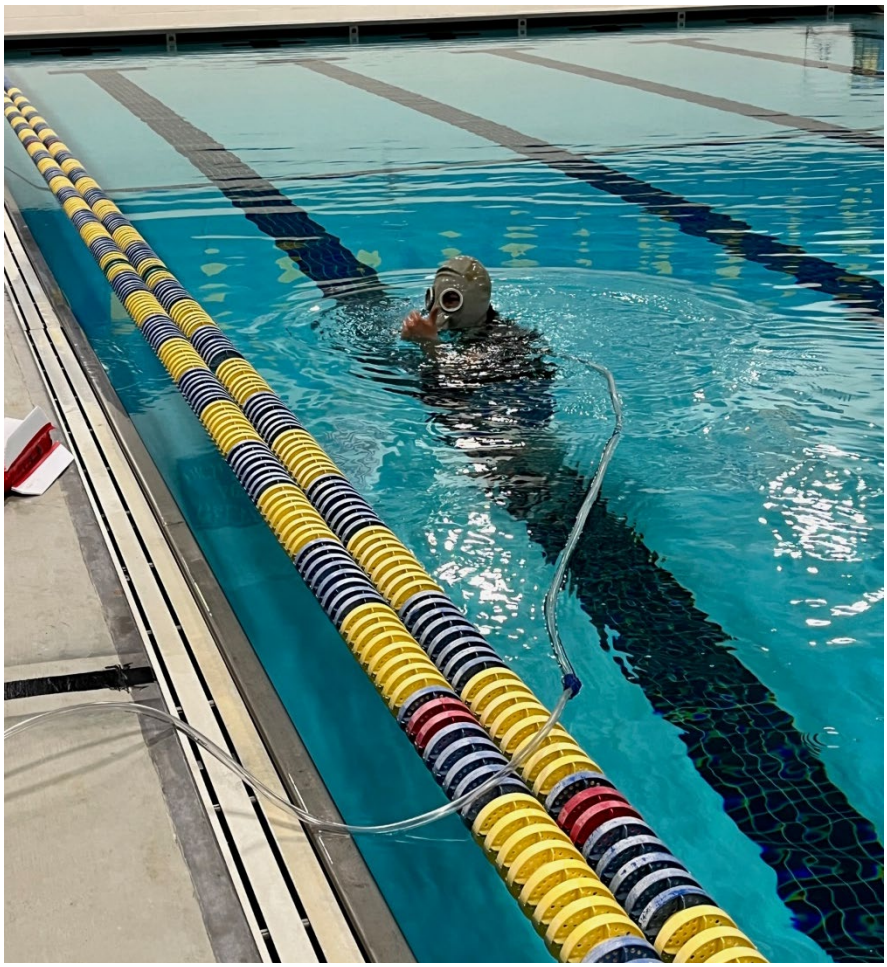
Three of the RREV pilots were designed to expand or extend existing experiential hands-on learning activities. RSU 44 (Telstar) High School is providing continuity for students following their immersion in the Telstar Freshman Academy, a partnership launched by the UMaine 4-H Camp and Learning Center at Bryant Pond and Maine School Administrative District (MSAD) 44 in 2015. Until now, options for Telstar students in 10th–12th grades have been limited mostly to a more traditional academic experience. Harpswell Coastal Academy focused on expanding the existing Expeditionary Learning model to shift away from one-off field trips to more reflective and sustained engagements for students in field work, service learning, job shadowing, and internships. At Kittery's Traip Academy, making the ELO coordinator a full-time position means that more students can receive individualized support and be connected with community-based learning opportunities.

> "If we want to reform rural education, we need to leave the 1950s. We have to step outside and create a culture of customizing education for kids to meet their needs. Then our kids know they are valued."
>
> ***Administrator***

T**wo schools planned infrastructure improvements to help integrate place-based learning opportunities into the traditional school setting.** The RSU 71 (Belfast) Area High School Marine Institute pilot included a new customized wet lab, designed to be a modern self-contained classroom to replace the use of science labs last upgraded in 1959. This freestanding structure will enable a broad range of marine science activities, housing aquariums to serve as a kelp nursery, providing a storing and staging area for kelp farming equipment and excursions, and facilitating experiential learning for new Biology of the Ocean and Chemistry of the Ocean courses planned for the 2023–24 school year. In Bethel, the LEAP pilot at RSU 44 (Telstar) High School seeks to engage students directly in eco-friendly outdoor learning spaces, including an outdoor pavilion for use as a community hub and outdoor classroom, a sugar shack to develop entrepreneurial skills related to maple syrup products, and a greenhouse and raised garden beds to grow food.

All of the ELO pilots are building community connections to create opportunities for students to learn about careers tied to the local economy. Kittery's Traip Academy, located

on the Piscataqua River across from the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, offers students opportunities to explore shipbuilding, lobster industries, and local tourism among other areas of employment. For RSU 44 (Telstar) High School students, Irving Forest Products Sawmill and the Maine Forestry Collaborative are helping explore forestry careers, with other engagements providing exposure to fishing and tourism jobs. RSU 71 (Belfast) Area High School students are learning about many opportunities related to Penobscot Bay. The Harpswell Coastal Academy pilot team strived to increase the community-based learning internship options available to students, broadening the Expeditionary Learning Program beyond its initial focus on science and Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math (STEAM).



A student from RSU 71 (Belfast) Area High School partially submerged in an indoor pool with scuba diving gear.

RREV teams at both RSU 44 (Telstar) High School and RSU 71 (Belfast) Area High School described using an interdisciplinary approach to learning designed to address the range of student needs and career aspirations present in a community with socioeconomic diversity. The Marine Institute can support combined programs such as marine biology research and marine diesel technology exploration in the same classroom. It is not limited only to a science focus, but instead covers marine themes embedded in a range of disciplines, with teachers in English and art serving on the pilot team. RSU 44 (Telstar) High School is leveraging local natural resources to teach relevant skills to students at all levels for addressing local community needs. Having a functioning sugar shack will allow students to tap the maple trees throughout the Telstar complex and develop entrepreneurship skills by producing and marketing maple products. Similarly, the student-driven design process for creating eco-friendly structures at Telstar, such as the outdoor pavilion and greenhouse, is based on understanding a range of factors, from building permit procedures to wetland conditions and design requirements that allow for the natural flow of water through the environment.

Implementation of pilots with ELO model

Not surprisingly, schools that received their RREV awards earlier were more prepared to implement their pilot programs during the 2022–23 school year. With a Round 1 award from August 2021, Harpswell Coastal Academy was in its second year of RREV implementation and started the school year with its new community-based learning coordinator and transportation already in place to continue expanding the Expeditionary Learning approach. RSU 71 (Belfast) Area High School and RSU 44 (Telstar) High School received Round 2 awards in March 2022, and both offered new interdisciplinary learning pathways covering core academic content when school started in the fall. After receiving a Round 3 award in May 2022, Kittery's Traip Academy added a part-time science teacher at the start of the school year and offered a new elective for three students while continuing to design and pilot activities throughout the year to gauge student interest.

Both the RSU 44 (Telstar) High School LEAP pilot and the RSU 71 (Belfast) Area High School Marine Institute faced construction delays related to time-consuming decisionmaking and permitting processes. In Bethel, there was a prolonged debate about where to place the new outdoor pavilion given trade-offs between access and safety with the envisioned immersion in the natural environment away from road noises. The budget for removing a portable classroom on the chosen site was set too low at first, requiring three rounds of bidding. Construction of the pavilion is finally underway to be ready for the 2023–24 school year. Similar challenges were encountered in Belfast, where slower than expected decision making related to the location and permit process for the wet lab meant that the standalone unit was not connected to plumbing. However, the outdoor structure served as an important storage and staging facility for the kelp farming activities and is expected to be a fully functioning wet lab with plumbing for the 2023–24 school year.

Three pilots implemented new interdisciplinary, hands-on, place-based learning programs to increase student ownership and engagement, as illustrated in the following examples:

- At RSU 44 (Telstar) High School, one unit in the new integrated LEAP curriculum focused on nearby Rumford as a mill town and the power of the Androscoggin River, with student teams collecting data and generating a series of "then and now" maps focused on one of four local industries (logging, agriculture, fishing, tourism).
- In Kittery, Traip Academy students in the marine Changemaker elective explored the effects of climate change and then designed a new sustainable product and marketing plan. They learned about the maritime heritage of Kittery; the impacts of climate change; and how local fisherman, ocean farmers, entrepreneurs, scientists, nonprofits, and entrepreneurs are developing innovative products, businesses and programs.
- RSU 71 (Belfast) Area High School students gained hands-on opportunities to develop practical job and life skills while also learning about the local history, culture, and economy. For example, the Marine Institute successfully applied for Limited Purpose Aquaculture (LPA) licenses, and students grew and harvested kelp from three 400-foot kelp lines in Penobscot Bay. An instructor from the Maine Maritime Academy conducted a Coast Guard training course in the school's pool to certify students in saltwater safety.

Implementing new hands-on programs has required an incremental and adaptive approach to overcome setbacks. The RSU 71 (Belfast) Area High School students could not implement the direct seeding method in the kelp nursery as planned to prepare their cultivation ropes for growing kelp, but the Marine Institute was able to draw on funds set aside for this contingency to purchase the kelp seed spools needed for the three LPA lines in Belfast Harbor. At Kittery's Traip Academy, parents and students expressed concern that the programming seemed too "ad hoc" and "last minute" as the ELO coordinator and science teacher tried to plan field trips and guest speakers based on evolving student interests. The RREV team has tried to build in opportunities for reflection to shift these impressions, which are based largely on previous traditional teacher-driven curriculum and learning experiences.

Each ELO school developed community connections, with varying approaches. RSU 71 (Belfast) Area High School and RSU 44 (Telstar) High School leveraged synergies between RREV and ELO awards from MDOE to establish partnerships with local organizations, businesses, and the public sector. Students in the RSU 71 (Belfast) Area High School Marine Institute gained opportunities to learn about local careers in their maritime community through active outreach by the ELO coordinator to establish student internships, job shadowing, and paid work experiences. Example placements include the Penobscot Marine Museum, the local fire department, a veterinary hospital, Belfast Water District, and the police department. Harpswell Coast Academy and Kittery's Traip Academy allocated RREV funding to cover personnel costs for creating or expanding the coordinator role. This allowed Harpswell Coast Academy to embed community-based learning across the curriculum, such as through partnerships with the Harpswell Historical Society, Growing to Give (a farm in Brunswick), the Midcoast Humane Society, Midcoast Hunger Prevention Program, Harpswell Aging at Home, and a wildlife rehabilitator in Bowdoin.

> "You can hear about doing these things from the classroom, but this is hands on, this is as good as it gets."
>
> ***Community partner***

The RREV pilot at Harpswell Coastal Academy shifted priorities after the Maine Charter School Commission denied the school's charter renewal application in October of 2022. With the school slated to close at the end of the 2022–23 school year, the RREV team focused increasingly on supporting the transition of students to another academic setting or a work placement. Current community-based learning electives continued as planned, but developing new community partnerships was no longer the priority. Staff attrition caused by the impending closure necessitated a more flexible, ad hoc approach to addressing students' learning, socio-emotional, and transportation needs for the remainder of their time at Harpswell.

Outcomes

ICF analyzed four types of outcomes across all pilots:

- Opportunities for learning outside a traditional classroom
- Satisfaction with Outdoor Education models
- Academic outcomes of participating students
- Social-emotional outcomes of participating students.

EXHIBIT 5. STUDENT & PARENT SURVEY RESPONSES RELATED TO OPPORTUNITIES FOR RESPONSIVE LEARNING

	Students	Parents	
	This year, I had more opportunities to learn outside a traditional classroom than in the past. (% agree or strongly agree)	How important is it to you that schools offer responsive educational activities?	How satisfied are you with the availability of responsive education activities offered through your child's school?
All ELO Schools (Student n=79, Parent n=19)	**87%**	**95%**	**79%**
RSU 71 (Belfast) Area High School (Student n=37, Parent n=5)	88%	100%	80%
Harpswell Coastal Academy (Student n=1, Parent n=1)	100%	100%	100%
Kittery's Traip Academy (Student n=32, Parent n=9)	89%	89%	78%
RSU 44 (Telstar) High School (Student n=9, Parent n=4)	78%	100%	75%

To gather data on these outcomes, ICF administered a survey to all students in 3rd grade or higher who participated in Outdoor Education activities. ICF received a total of 58 student surveys from across the ELO pilots. Students' families were also surveyed, and ICF received a total of 20 responses to this survey.

ICF also conducted in-person site visits at three of the four ELO pilots. An ICF researcher conducted interviews and focus groups with teachers, students, parents, and community partners.

When discussing outcomes, each team emphasized that the envisioned transformation would require a long-term process, but the three ELO pilots visited reported measurable results in these categories for the 2022–23 school year. Unfortunately, the Harpswell Coastal Academy team was not able to implement the ELO pilot as planned after the school's closure was scheduled, and limited information about their outcomes was available.

Availability of responsive education models

Almost all parents (95%) felt it was at least somewhat important for schools to offer responsive activities, defined on the survey as "learning outside a traditional classroom," and 79% expressed satisfaction with the options available at their children's school. 87% of students agreed or strongly agreed that they had more opportunities to learn outside of a traditional classroom during the 2022–23 school year than in the past.

Community partnerships played a key role in providing students with more experiential learning opportunities.

EXHIBIT 6. PARENT & STUDENT SATISFACTION WITH ELO PILOTS

	Students		Parents	
	Overall, I liked my experience participating in the ELO pilot this year.	I am glad I participated in the ELO pilot to learn this year.	My child enjoyed participating in the ELO pilot.	I am satisfied with my child's experience with the ELO pilot.
All ELO Schools (Student n=79, Parent n=19)	**91%**	**93%**	**79%**	**86%**
RSU 71 (Belfast) Area High School (Student n=37, Parent n=5)	94%	94%	60%	80%
Harpswell Coastal Academy (Student n=1, Parent n=1)	100%	100%	0%	0%
Kittery's Traip Academy (Student n=32, Parent n=9)	89%	89%	100%	100%
RSU 44 (Telstar) High School (Student n=9, Parent n=4)	89%	100%	100%	100%

- Two pilots established "increased community connections" as a performance objective for this year and added a combined total of 27 new partnerships that included local businesses, nonprofits, public agencies, or subject matter experts.
- The RSU 71 (Belfast) Area High School Marine Institute counted the number of student placements rather than the number of partners, with the new ELO coordinator establishing 60 new community-based learning placements during the 2022–23 school year that included student internships, job shadowing, and paid work experience.

Satisfaction with responsive learning

The vast majority of students were satisfied with their experiences with the ELO pilots, including 91% who said they liked their experience this year and 93% who said they were glad they participated in the pilot. Parents' satisfaction was similar to students. A strong majority of parents said their child enjoyed their participation (79%) and expressed overall satisfaction (86%).

Academic growth

Overall, students and parents perceived positive effects from these programs on student learning. 87% of students agreed that their school's pilot helped them learn this year, along with 79% of parents agreeing that their child learned a lot while participating in the pilot this year.

EXHIBIT 7. STUDENT & PARENT SURVEY RESPONSES RELATED TO ACADEMIC OUTCOMES

	Students	Parents
	The ELO pilot helped me learn this year.	My child learned a lot participating in the ELO pilot this year.
All ELO Schools (Student n=79, Parent n=19)	**87%**	**79%**
RSU 71 (Belfast) Area High School (Student n=37, Parent n=5)	88%	60%
Harpswell Coastal Academy (Student n=1, Parent n=1)	100%	0%
Kittery's Traip Academy (Student n=32, Parent n=9)	89%	100%
RSU 44 (Telstar) High School (Student n=9, Parent n=4)	78%	100%

Beyond these surveys, evidence of academic growth for students enrolled in pilot activities was determined by whether students earned credit for the new ELO course at each school. This was the most feasible measurement given the newly developed curriculum, the lack of data available for comparative analysis, and the at-risk students focused on through ELO activities. A passing grade in the new course required adequate content mastery. Of the three schools that reported performance objective data on student-based academic growth, two met their targets, while one school, Telstar, fell just short (Exhibit 8). Across the three pilots, there were 81 students enrolled in credit-bearing activities across the three pilots, and 69 of these earned passing grades, meaning that 85% demonstrated academic growth.

EXHIBIT 8. STUDENT-BASED EDUCATIONAL GROWTH PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES

	Student-Based Academic Growth Measure	Result
RSU 71 (Belfast) Area High School	85% of students will receive a credential, certification, or academic credit related to marine studies	Met – 100%
Harpswell Coastal Academy	Did not report	N/A
Kittery's Traip Academy	85% of students will earn credit in the Marine Changemaker course	Met – 89%
RSU 44 (Telstar) High School	85% of student will earn a grade of 2.7 or above in the pathway course	Not Met – 76%

Outcomes are also emerging related to students' new awareness, knowledge, and skills that could help facilitate their transition to postsecondary education or work opportunities.

- At the RSU 71 (Belfast) Area High School Marine Institute, at least 60% of the enrolled students are expected to earn a certification or other credential for a marine-related skill by graduation. This year, the one participating 2023 senior earned her Coast Guard Fishing Vessel Drill Conductor Certification.
- Both Kittery's Traip Academy and RSU 71 (Belfast) Area High School Marine Institute achieved their respective goals for increasing student awareness, as measured through self-reported gains on student surveys. In Belfast, this focus was on whether students were able to identify one or more careers in the maritime or marine industries both locally and globally. In Kittery, the students assessed whether they had increased awareness about how to apply design thinking to generate new solutions to social and/or environmental challenges facing the community.

Another important outcome for the three ELO pilots still under implementation is a new interdisciplinary place-based curriculum, which will continue to evolve during the 2023–24 school year. Each school experienced increased enrollment and RREV teams shared anecdotal observations about improvements in student performance.

- At Kittery's Traip Academy, the new marine-focused Changemaker elective gained popularity between the first and second semesters, increasing from three to 10 students, and appealed both to Advanced Placement students and to students who have not thrived in a traditional classroom setting.
- RSU 44 (Telstar) High School's LEAP, linking science and social studies courses to the local economy and history, also attracted a growing number of students, from 21 enrolled in the first semester to 45 in the second. Teachers noted that students who had failed in a traditional classroom setting flourished with project-based learning, "doing fantastic work" and "getting great grades."
- The RSU 71 (Belfast) Area High School Marine Institute is already a respected integrated learning model in the Belfast area, recently receiving the 2022–23 Excellence in Environmental Education Award from the Maine Environmental Education Association in recognition of its "innovation and creativity in providing the highest quality environmental education programming in the State of Maine."

Mental and emotional wellness

The parent and student surveys each included a question about the pilots' effects on students mental and emotional well-being. The vast majority of parents (86%) agreed that "participating in the ELO pilot improved my child's emotional well-being." A slightly smaller but still substantial proportion of students (76%) agreed that the experience "has helped me be a happier person."

EXHIBIT 9. STUDENT & PARENT SURVEY RESPONSES RELATED TO MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL WELLNESS

	Students	Parents
	My experience participating in the ELO pilot this year has helped me be a happier person.	Participating in the ELO pilot improved my child's emotional well-being.
All ELO Schools (Student n=79, Parent n=19)	**76%**	**86%**
RSU 71 (Belfast) Area High School (Student n=37, Parent n=5)	69%	80%
Harpswell Coastal Academy (Student n=1, Parent n=1)	100%	0%
Kittery's Traip Academy (Student n=32, Parent n=9)	78%	100%
RSU 44 (Telstar) High School (Student n=9, Parent n=4)	78%	100%

Indications of possible social-emotional outcomes included students' and teachers' descriptions of a "happier" learning environment and evidence of increased student engagement. Students reported that "our voices seemed to matter this year," "we were excited to take charge of our own learning," and "I am so happy not to be stuck in a chair." One teacher noted that the RREV pilot "brings kids to life who never even wanted to be in school before and increases their engagement." Teachers and administrators also described improvements to their own social-emotional wellness, reporting the pilot to be "one of the most rewarding professional experiences" and that "being able to pass knowledge on is super exciting."

Two schools defined and achieved targets for performance objectives related to increasing student engagement.

- RSU 44 (Telstar) High School targeted "increased enrollment in LEAP courses" to monitor changes between the first and second semesters.
- Kittery's Traip Academy aimed for "increased student engagement in hands-on learning opportunities to understand and help solve social and environmental challenges facing the Kittery community."

Dissemination and scaling

Public outreach and community relations have generated positive energy around the RSU 71 (Belfast) Area High School Marine Institute activities, enabling what one teacher referred to as "the social license to operate." This supportive environment is reflected in the approval of the local harbormaster for students to learn how to farm kelp in the busy Belfast Harbor and in news stories showcasing Marine Institute activities, such as the News Center Maine evening broadcast and an episode on *Somewhere in Waldo County* in May 2023 featuring Belfast students harvesting kelp.

Students from RSU 71 (Belfast) Area High School on a boat preparing to harvest kelp.

Dissemination activities for the new programs at Kittery's Traip Academy and RSU 44 (Telstar) High School have been less structured, relying more on ad hoc opportunities and word of mouth. Both teams described the need to be more proactive in building school and community support. Efforts are underway at Telstar to "market LEAP to the community" to foster a broader understanding of how the learning experience is changing. This includes brainstorming with the technology director on how to disseminate key messages and opportunities.

RREV teams for the three remaining ELO pilots each planned to expand activities during the 2023–24 school year, making use of new infrastructure, equipment, and supplies gained through their RREV funding.

- Plans for the RSU 71 (Belfast) Area High School Marine Institute include adding new core courses, including Physics of the Ocean and Chemistry of the Ocean; attracting a growing number of students; and using the new wet lab as a standalone classroom once it is more permanently located and connected to plumbing.
- At Kittery's Traip Academy, there is an ongoing process of piloting activities to gauge student and community interest. For example, the State of the Harbor session this summer entails 22 students collaborating with the RREV ELO coordinator and four community partners to explore options for integrating the use of the ROV and underwater mapping into the school curriculum. At minimum, the Changemaker course will be offered again in the fall, and another science teacher at Traip Academy has expressed interest in collaborating.
- The RSU 44 (Telstar) High School team expects to implement LEAP as originally designed once the new outdoor pavilion, greenhouse, and sugar shack have been constructed or renovated. All major construction should be completed before the new school year begins, and the team is planning activities and a new student survey to rekindle interest that might have waned during the construction delays.

None of the ELO RREV teams have used EnGiNE, Maine's online platform for innovative learning models, although this was not introduced to schools in its fully functional form until April 2023. However, they do share information with each other informally. Teachers at both Kittery's Traip Academy and RSU 44 (Telstar) High School reported that they had received advice from the RSU 71 (Belfast) Area High School Marine Institute regarding approaches for integrating experiential learning into the curriculum.

Sustainability

Each ELO RREV team acknowledged that sustaining the new ELO model will require continuing to build support within the school and the broader community. Plans to foster this culture shift and engage the community varied by school:

- RSU 44 (Telstar) High School will continue to develop community partnerships. The team is exploring hosting an annual Contractor Day, in which builders and other community volunteers donate their time and resources to complete a list of tasks including painting, renovation, and landscaping. In addition, an all-staff workshop was planned to continue building this interdisciplinary vision, to understand how different initiatives fit together, and to plan the professional development strategy for the next year.

- At RSU 71 (Belfast) Area High School, the team will continue expanding community connections through school outreach activities, parents, and school alumni. Community placements are perceived as a win-win engagement, where students are gaining real-world experiences and local industries are gaining needed human resources. The growing community support is expected to help maintain the political will needed for sustaining the Marine Institute.
- Kittery's Traip Academy is exploring student and community interest by testing small-scale activities in collaboration with community partners, such as the State of the Harbor summer session. Each activity is followed by a survey of students and parents to gauge interest, and those that generate more support will be adapted or scaled for the 2023–24 school year.

All three of these schools are finding complementary initiatives and funding sources to help sustain changes introduced through the RREV award, which is a key indicator of their pilots' success and value in their respective communities. Each RREV team acknowledged that a paradigm shift in education, such as that reflected in an ELO model, will require longer-term investments from multiple sources. As one ELO coordinator noted, "Flash-in-the-pan funding can help a cohort of students, but it can't sustain transformative change. We need to link initiatives and find ways to keep the change process going."

- Some of the related initiatives at RSU 44 (Telstar) High School to strengthen place-based learning in a rural setting include the separately funded ELO program, the Portrait of a Graduate process with the Western Maine Educational Collaborative, and Telstar's 7 Peaks Program that started with GEAR UP support in 2018 to foster postsecondary opportunities and aspirations for students and now offers programming in 6th–12th grades.
- The RSU 71 (Belfast) Area High School Marine Institute team developed a partnership with the Maine Center for Research in STEM Education (RiSE Center) funded by the National Science Foundation and is exploring establishing a CTE satellite aquaculture program that could sustain a new teaching position.
- Examples of community partners connecting with Kittery's Traip Academy students and teachers include Rozalia Project, a nonprofit focused on cleaning and protecting the ocean; University of New Hampshire, focused on a Changemaker collaboration; Cold Current Kelp, focused on aquaculture; and the Kittery Port Authority, for mapping and understanding the state of the harbor.

Finally, two of the pilots aimed to ensure fiscal sustainability by using RREV funding mostly for nonrecurring expenses. Both the Belfast Area High School and Telstar teams invested largely in infrastructure, equipment, and curriculum development. The ongoing costs for implementing the new curriculum are expected to be covered through the regular budget cycle.

Innovative Education Models – Multiple Pathways

Background

There are eight Adopter Schools in the Multiple Pathways category (Exhibit 10). The number of students directly involved in the pilot varied from 18 at regional school unit (RSU) 21 (Kennebunk) to more than 1,000 students at Falmouth.

EXHIBIT 10. OVERVIEW OF MULTIPLE PATHWAYS PILOTS

School	Award Round	Students	Grade Levels
St. George Public Schools	1	210	Pre-kindergarten (PreK)–8th
RSU 84 (East Grand)	2	138–140 students served	Kindergarten–12th
Falmouth*	3	Approximately 1,100	1st–12th
Lee Academy	3	21	10th–12th
Maine Indian Education	3	Over 100	6th–8th
RSU 21 (Kennebunk)	3	18	10th–12th
MSAD 49 (Lawrence)	4	12–22 students directly involved in L.E.A.P.; Over 100 students directly involved in CFPBL program	9th–12th
Wayfinder Schools	4	65	Youth aged 14–22

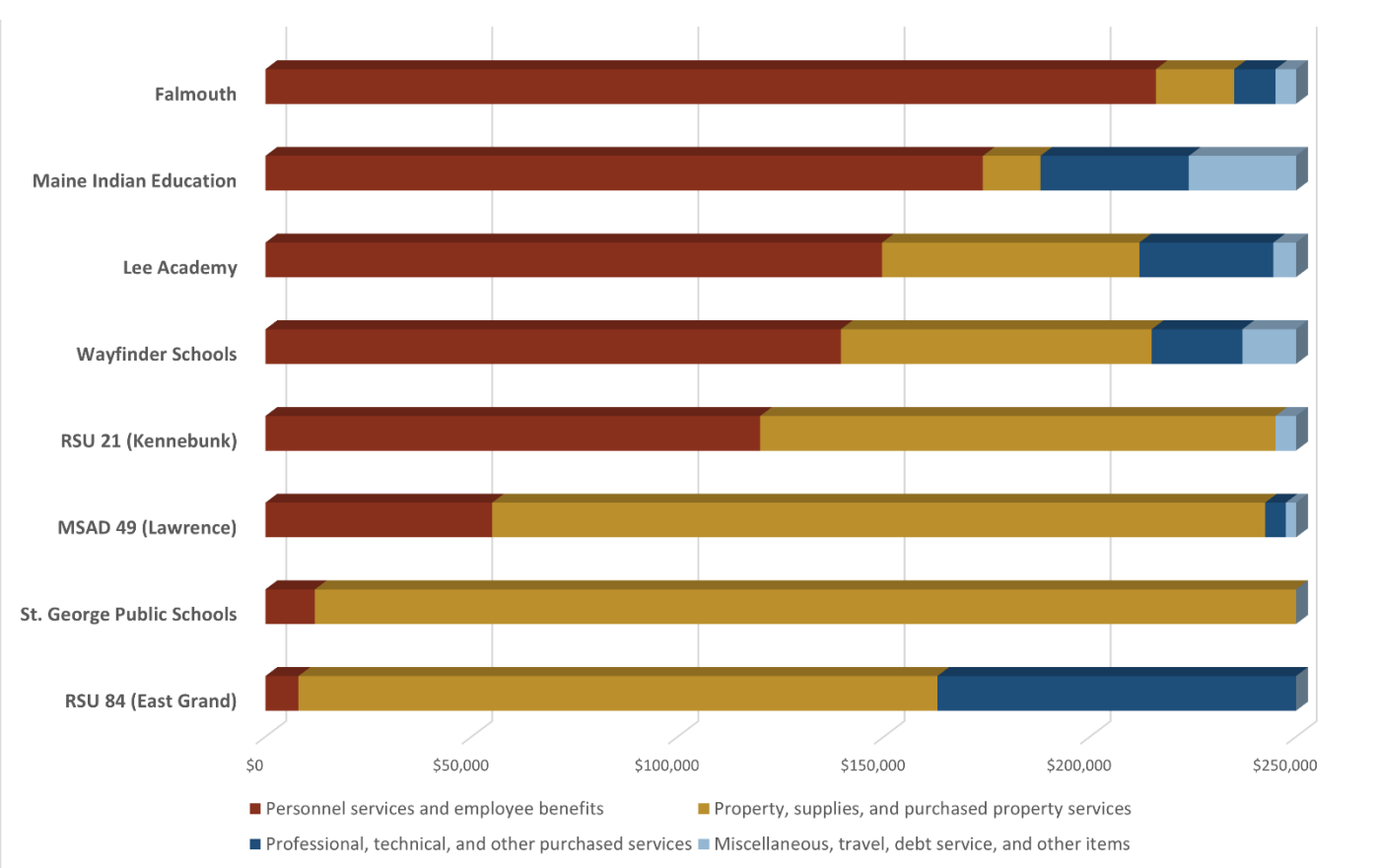
Note: L.E.A.P. stands for Lawrence Education Alternative Program and CFPBL Program is the Community-Focused Project-Based Learning Program.
*Falmouth was originally identified as a Multiple Pathways innovative model but has since changed to the Outdoor Education category.

In four out of eight schools, the largest budget category was for personnel services and employee benefits. In the other four schools, the largest budget category was for property, supplies, and purchased property services.

While each pilot had unique goals, there were common themes across schools in this category. These included:

- **Addressing academic, social, and emotional needs through a focus on the "whole child."** A common goal across Multiple Pathways pilots was to create programming for the student as a person with complex and intersecting interests and needs. For example, all elements of RSU 21 (Kennebunk's) Alternative Education program—including the curriculum, house renovation project, and the explicit focus on wellness/social-emotional learning (SEL)—are a direct result of conversations the implementation team had with students. For example, some students are interested in entering the trades field when they graduate, so the team has developed a curriculum and partnered with local community organizations to provide students an opportunity to develop their skills to prepare them for a career in a trade. The implementation team also recognized that students coming into the Alternative Education program had certain social-emotional

EXHIBIT 11. ALLOCATION OF RREV BUDGET BY MULTIPLE PATHWAYS SCHOOL

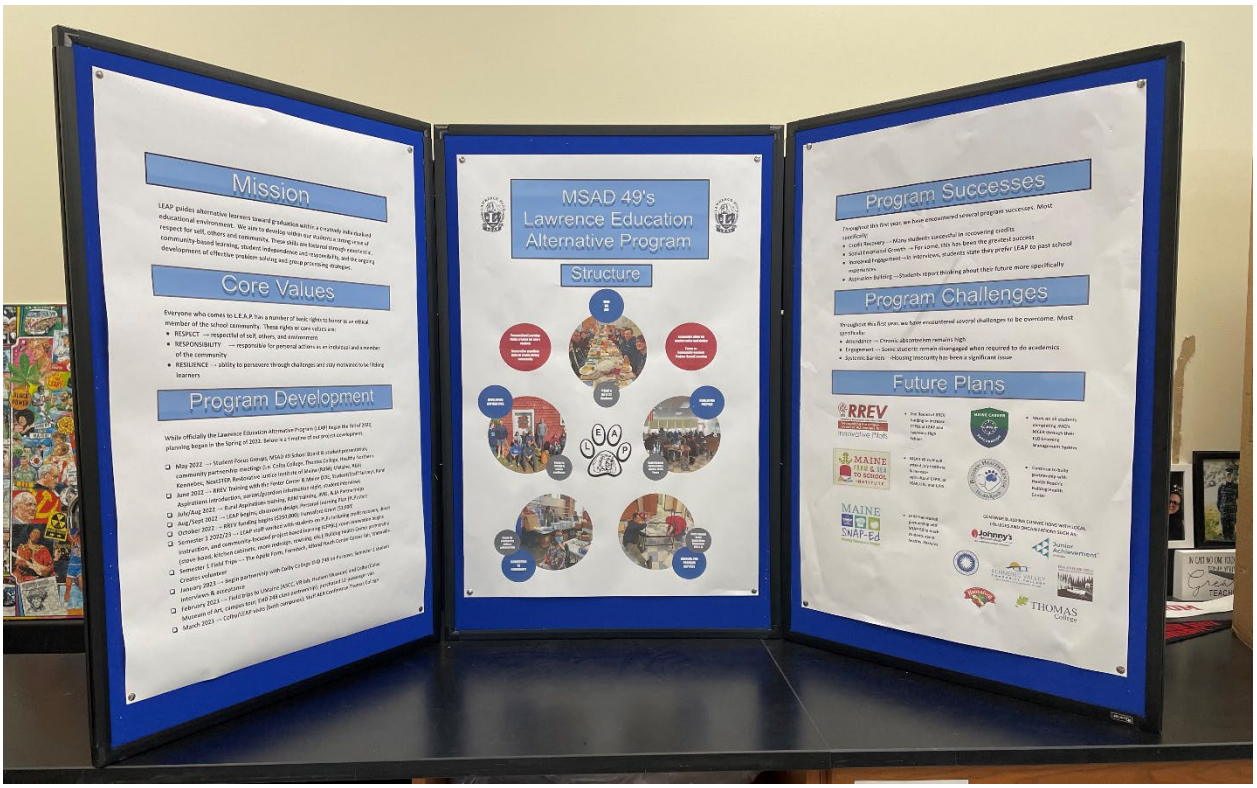


needs (as well as histories of adverse childhood experiences and trauma) that were not properly addressed in mainstream education settings; hence, the explicit focus on SEL and wellness. MSAD 49 (Lawrence's) pilot project provides an engaging approach to learning that is in high demand amongst the MSAD (Lawrence) student body. According to student surveys, there was a disconnect between the type of learning some students desire, and the type of learning that teachers were providing at the time. Students indicated that they desired more engaged, more interactive learning experiences. The interdisciplinary Community-Focused Project-Based Learning (CFPBL) Program addresses this gap by creating authentic learning experiences where students identify, understand, and work to solve problems in their own communities.

- **Strengthening student relationships with land and culture.** Several Multiple Pathways schools developed programs to bridge student connections with the natural environment and local culture. For example, Falmouth's program is designed to teach stewardship of land, water, and natural resources through cultural knowledge, mentorship, and project-based learning. In doing so, the ultimate goal is to build students' understanding of the ecological relationships within the Presumpscot Watershed and the importance of water through the ancestral perspectives and worldviews of the Wabanaki people (the first inhabitants and land stewards of the area). Likewise, Maine Indian Education's program is designed to foster the development of a

strong cultural foundation and identity through daily experiences with language, history, and practices based on Wabanaki worldviews.

- **Engaging students in economic revitalization and social development.** Some Multiple Pathways schools sought to build programs that not only supported students and their interests, but also supported the economic or social development and revitalization of the community. For example, RSU 84 (East Grand) established a co-op for students to connect with a local hardware store where they can get hands-on experience developing employability skills and learning about small business education. At the same time, this has been a mutually beneficially business model because not only does it provide students with project-based learning opportunities, but it also keeps the hardware store open and accessible to all members of the community, thereby contributing to the local economy. Similarly, St. George Public Schools' model seeks to support the economic development of the local community by educating students on specific trade skills (e.g., woodworking, welding, computer programming) that are in high demand and necessary to the economic resilience of the community.
- **Improving student attendance, graduation rates, and other measures of educational growth.** Several Multiple Pathways models addressed issues of student truancy, low student retention and graduation rates, and student achievement. Lee Academy, Wayfinder Schools, and MSAD 49 (Lawrence) all have the common goals of



Poster created by students at MSAD 49 (Lawrence) showing this Multiple Pathways school's program structure.

improving attendance rates, educational growth, and graduation rates for students who do not thrive in traditional academic settings and are most at risk for not graduating.

- **Expanding existing programs or curricula to include more students or expand program reach to neighboring school districts.** Two Adopter Schools focused on expanding already existing programs with RREV award funding. For example, RSU 21 (Kennebunk's) primary goal was to increase the physical space of the existing alternative education program to accommodate more students and allow for project/community-based learning. Likewise, Wayfinder Schools sought to expand the Passages Responsive Education Project (PREP) model to Hancock County.
- **Centering social-emotional wellness, resiliency, and other supports to reach students who do not thrive in traditional educational settings.** Though the goal of Multiple Pathways approach is primarily to make several different educational pathways available to students (with each pathway being aligned to one or more industry sectors, as well as to student interests), several Adopter Schools also prioritized social-emotional well-being as part of the design and delivery of these educational pathways. For example, St. George Public Schools and Lee Academy both sought to develop students' social-emotional skills, in addition to technical skills, as both schools view social-emotional wellness as critical to meeting existing labor force needs. Wayfinder Schools, through its focus on justice-involved youth, sought to build student resiliency by focusing on student strengths (as opposed to deficits).

Activities

Common activities among Multiple Pathways pilots included:

- **Offering work-based learning opportunities for students.** A key component of Multiple Pathways Adopter Schools was creating and connecting students with service-learning and community-based opportunities, internships, and experiences. Several schools engaged students in outdoor learning projects. For example, at Lee Academy, students participate in a series of service-learning based outdoor projects, such as trail work and community gardening, that occur both at school and with local nonprofit organizations. Students at Falmouth engage in a variety of experiential learning activities connected to the Presumpscot Watershed, including water testing and identification of local flora and fauna. Each student engages in an experiential learning project connected to local waterways, including fishing, canoeing, and navigating underwater robots. Maine Indian Education engages students in immersive outdoor project-based experiences designed to connect students with cultural identity and real-world learning. Other Adopter Schools created workforce exposure opportunities for students. For example, at St. George Public Schools, each class visits (or is visited by) a local business or contractor working in the trades or technical fields. Likewise, both Wayfinder Schools and MSAD 49 (Lawrence) connect students to local career technical education, financial literacy education, and internship/apprenticeship opportunities.
- **Developing standards-aligned curricula and learning plans that allowed students to pursue their interests and career goals.** Another key component of Multiple Pathways Adopter Schools was designing integrated curricula that brings real-world relevance to instruction, centers student interest areas, and is aligned with core academic principles and standards. For example, Lee Academy and Falmouth both developed an outdoor-based integrated curriculum that provides students with place-

based learning experiences. RSU 84 (East Grand) developed a curriculum aligned with standards for students to learn employability skills and career opportunities while developing skills in financial literacy, business management, product development, and trades. Finally, St. George Public Schools developed a curriculum scope and sequence to extend hands-on/minds-on career technical education opportunities to all students in pre-kindergarten (PreK) through 8th grade. In addition to formal curricula, some Adopter Schools also developed more informal learning plans and strategies to support student learning. For example, MSAD 49 (Lawrence) had students in their program develop an individualized learning plan that is centered on their interests.

- **Hiring staff devoted to supporting the needs of students in the program, including educational technicians and outdoor learning coordinators.** While several Adopter Schools initially planned to use RREV funds to hire additional staff to help support program implementation, many of these schools experienced challenges with recruitment and hiring. However, two schools were successful in recruiting, hiring, and retaining project staff. For example, RSU 21 (Kennebunk) hired two educational technicians to support the needs of incoming students for the alternative education program. Additionally, Falmouth hired an outdoor learning educator to support curriculum development, curricular alignment, and implement place-based learning experiences.
- **Purchasing supplies, materials, transportation vehicles, and physical spaces to support program implementation.** Two schools—RSU 21 (Kennebunk) and MSAD 49 (Lawrence)—used RREV funding to procure additional transportation vehicles to allow for more off-campus excursions to community project sites. As well, the majority of St. George Public Schools' RREV funding was used to support the design and construction of the career and technical education (CTE)/Makerspace Building.

Responsiveness and innovativeness of models

One goal of the RREV grant is to support schools in developing responsive and innovative education models within their school in ways that solve a local challenge or leverage a local opportunity. In this report, the term "responsive" refers to the ways in which schools have adapted their innovative models to meet the unique needs of their students, school, or community in their own context. The term "innovative" refers to the ways in which schools have developed new ways of learning that transcend traditional classroom instruction. The following section highlights the ways in which the Multiple Pathway Adopter Schools have implemented responsive and innovative educational models.

Responsiveness

The Multiple Pathways pilots integrate the schools into their communities' economic and social development. As noted previously, one of the major goals of the Multiple Pathways pilot projects was to build authentic student connections to the community. In doing so, several Adopter Schools created models that fostered relationships whereby both students and communities were beneficiaries of the pilot. For example, RSU 84 (East Grand's) pilot program consists of a business pathway that draws direct connections between the curriculum and the local economy. . Similarly, Lee Academy's alternative pathway program was developed in response to the socio-economic acute shocks and chronic stressors experienced by the community in recent years. In light of these challenges, school leaders wanted to focus on

relationship-building to establish trust between the students and the community. By exposing students to career options such as health care, food service, and trade industries through workplace visits and job shadowing, the program simultaneously nurtures students' interests and motivation and contributes to the economic resilience of the community. Finally, St. George Public Schools' Makerspace Initiative is intentionally designed not only to build technical skills and innovative thinking in preK–8 students, but also to provide adult education programming and "open shop" time for the broader community to visit the Makerspace Building to learn about traditional trades, woodworking, and other CTE skills.

Interior of a house renovated by students at RSU 21 (Kennebunk) for the Multiple Pathways pilot.

Some Multiple Pathways pilots center local ancestral Indigenous teachings, worldviews, and ways of knowing to teach students about their culture and community. Two Adopter Schools recognized and privileged the fact that their schools and local communities are situated on the unceded territories of the Wabanaki people. Rather than defining the "local community" as a specific city, township, municipality, or county in the state, these two Adopter Schools expanded the notion of community to encompass the ancestral lands of the Wabanaki, which extend beyond the colonial borders of Maine—as well as the United States and Canada. Falmouth's pilot program sought to develop students' appreciation, knowledge, and relationship with the local natural waterways through Wabanaki teachings of history and culture. Students (most of whom are not Indigenous) are taught to see and understand the interdependence between and among all orders of life (i.e., natural elements, plants, animals, and humans), as well as come to terms with how colonization and the attempted genocide of Indigenous peoples have had a cascading effect on the environmental problems facing the planet today. Maine Indian Education's pilot project explicitly focused on Wabanaki cultural revitalization. Student surveys showed that Maine Indian Education students felt disconnected from their learning in school and yearned for immersive practical and cultural learning experiences, particularly those that centered Wabanaki culture and language. This pilot is responsive to these student needs by providing programming—which includes an increased focus on Wabanaki culture, language, and practices—as well as creating a structure in which

students can make learning choices that put their Wabanaki knowledge, culture, and identity first.

Innovativeness

The Multiple Pathways pilots give students agency and responsibility over their learning. Finding ways to foster enthusiasm and joy for learning was a common challenge reported by several Adopter Schools. Tailoring educational pathways to student needs and centering students' lived experiences was a novel education strategy for Adopter Schools to overcome this challenge. For example, Lee Academy's pilot project is unlike anything the school has offered before. The full curricular model created a newfound excitement for learning among students. School leaders have already noticed positive outcomes because of the program, including increased attendance, positive feedback from teachers and community partners, and overall "aspirations" of students, including developing concrete goals, such as filling out college applications. Similarly, RSU 21 (Kennebunk's) Alternative Education pilot is unique in that the implementation team invests a great deal time at the *beginning of each school year* developing a brand-new curriculum that is responsive to the needs of that particular student cohort. Finally, Wayfinder Schools' pilot program centers each student's lived experience and offers individualized instruction to each student, such that the instructor also fills the role as a caring and trusted mentor in students' lives.

The Multiple Pathways pilots help students understand the relevance of their learning experiences beyond school. In some cases, pilot projects help students make linkages between academic and career technical knowledge and industry/career application. For example, RSU 84 (East Grand's) business pathway helps connect what is learned in the classroom about business topics—such as business management and financial literacy—to gaining applied experience in trades and product development in the community. Students participating in MSAD 49 (Lawrence's) Lawrence Education Alternative Program (L.E.A.P.) complete a postsecondary plan that includes college, career, and military options; all L.E.A.P. seniors leave high school with a detailed plan and connections made to specific workforce, college, and military support professionals. In other cases, pilot projects help students see the relevance of their learning experience to their broader world, from local to global. For example, Falmouth's pilot project provides opportunities for students to build connections with nature, their community, and Wabanaki history and culture through place-based learning. In doing so, place-based, experiential learning activities are helping students see the importance of broader issues currently impacting the planet, including overheating, pollution, climate change, and water contamination.

The Multiple Pathways pilots expand access to career and technical resources. Some pilot models are preparing students to develop the technical, creative thinking, and social-emotional skills to thrive in an innovation economy. RSU 84 (East Grand's) pilot focuses on employability skills that will benefit students beyond graduation; teachers there commented that an added benefit of this focus on employability is increased attendance because of students gaining valuable skills both inside and outside the classroom. St. George Public Schools pilot program is the first of its kind to extend CTE to students much younger than those traditionally served by CTE programs. CTE programming is made available to students starting in preK and St. George Public Schools' community partnerships provide a pathway for CTE opportunities throughout a student's entire preK–12 experience.

Multiple Pathways pilots contribute to the decolonization of public education. The historic legacies of assimilation and cultural bleaching under the guise of education for the "betterment" of Indigenous peoples has resulted in a great deal of ethnostress among American Indian/Alaska Native students today.[4] Ethnostress can be understood as the stresses that occur when Native students attempt to reposition a sense of self in a largely Western/Anglo-dominant environment while being fully aware of their historical and cultural connections and significance to Native identity. According to the implementation team at Maine Indian education, Native students experience a degree of ethnostress in their day-to-day school lives, and the Maine Indian Education pilot is an opportunity to address this problem by balancing curricular standards and requirements with a recentering of Indigenous identity. Any effort to restore and revitalize Indigenous culture in the public education system is a truly innovative venture when one considers the barriers that Indigenous educators face at the local, state, and federal levels when promoting education that uses a non-Western lens.

Implementation of pilots with education model

Implementation progress by award round

The Round 1 and Round 2 Adopter Schools—St. George Public Schools and RSU 84 (East Grand)—completed their proposed Multiple Pathways curricula. The primary goal of RSU 84 (East Grand's) pilot project was to build a K–12 business pathway curriculum for students to get involved in the local community. The completion of this curriculum has allowed students to partake in community engagement and connect what they have learned to college and career readiness preparation. A staff member said that because of the curriculum, students can "see all the places they can work in the community," including the hardware store where students participate in their co-op. Likewise, St. George Public Schools completed its CTE preK–8 curriculum scope and sequence. This is a particularly noteworthy implementation success because St. George Public Schools did not have a curriculum model or template to provide guidance. St. George Public Schools teachers worked for a full year to develop this curriculum. Additionally, St. George Public Schools has been able to forge new partnerships with 28 private businesses to support hands-on learning in the classroom. For example, 1st-grade students were visited by a local general contractor, who showed students how to use hand tools. The students learned how to work with hammers, screwdrivers, safety glasses, and work gloves; and built their own bird houses and wooden toolboxes.

Among Round 3 Adopter Schools, all schools have achieved progress toward the goals set forth in their pilot plans. Two out of four schools (Maine Indian Education and Falmouth) have formed meaningful partnerships with local community organizations to support learning. For example, Falmouth has created numerous community partnerships with natural scientists, conservation specialists, and other environmental specialists to co-facilitate outdoor learning experiences for students during the 2022–23 school year. Maine Indian Education formed a major collaborative partnership with Wabanaki Public Health and Wellness, which has been instrumental in providing expertise with regalia making, language, Indigenous science, and outdoor education. Maine Indian Education has also connected with local banks and farmers to develop educational materials to educate students on the homesteading process. At Lee Academy, students in both programs are meeting their academic and professional goals as part of the program. For instance, many students in the Outdoor Leadership program were on track

[4] Cajete, G. (2015). *Indigenous community: Rekindling the teachings of the seventh fire*. Living Justice Press.

to graduate at the end of this school year, and the students who are not graduating have signed up for the program next year, where they will serve as student leaders. Finally, RSU 21 (Kennebunk's) Alternative Education program has succeeded in making students feel supported academically, socially, and emotionally. A common theme that emerged based on conversations with teachers, administration, students, and parents was that the Alternative Education Pathway provided students with the space to grow inside and outside of school, which was a central goal identified in RSU 21 (Kennebunk's) pilot plan.

Among Round 4 Adopter Schools, one school has formed numerous community partnerships. MSAD 49 (Lawrence) was able to forge new partnerships from the education sector, the agricultural sector, higher education, and others in the community. These partnerships have been an asset to MSAD 49 (Lawrence) in building and maintaining both the L.E.A.P. and CFPBL programs.

Implementation challenges

Recruitment, hiring, and retention of key staff positions for pilot projects presented a substantial challenge for Adopter Schools. In some cases, Adopter Schools attributed this challenge to being in the first year of funding. For example, MSAD 49 (Lawrence) was unable to recruit for the ed tech III position for L.E.A.P. because MSAD 49 (Lawrence) didn't receive the RREV funds until the end of September and MSAD 49 (Lawrence's) business office didn't release the funds until 3 weeks after that, they were unable to post a job announcement until October 2022. This posed challenges for recruiting for this position. However, early in program implementation, project staff realized that not having this position filled did not compromise the day-to-day operation or the broader vision for the program. Therefore, they decided to reallocate the funds for this position to purchasing a van, which would allow all L.E.A.P. students to participate in off-campus projects. Similarly, staffing has been a challenge for RSU 21 (Kennebunk). The current need for the Alternative Education Pathway at RSU 21 (Kennebunk) exceeds the current capacity of the two full-time teachers who currently staff the program. However, RSU 21 (Kennebunk) has been unable to recruit an education technician who would be a good fit for the program and students; addressing this challenge will be a main focus of Year 2 of the grant.

Other Multiple Pathways schools' challenges with recruitment, hiring, and retention were not so much related to being a Year 1 (versus Year 2) RREV awardee; rather, these challenges were the result of broader trends in teacher/educator shortages throughout the state. For example, Wayfinder Schools staff planned to hire teachers using RREV funds. However, similar to other school districts throughout Maine, a teacher shortage made it difficult to find and hire qualified staff. Despite this shortage, Wayfinder Schools staff were very pleased with the way in which current teachers and staff were able to step up and fill any gaps that existed. Wayfinder Schools hopes to find two additional teachers next year to support the expansion and implementation of the program.

Finally, staff turnover has presented a challenge in terms of counseling students at Lee Academy. In the beginning of the school year, there was one guidance counselor at Lee Academy who focused only on students in the (Experience Creates Excellent Leaders) ExCEL program and another guidance counselor who worked with the larger student population. The counselor who worked with the larger student population resigned halfway through the year, which required some shifting in terms of which students the guidance counselor for ExCEL

could support. However, one administrator at the school said they have a faculty member who has a counseling background, so they were able to shift them into a counseling position.

Other challenges experienced by individual Adopter Schools included:

- **Construction costs.** The cost of the CTE/Makerspace Building construction at St. George Public Schools has been an ongoing challenge. Construction costs have been higher than anticipated primarily because of the lack of local residents working in the trades fields. The average time for construction has increased because locally there are fewer than expected electricians, plumbers, welders, fabricators, and other tradespeople to do the work. As noted in the sustainability section below, St. George Public Schools has initiated fundraising efforts to help meet the expense of construction, and has also redesigned the CTE/Makerspace, reducing construction costs by over $500,000. The construction project went out for bid in July 2023 and construction of the CTE/Makerspace is scheduled to begin in spring 2024.
- **Legal and administrative hurdles.** RSU 84 (East Grand) expected that creating the co-op would take less than 6 months, but administrative and legal hurdles have postponed implementation. School staff have met every other week for the past 4 months to prepare the legal documents to register the business, write the business education plan, and coordinate with outside economic development organizations to put a plan in place. Now, the last step is for the co-op to generate enough support within the community to pass an official vote. A staff member said that despite these challenges, they think the time investment will make the co-op more sustainable and successful once it is approved.
- **Cultural challenges.** Maine Indian Education's original program design included daily language culture routines (20–30 minutes each morning) that were intended to connect all Maine Indian Education students to Wabanaki language and cultural practices. While Maine Indian Education was successful to a degree in implementing this program component (e.g., one classroom started each day with a Passamaquoddy prayer), Maine Indian Education realized that this requires a greater level of professional development for teachers, particularly those who are not closely connected with Wabanaki language and culture. Moving forward, Maine Indian Education will take small steps to realizing this vision, such as educating all teachers on how to say "hello" or "good morning" in Wabanaki languages and building from there.

Outcomes

ICF analyzed five types of outcomes across all pilots:

- Opportunities for learning outside a traditional classroom
- Satisfaction with Multiple Pathways models
- Academic outcomes of participating students
- Social-emotional outcomes of participating students
- Connections with the community and culture

To gather data on these outcomes, ICF administered a survey to all students in 3rd grade or higher who participated in Multiple Pathways pilots. ICF received a total of 217 student surveys from across the multiple pathway pilots. Students' families were also surveyed, and ICF received a total of 46 responses to this survey.

ICF also conducted in-person site visits at three Multiple Pathways pilots and virtual site visits with the other five schools. During site visits, a two-person ICF team conducted interviews and focus groups with teachers, students, parents, and community partners.

Availability of responsive education models

Overall, just under two-thirds of students (64%) surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that they had more opportunities to learn outside a traditional classroom than in the past. RSU 21 (Kennebunk) had the highest percentage among Adopter Schools, with every student in the program agreeing that they had more opportunities to learn outside the classroom.

On the parent study, 100% of parents agreed or strongly agreed it is important that schools offer responsive educational activities, and 87% of parents were satisfied with the availability of responsive education activities offered through their child's school. Of the schools who had parents fill out the survey, East Grand, Falmouth, Lee Academy, Maine Indian Education, and Wayfinder Schools all had the highest percentage of parents who were satisfied with the availability of responsive education activities within the school (100%).

EXHIBIT 12. STUDENT & PARENT SURVEY RESPONSES RELATED TO OPPORTUNITIES FOR RESPONSIVE LEARNING

	Students	Parents	
	This year, I had more opportunities to learn outside a traditional classroom than in the past. (% agree or strongly agree)	How important is it to you that schools offer responsive educational activities?	How satisfied are you with the availability of responsive education activities offered through your child's school?
All Schools (Student n=231, Parent n=46)	**67%**	**100%**	**89%**
RSU 84 (East Grand) (Student n=17, Parent n=5)	71%	100%	100%
Falmouth (Student n=62, Parent n=7)	69%	100%	100%
RSU 21 (Kennebunk) (Student n=11, Parent N/A)	100%	–	–
MSAD 49 (Lawrence) HS* (Student n=5, Parent n=4)	0%	100%	0%
Lee Academy (Student n=14, Parent n=2)	86%	100%	100%
Maine Indian Education (Student n=26, Parent n=13)	71%	100%	100%

	Students	Parents	
	This year, I had more opportunities to learn outside a traditional classroom than in the past. (% agree or strongly agree)	How important is it to you that schools offer responsive educational activities?	How satisfied are you with the availability of responsive education activities offered through your child's school?
St. George Public Schools (Student n=93, Parent n=14)	58%	100%	93%
Wayfinder Schools (Student n=3, Parent n=1)	100%	100%	100%

*Lawrence High School only had one student fill out the survey, and it is possible that they misunderstood the scale of the questions because they chose "strongly disagree" for all survey options, but their open-ended feedback was very positive toward the program.

Satisfaction with Multiple Pathways models

Overall, 86% of students surveyed were glad they participated in a Multiple Pathways pilot this year. Additionally, 84% of students surveyed reported liking their experience participating in a Multiple Pathways pilot. RSU 21 (Kennebunk) had the highest student satisfaction among Multiple Pathways adopter schools, with all 11 students agreeing or strongly agreeing with each of the prompts related to their pilot program.

Parents were also asked a few questions pertaining to their students' experiences participating in Multiple Pathways pilots this year, including the extent to which they enjoyed the programs and learned a lot, in addition to their overall satisfaction with the programs. Overall, 88% of parents who filled out the survey were satisfied with their child's experiences in the Multiple Pathways pilot programs this year.

EXHIBIT 13. PARENT & STUDENT SATISFACTION WITH MULTIPLE PATHWAYS PILOTS

	Students		Parents	
	I am glad I participated in the Multiple Pathways pilot to learn this year.	Overall, I liked my experience participating in the Multiple Pathways pilot to learn this year.	My child enjoyed participating in the Multiple Pathways pilot to learn this year.	I am satisfied with my child's experience with the Multiple Pathways pilot.
All Schools (Student n=231, Parent n=46)	**86%**	**84%**	**84%**	**88%**
RSU 84 (East Grand) (Student n=17, Parent n=5)	88%	88%	100%	100%
Falmouth (Student n=62, Parent n=7)	85%	87%	100%	100%
RSU 21 (Kennebunk)	100%	100%	–	–

	Students		Parents	
	I am glad I participated in the Multiple Pathways pilot to learn this year.	Overall, I liked my experience participating in the Multiple Pathways pilot to learn this year.	My child enjoyed participating in the Multiple Pathways pilot to learn this year.	I am satisfied with my child's experience with the Multiple Pathways pilot.
(Student n=11, Parent N/A)				
MSAD 49 (Lawrence) HS (Student n=5, Parent n=4)	0%	0%	100%	100%
Lee Academy (Student n=14, Parent n=2)	71%	71%	100%	100%
Maine Indian Education (Student n=26, Parent n=13)	88%	65%	56%	56%
St. George Public Schools (Student n=93, Parent n=14)	88%	86%	92%	100%
Wayfinder Schools (Student n=3, Parent n=1)	50%	50%	–	–

*It is possible that a few parents at Maine Indian Education misunderstood the scale of the survey. Six parents said they were "very dissatisfied" with the questions above, but during the open-ended feedback section of the survey they wrote in very positive reviews of the program.

Academic outcomes

As discussed, one goal of the Multiple Pathways pilot projects was to increase academic outcomes by offering students the ability to learn outside the traditional classroom, including outdoors, in the community, in local businesses, and in a new CTE Makerspace. Students engaged in outdoor activities such as field trips to local rivers and waterways to learn about plants and dams, overnight camping trips to learn about nature and backpacking, and building robotics out of LEGO bricks to teach students about coding and engineering.

On the student and parent surveys, respondents were asked about the extent to which their pilot programs helped them learn this year. Overall, 76% of students surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that their Multiple Pathways pilot helped them learn this year, and 85% of parents surveyed from Multiple Pathways schools reported that their child learned a lot participating in the Multiple Pathways pilots.

EXHIBIT 14. STUDENT & PARENT SURVEY RESPONSES RELATED TO ACADEMIC OUTCOMES

	Students	Parents
	The Multiple Pathways pilot helped me learn this year.	My child learned a lot participating in the Multiple Pathways pilot.
All Schools (Student n=231, Parent n=46)	**76%**	**85%**
RSU 84 (East Grand) (Student n=17, Parent n=5)	88%	100%
Falmouth (Student n=62, Parent n=7)	77%	100%
RSU 21 (Kennebunk) (Student n=11, Parent N/A)	100%	–
MSAD 49 (Lawrence) HS (Student n=5, Parent n=4)	0%	100%
Lee Academy (Student n=14, Parent n=2)	71%	100%
Maine Indian Education (Student n=26, Parent n=13)	77%	56%
St. George Public Schools (Student n=93, Parent n=14)	70%	92%
Wayfinder Schools (Student n=3, Parent n=1)	100%	–

During site visits, students, parents, and faculty perceived positive effects from these programs on student learning. One student from Falmouth said:

> *My favorite thing was that we don't have to sit in a regular classroom all [day], instead we get to learn some actually useful things without just being talked at for hours. Everything is very hands on and not everyone has to do the same thing; there is a lot of variety.*

One parent from St. George Public Schools, on the topic of academic outcomes, said:

> *Students are able to engage with their work through real-world, project-based learning that helps [them] learn essential skills.*

A teacher from Maine Indian Education, on the impact of RREV on student academic outcomes, said:

> *I liked seeing the students look carefully at their options for learning and then think about what choices to make. Students showed that they are interested in learning, and want to learn more about their interests and talents.*

In addition to the student and parent surveys, Adopter Schools also developed a series of performance objectives to track academic progress throughout the school year. Since these schools prioritize alternative pathways to learning, they tracked academic growth in a variety of

ways, including NWEA assessments, credits earned, job skills achieved, and growth on pre/post assessment of content areas. Two schools (—RSU 21 (Kennebunk) and RSU 84 (East Grand)—that intended to use NWEA assessments to measure growth were unable to track growth either because the test data was not available by the end of July 2023 or not enough students took the test because of parental permission or absenteeism. St. George Public Schools received their scores for the NWEA assessments, and reported that 44% of students met their growth goals for the school year in math and reading.

Adopter Schools that tracked academic growth in other ways were able to report on the performance objectives. Falmouth reported 100% of students showed signs of academic growth on a pre/post assessment of content areas, which exceeded their goal of 85% for the year. Two schools, MSAD 49 (Lawrence) and Lee Academy, were able to partially meet their academic growth goal; at MSAD 49 (Lawrence), 14 students earned more credits in the program than when they were in the traditional high school, and at Lee Academy eight out of 10 students showed signs of academic growth by increasing the number of credits earned compared to the previous year.

Two Adopter Schools tracked academic progress through increased jobs skills and students self-reporting academic growth on a survey. Both of these schools were able to achieve their goals for the year, with all 12 students at Wayfinder Schools reporting increased job skills and knowledge of career options, and 76% of students from Maine Indian Education agreeing or strongly agreeing that participating in the pilot program helped them learn this year.

EXHIBIT 15. STUDENT-BASED EDUCATIONAL GROWTH PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES

School	Award Round	Student-Based Educational Growth Measure	Did They Report Student-Level Educational Growth Data?	Was Measure Met?	Notes
RSU 84 (East Grand)	2	At least 75% of students will show academic growth as defined as a higher NWEA literacy and Math RIT score in the spring than in the fall	No	N/A	The school did not receive NWEA data from the state in time for inclusion in the report
Lee Academy	3	100% of students participating in the ExCEL pathway will display evidence of academic growth as defined as an increase in credits earned/standards met	Yes	Partially – 80%	
RSU 21 (Kennebunk)	3	At least 80% of students will show academic growth using NWEA data from spring ’22/fall ’22 and spring ’23	Yes	No – 75%	
Wayfinder Schools	4	90% of participants will report increased job skills as measured by self-reporting an increase in job skills, work-readiness, and awareness of career options available to them	Yes	Yes – 100%	
Falmouth	3	At least 85% of students will show academic growth on pre- and post-assessments of content areas	Yes	Yes – 100%	
MSAD 49 (Lawrence)	4	Students involved in the L.E.A.P. program for at least a complete semester earned more credits during the ’22/’23 school year during the time when involved in L.E.A.P., than during the ’21/’22 school year when they were not involved in L.E.A.P.	Yes	Partially – 58%	
St. George Public Schools	1	Gather NWEA Measure of Academic Progress (MAP) Math and Reading data for K–8 students to use as a baseline for determining impact of the program over time	Yes	Yes – 44%	
Maine Indian Education	3	At least 75% of students will indicate that the pilot helped them learn this year on the RREV student survey	Yes	Yes – 75%	

Mental and emotional wellness

In addition to academic outcomes, Adopter Schools also sought to increase the social-emotional well-being of their students through activities such as nature journaling, nature walks, and "Wellness Wednesdays" where students partake in a variety of activities such as canoeing and hiking to learn the value of teamwork and collaboration. Overall, 64% of students agreed or strongly agreed that participating in the Multiple Pathways pilot this year helped them be a happier person, including 100% of students from RSU 21 (Kennebunk) High School. Additionally, 82% of parents reported that participating in the Multiple Pathways pilot improved their child's mental and emotional well-being, including all parents from RSU 84 (East Grand), MSAD 49 (Lawrence), and Lee Academy.

EXHIBIT 16. STUDENT & PARENT SURVEY RESPONSES TO MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL WELLNESS

	Students	Parents
	My experience participating in the Multiple Pathways pilot this year has helped me be a happier person.	Participating in the Multiple Pathways pilot improved my child's mental and emotional well-being.
All Schools (Student n=231, Parent n=46)	**64%**	**82%**
RSU 84 (East Grand) (Student n=17, Parent n=5)	77%	100%
Falmouth (Student n=62, Parent n=7)	62%	86%
RSU 21 (Kennebunk) (Student n=11, Parent N/A)	100%	–
MSAD 49 (Lawrence) HS (Student n=5, Parent n=4)	0%	100%
Lee Academy (Student n=14, Parent n=2)	50%	100%
Maine Indian Education (Student n=26, Parent n=13)	59%	56%
St. George Public Schools (Student n=93, Parent n=14)	61%	92%
Wayfinder Schools (Student n=3, Parent n=1)	100%	–

For example, students in the alternative education program at RSU 21 (Kennebunk) are currently students working with each other to renovate a house at a local land trust. Students described how this teamwork helps them learn better and that they feel a sense of accomplishment when "we're all collectively working on one thing." According to one parent, the alternative education system has also fostered a "sense of belonging" for their student because it helped their child recognize their "own giftedness" beyond traditional academics, athletics, or the arts. They also said the Alternative Education Pathway takes students' ideas and "expands them" so that they can recognize that they actually have good, valuable ideas that they can develop on their own.

Students at Falmouth also participated in wellness activities, including nature journaling and nature walks to allow time for self-reflection and growth. One student at Falmouth, on social-emotional wellness, said:

> *I enjoyed our field trips, which were some of the only times we got to go outside for educational purposes. I found one of our experiments, in which we stopped at various locations between Sebago Lake and our school—I found it to be a grounding experience in which I was focused and truly happy for the first time in a long time—even if it only was for the short few hours we were on the field trip. I found myself completely focused and not worrying about other things going on in my life.*

Parents and teachers have also noticed a change in their student's social-emotional wellness and overall happiness as a result of these programs. One parent at Maine Indian Education said the ability for their child to choose their own subjects as part of the pilot provided them with "[excellent] opportunities for students to grow emotionally, mentally, behaviorally, culturally." One teacher at MSAD 49 (Lawrence) said:

> *[Students] were excited to come to school and participate. I had students who would only participate in class on days we worked on the pilot project. Other kids had tremendous growth in social areas, working with people they never would before as well as actually participating and talking in class.*

Connections with the community and culture

One goal of a few Multiple Pathways pilots was to connect students with their local community and culture. For example, RSU 84 (East Grand) is running a co-op with a local hardware store in which students learn about employability skills and earn money while giving back to the community. Schools such as Falmouth and Maine Indian Education emphasize connecting students to the Wabanaki culture by offering immersive practical and cultural learning experiences to students that focus on Wabanaki culture, language, and practices. One student at Maine Indian Education described the impact of RREV on building connections to their culture:

> *Doing RREV, we learned about something our ancestors have done to survive or just clothing; I learned some traditional earrings, meals, and songs.*

Additionally, one parent at RSU 84 (East Grand) said that their child has "really liked the opportunity to work locally, close to home." Another parent from Falmouth said:

> *[The pilot program is] new, different, and brings the kids to the place they live. Learning that's connected to their community, and connects them to the place they call home. I think that's huge.*

One teacher at Falmouth, on the importance of community connections in their school, said:

> *[The pilot program] emphasized the importance of student choice and voice, hands-on relevant lessons, connections to the community, and time outside. A need for sharing of resources and creating learning opportunities for staff, within the building, district, and within the watershed, is very much needed. Also, it's*

been a good reminder that students will rise to the bar that you give them, so keep it high.

Dissemination and scaling

One goal of the RREV grant is to provide schools with the resources and support to disseminate and scale their programs both within their school and to other schools throughout the state. To do so, MDOE has created a variety of pages on EnGiNE for schools to track progress throughout the year and connect with other schools implementing similar innovative models.

Two Adopter Schools, Wayfinder Schools and RSU 21 (Kennebunk), have used the RREV award to expand existing programs within their school. RSU 21 (Kennebunk) has been able to purchase additional supplies and transportation to scale their existing Alternative Education program, while Wayfinder Schools plans to eventually expand their PREP program to a neighboring county to provide more at-home learning opportunities for at-risk youth. RSU 84 (East Grand), during the spring check-in call, identified their business pathway curriculum as a low-cost curriculum that can be replicated and disseminated to neighboring school districts.

Although none of the Adopter Schools have identified instances where they have communicated or shared resources with other schools throughout the year, a few schools have identified a plan to utilize EnGiNE to do so in the future.

Sustainability opportunities/challenges

Adopter Schools described various elements of program legacy and sustainability that need to be in place to continue the programs they have begun in this initial pilot year. The ultimate goal is for programs to be continued without the continued support of RREV and, instead, rest on non-RREV programmatic, organizational, and fiscal supports. Below, we describe Adopter Schools' plans for sustainability (and challenges they have encountered in their sustainability planning discussions).

Program Supports. Adopter Schools described a broad range of supports and resources that will be needed to help their pilot programs remain effective and achieve their goals. Adopter Schools discussed ongoing training and capacity building needs for teachers to have the skills and human capital necessary to implement program activities. For example, Lee Academy plans to work with key teaching staff who have experience and success working with at-risk students to design some of the details of the program and set the tone for professional expectations. This, in turn, will help other teachers and counseling staff to build their own capacity to reach a larger population of students. Similarly, MSAD 49 (Lawrence) described how teachers do not have the capacity to devote ample amounts of time to matters outside traditional classroom functions. As a result, a key source of sustainability will come from a systemic approach to change wherein the teachers involved in the pilot project share their experiences and act as mentors for their colleagues. Further, school leaders will work to develop ways to make L.E.A.P. and the CFPBL program easier for teachers to implement, thereby gathering more buy-in and creating a foundation for the projects to continue year after year. Lastly, one Adopter School discussed how they will use data to identify opportunities for adapting the project to better fit the needs of students. Specifically, RSU 21 (Kennebunk) will continue to gather performance objective data to inform future funding applications, identify staffing needs, and create sustainable learning spaces for students.

Organizational supports. Adopter Schools described various organizational and institutional processes and policies that need to be in place to support the long-term management and implementation of pilot programs. For example, RSU 84 (East Grand) explained how their vision for the business pathway curriculum is to eventually integrate this with the core curriculum so the business pathway curriculum is aligned with and underscores core academic principles and standards. Other schools talked about the importance of continuing community partnerships established during the pilot as a source of sustainability. For instance, St. George Public Schools explained that they started a CTE/Makerspace working group consisting of staff, community, and business owners who have agreed to continue leading and advising the project past the RREV funding period.

Fiscal Supports. The most discussed aspect of sustainability planning is related to funding that will be needed to support direct services, staff, and organizational resources for each Adopter School's project. For schools that used RREV funding to hire project staff, a major sustainability concern centered on how to continue funding these positions, post-RREV. For example, Falmouth hired an Outdoor Learning Coordinator to support curriculum development and curricular alignment, and implement place-based learning experiences. This position is instrumental to sustaining the transformative change in outdoor learning at Falmouth, and the implementation team plans to propose that this position be written into the district budget after the RREV funding period ends. Similarly, funding for MSAD 49 (Lawrence's) L.E.A.P. was included in the annual budget referendum that town residents vote on to set the district's spending. If approved, L.E.A.P. staff and supplies will be covered for the next school year. Other Adopter Schools discussed securing financial capital via fundraising efforts. For example, St. George Public Schools has raised over $1,900,000 for construction costs through grants, private donations, business sponsorships, and fundraisers. Due to higher-than-expected construction costs, St. George Public Schools is continuing its fundraising effort and working to find ways to reduce costs while remaining true to the pilot vision. Wayfinder Schools recently received a multi-year grant from the Sewall Foundation for continuing services in Hancock County. They are also planning to apply for additional foundation grants throughout the school year as well as to spread the word about the program through press releases to help expand their donor pool and support for the program. Lee Academy is exploring additional ways to leverage community partnerships to raise money through contributions from key partners in the area, including local businesses.

Innovative Education Models – Online Learning

Background

There are seven Adopter Schools implementing eight pilots in the Online Learning category (Exhibit 17).[5] Across all schools in this category, 157 students were served in 5th–12th grades.

EXHIBIT 17. OVERVIEW OF ONLINE LEARNING PILOTS

School	Award Round	Number of Students served	Grades Served
Brewer Public Schools	1, 3	48	6th–12th
RSU 60 (Noble)	1	26	5th–9th
RSU 22 (Hampden) Academy – Accelerator	2	22	10th–12th
RSU 25 (Bucksport) – Year 2 Accelerator	2	12	7th–12th
MSAD 6 (Bonny Eagle) – Year 2 Accelerator[6]	3	10	8th–9th
RSU 34 Old Town – Year 2 Accelerator	3	29 (13 full-time), 16 part-time)	8th–12th (open to 6th–12th)
RSU 71 (Belfast) – Year 2 Accelerator	3	10	9th–12th

Note: RSU stands for regional school unit. MSAD is Maine School Administrative District.

In seven out of eight pilots, the largest budget category was for personnel and the next largest was employee benefits. The exception is regional school unit (RSU) 60 (Noble), which spent most of its budget on a yurt structure for students.

[5] Brewer Public Schools is implementing two pilots: a Round 1 full award to implement the Nu program and a Round 3 Accelerator award to expand the Nu program. This report distinguishes these awards where appropriate but otherwise treats these as one program because the innovative model is the same.

[6] Maine School Administrative District (MSAD) 6 Bonny Eagle did not respond to outreach from the ICF evaluation team or their RREV coach in spring 2023, so data for this pilot are drawn from their pilot application and an interview in fall 2022.

EXHIBIT 18. ALLOCATION OF RREV BUDGET BY ONLINE LEARNING SCHOOL – ACCELERATOR AWARD

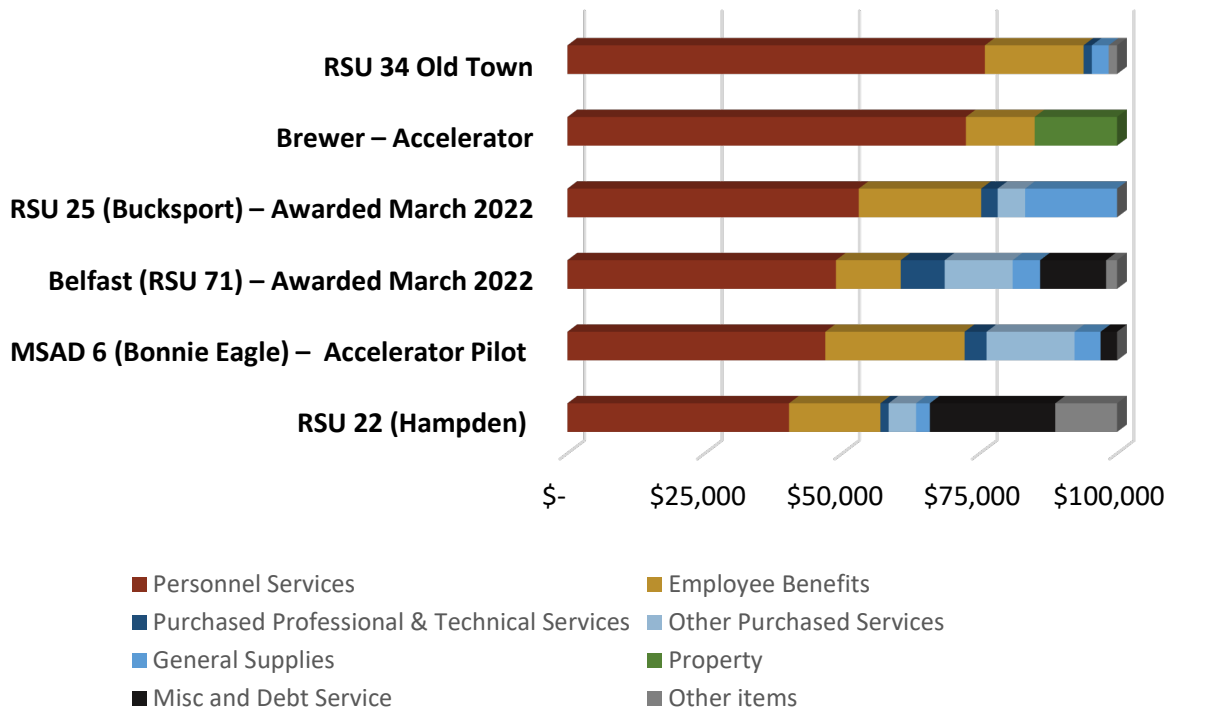
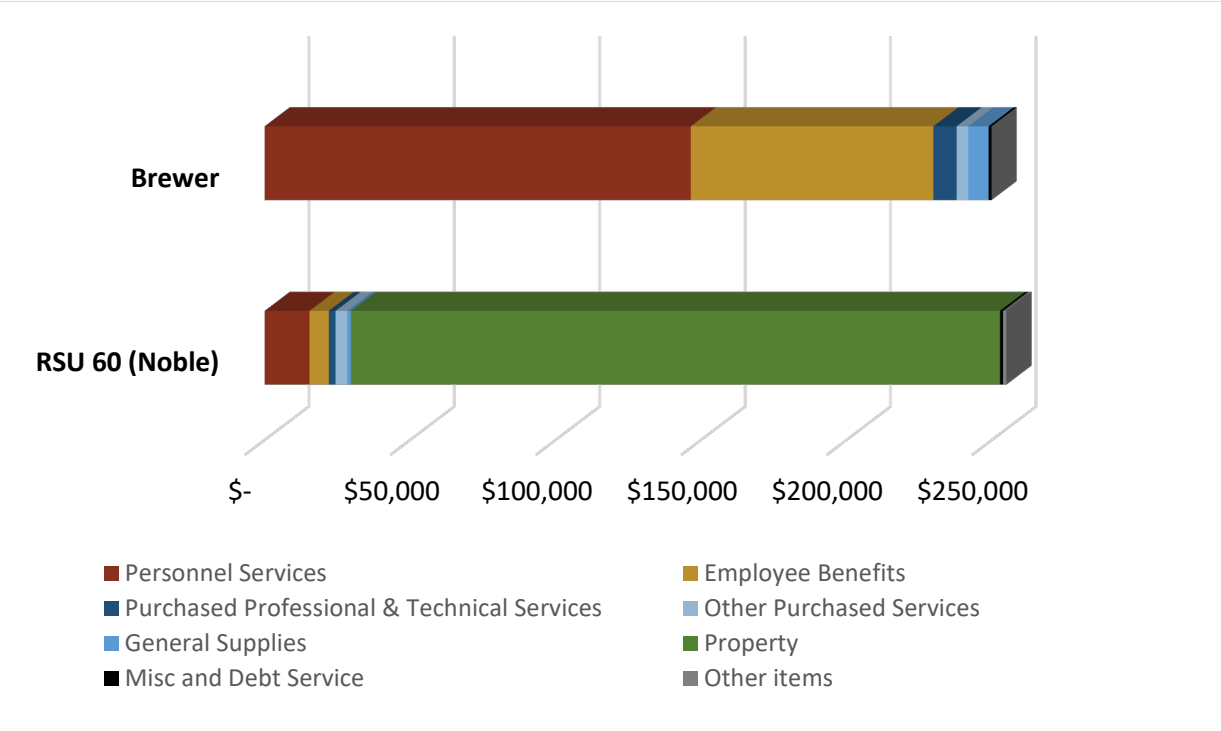


EXHIBIT 19. ALLOCATION OF RREV BUDGET BY ONLINE LEARNING – FULL AWARD



While each pilot had unique goals (described more fully in Appendix A), two overarching themes emerged among the goals of Online Learning pilots:

- **Offering students more options beyond 100% in-person learning.** All Online Learning programs sought to provide more options to students and families beyond in-person only. These options included hybrid models, incorporating group field trips, and offering a remote learning pathway to return to in-person instruction. For many pilots in Online Learning category, this goal emerged from their experience returning to in-person learning after the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, when they realized that some students appreciated options for how they learn.
- **Creating systems and cultures that support the needs of the "whole child."** All Online Learning pilots connected the academic aspects of their programs with additional support for students' mental, emotional, social, and physical wellness. Online Learning pilots specifically built structures around and beyond their Online Learning platforms, such as individual check-ins with educators, to identify and address each students' individual needs. Pilots in this category also included goals for building a program-specific culture in which students felt a sense of belonging and fellowship.

Activities

Common activities among these pilots were:

- **Hiring staff devoted to supporting students' Online Learning**. These were often called remote learning specialist/director, teacher/case manager, or learning coach.
- **Establishing policies to facilitate student participation in cocurricular and extracurricular activities while learning remotely.** Most Online Learning pilots updated district or school policies to account for students who do not attend in-person and still participate in sports, clubs, or certain classes such as art or band, where in-person learning is integral to the subject. These policies included establishing eligibility requirements for participation based on performance in classes offered through an Online Learning platform.
- **Organizing in-person events, such as field trips, specifically for students who learn online.** All online programs implemented some sort of in-person activity into their program, such as group field trips or providing students with a day or two to join the staff and other students for tutoring, development of skills, passion projects, and community engagement programs.
- **Obtaining licenses for Online Learning platforms**. Most of the Online Learning pilots used existing online programs, such as Apex Learning or Edgenuity. While RSU 34 Old Town found that their online platform did not work as well for middle school students as it did for their high school students, they found a hybrid solution that worked this year and plan to either create or find a program for the middle school students in the coming year.
- **Creating new classes specifically geared toward students in the Online Learning program**. RSU 71 (Belfast) Area High School's summer Learning Intentionally Online Now (LION) Semester and RSU 25 (Bucksport) High School's part-time students allowed flexibility for students who were interested in credit recovery while still learning at their own pace.

Online students at RSU 60 (Noble) standing in front of the yurt that acts as their classroom.

- **Setting aside specific spaces for students in the online pathway to gather and learn during in-person days**. Both Brewer and RSU 60 (Noble) have created space for their students so that they feel that they have a home base. Noble constructed the yurt for their students, which gives them the opportunity to feel at home in their learning space. The plan is that these dedicated spaces will encourage and allow students to feel more comfortable with in-person activities.

Responsiveness and innovativeness of models

One goal of the RREV grant is to support schools in developing responsive and innovative education models. The term responsive, in this context, refers to the ways in which schools have adapted their innovative models to meet the unique needs of their students, school, or community in their own context. The term innovative refers to the ways in which schools have developed new ways of learning that transcends traditional classroom instruction. The following section highlights the ways in which the Online Learning pilots have implemented responsive and innovative educational models.

- **Pilots offer students who are successful in remote learning an opportunity to continue in the modality in which they have been successful.** Both Year 1 awardees and four of the five Year 2 awardees in the Online Learning category shared that their pilots responded to a need they observed: some students thrived in remote learning settings during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the same students struggled with the subsequent return to in-person mode. These pilots expressed a desire to offer these

students, who had the necessary skills to thrive in virtual learning settings, a remote learning option combined with in-person learning experiences. While some schools, such as RSU 25 (Bucksport) High School, did not have an alternative learning model that offered a chance for students to continue their education in a remote learning environment, other schools such as Maine School Administrative District (MSAD) 6 Bonny Eagle did have a primarily online alternative education model (i.e., The Learning Center)—but it prioritized students in the higher grades of high school.

- **Pilots address students' socio-emotional well-being through the provision of in-person learning experiences.** Each of the Year 1 and Year 2 pilots adopted a hybrid learning model with students taking classes in virtual settings but participating in in-person learning experiences, such as field trips, community service, and workplace activities. The purpose of offering these in-person opportunities is to create a learning environment where students could have positive social experiences with their peers and school staff. Furthermore, staff from two of the five pilots—RSU 71 (Belfast) and MSAD 6 (Bonny Eagle)—shared that in so doing, they expected students would re-engage with in-person learning in ways that could potentially aid in the transition to in-person schooling.
- **Pilots created roles for staff dedicated to supporting students' academic, mental, emotional, physical, and social wellness.** Each of the Year 1 and Year 2 pilots identified a dedicated staff member who is responsible for student learning by providing individualized support contextualized to the students' learning needs. Staff from RSU 25 (Bucksport), RSU 60 (Noble) Flexible Learning Experiences (FLEX), and RSU 34 Old Town described the role of their pilots' facilitator as that of a "case manager," where their support considers students' unique circumstances. Personalized support covers a wide array of duties including helping students set up goals; helping them develop a learning plan that involves identifying the necessary courses; monitors their progress; provides feedback to students; and helps students course-correct should they find themselves unsuccessful. In some cases, the facilitator or remote learning specialist provides academic support in the form of personalizing lessons and assessments, which ensures that courses have a suitable level of rigor; thus, resulting in increased engagement. Additionally, pilots are designed in a manner that facilitators and remote learning specialists have ample opportunity to check in with their students.
- **Pilots offer students flexibility in their learning.** Both Year 1 awardees and four of the five pilots awarded in Year 2 staff shared that pilots were planned in a manner that allowed for flexibility so students could choose what and how they learned to some degree. For instance, students in the RSU 22 (Hampden) Academy Corral pilot could complete courses at their own pace given that their courses were asynchronous; however, staff in this school shared that one student expressed a desire to have deadlines to better manage their schoolwork. Students in RSU 25 (Bucksport) High School's remote learning pathway can also choose which courses to take. Regardless of how the pilots incorporated a flexible approach, having flexibility allows students to be thought partners in their own learning journey. Students can exercise autonomy and control over their coursework, taking ownership over their learning and becoming independent learners. This casts the traditional student-teacher relationship in a new light focused on mutual trust and accountability.

- **Some pilots offer an additional way to earn credit.** One of the Year 1 and two of the five pilots awarded in Year 2 provide students with opportunities to take courses that may not have been previously available and for credit recovery so that students can be on-track for graduation. For instance, in RSU 71 (Belfast) Area High School's summer LION Semester, students had the option of taking courses in the summer where earlier they may have been under pressure to complete them during the school year. Staff at RSU 71 (Belfast) Area High School shared that rethinking the school year to include the summer increases the likelihood for students to be on track for graduation without the added stress of being restricted to the fall or spring semesters. RSU 25 (Bucksport) High School opened enrollment in their online pathway to include "part-time students" who were in-person RSU 25 students who were in credit recovery or were interested in a course that was not available in their in-person offerings but was available through the remote learning pathway. Brewer's *Nu* high school students have been able to take advantage of career training and certification in nursing and mechanics while still in high school. By expanding their reach, these pilots demonstrate potential benefits for all students regardless of their learning needs.

Implementation of pilots with education model

- **Round 1 awardees established a dedicated space to provide in-person experiences.** Pilots awarded in Year 1 that were in their second year of implementation were successful in securing a space for students to meet in-person. Although students were mostly remote, having a dedicated space would allow for students to feel more at ease about being in-person. Pilot team members observed that in-person learning could be a triggering experience for many students, especially those with social anxiety for whom remote learning during the pandemic was a relief. They explained that providing space for in-person learning in a smaller, supportive environment would offer students positive in-person learning experiences, and ultimately ease their transition to in-person activities later. In Year 2, RSU 60 (Noble) completed construction of their yurt, a space for students in the Be Well Connected program to meet in-person. The pilot staff observed that students felt "at home" in their own space to learn, which has been "really powerful" to observe. The completion of the yurt also helped students to spread out beyond the classroom walls to include local trails, which "has helped to better address the lifelong wellness" aspect of the program. The yurt also provided students with greater access to the local community center and additional community trails. While Brewer had access to a dedicated space, they faced resistance from students in bringing them together for in-person experiences. However, for the upcoming school year, Brewer has plans to engage students in in-person learning experiences by offering smaller group trips.

  With respect to awardees in Round 2, some pilots had access to a space (e.g., a conference room or classroom) for in-person meetings and experiences as needed but this was not as much of a priority in their first year of implementation. RSU 22 (Hampden) Academy noted the absence of a dedicated space as a particular challenge for their pilot. There was no dedicated space for students in the Corral program to meet and get support from their facilitator, so they had to repurpose existing spaces, such as conference rooms or study halls. This made it challenging for students to access support from the facilitator.

Interior of the yurt built at RSU 60 (Noble) as a place for FLEX students to gather.

- **Most pilots were successful at finding staff to implement their pilots**. All pilots awarded in Year 1 and Year 2 were successful in identifying or hiring a staff member solely dedicated to supporting students in the pilot. Given the unique contexts of students in each of these pilots, the role may cover a vast array of supports. For instance, RSU 60 (Noble) hired a social worker to provide support to students who have previously encountered bullying. The social worker manages behavior plans and provides creative options and services to students and their families with the purpose of helping them feel a sense of belonging and to "feel [like] a part of the community." RSU 34 Old Town and RSU 25 (Bucksport) High School envisioned their facilitator would take on more of a case manager role, working with students to establish their academic and socio-emotional goals, monitoring progress toward the goal, and providing support tailored to the student's context to help them reach their goals. The remote learning specialist at RSU 25 (Bucksport) reported success in being able to provide the appropriate level of support and scaffolds to students because they had a team of specialists (e.g., guidance counselor, special educator, and so on) to support their role. Students appreciated their remote learning specialist as they felt more ownership and could provide feedback to their remote learning specialist about what works for them and what does not, especially since students perceived that they were trusted.

Conversely, the role of the "case manager" at RSU 34 Old Town was more challenging as the pilot had students with differing grade levels and diverse learning needs. While support for high school students was more of case management, support for middle schoolers in the program was more intensive, requiring both case management and subject-specific tutoring/teaching assistance, which was beyond the scope of their case manager. With the addition of an online curriculum for middle schoolers next year, the case manager's teaching role would be reduced significantly. RSU 22 (Hampden) Academy faced similar challenges as students in their program needed additional mental health support that was beyond the scope of their facilitator.

- **All pilots in Round 1 and Round 2 were successful in identifying and purchasing software licenses necessary to conduct remote learning.** For some pilots, the process of identifying the software with the most suitable content for their student population of focus took some time—such as RSU 22 (Hampden)—but as the school year started most pilots had their systems and software in place. As the school year progressed, RSU 34 Old Town realized that their online platform did not meet the needs of their middle school students primarily because of the lack of grade-level content suitable for middle schoolers. As a result, it became necessary for the case manager to provide subject-specific support that was beyond their capacity. As a workaround, collaboration between the program and the middle school staff allowed for weekly lessons added to Google Classroom for middle schoolers from their teachers with the case manager then assembling lessons and individualized learning plans for each student, ensuring that grade level standards were being met. Additionally, the case manager created Zoom lessons for students to watch, which was more time-consuming than expected. For the next year, they hope to find a platform better suited to the needs of all students so that the case manager has a better defined role.

- **Pilots developed relationships and partnerships with the community**. Pilots awarded in Round 1 were successful in developing community partnerships and leveraging these partnerships to provide extended learning opportunities for students in their program. For example, Brewer developed relationships with their neighboring senior center to offer junior and senior students an opportunity to participate in their Certified Nursing Assistant training program, where students are paid for their time in training and certified through the state. Two juniors have completed the program so far with seven others lined up to participate. In addition to this, Brewer leveraged their relationship with a community school to expand its reach and add a drop-in program that would potentially increase enrollment by an additional 10 to 15 students who will participate from surrounding districts given the interest shared from sending or surrounding districts. RSU 60 (Noble) leveraged community partnerships to create opportunities for their students to volunteer and feel a sense of belonging with the community at large. Some examples include volunteering at a local gym in their program for adults with Parkinson's disease, working with veterans at a library, and volunteering at the Special Olympics for York County.

  To some extent, Round 2 awardees were able to build community partnerships to provide opportunities for their students. RSU 71 (Belfast) leveraged community partnerships to provide extended learning opportunities for students to earn credits. Some of these offerings include earning credits for attending art workshops at the local

art center and for attending drivers' education classes. RSU 25 (Bucksport) leveraged community partnerships for volunteering opportunities. It must be noted that developing and leveraging community partnerships was not as much of a focus for Round 2 pilots given that this was their first year of implementation and the focus was on building a status quo for their learning model. However, building community partnerships is a priority in their second year.

- **Most pilots were supported by administrators and other school staff**. For the most part, pilots in Rounds 1 and 2 were successful in gaining support not only from their school administrators but also from other school staff. In some cases, this support has been vital to the success of the program. For instance, the role of the facilitator in RSU 25 (Bucksport) High School's program is akin to that of a case manager and given that students in this program are in different grade levels with diverse learning needs, support from other specialist staff and teaching staff was necessary to ensure that students were getting all the support they needed to succeed. Administrator support has also been cited as integral to the success of pilots. This element was notably absent in the case of RSU 22 (Hampden) as they encountered frequent turnover at the administrative level. Indeed, staff responsible for the pilot at RSU 22 (Hampden) did not have access to the original grant-writing RREV team and relied on the original pilot plan submitted to MDOE for guidance on the vision when implementing their pilot.
- **A common challenge was identifying students for whom the pilot is well-suited.** Two out of the five Round 2 awardees described identifying students who matched the pilot's ideal student profile as a process that took time. As such, recruiting students may have led to a slow roll out. RSU 25 (Bucksport) was able to fill enrollment with students suited to their model for the most part through recommendations and referrals from their support staff and a screening process. During the school year they expanded enrollment to include "part-time students" who were enrolled in RSU 25 (Bucksport) as full-time students but were credit deficient. RSU 25 (Bucksport) High School's strategy for the future is to tap into the homeschooling network because these students have the required skills to be successful in the program and it would offer them a pathway to return to RSU 25 (Bucksport) while continuing with the learning modality in which they have been successful. On the other hand, RSU 22 (Hampden) Academy experienced challenges in identifying students suited to their program because communication regarding the ideal student profile to those involved in the referral process was not executed consistently. To ramp up student recruitment to meet the pilot's goals, students for whom the pilot was not a good fit were added to the program. Staff shared that these students struggled with taking ownership over their learning.

  Evaluating student-program fit is a constant endeavor for Year 1 schools. In the case of Brewer, there were several students that joined the program, due to truancy or grade issues, with hopes that the *Nu* program would get them back on track. While some were successful, for others there was a need to re-evaluate the student-program fit. This is an ongoing process throughout the school year to ensure that the program meets the learning needs of students in order to better serve them.
- **Engaging parents and families to earn their buy-in.** Parental engagement and their buy-in was vital to the implementation of pilots. This is because a large portion of the programs required students to complete their coursework at home and having parents or

other family members as accountability partners was crucial to ensure students were getting the most out of their time in the program. Most pilots were able to successfully engage parents and develop relationships with them. Indeed, gaining parental buy-in has been crucial to pilots' sustainability. Some parents in RSU 25 (Bucksport) shared that because their relationship with school staff was established, they were more open to participating in Parent Teacher Association (PTA) meetings and their participation in school activities felt "less onerous" and "less like a chore." Staff at RSU 71 (Belfast) shared that they leveraged the relationship they had with parents of students in the LION Semester to ensure that students had a successful transition to in-person instruction and persisted through the school year in this modality—a key academic outcome for the LION Semester. One school—RSU 22 (Hampden)—had trouble gaining buy-in from some parents, specifically those parents with children for whom the pilot was not well-suited.

Outcomes

ICF analyzed four types of outcomes across all pilots:

- Opportunities for learning outside a traditional classroom
- Satisfaction with Online Learning models
- Academic outcomes of participating students
- Social-emotional outcomes of participating students

To gather data on these outcomes, ICF administered a survey to all students in 3rd grade or higher who participated in Online Learning activities. ICF received a total of 41 student surveys from across the Online Learning pilots. Students' families were also surveyed, and ICF received a total of 40 responses to this survey.[7]

ICF also conducted an in-person site visit at RSU 25 (Bucksport), with three other virtual site visits at three Extended Learning Opportunities pilots—Brewer, RSU Old Town, and RSU 60 (Noble). During site visits, an ICF researcher conducted interviews and focus groups with teachers, students, parents, and community partners.

Availability of responsive education models

Almost all parents said it was at least somewhat important for schools to offer responsive activities, defined on the survey as "learning outside a traditional classroom," and almost as many parents (97%) expressed satisfaction with the options available at their child's school. More than three-quarters of students (78%) agreed or strongly agreed that they had more opportunities to learn outside of a traditional classroom during the 2022–23 school year than in the past.

[7] MSAD 6 (Bonny Eagle) did not respond to requests from ICF and their RREV coach to support survey administration, and thus are not included in these analyses.

EXHIBIT 20. STUDENT & PARENT SURVEY RESPONSES RELATED TO OPPORTUNITIES FOR RESPONSIVE LEARNING

	Students	Parents	
	This year, I had more opportunities to learn outside a traditional classroom than in the past. (% agree or strongly agree)	How important is it to you that schools offer responsive educational activities?	How satisfied are you with the availability of responsive education activities offered through your child's school?
All Schools (Student n=44, Parent n=35)	**78%**	**97%**	**79%**
Brewer Public Schools (Student n=10, Parent n=11)	90%	100%	90%
RSU 60 (Noble) FLEX (Student n=16, Parent n=8)	75%	100%	100%
RSU 22 (Hampden) Academy (Student n=5, Parent n=2)	100%	100%	50%
RSU 25 (Bucksport) High School (Student n=5, Parent n=7)	50%	86%	57%
RSU 34 Old Town (Student n=7, Parent n=7)	57%	100%	71%
RSU 71 (Belfast) Area High School's LION Semester (Student n=1, Parent N/A)	100%	–	–

Note: Survey responses for Brewer included the Year 1 Full award and the Year 2 Accelerator award. Responses were combined because the activities of both pilots were identical.

Satisfaction with responsive learning

Almost all parents (89%) were satisfied with their child's experience in the Online Learning pilot and said their child enjoyed participating in the pilot. A slightly smaller proportion of students—but still the vast majority of students (78%)—said they liked their experience with Online Learning this year and were glad they participated in the pilot (73%).

EXHIBIT 21. STUDENT & PARENT SATISFACTION WITH ONLINE LEARNING PILOTS

	Students		Parents	
	Overall, I liked my experience participating in the pilot this year.	I am glad I participated in the pilot to learn this year.	My child enjoyed participating in the pilot.	I am satisfied with my child's experience with the pilot.
All Schools (Student n=44, Parent n=35)	**78%**	**73%**	**93%**	**89%**
Brewer Public Schools (Student n=10, Parent n=11)	100%	90%	91%	91%
RSU 60 (Noble) FLEX (Student n=16, Parent n=8)	69%	63%	100%	100%
RSU 22 (Hampden) Academy (Student n=5, Parent n=2)	100%	80%	50%	50%
RSU 25 (Bucksport) High School (Student n=5, Parent n=7)	0%	50%	100%	100%
RSU 34 Old Town (Student n=7, Parent n=7)	71%	71 %	100%	83%
RSU 71 (Belfast) Area High School's LION Semester (Student n=1, Parent N/A)	100%	100%	–	–

Academic growth

Overall, students and parents perceived positive effects from these programs on student learning. More than three-quarters of students (78%) of students agreed that their school's pilot helped them learn this year. An even higher proportion of parents (85%) agreed that their child learned a lot while participating in the pilot this year.

EXHIBIT 22. STUDENT & PARENT SURVEY RESPONSES RELATED TO ACADEMIC OUTCOMES

	Students	Parents
	The pilot helped me learn this year.	My child learned a lot participating in Online Learning this year.
All Schools (Student n=44, Parent n=35)	**78%**	**85%**
Brewer Public Schools (Student n=10, Parent n=11)	100%	82%
RSU 60 (Noble) FLEX (Student n=16, Parent n=8)	69%	100%
RSU 22 (Hampden) Academy (Student n=5, Parent n=2)	100%	50%
RSU 25 (Bucksport) High School (Student n=5, Parent n=7)	0%	100%
RSU 34 Old Town (Student n=7, Parent n=7)	71%	83%
RSU 71 (Belfast) Area High School's LION Semester (Student n=1, Parent N/A)	100%	–

In addition to the student and parent surveys, schools also examined academic growth through their RREV performance objectives. Four schools intended to measure academic growth through NWEA scores. However, results from the spring assessment were not available at the time of this report in July 2023 owing to a change in testing procedures and reporting at the state level, resulting in an incomplete representation of student academic growth. Two pilots—RSU 71 (Belfast)'s LION Semester and RSU 25 (Bucksport)'s—employed student-based outcomes that varied from academic growth. For these schools, completion of expected course credits was an academic goal, where approximately 88% of students achieved this goal. In addition, for one school—RSU 71 (Belfast) Lion Semester—the return to and persistence in in-person instruction was held as an academic goal. This school successfully met these goals as approximately 80% of students enrolled throughout the school year in-person instruction.

Four online pilots also tracked student attendance data for their performance objectives. Only RSU 60 (Noble) definitively met their goal, reducing chronic absenteeism in their students by 20%. The other three schools with this measure just missed their goals in most cases: Brewer – 83% versus 85%; RSU 34 Old Town – 55% versus 60%; and RSU 25 (Bucksport) – 77% versus 85%.

EXHIBIT 23. STUDENT-BASED EDUCATIONAL GROWTH PEFORMANCE OBJECTIVES

School	Award Round	Student-Based Educational Growth Measure	Did They Report Student-Level Educational Growth Data?	Was Measure Met?	Notes
Brewer Public Schools –Year 1, Full/Year 2, Accelerator	1, 3	At least 85% of students will show an increase in RIT score on the NWEA assessment between fall and spring	No	N/A	The school did not receive NWEA data from the state in time for inclusion in the report
RSU 60 (Noble)	1	At least 85% of students will show an increase in RIT score on the NWEA assessment between fall and spring	Yes	N/A	The school did not receive NWEA data from the state in time for inclusion in the report; however, Noble did report fall-to-winter growth, which showed progress toward their objective
RSU 22 (Hampden) Academy (Corral)**	2	At least 90% of students will show academic growth.	No	N/A	The school did not respond to multiple requests for performance objectives data.
RSU 25 (Bucksport) – Accelerator	3	At least 75% of students will meet expected academic growth goals in the NWEA (Reading or Math)	Yes	Met – 75%	
		85% of students will earn five out of the six expected course credits in the 2022–23 school year		Met – 85%	
RSU 34 Old Town	4	60% of students will show academic growth on the NWEA	Yes	Met – 66%	

School	Award Round	Student-Based Educational Growth Measure	Did They Report Student-Level Educational Growth Data?	Was Measure Met?	Notes
RSU 71 (Belfast) Area High School (LION Semester)	3	At least 50% of the LION Semester students will achieve 2 credits in the summer	Yes	Met – 90%	
		At least 70% of the LION Semester students will participate in in-person instruction, defined as being actively enrolled and regularly attending at least a half-time schedule, in the fall semester (excluding students who graduated or transferred out of school)		Met – 80%	
		At least 50% of the students identified as eligible for the LION Semester will maintain contact (either biweekly in-person or electronically) with the LION Semester instructor through the school year		Met – 86%	
		At least 50% of the LION Semester students will pass a higher proportion of their courses in the spring of 2023 when compared to fall of 2022		Met – 63%	

In addition to student and parent surveys and performance objectives targeted by schools in the Online Learning category, ICF also gathered data on academic outcomes through interviews with students, parents, and educators. Key themes from these data included:

- **Students credited the flexible nature of Online Learning with improving their academic performance.** Although schools defined academic outcomes in different ways, remote learning pilots had a positive impact on student academic outcomes. For instance, a student participating in the Corral pathway at RSU 22 (Hampden) Academy was on track to graduate early because they were able to take courses before they were offered in the regular semester schedule. Remote learning pilots prioritize flexibility in student learning, allowing students to take ownership over their learning. During interviews and focus groups, students across schools shared that they appreciated the ability to complete coursework at their own pace. Students also shared that by participating in these pilots they were able to focus on work easily and were "less stressed out" because they could complete work from the comfort of their own home without "worrying about missing school days" when they were unwell.
- **Pilots provided students with an alternate mode to achieve their learning goals.** The rationale behind the development of these pilots was to provide students who are struggling with in-person instruction an alternate pathway to achieve their academic goals. One staff member said that these pilots can be considered as another avenue to ensure students "succeed in school" and to "prevent vulnerable students from falling through the cracks and [dropping] out" because traditional schooling was not a good fit for them. Staff from RSU 71 (Belfast) Area High School shared that a key objective of the summer LION Semester was to re-engage students identified as truant or chronically absent in in-person instruction throughout the school year. To this end, they reported success as most LION Semester students (86%) enrolled and persisted in the fall and spring semesters of the school year.

Mental and emotional wellness

The parent and student surveys each included a question about the pilots' effects on students mental and emotional well-being. The vast majority of parents (93%) agreed that "participating in the Online Learning pilot improved my child's emotional well-being." A smaller but still substantial proportion of students (70%) agreed that the experience "has helped me be a happier person."

EXHIBIT 24. STUDENT & PARENT SURVEY RESPONSES RELATED TO MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL WELLNESS

	Students	Parents
	My experience participating in the pilot this year has helped me be a happier person.	Participating in the pilot improved my child's emotional well-being.
All Schools (Student n=44, Parent n=35)	**70%**	**93%**
Brewer Public Schools (Student n=10, Parent n=11)	90%	91%
RSU 60 (Noble) FLEX (Student n=16, Parent n=8)	56%	100%
RSU 22 (Hampden) Academy (Student n=5, Parent n=2)	100%	50%
RSU 25 (Bucksport) High School (Student n=5, Parent n=7)	0%	100%
RSU 34 Old Town (Student n=7, Parent n=7)	71%	100%
RSU 71 (Belfast) Area High School's LION Semester (Student n=1, Parent N/A)	100%	–

Qualitative data collected through interviews with students, parents, and educators adds more context to these survey findings. Most pilots in the remote learning category sought to re-engage learners for whom in-person instruction was a challenge—such as those with anxiety issues or chronic absenteeism—by providing students with an alternate remote education model prioritizing flexibility. The rationale behind this was to afford students with some degree of autonomy so that students have control and choice over their learning experiences. Staff at some schools said that they observed improvements in students' social and emotional well-being as they participated in the pilot.

During the site visit at RSU 25 (Bucksport) High School, some parents shared that they noticed their children were developing social relationships with their peers and instructors in school, which was something that was challenging for them prior to their participation in the pilot. Students also reported that they were able to interact and develop relationships with their peers. One student shared that they had regular work sessions on zoom with their friend where the two of them would complete their coursework independently. This student said that this allowed them to continue "working on the relationship" while also keeping them accountable. RSU 60 (Noble) FLEX, a Year 1 grantee, had students comment that they have never felt a sense of community at a school before—where differences are celebrated and there is no bullying.

Parents also remarked that their children were noticeably happier and more excited about the idea of going to school where earlier there was anxiety. Another parent shared that because of the pilot there was less conflict at home:

> *There are not as many arguments. Just last night, [student] was sitting down after work, doing homework just to be ahead. Like I would never have seen that before, ever. It would have been like pulling teeth to get her to do the homework that she needed to complete, not extra. So, it's brought about a better relationship between me and my daughter.*

Students across schools shared that by participating in their school's remote learning pilot program they have felt an improvement in their social and emotional well-being. For example, one student reported that they "haven't had as many anxiety attacks" as they did when they had to attend in-person instruction. This student shared that their parents would have to leave work in the middle of the day several times a week to pick them up from school during one of their episodes. With the switch to the pilot, the student reported that schooling has felt like less of a burden to themself and their parents.

Across schools, students shared that they enjoyed participating in online pilots and indicated that they were more motivated to learn. This was because students said they felt more in control and had a sense of ownership over what and how they learn. Staff noted that prior to the pilots, some students found it challenging to verbalize what they needed to in order to be successful in learning. However, as these students engaged more with the pilot, they learned to advocate for themselves and their learning needs, asking for more support or resources when they needed it, articulating when a specific resource or support was not suitable for them, or saying they needed more time to complete their coursework. In essence, as students were becoming more independent learners they developed a sense of self-advocacy.

Students, staff, and parents all perceived this model provided students with positive high school experiences because it prioritized creating a positive learning culture using specific in-person experiences meant to engage students (e.g., community service and field trips), having dedicated support staff and resources, and allowing students to be the architect of their learning journeys. For example, one student said:

> *I am a pretty quick learner and pick up on things quickly, so I can move ahead in different classes if I want to. But I can also stay behind and work on something a little longer if I am struggling with it. I love the fact it gives me independence and I feel like it is helping me with my work ethic and my motivation to do different things on my own. Overall, I love doing classes online and it has changed my high school experience for the better.*

Dissemination and scaling

- Brewer's program *Nu* was the roadmap for several Round 2 awardees, such as RSU 34 Old Town and RSU 22 (Hampden) Academy. RSU 34 Old Town continues to have monthly meetings with Brewer, along with other local districts that are interested in adding an online component to their current educational offerings. These meetings discuss common concerns and issues that come up, as well as a chance for districts to pick the brains of Brewer staff about their growing program. Such partnerships between pilots are expected to burgeon in the coming years.
- Several programs have continued to grow by expanding their scope. In the case of RSU 60 (Noble) FLEX's Be Well Connected program, they included 9th-grade students to allow for a smoother transition for those who are heading into high school but are not

quite ready for full-time in-person instruction. In the upcoming year, RSU 71 (Belfast) Area High School's LION Semester will expand to include 8th-grade middle school students and an additional staff member to help with the transition to high school. This would give students an opportunity to engage with in-person learning and prepare them for high school level courses and expectations, all the while building relationships with school staff. Additionally, this would prevent middle school students identified as high risk for truancy from falling through the cracks, so to speak, so that they have the necessary tools to graduate on time with their peers. RSU 25 (Bucksport) expanded their pilot to include full-time students enrolled in Bucksport's in-person instruction who were experiencing credit shortfalls as part-time students of the program. This ensured that they remained on track for graduation or in some cases could graduate early.

- In Year 2, both Brewer's *Nu* and RSU 60 (Noble) FLEX's Be Well Connected programs have continued to grow their community partnerships. In Year 2, Brewer introduced alternative pathways to reach students' academic goals by offering Extended Learning Opportunities for students in different lines of work, such as mechanics and Certified Nursing Assistants to name a few. Both programs have reached out and will continue to target homeschooling families in their communities; this is a strategy expressed by some Year 2 awardees as well (e.g., RSU 25).

Sustainability opportunities/challenges

Both Round 1 awardees and three of the four Round 2 awardees[8] will be sustaining their programs. RSU 22 (Hampden) Academy was initially not going to sustain their pilot given the challenges they encountered in their first year of implementation, but has since reconsidered and is reconvening with a new teacher and new direction.

- **Fiscal sustainability:** Both Brewer and RSU 60 (Noble's) programs have been integrated into their local school budgets; these school districts have allocated funds to implement the *Nu* and FLEX programs, respectively, for the foreseeable future. This—with the addition of tuition-based students (e.g., 15 students in Brewer), to which enrollment have been above projections—has allowed their programs to be sustainable once RREV funds run out. As the pilots are in the early stages among Year 2 awardees, they have yet to be integrated into the school budget and hence identifying funding sources has been a challenge. Some schools have shared their interest in securing RREV funds for the upcoming year and working toward integrating program costs within the school budget (e.g., RSU 25, RSU 34, and RSU 71). Additionally, RSU 71 (Belfast) is in discussions about making a shift to the LION learning model in place of the existing summer school given the positive outcomes reported from the LION Semester and strong parental support.

- **Institutional sustainability**: Both Round 1 awardees in their second year—Brewer and RSU 60 (Noble)—were able to hire additional staff this year to accommodate their growing rosters of students. Brewer hired a new teacher who will focus on the educational and vocational needs of students at the high school level, while Noble hired a social worker to assist with case management and additional tutoring and resource

[8] MSAD 6 (Bonny Eagle) ceased participation in the evaluation in spring 2023 so information regarding their sustainability initiatives could not be ascertained.

gathering. Among Round 2 awardees, there are plans to continue with the staff identified in their pilot year given the rapport they established with parents and families in the school community.

- **Cultural sustainability:** All schools that are continuing their programs are doing so because they have a lot of buy-in from the families they serve, in addition to district support for their programs. Both Round 1 awardees will continue to increase their outreach to the local community to make more families aware of their program and provide more opportunities for their students to be a part of the larger community. Round 2 awardees have described establishing and maintaining strong community partnerships as a goal for future years.

Innovative Education Models – Outdoor Education

Background

There are 18 Adopter Schools in the Outdoor Education category, of which five were Round 1 awards, two were Round 2 awards, two were Round 3 awards, and nine were Round 4 awards.[9] In total, across all schools, 11,052 students were served in PreK–12th grades (Exhibit 24).

The following table shows the number of students and grades served during the 2022–23 academic year.

EXHIBIT 25. OVERVIEW OF OUTDOOR EDUCATION PILOTS

School	Award Round	Number of Students served	Grades Served
MSAD 17 (Agnes Gray)	1	84	PreK–6th
MSAD 28 (Camden)	1	356	PreK–4th
RSU 9 (Mt. Blue)	1	50	9th-12th
RSU 89 (Katahdin)	1	240	K–5th, 11th–12th
School Union 76 (Deer Isle-Stonington)	1	455	K–12th
Portland Public Schools	2	6,700	K–12th
RSU 25 (Bucksport) (Full Award)	2	290	5th–8th
Brunswick	3	522	3rd–5th
RSU 1 (Bath)	3	330	6th–8th
RSU 20 (Searsport)	3	250	6th–12th
Gorham High School	4	70	9th
Limestone (Community School)	4	51	5th–8th

[9] Falmouth, a Round 3 pilot, was originally categorized as a Multiple Pathways pilot but transitioned to an Outdoor Education pilot midyear. Its pilot is discussed in the Multiple Pathways chapter.

School	Award Round	Number of Students served	Grades Served
Maine Academy of Natural Sciences (MeANS)	4	170	9th–12th
MSAD 11 (Gardiner)	4	186	9th
MSAD 59 (Madison)	4	250	PreK–4th
MSAD 61 (Lake Region)	4	434	6th–8th
RSU 13 (Oceanside)	4	13	9th
RSU 35 (Marshwood) Great Works School	4	290	4th–5th
RSU 73 (Spruce Mtn.) Elementary School	4	311	3rd–5th

Note: RSU stands for regional school unit. MSAD is Maine School Administrative District.

The total amount of RREV funds awarded across the 19 Outdoor Education pilots was $3,511,000 (Exhibit 25). The schools that are part of the first award round—MSAD 17 (Agnes Gray), MSAD 28 (Camden), RSU 89 (Katahdin), RSU 9 (Mt. Blue), and School Union 76 (Deer Isle-Stonington)—each received $250,000 at the beginning of the 2021–22 academic year. Five other pilots received the full $250,000 award, and the remaining eight pilots received Accelerator awards for $100,000.

- Most Outdoor Education pilots allocated the majority of their RREV award to **property and property services**. This category includes the construction of permanent infrastructure such as buildings, gardens, and storage units necessary for implementing the pilot's innovative learning model; and the improvement of existing areas for outdoor learning by paving tracks and installing tables, benches, and displays. One reason for building and renovating these spaces is that prior to RREV, the Maine climate and weather limited the amount of outdoor learning opportunities for students. The new infrastructure allows students to engage more fully with the natural surroundings of their schools through a variety of outdoor and hands-on activities that they were unable to prior to RREV. Some examples of this infrastructure include MeANS is building a barn for blacksmithing activities, MSAD 59 (Madison) is installing a dock system on the surrounding wetlands, RSU 73 (Spruce Mtn.) Elementary School is building two small greenhouses, RSU 25 (Bucksport) is building a greenhouse and a kitchen/makerspace, MSAD 61 (Lake Region) is building a greenhouse and a pavilion with seating and Wi-Fi access, and RSU 20 (Searsport) is building a longhouse.
- **Personnel services and employee benefits** were the largest budget category in three schools and the second largest category in seven schools. Across schools, educators and staff involved in the pilots were compensated for their time and efforts. Some schools, such as MeANS and School Union 76 (Deer Isle-Stonington), hired outdoor learning specialists to help educators to build the outdoor curriculum.
- **Professional services** was the largest expense in three pilots and the second largest expense of four more. These funds were typically used for professional development training for staff that would be directly involved in their pilot's implementation.

EXHIBIT 26. ALLOCATION OF RREV BUDGET BY OUTDOOR EDUCATION SCHOOL – ACCELERATOR AWARD

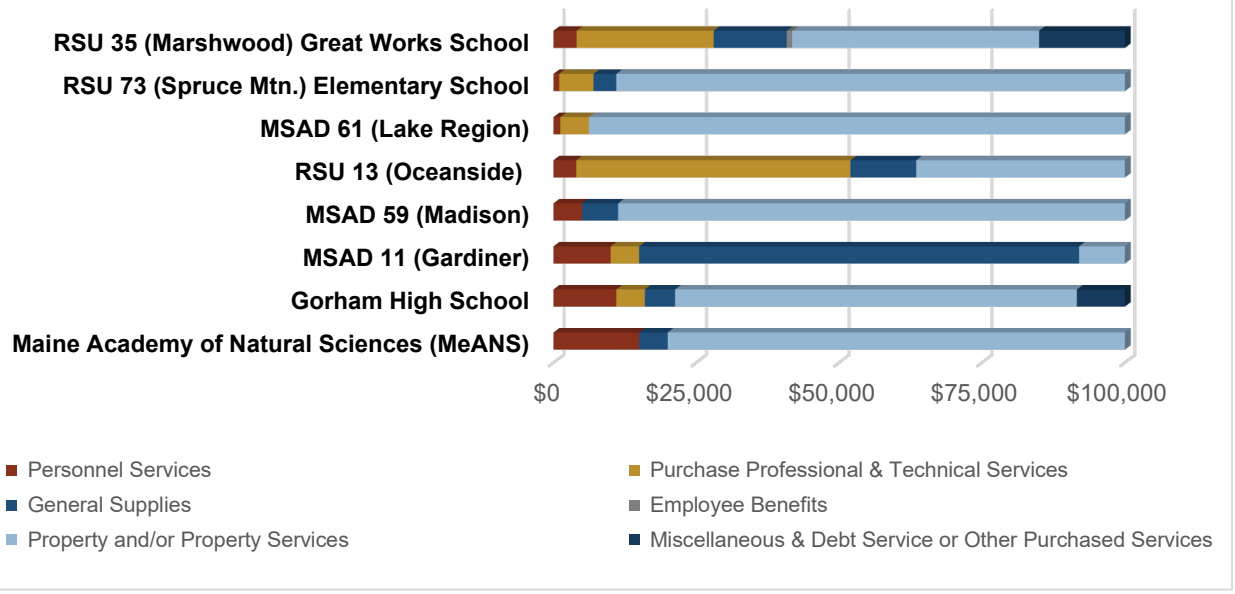
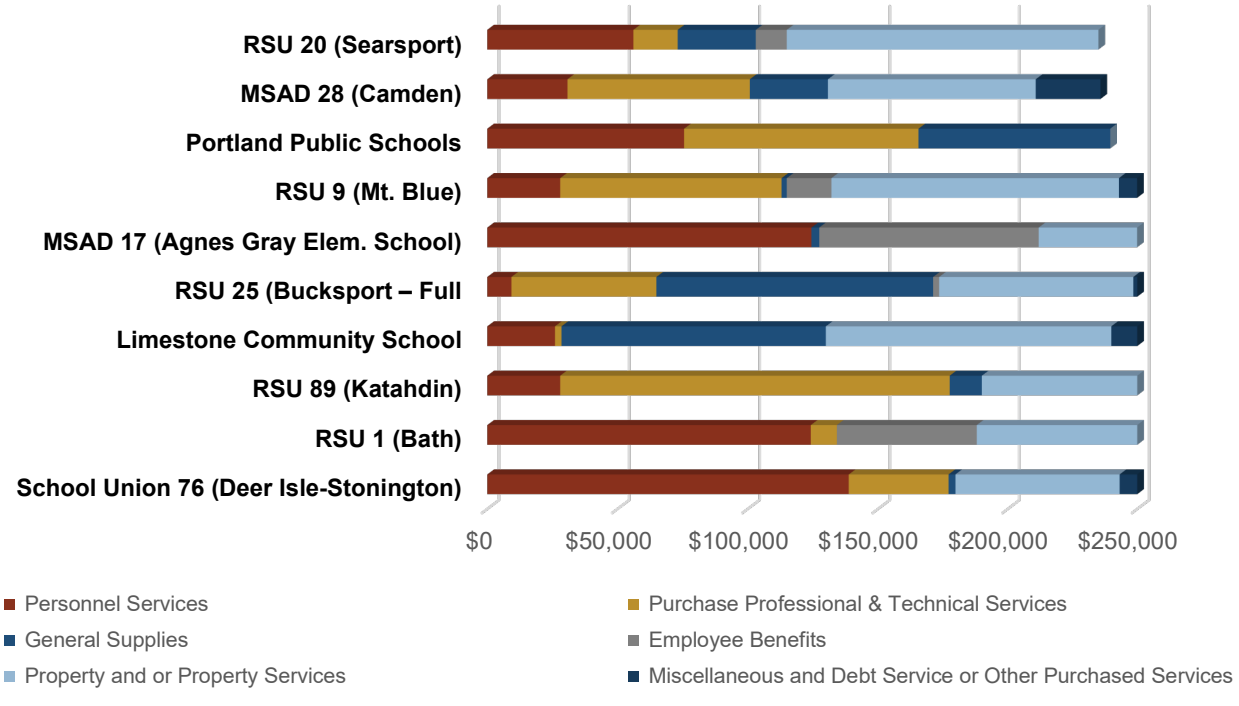


EXHIBIT 27. ALLOCATION OF RREV BUDGET BY OUTDOOR EDUCATION SCHOOL – FULL AWARD



- Many pilot budgets included **general supplies** for the purchase of outdoor wear, equipment, and instructional supplies. For example, MSAD 11 (Gardiner) is purchasing boots, rainwear, hats, mittens, winter jackets, snowshoes, fly fishing equipment,

binoculars, sporting scopes, game cameras, shovels, backpacks, and foldable camping chairs. The school also purchased a wheelchair adapted for all-terrain use for students with mobility problems.

Common goals across Outdoor Education schools included:

- **Integrate natural assets both on and off campuses to make outdoor learning more accessible**. Many used the funds to take advantage of the surroundings and made them accessible for outdoor learning.
- **Improve student engagement and behavior.** Outdoor Education pilots see outdoor learning as an opportunity to motivate and inspire students, especially in light of behavioral and engagement challenges they observed following the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **Support student socio-emotional development.** Many pilots envision outdoor learning as a tool to reinvigorate relationships and improve students' well-being.
- **Develop and/or expand outdoor learning curriculum and incorporate place-based or inquiry-based learning models.** The RREV pilots will help schools to add standards-aligned outdoor learning to their curriculums.
- **Improve teachers' comfort and skill with outdoor learning.** Many pilots seek to make teachers more comfortable when adding outdoor experiences to their classes.
- **Improve teacher engagement.** Many pilots not only target students' engagement, but teachers and staff's morale, passion, and social-emotional wellness.
- **Strengthen school and districtwide relationships.** Many pilots sought to foster collaborations across grades, academic departments, and to strength relationships with other schools in the same district.
- **Rebuild community relationships after the COVID-19 pandemic.** Many Outdoor Education pilots pursue community involvement to make their updated surroundings and landscapes available to the local community.

To fulfill the RREV goals, the common activities implemented by schools are listed below:

- **Building outdoor learning spaces.** One key element of most Outdoor Education pilots is identifying, constructing, and using an outdoor learning space. These learning spaces included greenhouses, nature trails, outdoor classrooms, pavilions, yurts, outdoor gardens, and orchards.
- **Establishing and maintaining outdoor gear supplies.** Several pilots invested in purchasing gear to allow students to engage with outdoor learning in different seasons and in diverse activities. Providing gear supplies ensures equitable access to outdoor activities some students would otherwise not have.
- **Pilots leverage professional development and coaching models to equip teachers with the skills and knowledge necessary for facilitating student learning outside.** Pilots varied in the type of professional development format used, such as coaching models, after school professional development sessions, or multiday intensive

professional development sessions, as well as whether teaching staff were mandated to participate in professional development. However, all pilots that included a professional development component focused on equipping teachers with the skills necessary to continue moving classes beyond each pilot's years and scope.

- **Creating a new position.** Several pilots recognized the necessity of having a position to focus solely on Outdoor Education.
- **Forms of transportation to connect students to the outdoors.** Some pilots invested in purchasing minivans to take students to outdoor learning spaces and facilities operated by community partners. Other schools use the funds to support the increased number of field trips to get students into local communities and local environments. For example, RSU 1 (Bath) used transport vans to take students to community partners both for larger overnight trips at the beginning of the school year as well as small weekday trips to community partners like food banks or to trail heads for an after-school mountain biking club.
- **Adapting schedules to include longer class periods provides teachers with greater opportunities to take students outside.** Multiple pilots adapted their school schedules to ensure that longer class periods could support the more in-depth focus required for project-based learning or for students learning outside. Longer class periods meant teachers could facilitate longer sessions of outdoor engagement within the school day. Further, schools that adapted their schedules can maintain that change regardless of pilot funding.
- **Embedding outdoor learning into the regular schedule to create equitable access to nature for all students.** Several pilots incorporate outdoor learning into existing classes or new schedules to meet their goals of serving all students and embedding nature experiences in the school culture.
- **Aligning current standards and curriculum with outdoor activities and trips.** Multiple pilots have aligned the new curriculum developed for outdoor activities with school and state academic standards to support teachers' lesson planning in future years. Further, by embedding outdoor activities into the curriculum, pilot teams intend for learning outside to continue beyond the pilot's scope.
- **Establishing and deepening relationships with community organizations.** Pilot teams recognized the opportunity to engage with or deepen existing relationships with community organizations focused on learning and various outdoor activities. Establishing these connections provided opportunities for community members to volunteer as a part of various pilots as well as giving students the opportunity to engage with the communities around them.

Responsiveness and innovativeness of models

- **Pilots take advantage of local outdoor assets and resources to support Outdoor Education.** Many of the schools involved in outdoor pilots have leveraged the natural assets around them for both student and community engagement with outdoor learning. Some schools foster this connection through frequent field trips to local outdoor sites while others focus on utilizing the outdoor assets available on their campuses. This

Pre-kindergarten students from MSAD 28 (Camden) Elementary School taking a rest between activities at one of the wooden educational platforms built with RREV funds.

offers pilot teams the chance to deepen student engagement through local organizations and their nature. For example, RSU 89 (Katahdin), located near Baxter State Park, partnered with community organizations such as the Katahdin Learning Project to connect with and use natural spaces.

- **Pilots use coaching to empower teachers to take ownership over outdoor learning.** Multiple pilots noted in their pilot design that, though some teachers were prepared for taking students outside to learn, many teachers needed training and additional support to feel comfortable taking students outside. A key innovation of many

pilots was the use of coaching to empower teachers to leverage their schools' natural resources in ways that complemented their teaching strengths and goals. That is, pilots offered teachers ongoing support to try outdoor learning in ways that matched their teaching style and lead to sustained use of outdoor learning spaces and teachers' professional growth. For example, at RSU 20 (Searsport) District Middle High School teachers used their lived experience to support the design of new outdoor learning units.

- **Pilots build buy-in from students and school communities' by soliciting and acting upon their input.** Outdoor pilots sought input from members of their communities, including students, teachers, administrators, families, and community organizations for both pilot design and implementation. Input mechanisms varied between pilots from surveys and written feedback to focus groups and conversations with the communities and the time frames during which pilots collected community feedback. Incorporating community feedback as a part of both pilot development and implementation helps support buy-in across stakeholder groups. Further, pilots with ongoing feedback systems can adjust implementation as well as reassess the changing needs of their communities. Some examples include RSU 89 (Katahdin) High School and RSU 9 (Mt. Blue) High School where students provided feedback on topics and certifications of interest. Similarly, MSAD 61 (Lake Region) Middle School's student input was a cornerstone of pilot development where students are responsible for "[designing] the layout inside the greenhouse and [building] the raised beds, shelves, and seating area … and [harvesting] the food that is grown in the greenhouse," as noted in the proposal.

- **Pilots support relationships between schools and their communities by providing for more frequent engagement between students and local organizations.** Multiple pilots have used award funding to support transportation needs such as paying for trips or the funds necessary to purchase transport vehicles. This allows students and teachers to better engage with their community by being out in their communities. One example is the transport van purchased by RSU 1 (Bath) Middle School's pilot, which has helped deepen the school's relationships with local organizations focused on ecology by allowing more frequent, small trips from the school to take advantage of their learning experiences. Gorham High School's pilot focuses on providing project-based learning opportunities for students to see how the content learned applies to the real world, "instead of just learning from a textbook and learning from ... worksheets in that more traditional model where we're asking them authentic questions."

- **Pilots have adapted school schedules and supported after school programs to increase opportunities for outdoor learning.** By engaging students with the pilot during sections of the school day, pilots such as the ones at RSU 35 (Marshwood) Great Works School, MSAD 11 (Gardiner) High School, or Limestone Community School ensure students across their populations can participate equitably in outdoor activities. RSU 1 (Bath) Middle School created an entirely new schedule with longer blocks and more aligned teacher planning time to facilitate project-based learning and opportunities to learn off campus. At RSU 35 (Marshwood) Great Works School, every student participated in a special class called Woodland and Wonder for three class periods each semester. This class is designed to support the development of eco-literacy skills while students are engaged in outdoor nature-based instruction and engage in citizen science

projects focused on Maine's ecology. Other pilots also support after school opportunities so students can continue to engage with outdoor learning beyond the school day.

- **Multiple pilots facilitate the creation of more authentic, real-world connections between schoolwork and local cultures and industries.** Multiple pilots invested in the development of place-based and locally informed lesson materials that connect the curriculum to the history and assets of their communities. Not only does this focus connect what students are learning academically to the community around them, but it supports students in developing the knowledge and skills necessary for choosing careers in the local economies. For instance, School Union 76 (Deer-Isle Stonington) has developed new place-based learning opportunities both on and off campus that center education around the specific context, such as the fishing industry, of their community and draw connections between core content and students' lived experiences and future plans. Likewise, both RSU 89 (Katahdin) High School and RSU 9 (Mt. Blue) High School focus their curriculum and certifications to support students interested in careers in the local outdoor industries. Portland Public Schools has connected pieces of the elementary school curriculum to incorporate lessons about the history and culture of local indigenous tribes. Similarly, RSU 25 (Bucksport) Middle School's pilot engages students in the local economy by selling the goods produced through student engagement with the pilot.
- **Pilots target the social-emotional well-being of students.** Multiple pilots identified addressing social-emotional well-being as a necessity after students experienced the COVID-19 pandemic and ongoing disruptions to attending school. Some schools, such as RSU 9 (Mt. Blue) and RSU 35 (Marshwood) Great Works School, used formalized assessments to help understand and track student social-emotional engagement while others used student surveys and other school metrics such as attendance or office referrals as proxies to help understand student engagement. Some pilots—RSU 35 (Marshwood) Great Works School, RSU 89 (Katahdin), and RSU 13 (Oceanside) High School—are specifically targeting high-need groups in their school communities by supporting school counseling and student support services with pilot implementation. Other schools, such as RSU 73 (Spruce Mtn.) Elementary and Limestone Community School, targeted students with high truancy rates.
- **Pilots emphasize the use of project-based and inquiry-based learning models to support student engagement and diversify methods for curriculum delivery.** To do so, multiple pilots have invested in professional development for teachers to adjust to the current curriculum and develop new lesson resources to support these learning models. For example, an administrator at Portland Public Schools explained that they sought to "interweave [experiential learning] into the curriculum [and] do it so it is equitable and systemic." In addition, multiple pilots provided professional development and coaching to support teachers in developing the skills necessary to implement project-based and inquiry-based learning. One such pilot at Gorham High School leveraged video creation and other technologies to engage students in project-based learning related to the pilot. When discussing students learning outside at MSAD 28 (Camden) one school administrator said, "You don't have to be *in* school to learn."

- **Incorporating accessibility into pilot design to serve all students.** Learning outside introduces additional obstacles and barriers for students with disabilities who may need additional support. Further, creating gear closets with necessary materials for going outside ensures all students, regardless of socioeconomic background, have the materials necessary to participate in outdoor learning. Some pilot teams, such as MSAD 11 (Gardiner) High School, have incorporated this into their pilot designs. School Union 76 (Deer Isle-Stonington), for example, built an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)-compliant trail connecting the elementary school and high school. Similarly, MSAD 59 (Madison) Elementary School built designated accessible outdoor learning areas. Still other teams, such as RSU 35 (Marshwood) Great Works School, are considering accessibility when building new outdoor learning spaces and selecting field trip sites.

Implementation of pilots with education model

RREV pilots' implementation progress varies according to the award round of the school. Round 1 schools are more advanced because they finished the second year of their RREV pilots.

Most of the Round 1 schools have implemented major activities as planned:

- **Most Round 1 awardees completed their major building and renovation work**. For example, RSU 9 (Mt. Blue) finished construction of the yurt and has started to use it as a classroom. Similarly, School Union 76 (Deer Isle-Stonington) and MSAD 28 (Camden) have completed the major work on their outdoor learning spaces. Although MSAD 28 (Camden) and School Union 76 (Deer Isle-Stonington) already finished a major part of the work to prepare existing tracks and paths for outdoor learning, they are still finishing the spaces with landscaping work and making trails ADA accessible. RSU 89 (Katahdin) also completed a nature trail connecting the elementary school and high school campuses and designating outdoor classrooms along these paths.
- **All schools have already purchased the outdoor equipment intended to be reused year after year.** RSU 89 (Katahdin) purchased tents. For the rest of the schools, this year's expenses were related to consumables and general supplies for students.
- **Five schools provided professional development opportunities for teachers and staff.** MSAD 28 (Camden) included a 2-day professional development workshop on how to integrate content area standards with guiding principles of outdoor learning.
- **MSAD 17 (Agnes Grey Elementary School) and School Union 76 (Deer Isle-Stonington) continued to have a place-based education integration specialist.** These educators are key to providing the necessary professional development and curriculum development for lessons to occur outside. The two community liaison positions at MSAD 28 (Camden) were eliminated this year while the new RREV coordinators reassessed the school's needs and priorities during its second year with the pilot, and felt that teachers were able to work directly with community partners.
- **Community partners have been highly engaged in schools**. The second year of the grant served to consolidate education partnerships with local organizations and to continue expanding the network. Thanks to the RREV award, schools not only can take students to the organization premises, but host activities as well. The greenhouse at

School Union 76 (Deer Isle-Stonington), for example, hosts nutrition and cooking lessons.

- **Teachers continued developing and sharing outdoor experiences that enhanced the current curriculum**. Teachers stated that the availability to share ready-to-use resources and experiences that met educational standards is crucial for teacher buy-in. RSU 89 (Katahdin) is already integrating outdoor learning across PreK–5th grades and content areas.
- **Community engagement and awareness is growing.** MSAD 28 (Camden) hosted a public meeting with other PreK schools in the area to talk more about the outdoor learning model and what the RREV pilot is doing to foster the school's philosophy.

Infrastructure improvement activities were more challenging than expected for Round 2, 3, and 4 schools, but most still expected new learning spaces to be ready for the start of the 2023–24 school year. The construction delays were due to bureaucratic issues, lack of consensus among stakeholders, and delays in permits. Below are examples of how three schools faced these challenges:

- **MSAD 61 (Lake Region) Middle School planned to build a greenhouse in collaboration with 8th-grade students and an outdoor pavilion with carpentry students from the local high school**. For safety and liability concerns, the collaborative tasks were switched to nonstructural work.
- **MSAD 59 (Madison) Elementary School is concerned about how they will maintain the dock system that is projected to finish in fall 2023**. To reduce maintenance costs, the district and contractors are working closely to find cost-efficient materials and solutions.
- **At Gorham High School, the plan to build a greenhouse depended on collaboration with the local authorities.** The school lacks property for construction projects, but the town agreed to provide the land. Delays in permits and other challenges made the school abandon the project. During an interview, one educator at Gorham pointed out that she lacked the administrative background required to realistically plan a project that involves construction. She mentioned that if she had known all the paperwork and authorizations required to build on school property ahead of time, she probably would have changed the focus on the RREV award. She also mentioned that she acted as the intermediary between the contractor on-site and the officer in the school district, which caused delays in communication and decisions.

Despite challenges with infrastructure for their pilots, most schools were able to implement other components as planned:

- **All schools purchased outdoor teaching/learning supplies as planned**.
- **Five schools hired a part-time expert to deliver the training.** The rest relied on third-party content providers. Participant teachers and staff varied across schools. Below is a list of examples:
    - At some schools, all teachers who work directly with students who benefit from the RREV funds received tailored training. This was the approach at RSU 35

Left: *Students in 1st grade observing ferns for a science project at School Union 76 (Deer Isle-Stonington).* ***Above:*** *A close up of the worksheet a 1st-grade student is completing for this outdoor science project.*

(Marshwood) Great Works School, RSU 20 (Searsport) District Middle High School, RSU 13 (Oceanside) High School, RSU 1 (Bath), and MSAD 61 (Lake Region) Middle School.

- At other schools, selected teachers received training. The criteria for teachers' selection varies across schools. Some schools, such as RSU 73 (Spruce Mtn.) Elementary School, selected 4th-grade teachers as pioneers to receive training to later act as mentors to the rest of grades. RSU 25 (Bucksport) Middle School and Portland Public Schools pilots also involve all students, but they selected a group of teachers across grades to start receiving training.

- **Five pilots hired a part-time expert in Outdoor Education.** Among the tasks assigned to this new educator were delivering professional training sessions and helping teachers to adapt their current curriculum to include outdoor learning.

- **Most schools aligned their curriculum and current school processes with outdoor learning**. For example, RSU 1 (Bath) Middle School allows longer class periods to provide additional time for project-based learning and for teachers to take students on trips within a single class. Another example is the Earth Sciences educator at MSAD 11 (Gardiner) High School, who spent the previous summer transforming the mandatory class for 9th-grade students into a 100% outdoor experience. The rest of the schools are

incorporating outdoor experiences, lessons, and units in the sciences curricula, with the goal of extending the approach to other core subjects and academic departments.

- **Outdoor education pilots strengthened relationships with community and third parties**. Schools are using the RREV pilots to reach out to community organizations to organize outdoor experiences. MeANS, for example, is using the RREV pilot to transform a community partnership into a lasting commitment for learning. The funding and equipment donated by a local blacksmith and the assistance of a former student are creating a lasting on-campus blacksmithing and metalworking program at the school. Gorham High School and MSAD 11 (Gardiner) High School partnered with a community organization that provides learning experiences on BMX bikes.
- **Schools with limited experience in Outdoor Education found it more challenging to create and sustain teacher buy-in.** Schools with a longer history of learning outside were able to increase the depth or frequency of Outdoor Education more easily than schools with more limited experience. For example, administrators at MSAD 28 (Camden) Elementary School (a Round 1 school) commented that "outdoor learning is a part of the [school's] DNA" so integrating new outdoor space was less disruptive for teachers. However, other schools found it more arduous to integrate outdoor learning. This was especially the case for elementary and middle school schools, where going outside involves two or more adults, every time. Some schools do not have enough personnel to provide habitual outdoor experiences. Some schools rely on parents for help, but others cannot guarantee a constant supply of volunteers during school hours.
- **Science content was easier to teach outside than other subjects.** All pilot schools include science as a core subject for outdoor learning. Some pilots stated it was a long-term goal to extend outdoor experiences to more subjects. For example, teachers at School Union 76 (Deer Isle-Stonington) described using the nature trail for activities in many subjects, for example by going outside to write in journals or draw pictures. However, some educators perceived that most of the professional development focused on sciences and expressed interest in learning more about how to integrate outdoor learning in other subjects.
- **Teachers desired more practical tips in professional development on outdoor learning**. A few educators from Round 2, 3, and 4 schools reported that the professional development material available for Outdoor Education includes too much "science of outdoor learning" and too few "real examples." They felt teachers needed more ready-to-use lessons and experiences instead of lessons on educational theories about the benefits of learning outside.

Outcomes

ICF analyzed four types of outcomes across all pilots:

- Opportunities for learning outside a traditional classroom
- Satisfaction with Outdoor Education models
- Academic outcomes of participating students

- Social-emotional outcomes of participating students.

To gather data on these outcomes, ICF administered a survey to all students in 3rd grade or higher who participated in Outdoor Education activities. ICF received a total of 1,068 student surveys from across the Outdoor Education pilots. Students' families were also surveyed, and ICF received a total of 494 responses to this survey.

ICF also conducted in-person site visits at 6 Outdoor Education pilots and virtual site visits with the other 13 schools. During site visits, a two-person ICF team conducted interviews and focus groups with teachers, students, parents, and community partners.

Availability of responsive education models

Across the Outdoor Education pilots, almost all parents (96%) felt it was at least somewhat important for schools to offer responsive activities, defined on the survey as "learning outside a traditional classroom." The same proportion expressed satisfaction with the options available at their child's school. In fact, every parent who responded to a survey at School Union 76 (Deer Isle-Stonington), MSAD 11 (Gardiner) High School, RSU 9 (Mt. Blue) High School, and Portland Public Schools said they were satisfied with the responsive education options available to their children, and the proportion was nearly as high at all other schools in this category.

About two-thirds of students (66%) participating in an Outdoor Education pilot agreed or strongly agreed that they had more opportunities to learn outside of a traditional classroom during the 2022–23 school year than in the past. RSU 9 (Mt. Blue) had the highest proportion (100%) of students who agreed they had more opportunities to learn outside than in the past. RSU 9 (Mt. Blue's) pilot consists of a specific class with extensive outdoor activities, so it is unsurprising that students in the class reported more opportunities to learn outside. Some of the schools where a lower proportion of students perceived more opportunities for responsive education were Round 1 awardees where Outdoor Education was already broadly offered the previous year (Mt. Blue was also a Round 1 awardee, but this was the first year its current cohort of students was able to participate in its programming), while others such as RSU 73 (Spruce Mtn. Elementary School) had not fully implemented their outdoor activities when students completed the survey.

EXHIBIT 28. STUDENT & PARENT SURVEY RESPONSES RELATED TO OPPORTUNITIES FOR RESPONSIVE LEARNING

	Students	Parents	
	This year, I had more opportunities to learn outside a traditional classroom than in the past. (% agree or strongly agree)	How important is it to you that schools offer responsive educational activities?	How satisfied are you with the availability of responsive education activities offered through your child's school?
All Schools (Student n=1,115, Parent n=490)	**66%**	**96%**	**68%**
Brunswick (Harriet Beecher Stowe) (Student n=13, Parent n=92) – Round 3	70%	96%	40%

	Students	Parents	
	This year, I had more opportunities to learn outside a traditional classroom than in the past. (% agree or strongly agree)	How important is it to you that schools offer responsive educational activities?	How satisfied are you with the availability of responsive education activities offered through your child's school?
RSU 25 (Bucksport) – Full Award (Student n=29, Parent n=21) – Round 3	72%	90%	38%
MSAD 28 (Camden)-Rockport Elementary School (Student n=77, Parent n=65) – Round 1	61%	98%	77%
School Union 76 (Deer Isle-Stonington) (Student n=74, Parent n=30) – Round 1	54%	100%	90%
Gorham High School (Student n=44, Parent n=21) – Round 4	67%	90%	86%
RSU 89 (Katahdin) Schools (Student=1, Parent n=4) – Round 1	–	80%	80%
RSU 35 (Marshwood) Great Works School (Student n=157, Parent n=59) – Round 4	67%	98%	92%
MSAD 11 (Gardiner) High School (Student=137, Parent n=40) – Round 4	87%	100%	90%
MSAD 17 (Agnes Gray Elementary School) (Student n=50, Parent n=6) – Round 1	70%	83%	83%
MSAD 59 (Madison) Elementary (Student N/A, Parent n=11) – Round 4	–	91%	73%
MSAD 61 (Lake Region) Middle School (Student n=73, Parent n=10) – Round 4	65%	90%	70%
RSU 9 (Mt. Blue) High School (Student n=11, Parent n=10) – Round 1	100%	100%	100%
Portland Public Schools (Student N/A, Parent n=5) – Round 2	–	100%	60%
RSU 1 (Bath) Middle School (Student n=272, Parent n=38) – Round 3	61%	92%	55%

	Students	Parents	
	This year, I had more opportunities to learn outside a traditional classroom than in the past. (% agree or strongly agree)	How important is it to you that schools offer responsive educational activities?	How satisfied are you with the availability of responsive education activities offered through your child's school?
RSU 20 (Searsport) District Middle High (Student n=24, Parent n=19) – Round 3	40%	95%	32%
RSU 73 (Spruce Mtn.) Elementary School (Student n=152, Parent n=58) – Round 4	50%	97%	62%
RSU 13 (Oceanside) High School (Student n=1, Parent n N/A) – Round 4	–	–	–

Satisfaction with outdoor learning

The vast majority of students and parents were satisfied with their experiences with the outdoor learning pilots. RSU 20 (Searsport), RSU 9 (Mt. Blue) and Brunswick (Harriet Beecher Stowe) had the highest proportion (100%) of students who agreed they were glad to learn outside this year while MSAD 28 (Camden-Rockport) (72%). RSU 9 (Mt. Blue) and Brunswick (Harriet Beecher Stowe) also had the highest proportion (100%) of students who agreed they liked their experience going outside.

MSAD 59 (Madison) Elementary School, MSAD 17 (Agnes Gray), and RSU 89 (Katahdin) had the highest proportion (100%) of parents who agreed their child enjoyed participating in Outdoor Education while MSAD 61 (Lake Region) Middle School and RSU 20 (Searsport) District Middle High had the lowest proportion (67% and 63%, respectively). MSAD 59 (Madison) Elementary and Portland Public Schools had the highest proportion (100%) of parents who agreed they were satisfied with their child's experience while MSAD 61 (Lake Region) Middle School and RSU 20 (Searsport) District Middle High again had the lowest proportion (67% and 63%, respectively).

EXHIBIT 29. STUDENT & PARENT SATISFACTION WITH OUTDOOR EDUCATION PILOTS

	Students		Parents	
	I am glad I went outside to learn this year.	Overall, I liked my experience going outside to learn this year.	My child enjoyed participating in Outdoor Learning.	I am satisfied with my child's experience with Outdoor Learning.
All Schools (Student n=1,115, Parent n=490)	**81%**	**79%**	**87%**	**83%**
Brunswick (Harriet Beecher Stowe) (Student n=13, Parent n=92) – Round 3	100%	100%	96%	79%
RSU 25 (Bucksport) – Full Award (Student n=29, Parent n=21) – Round 3	83%	76%	75%	86%
MSAD 28 (Camden)-Rockport Elementary School (Student n=77, Parent n=65) – Round 1	72%	79%	83%	79%
School Union 76 (Deer Isle-Stonington) (Student n=74, Parent n=30) – Round 1	81%	80%	84%	88%
Gorham High School (Student n=44, Parent n=21) – Round 4	84%	84%	89%	89%
RSU 89 (Katahdin) Schools (Student=1, Parent n=4) – Round 1	–	–	100%	80%
RSU 35 (Marshwood) Great Works School (Student n=157, Parent n=59) – Round 4	81%	81%	88%	86%
MSAD 11 (Gardiner) High School (Student=137, Parent n=40) – Round 4	85%	82%	85%	85%
MSAD 17 (Agnes Gray Elementary School) (Student n=50, Parent n=6) – Round 1	84%	79%	100%	100%
MSAD 59 (Madison) Elementary (Student N/A, Parent n=11) – Round 4	–	–	100%	100%
MSAD 61 (Lake Region) Middle School (Student n=73, Parent n=10) – Round 4	88%	88%	67%	67%

	Students		Parents	
	I am glad I went outside to learn this year.	Overall, I liked my experience going outside to learn this year.	My child enjoyed participating in Outdoor Learning.	I am satisfied with my child's experience with Outdoor Learning.
RSU 9 (Mt. Blue) High School (Student n=11, Parent n=10) – Round 1	100%	100%	80%	80%
Portland Public Schools (Student N/A, Parent n=5) – Round 2	–	–	80%	100%
RSU 1 (Bath) Middle School (Student n=272, Parent n=38) – Round 3	77%	74%	93%	71%
RSU 20 (Searsport) District Middle High (Student n=24, Parent n=19) – Round 3	100%	80%	63%	50%
RSU 73 (Spruce Mtn.) Elementary School (Student n=152, Parent n=58) – Round 4	77%	76%	90%	90%
RSU 13 (Oceanside) High School (Student n=1, Parent n N/A) – Round 4	–	–	–	–

Qualitative data from site visits and open-ended survey responses offer additional context about students' and parents' positive experiences with the pilots. Many students across schools shared with ICF teams their joy and excitement during site visits and described a special joy when going outside to learn. For example, one student said that they "loved going outside and pretending to have our own civilization, hammocks to chill out and read in, building huts, tools, and a bunch more." Another student explained that they appreciated "being more hands on and not having to look at a screen or a sheet of paper. Being able to experience things in the real world."

Parent feedback was also mostly positive. For example, one parent said that their child "never talks about school … [but] we heard about this project [which] she absolutely loved." Another parent stated that their child "looks forward to [being outside] each week," and one reported that their child "comes home inspired" on days they learn outside. Common themes among parent feedback were that their children like opportunities to interact with their peers and teachers in different environments and doing different tasks than what usually takes place in a traditional classroom. For example, one parent said, "All three of my children have deeply enjoyed the opportunities to be outside learning. It is engaging and required a different way of thinking and listening that they enjoy." Several other parents appreciated the opportunities for "hands-on learning," "more movement," "experimentation," and "exploration" afforded by these pilots.

Although most feedback from students and parents was positive, some did offer more critical assessments. A few students were bothered by insects or being outside in cold weather. Some

parents also relayed complaints from their children about the weather, and a small number perceived outdoor learning to be less rigorous than traditional classroom time. For example, one parent wrote that their child's experience "was very social with little to no educational content," while another was concerned that "outdoor learning became an extra recess."

Academic outcomes

A primary goal of Outdoor Education pilot projects was to improve academic outcomes by offering students the ability to learn outside the traditional classroom. Students engaged in hands-on learning experiences related to outdoor topics within their normal curricula, such as learning about plants, animals, or traditions of indigenous cultures, but also were instructed and completed course modules in outdoor spaces, such as reading and writing activities or math exercises.

Overall, students and parents perceived positive effects from these programs on student learning. About two-thirds of students (63%), and an even higher proportion of parents (84%), agreed that participating in the Outdoor Education pilot helped them learn this year.

RSU 9 (Mt. Blue) and Brunswick (Harriet Beecher Stowe) had the highest proportion (100% and 90%, respectively) of students who agreed going outside helped them learn this year while MSAD 28 (Camden)-Rockport Elementary School and RSU 1 (Bath) Middle School had the lowest proportion (50% and 47%) of students who agreed. In the case of RSU 1 (Bath) Middle School, this may be due to the nature of the pilot design where all students participated in a Connections Class period, but not all of these classes focused on outdoor activities.

MSAD 50 (Madison) Elementary, MSAD 17 (Agnes Gray), and Portland Public Schools had the highest proportion (100%) of parents who agreed their child learned a lot while participating in outdoor learning while RSU 9 (Mt. Blue) and MSAD 61 (Lake Region) Middle School had the lowest proportion (70% and 67%, respectively).

EXHIBIT 30. STUDENT & PARENT SURVEY RESPONSES RELATED TO ACADEMIC OUTCOMES

	Students	Parents
	Going outside helped me learn this year.	My child learned a lot participating in Outdoor Learning.
All Schools (Student n=1,115, Parent n=490)	**63%**	**84%**
Brunswick (Harriet Beecher Stowe) (Student n=13, Parent n=92) – Round 3	100%	96%
RSU 25 (Bucksport) – Full Award (Student n=29, Parent n=21) – Round 3	65%	88%
MSAD 28 (Camden)-Rockport Elementary School (Student n=77, Parent n=65) – Round 1	50%	79%
School Union 76 (Deer Isle-Stonington) (Student n=74, Parent n=30) – Round 1	70%	92%
Gorham High School (Student n=44, Parent n=21) – Round 4	65%	79%

	Students	Parents
	Going outside helped me learn this year.	My child learned a lot participating in Outdoor Learning.
RSU 89 (Katahdin) Schools (Student=1, Parent n=4) – Round 1	–	80%
RSU 35 (Marshwood) Great Works School (Student n=157, Parent n=59) – Round 4	64%	84%
MSAD 11 (Gardiner) High School (Student=137, Parent n=40) – Round 4	79%	85%
MSAD 17 (Agnes Gray Elementary School) (Student n=50, Parent n=6) – Round 1	63%	100%
MSAD 59 (Madison) Elementary (Student N/A, Parent n=11) – Round 4	–	100%
MSAD 61 (Lake Region) Middle School (Student n=73, Parent n=10) – Round 4	77%	67%
RSU 9 (Mt. Blue) High School (Student n=11, Parent n=10) – Round 1	100%	70%
Portland Public Schools (Student N/A, Parent n=5) – Round 2	–	100%
RSU 1 (Bath) Middle School (Student n=272, Parent n=38) – Round 3	47%	75%
RSU 20 (Searsport) District Middle High (Student n=24, Parent n=19) – Round 3	80%	71%
RSU 73 (Spruce Mtn.) Elementary School (Student n=152, Parent n=58) – Round 4	63%	85%
RSU 13 (Oceanside) High School (Student n=1, Parent n N/A) – Round 4	–	–

Qualitative data from teachers also provide additional context for the academic effects of outdoor learning pilots. For example, one teacher reported “a bump in engagement” this year, which she attributed to students feeling a sense of connection to their surroundings and history, especially related to the local river. A teacher at a different pilot made a similar observation that students “are more engaged than the last few years … they’re actually coming back and learning,” which she attributed to the pilot’s ongoing “experience [learning outside] every day in a much more positive way.” Another teacher said, *“*Outdoor learning tends to be active and hands-on by nature. This type of experiential learning is more relevant, meaningful, and memorable than traditional by-the-book learning. The things my students learn outside tend to be the things they remember and understand more deeply.*”*

Several teachers and parents felt that outdoor learning was especially valuable for students who have struggled in traditional classrooms. For example, one educator relayed feedback from a student she described as “not typically academically-minded,” who told her, “I actually learned something on the field trip.” The student shared this during a group reflection about the unit, noting that it was different because he had fun and learned at the same time. As noted earlier,

the vast majority of parents perceived improved learning when their children learned outside. Open-ended feedback from parents was especially positive among those who said their children had struggled in traditional classrooms. For example, one parent wrote, “Our son learns best in a nontraditional setting. [The pilot] keeps him interested in the learning goals for this year.” Another parent wrote that their child “has ADHD and other learning challenges and learning through experiences, especially outside and through activity, has been an amazing way for her to transition into high school. These experiences outside the classroom really helped her connect with what she had learned in the classroom.” However, a small number of parents did express concern about time spent away from the classroom. For example, one parent felt that pilot activities “do not come close to outweighing the lost instruction time for core, academic classes.”

Most Outdoor Education pilots also provided performance objectives data on student educational growth. Schools were responsible for defining educational growth as appropriate for their context, and chose a variety of measures including student growth on statewide assessment, student gains in content knowledge measured by customized assessments, or academic performance in coursework, among others. Four of the five Round 1 pilots met their educational growth targets, while one was unable to provide data. Many schools in later award rounds were unable to meet their targets or report on data this year. In many of these cases, the pilots were in early stages of implementation and expect more success on their performance objectives during the 2023–24 school year.

EXHIBIT 31. STUDENT-BASED EDUCATIONAL GROWTH PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES

School	Award Round	Student-Based Educational Growth Measure	Did They Report Student-Level Educational Growth Data?	Was Measure Met?	Notes
Brunswick (Harriet Beecher Stowe)	3	85% of students increase in RIT score on at least one NWEA assessment	No	N/A	The school provided school-level NWEA assessment data instead of student-level data
Gorham High School	4	Did not set student-based growth objective	No	N/A	The school provided attendance data instead of student-based educational growth data
Limestone (Community School)	4	Did not set student-based growth objective	No	N/A	The school did not respond to repeated requests for performance objectives data
Maine Academy of Natural Sciences (MeANS)	4	100% of students engage in outdoor learning	Yes	Not Met – 75%	
MSAD 11 (Gardiner)	4	50% of students increase score on school-developed fall-spring assessment	Yes	Met – 100%	
MSAD 17 (Agnes Gray Elementary School)	1	85% of students improve on reading or math STAR assessment	Yes	Met – 98%	
MSAD 28 (Camden)	1	85% of students increase in RIT score on at least one NWEA assessment	Yes	Met – 94%	
MSAD 35 (Marshwood) Great Works School	4	Did not set student-based growth objective	N/A	N/A	School provided data on teacher practice, student social-emotional health, and attendance, but none on student educational growth
MSAD 59 (Madison)	4	Did not set student-based growth objective	N/A	N/A	MDOE waived the Performance Objective requirement for 2022–23 per consultation with the school, ICF, and the RREV coach

School	Award Round	Student-Based Educational Growth Measure	Did They Report Student-Level Educational Growth Data?	Was Measure Met?	Notes
MSAD 61 (Lake Region)	4	70% of students meet their NWEA growth goals	Yes	Not Met – 36%	
Portland Public Schools	2	70% of students demonstrate gains in experience learning about flora and fauna in outdoor learning spaces	Yes	Met – 70%	
RSU 1 (Bath)	3	100% of students will produce a quality final product during their interdisciplinary expeditions course	Yes	No	This was met during the spring semester but not fall semester
RSU 13 (Oceanside)	4	Students in the program will pass all classes	Yes	Not Met – 0%	
RSU 20 (Searsport)	3	70% of students will demonstrate growth in English language arts and math	No	Not Met	The school stated that they did not meet the 70% target but did not indicate the percentage of students who did demonstrate growth
RSU 25 (Bucksport) – Full Award	2	Students will increase scores by at least one promotion standard	No	N/A	The school provided class-level data but not student-level data
RSU 73 (Spruce Mtn.) Elementary School	4	Student scores will increase by 10%	No	N/A	The school provided school-level NWEA assessment data instead of student-level data
RSU 89 (Katahdin)	1	75% of students will demonstrate growth on Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELs) assessment	No	N/A	The school was unable to report student-level data because it had not received assessment data from the state
RSU 9 (Mt. Blue)	1	85% of students will achieve a B or higher in the OxBow ELA course	Yes	Met – 100%	
School Union 76 (Deer Isle-Stonington)	1	85% of students increase in RIT score on at least one NWEA assessment	Yes	Met – 85%	

Mental and emotional wellness

The vast majority of parents (80%) and a slight majority of students (55%) agreed that Outdoor Education improved their mental and emotional well-being. Overall, the proportion of parents who agreed that Outdoor Education improved student's mental and emotional well-being was higher than the proportion of students for all pilots apart from Brunswick (Harriet Beecher Stowe) and RSU 9 (Mt. Blue) High School.

Again, RSU 9 (Mt. Blue) and Brunswick (Harriet Beecher Stowe) had the highest proportion (91% and 80%, respectively) of students who agreed their experience learning outside this year helped them be happier while RSU 1 (Bath) Middle School had the lowest proportion (45%).

Portland Public Schools and MSAD 17 (Agnes Gray) had the highest proportion (100%) of parents who agreed participating in outdoor learning improved their child's mental and emotional well-being, while RSU 20 (Searsport) District Middle High had the lowest proportion (63%).

EXHIBIT 32. STUDENT & PARENT SURVEY RESPONSES RELATED TO MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL WELLNESS

	Students	Parents
	My experience learning outside this year has helped me be a happier person.	Participating in Outdoor Learning improved my child's mental and emotional well-being.
All Schools (Student n=1,115, Parent n=490)	**55%**	**80%**
Brunswick (Harriet Beecher Stowe) (Student n=13, Parent n=92) – Round 3	80%	89%
RSU 25 (Bucksport) – Full Award (Student n=29, Parent n=21) – Round 3	59%	88%
MSAD 28 (Camden)-Rockport Elementary School (Student n=77, Parent n=65) – Round 1	49%	74%
School Union 76 (Deer Isle-Stonington) (Student n=74, Parent n=30) – Round 1	58%	84%
Gorham High School (Student n=44, Parent n=21) – Round 4	58%	89%
RSU 89 (Katahdin) Schools (Student=1, Parent n=4) – Round 1	–	80%
RSU 35 (Marshwood) Great Works School (Student n=157, Parent n=59) – Round 4	56%	84%
MSAD 11 (Gardiner) High School (Student=137, Parent n=40) – Round 4	64%	80%
MSAD 17 (Agnes Gray Elementary School) (Student n=50, Parent n=6) – Round 1	56%	100%
MSAD 59 (Madison) Elementary (Student N/A, Parent n=11) – Round 4	–	75%

	Students	Parents
	My experience learning outside this year has helped me be a happier person.	Participating in Outdoor Learning improved my child's mental and emotional well-being.
MSAD 61 (Lake Region) Middle School (Student n=73, Parent n=10) – Round 4	61%	67%
RSU 9 (Mt. Blue) High School (Student n=11, Parent n=10) – Round 1	91%	80%
Portland Public Schools (Student N/A, Parent n=5) – Round 2	–	100%
RSU 1 (Bath) Middle School (Student n=272, Parent n=38) – Round 3	45%	64%
RSU 20 (Searsport) District Middle High (Student n=24, Parent n=19) – Round 3	50%	63%
RSU 73 (Spruce Mtn.) Elementary School (Student n=152, Parent n=58) – Round 4	59%	77%
RSU 13 (Oceanside) High School (Student n=1, Parent n N/A) – Round 4	–	–

Several schools included performance objectives related to mental and emotional well-being:

- RSU 1 (Bath) Middle School found that 83% of students and 84% of staff reported favorable experiences after taking part in Connection Classes in a survey administered by the pilot team.
- More than 80% of students surveyed by RSU 35 (Marshwood) Great Works School responded in the affirmative to questions such as, "Do you have a teacher or other adult from school who you can count on to help you, no matter what?" and "Do you have a friend from school who you can count on to help you, no matter what?"
- At RSU 35 (Marshwood) Great Works School, pilot staff achieved the goal of improving student social-emotional well-being by decreasing the percentage of students who felt only somewhat, a little, nor not understood by a person at their school from 41% to below 18% as a result of the outdoor learning pilot.
- At SRSU 73 (Spruce Mtn.) Elementary School, the number of students who were identified as having an extremely elevated risk of emotional distress decreased from 19% to 14% as a result of the outdoor learning pilot.

When describing mental and emotional effects of the pilot, many stakeholders commented on the ways pilots facilitated different modes of social engagement, including opportunities for smaller group activities. For example, one RSU 1 (Bath) Middle School teacher described how pilot field trips, which are taken in a van, has helped a "6th grader who really struggles in large groups. … Having a van allowed her to participate because she was able to have a teacher drive her with a much smaller group, [which] allowed her to participate and be with her peer

group in a … fun activity." Another teacher, at RSU 35 (Marshwood) Great Works School, credited the pilot with improving students "investment in school … because they just like being here and … learning something that's engaging."

During site visits, students and parents described how outdoor learning incorporates opportunities for personal reflection, mindfulness, and relationship building elements in educational activities. For example, students at RSU 1 (Bath) Middle School credited the pilot's journaling activities, in which they write about their own perceptions and preferences relating to being outdoors and learning, with helping their wellness. Students at RSU 9 (Mt. Blue) High School also engaged in resiliency training and mindfulness activities in order to connect their work on outdoor skills and certifications to their own well-being. As noted earlier, common responses among parents' open-ended feedback on the survey were that pilots improved their children's engagement and confidence. For example, one parent said the pilot "allowed my child to feel confident" and another parent said they appreciated the "engaging and interactive and hands-on" aspects of the pilot, which they said had "so many holistic benefits" for their child.

When students were asked to reflect on what they enjoyed about their outdoor pilot programs, many noted the effect of learning outside on their well-being at school. For example, one student said, "I adored going outside as it made me calm, yet [joyful]. Going outside is one of my favorite activities." Another student said that the pilot "helped my anxiety and depression and it's helped me learn a lot more faster than I usually would have in person!" Another student told the research team that participating in the pilot "made me feel like I was part of something that was bigger than me and it made me happy, it showed me the best way I could learn, which is in a hands-on environment. … [The pilot] helped me discover the best parts of me and has helped me learn who I am."

Dissemination and scaling

Many education pilots focused their first year of implementation on establishing a program at one school or grade level, but have expanded or intend to expand their programs in later years. For some pilots—such as MSAD 17 (Agnes Gray Elementary School) and RSU 89 (Katahdin)—pilot implementation began for a limited number of grades, and they plan to expand engagement with the pilot in coming years. For other pilots, such as MSAD 61 (Lake Region) Middle School, and RSU 20 (Searsport) District Middle High School, this meant establishing the pilot initially at a single school and expanding the pilot scope to other schools within the district in the second year of pilot implementation. Still others, such as RSU 9 (Mt. Blue) and RSU 89 (Katahdin), are establishing advanced courses for high school students in which students who participated in the pilot this year will be able to build on what they have learned in an advanced Year 2 class. In all cases, pilot teams re-evaluated and improved pilot implementation based on their experience and feedback in the initial year.

A few pilots, such as MSAD 28 (Camden) and MSAD 17 (Agnes Gray Elementary School), have been active in disseminating their innovations with other schools interested in establishing outdoor learning. Some pilots even had the chance to advocate at the local and state level for more support for outdoor learning. Programs such as the one at MeANS will share the pilot in a statewide event for educators and administrators. Two students from MSAD 17 (Agnes Gray Elementary School) and the pilot lead presented in front of the Maine House of Representatives in support of a bill to increase state support for Outdoor Education programs. At Gorham High School, students created video projects highlighting the pilot's implementation that are posted

on the school website and shared through social media. MSAD 59 (Madison) Elementary School plans to use the district webpage to highlight students and families' activities—with testimonials, photos, attendance logs, and other resources—to create awareness and expand the use of the spaces.

Sustainability opportunities/challenges

Most outdoor pilots plan to use the physical infrastructure for years to come. After the one-time investment required to build and supply the infrastructure for outdoor learning spaces, many awardees are able to cover any ongoing costs, such as maintenance and utilities, in normal operating budgets. In the short- to mid-term, awardees will not need to replace purchased equipment and gear and will have time to secure additional funding for long-term sustainability as gear wears out or needs to be replaced.

Pilots that involve one-time curriculum or lesson plan development also rely on low ongoing maintenance costs to continue programming once award funds end. Awardee staff described plans to integrate elements of training related to outdoor learning and the utilization of outdoor spaces into ongoing mentoring efforts as well as communities of practice within their schools in order to promote ongoing implementation of best practices being learned through the pilot.

Awardees highlight fostering community buy-in and connections with external organizations to support outdoor learning over time. Most outdoor learning awardees have partnerships with various organizations in their communities, such as outdoor learning centers, post-secondary institutions, or community service organizations, that both provide expertise and assistance as well as publicize efforts and engage community members beyond those directly involved with the school.

Chapter 2: RREV Year 2 Educator Survey Results

Background

RREV seeks to create systemic change in Maine schools that extends beyond the immediate financial support provided by the award. A key mechanism for this long-lasting impact lies in teachers' attitudes toward innovation. According to RREV's theory of change, teachers and administrators who participate in a pilot will experience first-hand the benefits of innovation, and thus become more supportive and effective at implementing innovative education models in the future. RREV posits that over time, positive attitudes toward innovation among Maine educators will cultivate an environment where administrators and teachers continuously create and implement new educational models that respond to changing student needs.

In August 2022, ICF submitted an evaluation report summarizing findings from the first full year of RREV implementation. This report included findings from a survey of educators at the nine Round 1 awardees. Results were promising and showed that teachers involved in a pilot exhibited high openness to new approaches to education and appreciated opportunities to collaborate with their colleagues on a shared mission.

This report adds to findings from the Year 1 (2021–22) educator survey by summarizing findings from the Year 2 (2022–23) pre- and post-surveys of educators in Adopter Schools awarded in rounds 1, 2, 3, and 4.[10] The surveys from both years explore the same constructs—i.e., educator attitudes toward innovation in education and educator satisfaction with the support they received to implement their RREV pilot. However, there were some changes to the survey between Year 1 and Year 2. These changes were the result of a deliberate decision by ICF and MDOE to reflect on what was learned during Year 1 about how teachers conceptualize innovation in education. Specifically, ICF conducted a factor analysis to estimate relationships between item responses and the constructs they sought to measure. Based on this analysis, as well as lessons learned from the qualitative data collected during Year 1, some items were replaced with new questions to align the survey questions with how teachers think about innovation. This approach improves the validity of the survey because it integrates new knowledge about how teachers approached the survey during the first year, and also reflects RREV's philosophy of continual experimentation and learning. However, it also complicates reporting because the Year 1 and Year 2 instruments do not exactly match. Therefore, findings from longitudinal comparisons are only provided for items that were asked in both Year 1 and Year 2. These instances are referenced throughout the sections as needed.

Research Questions

This chapter is focused on attitudes toward innovation among educators at Adopter Schools and their satisfaction with the support they received to implement their educational models. This chapter addresses the following research questions:

[10] Educators at Round 1 schools were only asked to complete a fall 2022 survey if they did not complete a spring 2022 survey—for example, if they were hired over the summer. All educators were asked to complete a spring 2023 survey. Awardees in Round 1 are referred to as Cohort 1 whereas awardees in Rounds 2,3, and 4 are combined into Cohort 2.

1. What attitudes do educators at Adopter Schools have toward innovation in education, and to what extent and how did these change during implementation of an innovative education model?
2. To what extent were educators satisfied with the professional development and other resources to support the implementation of their pilot model?

Methods

Measures

Educators' attitudes toward innovation

ICF and MDOE collaborated to design a survey aligned with RREV's philosophy of innovation, especially the design thinking principles taught in IMPD courses. Specifically, this survey includes 25 items about educators' attitudes and experience around innovation along five domains:

1. Flexibility and iteration
2. Collaboration
3. Self-reflection
4. Engagement in professional practice, and
5. Perception of leadership support for innovation.

These survey items were posed as statements with which the respondents were asked to rate their agreement on a 5-point Likert scale ("strongly disagree," "disagree," "neutral," "agree," and "strongly agree"). For most items, agreement with the statement indicated a positive attitude toward innovation, such that an increase in the proportion of respondents who agreed signals an improved attitude toward innovation. However, as a way to encourage respondents to carefully respond to these statements, ICF also included some statements where *disagreement* indicates positive attitude toward innovation, such that an increase in the proportion who disagreed signals an improved attitude toward innovation (e.g., New approaches to education tend to be passing fads).

Five statements relating to teaching were only asked to respondents who indicated they were teachers but were not asked of educators who identified as administrators, counselors, and other school staff. These instances are denoted in exhibits with a caret (^) and further indicated in exhibit notes. The remaining 20 items were customized for these non-teaching educators.

Experience with the Coaching Framework and the RREV pilot

Educators were asked to rate a series of statements about the RREV Coaching Framework and their RREV coach as it related to their experience with them. Educators who indicated that they knew and communicated with their RREV coach responded to a series of eight statements on a 5-point Likert scale (strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, and strongly agree). Statements pertaining to the RREV Coaching Framework and the RREV coach were only posed in the Year 2 post-survey in spring 2023.

In addition to this, educators were asked to describe their experience in their RREV pilot and in their interactions with educators involved in their school's and other schools' RREV pilots. Ratings were on a 5-point Likert scale (strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, and strongly

agree). Two of the six statements were only posed in the Year 2 post-survey in spring 2023, whereas the remainder were asked in the post-surveys of Years 1 and 2.

Analytic approach

In Year 1, ICF's analytic approach included respondents who took both the pre-survey in fall 2022 and the post-survey in spring 2023, so that resulting percentage changes were indicative of individual change or growth from pre- to post-survey. In Year 2, the research team adopted a new approach to analyzing survey responses and trends over time, which involved examining the distribution of responses from unique survey respondents—as opposed to matched pairs. In doing so, findings would signal the degree to which the distribution of responses varied from Year 1 to Year 2. This shift in ICF's analytic approach was primarily driven by the extent of educator changes in Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 pilots where new educators were identified as being directly involved in the RREV pilots either because the scope of the pilot expanded or because they were filling vacant positions. Because of the differing sample sizes in each timepoint:

- The number of matched pairs—that is the number of educators who responded to surveys at all relevant timepoints—became too small to adequately capture individual growth or change.
- Administering a pre- and a post-survey, specifically for the schools in the later award rounds where pilot implementation only began in earnest during the later part of the 2022–23 school year would not have yielded a truly representative or meaningful change in attitudes.
- The inclusion of all unique respondents, including new educators who joined the pilot after the fall 2022 pre-survey administration, allows for richer insights and deeper understanding of educators' attitudes towards innovation.

Since the goal is to measure change not only in educators' attitudes and actions, but also in schools' culture toward innovation, the research team compared all the answers from the pre- and post-surveys administered in Year 1 and Year 2, to represent change since the inception of the first RREV pilots to date. Educators in Cohort 1 (i.e., in the first award round) who were administered the fall 2021 pre- and spring 2022 post-surveys did not get the fall 2022 pre-survey in Year 2. The fall 2022 pre-survey was administered to Cohort 1 educators who were newly identified to work on the pilots as well as educators involved in Cohort 2 pilots. Educators across both cohorts responded to the spring 2023 post-survey.

The figures included in this section represent educators' attitudes and experience around innovation in four different timepoints: Year 1 surveys (administered in fall 2021 and spring 2022) and Year 2 surveys (administered in fall 2022 and spring 2023). All Cohort 1 educators were invited to complete the Year 1 fall 2021 and spring 2022 surveys. All Cohort 2 educators and any new Cohort 1 educator were invited to complete the Year 2 fall 2022 survey. All Cohorts 1 and 2 educators were invited to complete the Year 2 spring 2023 survey. Not all schools and not all respondents were part of the RREV pilot at all the timepoints. Therefore, to create the figures, each calculation was made in accordance with the number of respondents who answered each statement at each timepoint.

Survey administration and response rate

In September 2022, ICF asked the primary point of contact at each pilot to provide the names and email addresses of all educators who were directly involved in the pilot. Across all pilots, there were 244 educators directly involved in implementing a pilot. ICF received a total of 195 unique survey responses, meaning the completion of at least a fall 2022 or a spring 2023 survey, which corresponds to an 80% overall response rate. Of these, 176 completed the pre-survey (72% response rate) and 124 completed the post-survey (51% response rate). These individual pre- and post-survey response rates were affected by a few complications:

- As described earlier, educators at Round 1 schools who took a spring 2022 survey were not asked to take a fall 2022 survey because there would not be expected change over the summer, and ICF did not wish to overburden survey respondents.
- Many Adopter Schools had new educators join the pilot during the middle of the year. These educators were not asked to complete the pre-survey.
- Many Adopter Schools experienced staff turnover over the course of the year. Educators who left a school or were no longer involved in a pilot were not asked to complete a post-survey.

Exhibit 33 summarizes the number of educators involved as reported in fall 2022, the number of post-surveys received in spring of 2023, and the response rate on the post-survey statewide and by Adopter School. Because of the small number of survey respondents at some schools, ICF does not provide school-level analysis of educator survey data to protect confidentiality; however, the school snapshots (Appendix A) provide deep dives into the implementation of the pilot at each school.

Exhibits 34 and 35 summarize the number of respondents by role and the number of respondents by years of experience as indicated in the Year 2 Educator Surveys.

EXHIBIT 33. NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS BY ADOPTER SCHOOL IN YEAR 2

Adopter School	Total Staff Involved in Pilot	Pre-Survey (Response Rate)	Post-Survey (Response Rate)	Total # Respondents
Brewer Public Schools	10	8 (80%)	6 (60%)	8 (80%)
Brunswick	10	9 (90%)	4 (40%)	9 (90%)
School Union 76 (Deer Isle – Stonington)	5	1 (20%)	2 (40%)	3 (60%)
Falmouth	10	9 (90%)	6 (60%)	9 (90%)
Gorham	4	3 (75%)	3 (75%)	4 (100%)
Harpswell Coastal Academy	7	3 (43%)	3 (43%)	3 (43%)
Kittery	3	3 (100%)	1 (33%)	3 (100%)
Lee Academy	4	4 (100%)	3 (75%)	4 (100%)

Adopter School	Total Staff Involved in Pilot	Pre-Survey (Response Rate)	Post-Survey (Response Rate)	Total # Respondents
Limestone	2	1 (50%)	2 (43%)	2 (100%)
Maine Academy of Natural Sciences (MeANS)	14	13 (93%)	6 (43%)	13 (93%)
Maine Indian Education	10	9 (90%)	6 (60%)	9 (90%)
MSAD 11 (Gardiner)	2	2 (100%)	1 (50%)	2 (100%)
MSAD 17 (Agnes Gray Elementary School)	12	4 (33%)	9 (75%)	9 (75%)
MSAD 28 (Camden)	4	3 (75%)	2 (50%)	3 (75%)
MSAD 49 (Lawrence) High School	9	6 (67%)	7 (78%)	9 (100%)
MSAD 59 (Madison)	7	3 (43%)	3 (43%)	4 (57%)
MSAD 61 (Lake Region)	12	11 (92%)	7 (58%)	12 (100%)
Portland Public Schools	15	11 (73%)	7 (47%)	11 (73%)
RSU 60 (Noble)	5	4 (80%)	3 (60%)	4 (80%)
RSU 1 (Bath)	29	13 (45%)	12 (41%)	18 (62%)
RSU 13 (Oceanside) High School	7	5 (71%)	2 (29%)	5 (71%)
RSU 20 (Searsport)	3	2 (67%)	2 (67%)	2 (67%)
RSU 21 (Kennebunk)	5	5 (100%)	1 (20%)	5 (100%)
RSU 22 (Hampden) – Accelerator	2	2 (100%)	1 (50%)	2 (100%)
RSU 25 (Bucksport) – Accelerator	2	2 (100%)	1 (50%)	2 (100%)
RSU 25 (Bucksport) – Full Award	7	5 (71%)	2 (29%)	5 (71%)
RSU 34 Old Town	2	2 (100%)	2 (100%)	2 (100%)
RSU 44 (Telstar)	5	5 (100%)	5 (100%)	5 (100%)
RSU 6 (Bonny Eagle) – Accelerator	5	3 (60%)	1 (20%)	3 (60%)
RSU 71 (Belfast) – Accelerator	1	1 (100%)	1 (100%)	1 (100%)
RSU 71 (Belfast) – Full	8	5 (63%)	3 (38%)	5 (63%)
RSU 73 (Spruce Mtn.) Elementary School	6	5 (83%)	3 (50%)	5 (83%)
RSU 84 (East Grand)	3	3 (100%)	1 (33%)	3 (100%)

Adopter School	Total Staff Involved in Pilot	Pre-Survey (Response Rate)	Post-Survey (Response Rate)	Total # Respondents
St. George Public Schools	7	7 (100%)	4 (57%)	7 (100%)
Wayfinder Schools	7	4 (57%)	3 (43%)	4 (57%)
Total	**244**	**176 (72%)**	**125 (51%)**	**195 (80%)**

Exhibits 34 and 35 summarize the 195 educators by role and by years of experience as indicated in the Year 2 Educator Surveys. A majority of the survey respondents (69%) identified themselves as teachers, followed by administrators (14%). Regarding years of experience, more than half of educators reported having less than 9 years' experience with a combined proportion of 64%.

EXHIBIT 34. NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS BY ROLE

Educator Role	Number	Percent
Teacher	136	69%
Administrator	28	14%
Other School Staff	21	11%
Counselor	7	4%
Not responded	3	2%
Total	**195**	**100%**

EXHIBIT 35. NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS BY YEARS OF EXPERIENCE

Educator Role	Number	Percent
Less than 3 Years	71	36%
More than 3 years and less than 9 years	55	28%
More than 9 years and less than 20 years	23	12%
More than 20 years	23	12%
Not responded	23	12%
Total	**195**	**100%**

RQ1: What attitudes do educators at Adopter Schools have toward innovation in education, and to what extent and how did these change during implementation of an innovative education model?

Educators at Adopter Schools across both cohorts exhibited positive attitudes toward innovation across all five domains and at all times the survey was administered. Most teachers, administrators, and other staff—regardless of their level of experience—agreed with principles

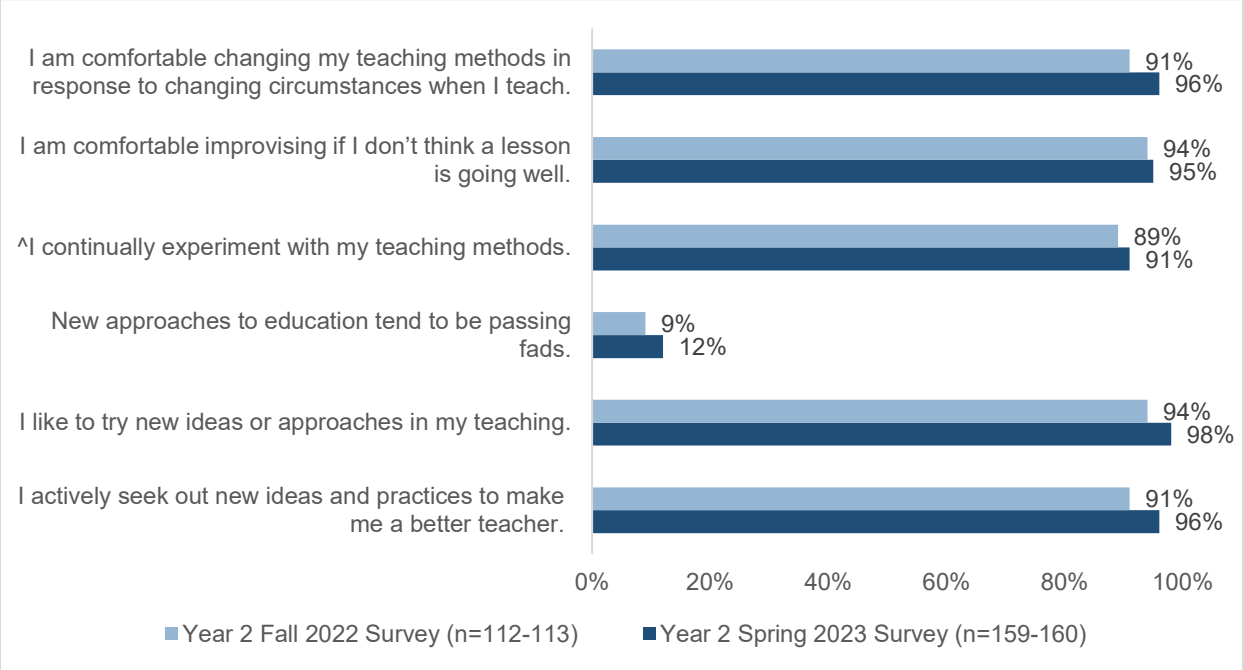
of innovation and stated that they sought to integrate innovative approaches in their professional practices. In essence, there was an overall positive orientation toward innovation across all five domains of innovative attitudes examined by the survey. However, the high degree of innovative attitudes from the beginning of RREV meant there were no significant changes in attitudes between the beginning of pilot implementation and the most recent survey administration in spring 2023.

Flexibility and iteration

The Year 2 survey included six new items related to educators' flexibility and experimentation. These items were developed based on feedback from the first year of implementation and survey analysis, which is why there are no comparisons to Year 1 survey data. Overall, most educators agreed they showed flexibility and experimentation in their practice in both timepoints. As shown in Exhibit 36, almost all educators (over 90%) agreed or strongly agreed to five of the six positively worded statements, with a higher percentage of respondents indicating agreement in the spring 2023 post-survey compared to ratings in the fall 2022 pre-survey. For instance, educators' ratings to *trying new ideas or approaches in their teaching or professional practice* increased between the fall 2022 and spring 2023 surveys (from 94% to 98%, as did ratings for *feeling comfortable changing their methods in response to changing circumstances*—from 91% to 96%).

Several educators used open-ended responses to describe their RREV pilot's impact on their flexibility and iteration. For example, one educator wrote that the RREV pilot allowed them "to think creatively and collaborate with innovative educators who are exploring new methods in teaching" and to think "more 'outside the box.' " Another educator wrote that the pilot helped their school "move beyond … the old ways of doing things [that] doesn't fit this generation." Another educator stated that the pilot helped them "learn more about how different subjects can be integrated and taught in a nontraditional way to meet standards." Another educator, who identified their role as a counselor, wrote that the pilot has "shifted my mission and vision within the school counseling classes. We moved completely outside and adapted a new approach to social/emotional teaching in the moments of play, teamwork, and problem solving."

EXHIBIT 36. PERCENTAGE OF EDUCATORS WHO AGREE OR STRONGLY AGREE WITH STATEMENTS RELATING TO FLEXIBILITY AND ITERATION AND OPENNESS TO EXPERIMENTATION



^Educators who identified as administrators, counselors, or other school staff did not respond to this item.

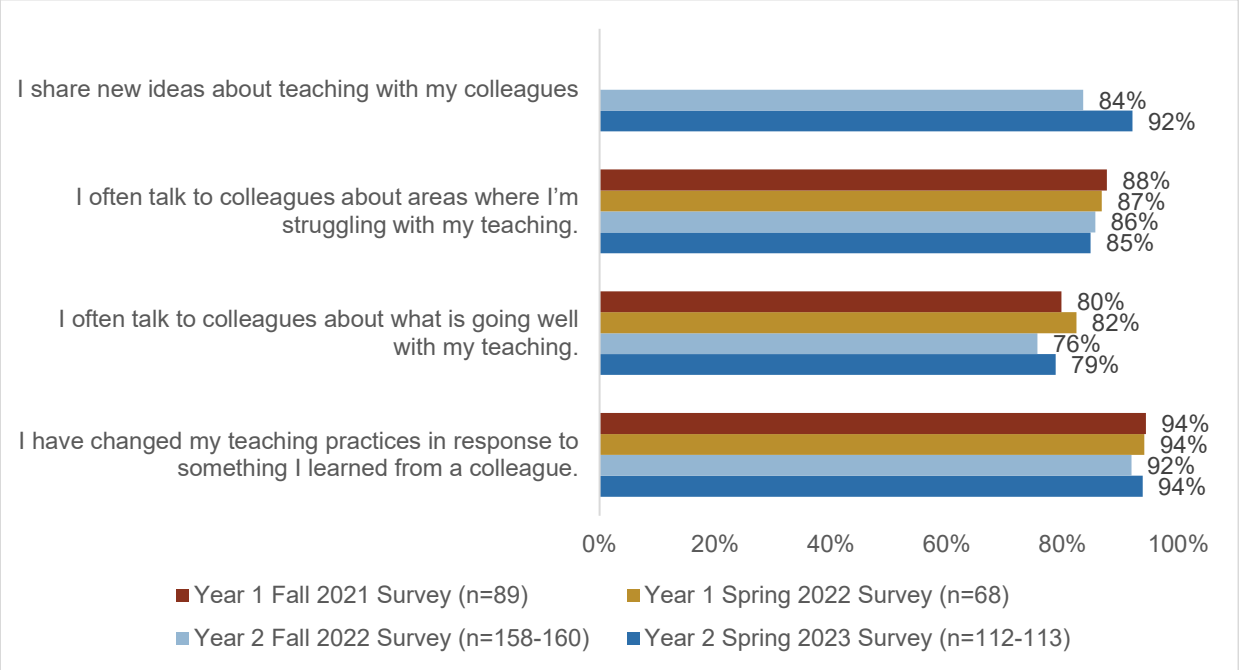
Collaboration

The Year 2 survey included four items about educators' collaboration with their colleagues, of which three were presented in the Year 1 survey, and one was new ("I share new ideas about teaching with my colleagues"). On this item, the proportion who agreed with this statement increased from 84% on the fall 2022 survey to 92% on the spring 2023 survey. The other survey items related to collaboration were included on all four surveys. These did not show substantial variation between fall and spring surveys but did indicate high levels of collaboration at all points in time.

Qualitative data from open-ended responses offered additional insights into how implementing a RREV pilot affects collaboration at a school. Many educators commented that working together on a shared mission strengthens their relationships with colleagues. For example, one educator involved in an Outdoor Education pilot wrote, "Working with my team and administration on this project is something I will never forget." Another educator commented on their collaboration with community partners:

> *It has been rewarding to observe the community members come and work with students. There are so many hidden talents here that I didn't know about before this venture.*

EXHIBIT 37. PERCENTAGE OF EDUCATORS WHO AGREE OR STRONGLY AGREE WITH STATEMENTS RELATING TO COLLABORATION



Note: "I share new ideas about teaching with my colleagues" was a new item in Year 2.

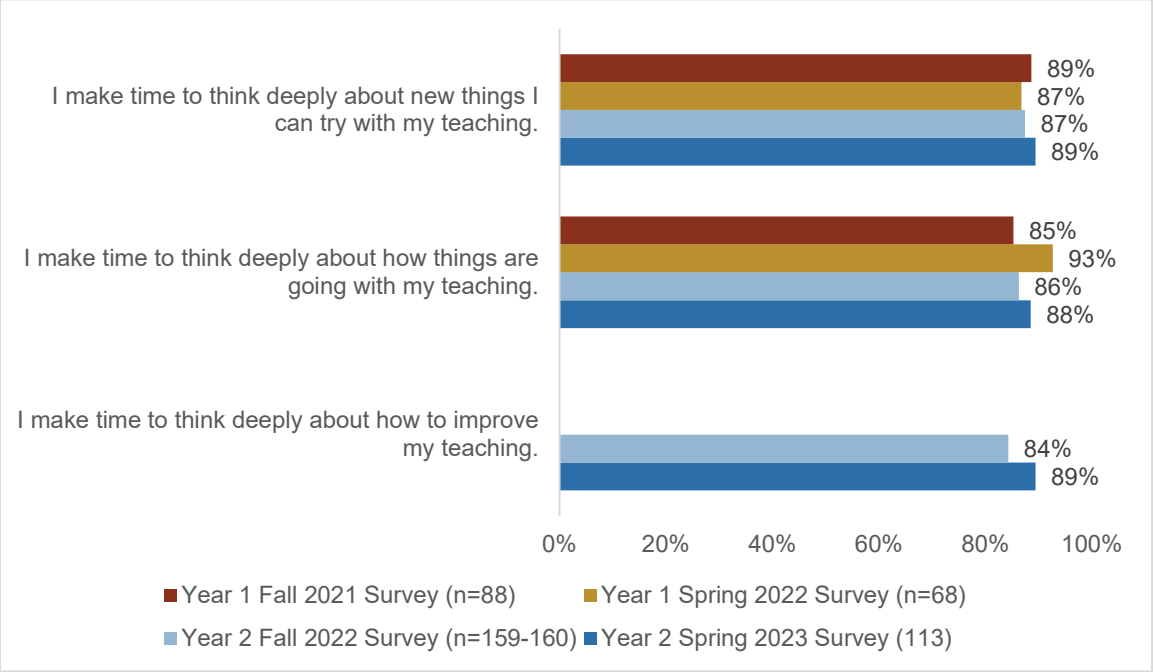
Self-reflection

The Year 2 survey included three items about how educators reflect on their practice. As with the other constructs, educators reported a high degree of self-reflection on all surveys. As shown in Exhibit 38, the percentage of educators who agreed or strongly agreed to two self-reflection items increased at the time of the Year 2 post-survey. The percentage of educators who agreed or strongly agreed with the three self-reflection items in the Year 2 spring 2023 post-survey increased across all items from the Year 2 fall 2022 pre-survey. Additionally, the proportion of educators who were in agreement that they make time to think deeply about new things they could try with their teaching or professional practice and that they make time to think deeply about how things are going with their teaching or professional practice were similar or higher than Year 1 fall 2021 pre-survey levels.

Educators' open-ended responses offered additional context about RREV's impact on their self-reflection. For example, one educator wrote:

> *I'm thinking differently. I'm trying to find unique ways to engage kids and make them invested in their own learning. I can't go back to the old way, even though this work is tough.*

EXHIBIT 38. PERCENTAGE OF EDUCATORS WHO AGREE OR STRONGLY AGREE WITH STATEMENTS RELATING TO REFLECTION



Note: "I make time to think deeply about how to improve my teaching" was a new item in Year 2.

Engagement in professional practice

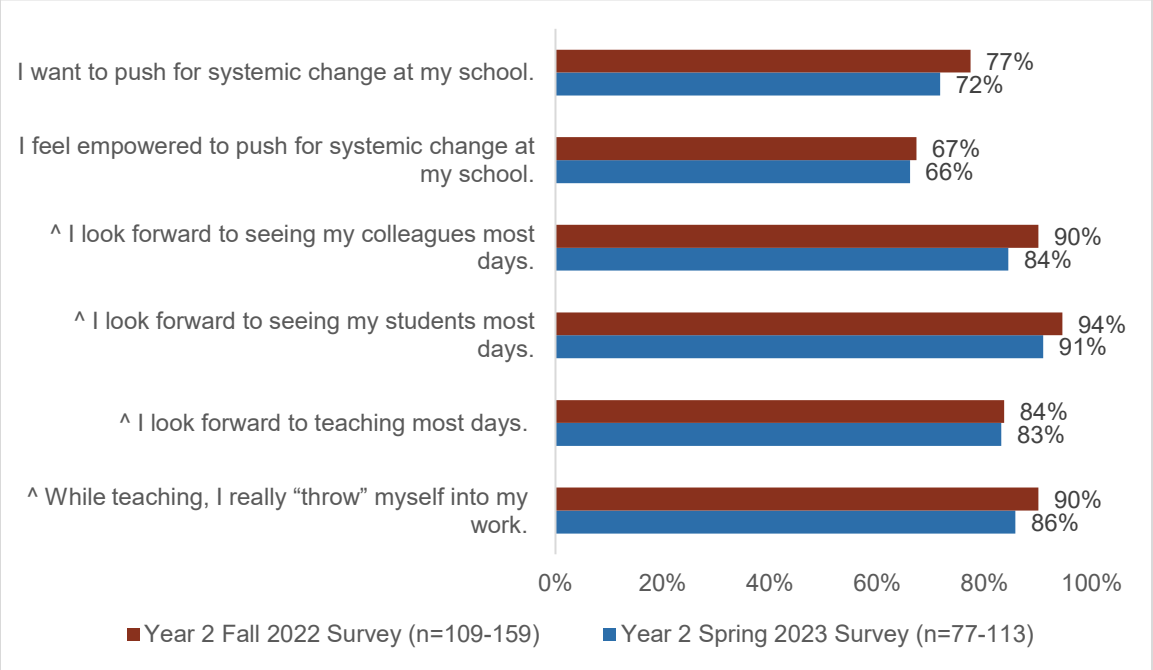
The Year 2 survey included four items about teachers' engagement in their profession and two items addressing attitudes toward systemic change. The engagement items were revised based on feedback on the Year 1 survey and the two items capturing educators' attitudes toward systemic change are new. Therefore, longitudinal analysis from Year 1 findings is not included because it is not possible to make a fair comparison.

Almost all teachers involved in RREV pilots demonstrated high levels of engagement in their professional practice. The quantitative data do not show significant changes over the course of the year, but open-ended responses revealed that many teachers found their work with the pilots to be professionally energizing. For example, one teacher involved in an outdoor education pilot wrote:

> *I have been rejuvenated and I found my passion again for teaching. It was so exciting to be able to try new things, which immediately got the students engaged and motivated to learn.*

Although almost all teachers described high degrees of engagement, their attitudes toward systemic change were more mixed. About three-quarters of educators indicate that they want to push for systemic change at their school, but only about two-thirds feel empowered to do so, and there was no substantial difference between the beginning and end of the school year. These findings suggest most educators at Adopter Schools operate in an environment conducive to systematic change, but also that a sizeable minority of teachers involved in RREV pilots desire more support in pushing for systemic change.

EXHIBIT 39. PERCENTAGE OF EDUCATORS WHO AGREE OR STRONGLY AGREE WITH STATEMENTS RELATING TO WELL-BEING AND OUTLOOK



^Educators who identified as administrators, counselors, or other school staff did not respond to these items.

Leadership support for innovation

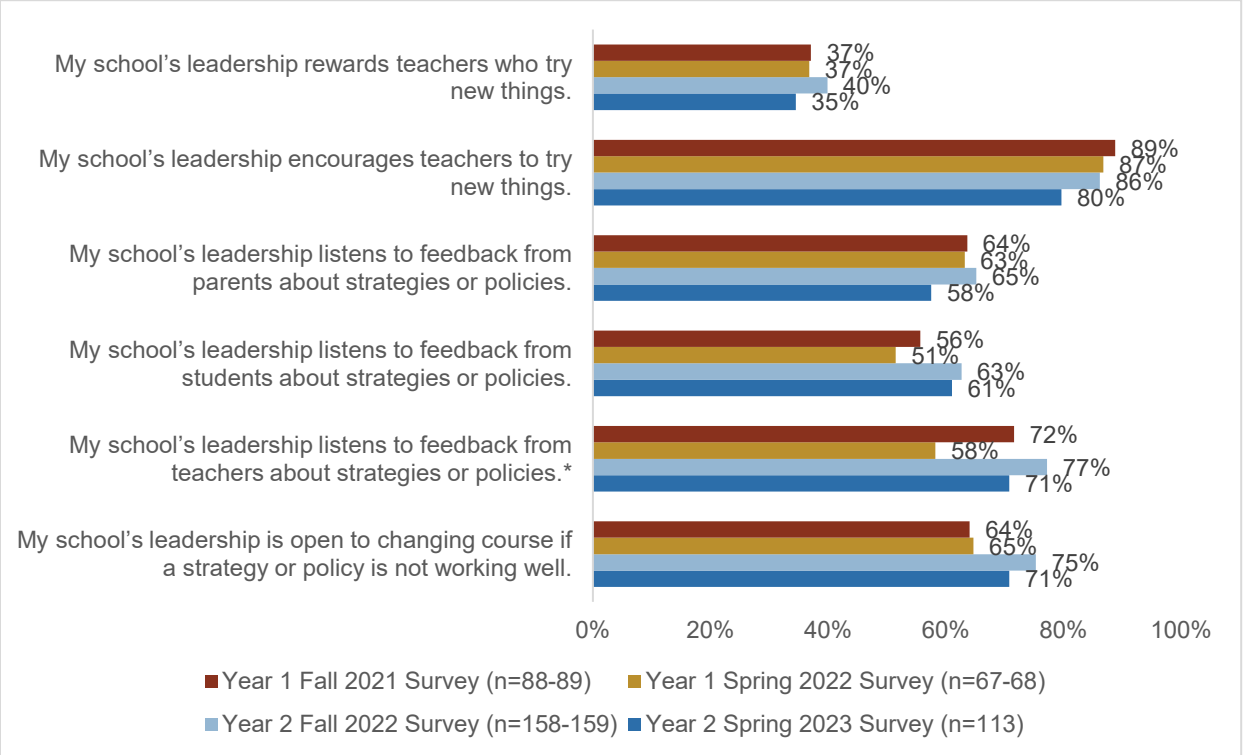
Educators, regardless of their role, shared their perceptions about leadership support for innovation by responding to a series of six items. These items were unchanged from the Year 1 survey, making longitudinal comparisons possible. In Year 2, there were mixed perceptions of school leaders' support for innovation. On most items, a majority of educators agreed that school leaders support innovation, but several items showed a decrease from the Year 2 pre-survey to the post-survey. For example, the proportion of teachers who agreed that their leaders listen to feedback from parents about strategies or policies decreased from 65% in the fall to 58% in the spring. There were mixed findings when comparing these results with Year 1. Levels of agreement in Year 2 pre- and post-survey were higher on some statements, including that school leaders listened to students about strategies and policies and that leadership is open to changing course if a strategy or policy is not working well. For the remainder, the proportion of educators' agreement levels were lower in the Year 2 post-survey compared to Year 1.

Two noteworthy themes emerged. The first related to educators' perceptions of how leadership responds to teachers' ideas for new approaches. On one hand, almost all educators on the pre- and post-surveys agreed that their school leaders *encourage* teachers to try new things, yet less than half said leaders *reward* teachers who try new things. The second related to whether educators perceive that leadership listens to feedback from teachers about strategies or policies. During the first year of RREV implementation, there was a substantial decrease between the fall and spring in the proportion of educators who felt their leadership listened to teacher feedback, from 72% to 58%. There was also a decrease during Year 2, but to a lesser degree—from 77% to 71%.

Qualitative data indicate that turnover among school and district leadership inhibited innovative environments at some Adopter Schools, especially when new leaders were not involved in pilot planning or were not sure about the administrative requirements associated with the award. For example, one educator noted that there were multiple new principals in their district, as well as new district-level leadership, and explained that these new leaders were generally supportive of the pilot but were focused on getting up to speed on all their responsibilities and did not engage deeply with the innovation. At another school, an educator did not mention turnover, but did echo the sentiment that their administrators kept the pilot at arm's length. This educator wrote that their "administrators were supportive" of their pilot, but "didn't know the ins and outs" of it and were not able to give "solid answers" about future support for the program.

Although only a minority of educators agreed that their school's leadership rewarded innovation, open-ended comments from some educators illustrated how valuable administrator and teacher collaboration could be for their pilot. For example, one educator wrote that it was "amazing to know that we have administrative support and extra resources that allowed us to dream big and think about all that is possible." Another educator commented that the RREV pilot helped them "to reframe priorities within [our] school's curricula."

EXHIBIT 40. PERCENTAGE OF EDUCATORS WHO AGREE OR STRONGLY AGREE WITH STATEMENTS RELATING TO SCHOOL LEADERSHIP SUPPORT FOR INNOVATION



*Responses for "My school's leadership listens to feedback from teachers about strategies or policies" significantly lowered (p<.05) from the Year 1 fall 2021 survey to the Year 1 spring 2022 survey but were of similar levels to those in Year 2 spring 2023.

RQ2: To what extent were educators satisfied with the professional development and other resources to support the implementation of their pilot model?

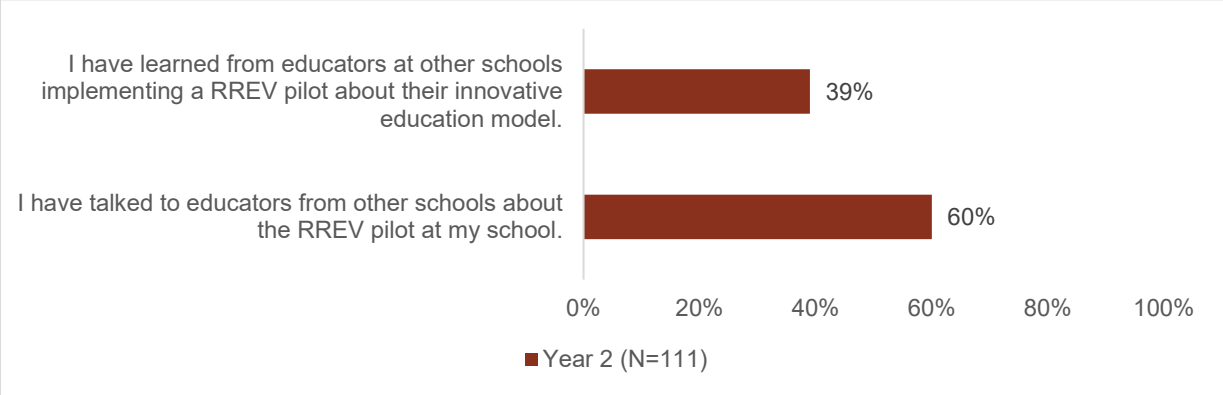
The Year 2 post-survey included items to rate educators' satisfaction with the support received during the implementation of their pilots, including interactions with other schools about their RREV pilots, developing their logic models, and the professional development and other resources made available through RREV.[11]

Interactions with educators at other pilots

In Year 2, educators were surveyed on the interactions with other schools about their RREV pilots in the post-survey (Exhibit 41). While a majority of educators (60%) have *talked* with colleagues from other schools about their own RREV pilot, less than half of educators (39%) agreed that they *learned* from their colleagues at other schools implementing a RREV pilot about their innovative education model.

In open-ended comments, educators expressed interest in more opportunities to learn from each other. For example, one educator wrote that they desired "More opportunities for examples of how others have spent grant money." Another educator wrote that they hoped MDOE would "create a learning community among all RREV teachers and communicate more often of our struggles or success."

EXHIBIT 41. PERCENTAGE OF EDUCATORS WHO AGREE OR STRONGLY AGREE WITH STATEMENTS RELATING TO THE RREV PILOT

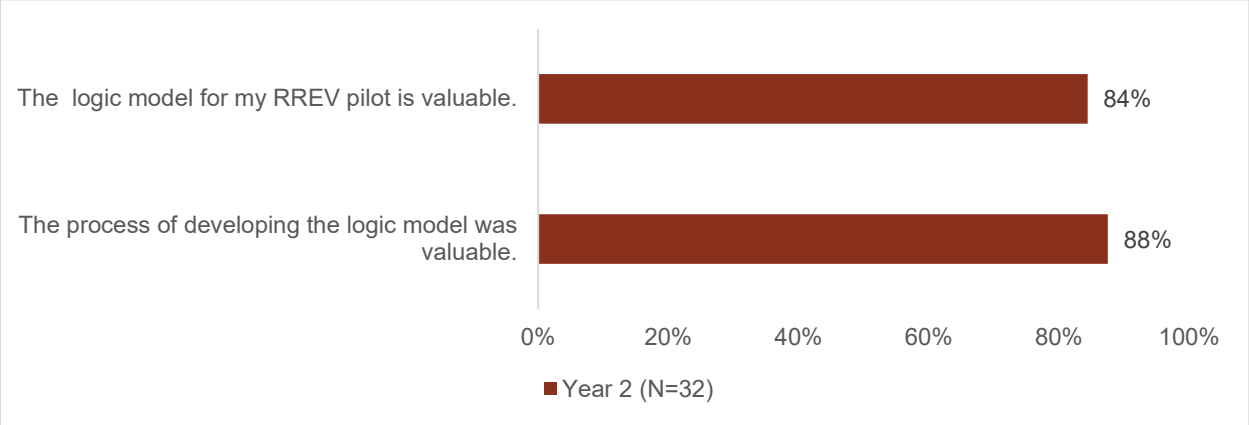


Logic models

In Year 2, educators were asked about their experience developing logic models in the post-survey (Exhibit 42). Less than half of educators (42%) reported that they had seen their school's logic model, and of these educators, 62% indicated that they were involved in the development of a logic model for their RREV pilot. Among these educators, the majority agreed that both the logic model and the process of developing the logic model were valuable (84% and 88%, respectively).

[11] The Educator Survey also asked about their satisfaction with the RREV coaching component. These results are described in Chapter 2.

EXHIBIT 42. PERCENTAGE OF EDUCATORS WHO AGREE OR STRONGLY AGREE WITH STATEMENTS RELATING TO THE LOGIC MODELS

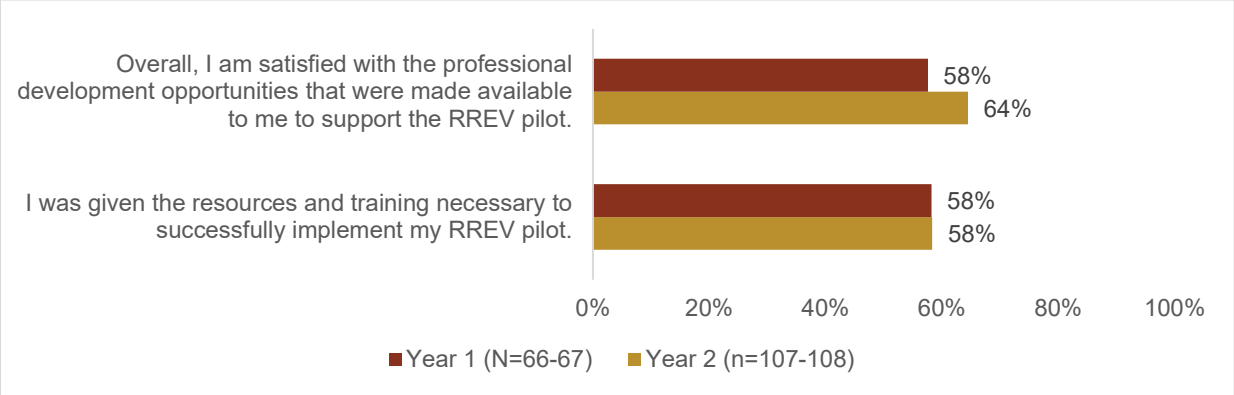


Training and professional development opportunities through RREV

In both years, educators were asked to respond to statements about the training and professional development opportunities made available to them through RREV in the post-survey (Exhibit 43). Slightly more than half of educators (58%) agreed that they were given the resources and training necessary to successfully implement their RREV pilot; a proportion that was similar across years. However, a higher proportion of educators in Year 2 (64%) indicated that they were overall satisfied with the professional development opportunities that were available to them to support their pilots compared to 58% in Year 1.

An educator from the ELO category discussed how the pre-implementation workshops helped the school: “The design thinking course, which helped us design a much better pilot than we originally planned for.” Another educator from the Outdoor Education category described the workshop days at the University of Maine as “tremendously helpful.” Educators shared that additional training or professional development would be valuable, such as trainings in “creativity in collecting and analyzing data.” Another educator wanted to “provide professional development to [my] peers who expressed interest in our project.”

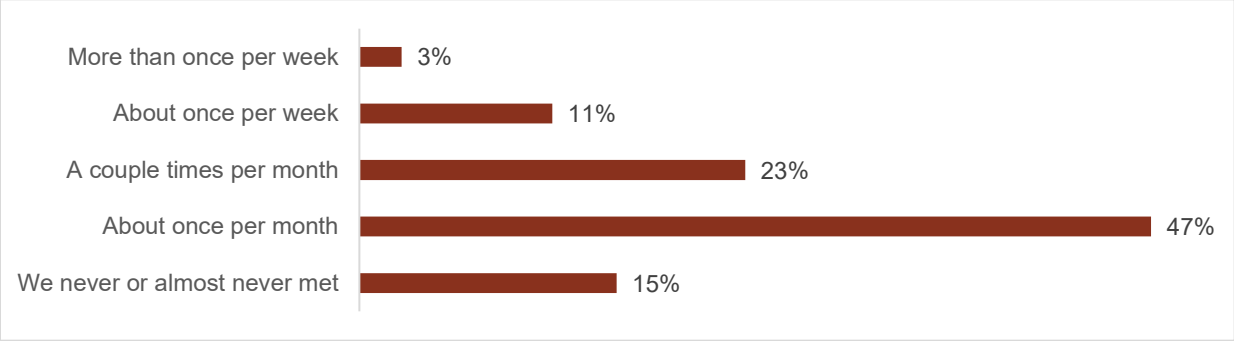
EXHIBIT 43. PERCENTAGE OF EDUCATORS WHO AGREE OR STRONGLY AGREE WITH STATEMENTS RELATING TO THE RREV PILOT



RQ3: To what extent were educators satisfied with their interactions with RREV coaches throughout the year?

Educators were asked how often they met with their RREV coach this year (Exhibit 44). Across Adopter Schools, there were 78 educators (i.e., 62% of respondents to the Educator Survey) who reported communicating with their RREV coach at least once during the year, while the others were educators who were involved in implementing the pilot but were not their Adopter School's primary RREV point of contact. Among the educators who communicated with their RREV coach, 85% met at least once per month, including 14% who met once per week or more. On the other end of the spectrum, 15% of educators said they never or almost never met with their RREV coach; again, these were not their school's primary point of contact, but instead were likely teachers who had communicated with the RREV coach in the context of a broader meeting. During site visits, Adopter Schools who met with the coach regularly said coaches provided a sounding board for different ideas. They also found that having regular meetings with their RREV coach helped them stay organized and accountable to their own goals and commitments because they wanted to show progress during their calls.

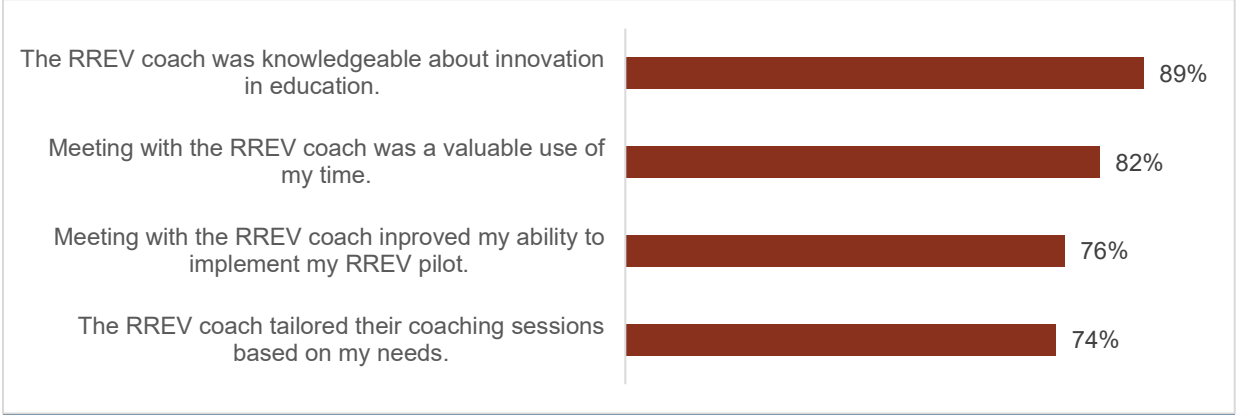
EXHIBIT 44. FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS BETWEEN ADOPTER SCHOOLS & COACHES, BY PERCENTAGE OF EDUCATORS (N=78)



In addition to asking about how often they met with their RREV coach, the Educator Survey also included questions about their relationship with their RREV coach, including whether meeting with their RREV coach proved to be a valuable use of their time (Exhibit 45). Among the educators who met with their RREV coach once per month or more (n=66), 89% of educators who filled out the survey agreed or strongly agreed that their RREV coach was knowledgeable about innovation in education, and 82% reported that meeting with their RREV coach was a valuable use of their time. Slightly smaller proportions, but still the majority of educators, agreed that "Meeting with my RREV coach improved my ability to implement my RREV pilot" (76%) and "The RREV coach tailored their coaching sessions based on my needs" (74%). Qualitative data provide additional context for these findings. One theme that emerged from these data was that their RREV coach served as a valuable "sounding board" for discussing ideas about how to make the best use of new resources procured with RREV funding. For example, one educator at an Outdoor Education school described talking with their RREV coach about strategies to expand use of outdoor spaces to more grade levels. Another theme in qualitative feedback from the primary points of contact at Adopter Schools was that meeting with their RREV coach helped them keep track of all the tasks involved with setting up a new program. For example, one educator said their regular meetings helped them "stay accountable" and follow through on their intentions. Additionally, some educators whose RREV coach had a school or district

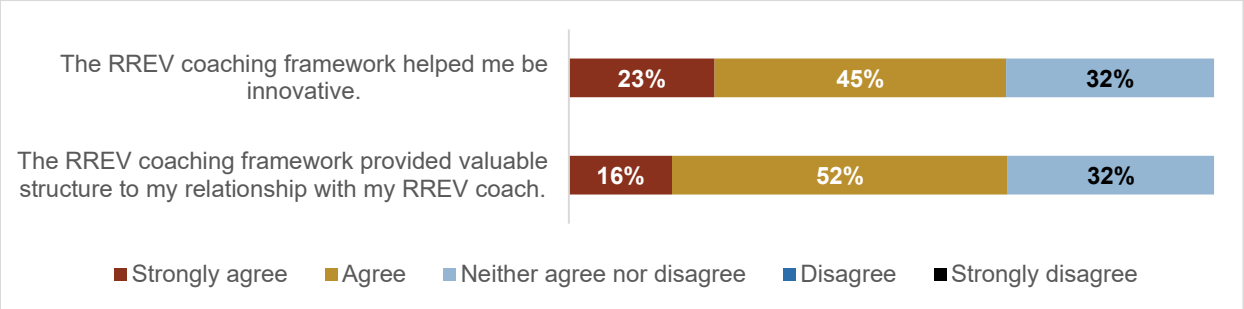
leadership background said this perspective helped them communicate effectively with decisionmakers in their district to build support for their program.

EXHIBIT 45. ADOPTER SCHOOLS' EXPERIENCE WITH RREV COACHES, BY PERCENTAGE OF EDUCATORS (N=66)



The spring Educator Survey also asked educators whether they had heard of the RREV Coaching Framework. Only 32 educators (26%) were familiar with the framework, which is unsurprising because it was primarily described as such to the coaches and not the educators at Adopter Schools. Among those educators who said they were familiar with the framework, 68% agreed or strongly agreed that the RREV Coaching Framework helped them be innovative and provided valuable structure to their relationship with their RREV coach. The other 32% of educators were neutral about the Coaching Framework, meaning no educators disagreed that the Coaching Framework helped them be innovative or provided valuable structure to their relationship with their RREV coach.

EXHIBIT 46. ADOPTER SCHOOLS' EXPERIENCE WITH THE COACHING FRAMEWORK, BY PERCENTAGE OF EDUCATORS (N=32)



Appendix A: RREV School Snapshots

RREV School Snapshot – MSAD 17 (Agnes Gray Elementary School)

Background

In June 2020, the Maine Department of Education 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 August 2021, Maine School Administrative District (MSAD) 17 (Agnes Gray Elementary School) received an award from RREV to implement its Teaching Outside: The Box pilot, which is in the Outdoor Education category.

The goals of this pilot are to:

- Expand outdoor learning opportunities for students at Agnes Gray Elementary School and within the district by
    - Encouraging and training teachers to share ideas and best practices with their colleagues within the district.
    - Creating a resource bank of curricula designed to use outdoor spaces for teachers within the district.
    - Creating new outdoor learning spaces at Agnes Gray Elementary School.

Key activities of this pilot include:

- In Year 1:
    - Create the role of an outdoor learning coordinator based at Agnes Gray.
    - Expand existing outdoor learning spaces and build new outdoor learning spaces at Agnes Gray.
    - Develop a curriculum-aligned outdoor learning lesson and activity bank.
- In Year 2:
    - Expand the role of outdoor learning coordinator to a district level position that helps implement the pilot at other schools in the district in 1–4 week-long cycles.
    - Expand the curriculum-aligned outdoor learning lesson and activity bank and ensure availability for teachers across the district.

EXHIBIT. RREV AWARD SUMMARY

Category	Year 1	Year 2	Total
Personal Services – Salaries	$61,138	$63,328	$124,466
Employee Benefits	$41,320.71	$43,173.88	$84,494.59
General Supplies	$1,500	$1,500	$3,000
Property	$38,000	—	$38,000
Total	**$141958.71**	**$108,001.88**	**$249,96.59**

- **Students:** Serves 413
- **Grades:** Serves Pre-kindergarten (PreK)–6th
- **Educators:** Twenty-seven teachers directly involved

Responsiveness of the Pilot

MSAD 17 (Agnes Gray Elementary School's) pilot is responsive to local needs and/or assets because it is:

- **Developing physical infrastructure at Agnes Gray to provide ample space for outdoor education.** The pilot expanded pre-existing outdoor spaces, including an orchard and a cabin, while also funding the creation of new outdoor learning spaces, including a yurt and a nature trail. Having more outdoor spaces available to teachers allowed multiple classes to take advantage of outdoor learning at the same time. This also allowed the outdoor learning coordinator to better understand what types of planning and materials are necessary for teachers to function in different kinds of outdoor spaces.
- **Integrating community assets and programs into the pilot.** The local community has an abundance of natural assets, including rivers and woods, which the school has been using for many years in outdoor teaching. In fact, the school already has three pavilions and a cabin used as outdoor learning spaces, and regularly implements educational programming, such as Forest Fridays,[12] in which students participate in one-off outdoor lessons. According to the implementation team, these programs are popular with students and teachers, but can be a "logistical nightmare" and are not necessarily integrated into the broader curriculum. The pilot builds on these assets by incorporating them into a more cohesive program with a dedicated staff person who is responsible for coordinating activities and ensuring lessons are meaningfully integrated with content standards.

Innovativeness of the Pilot

MSAD 17 (Agnes Gray Elementary School's) pilot is innovative because:

[12] See the *Sun Journal* article Teaching 'outside the box' (in West Paris).

- **The development of the outdoor learning coordinator role across 2 years builds the capacity of teachers in the district to facilitate lessons in outdoor spaces more frequently.** The outdoor learning coordinator acts as an expert, working both individually and with teams of teachers, to provide the necessary professional and curriculum development for lessons to occur outside. Developing this role in the first year of the pilot before expanding the pilot to other schools in the district allowed the outdoor learning coordinator to figure out the necessary structures and guidance to help classroom teachers develop these skills before working across multiple campuses in shorter cycles.
- **The development of an outdoor lesson bank across the district reduces the planning burden on teachers wanting to get outside.** By focusing on developing a bank of shared curriculum-aligned lessons and resources, the pilot provides the tools necessary for teachers with limited planning time to focus on bringing student outdoors rather than designing new lessons. Teachers are able to store developed lessons in a central place accessible to all teachers across the district and utilize the lessons that have already worked in other outdoor spaces. As the pilot is implemented the lesson bank grows, giving teachers more and more resources to teach kids outside.

Sustainability of the Pilot

One of the key measures MSAD 17 (Agnes Gray Elementary School's) pilot model took for sustainability was moving the position of the outdoor learning coordinator to the district level during the second year of implementation. In doing so, both the cost and benefits of having this role are spread across the district as a whole and sources of future funding can be more flexible. Though it is still unclear if this will become a permanent districtwide position, the pilot team has been actively working to persuade the school board since the first year of implementation. Further, the pilot design also ensures that the lesson resources and the physical infrastructure investment will be maintained regardless of the permanency of the Outdoor Learning Coordinator Position.

RREV School Snapshot – RSU 1 (Bath)

Background

In June 2020, the Maine Department of Education 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 May 2022, regional school unit (RSU) 1 (Bath) Middle School received an award from RREV to implement a pilot in the Extended Learning Opportunity category. The overarching goal of Bath's RREV pilot is to strengthen the school's sense of community so that everyone, including students, teachers, and parents, feel connected to and valued by one another. By fostering such a sense of community, RSU 1 (Bath) Middle School intends for its pilot to:

- Create stronger value and connection in the RSU 1 (Bath) Middle School community.
- Improve student engagement, academic achievement, and social-emotional well-being.
- Improve teacher morale, engagement, and passion.
- Strengthen connections between RSU 1 (Bath) Middle School and the broader community, including parents and local organizations.

Key activities of this pilot include:

- **Adapting the weekly schedule to increase opportunities for collaboration and inquiry-based learning.** The new schedule provides for longer class periods to facilitate project-based learning and off-campus learning opportunities, more shared planning time to support staff collaboration, and time for a new " Connections Class" (described below).
- **The introduction of Connections Classes.** The pilot provides a weekly Connections Class, a nonacademic class in which teachers choose a topic unrelated to their subject of expertise. Every teacher will teach at least one Connections Class during the year, and students will participate in four Connections Classes over the course of one school year. These classes aim to focus more on programs of interest rather than grades, and thereby promote more personal connections and stronger relationships between teachers and students.
- **Using award funds to provide regular transportation for students.** RSU 1 (Bath) Middle School is investing in school-owned passenger vans to provide more flexibility for field lessons during the school day as well as to provide after-school transport to students. Eventually, having multiple vehicles would allow multiple staff members to plan and conduct field trips on the same day. Further, owning the vans will provide the school

with increased flexibility to offer transport outside of school hours. Increasing after-school transport allows more students to engage in after-school opportunities.

- **Instructional coaching for teachers focused on inquiry and project-based learning.** During the first year, teachers engage with an instructional coach to support their creation and implementation of project-based lessons. In year two, staff will begin peer feedback practices. In year three, teachers will map standards to learning expeditions and incorporate them into the regular curriculum.

EXHIBIT. RREV AWARD SUMMARY

Category	Year 1	Year 2	Total
Personal Services	$60,712	$63,512	$124,224
Employee Benefits	$38,865.03	$14,950.16	$53,815.19
Purchased Professional & Technical Services	$5,000	$5,000	$10,000
Property	$61,960.81	—	$61,960.81
Total	**$166537.84**	**$83,462.16**	**$250,000**

- **Students:** All 330 enrolled students
- **Grades:** Serves 6th–8th
- **Educators:** All teaching staff

Responsiveness of the Pilot

RSU 1 (Bath) Middle School's pilot is responsive to local needs and/or assets because:

- **The focus on outdoor education reflects student and teacher input that was intentionally sought and incorporated during the design process.** One of the major concerns of the pilot team is students feeling disconnected from the school community. Throughout the planning and implementation of RSU 1 (Bath) Middle School's pilot, they have found opportunities to collect student and teacher feedback and adjust accordingly. These opportunities for student feedback began during the planning phase, when the pilot team hosted student and teacher focus groups to include their input in the pilot design. The pilot team reconvened these focus groups during the first year of implementation to collect feedback. Further, the pilot team has implemented feedback surveys, so all students and teachers can provide input.
- **The pilot deepens relationships between the school and the community by providing for more frequent engagement between students and local organizations.** The pilot provided for the purchase of a transport van, which has deepened the school's relationships with local organizations focused on ecology by allowing more frequent, small trips from the school to take advantage of their learning experiences. Further, school-provided transport for day trips removes some of the barriers for students who are not willing or able to participate in the overnight portion of longer trips or participate in after-school activities requiring transport such as mountain biking.

- **The pilot increases the available support for teachers by restructuring the weekly schedule and investing in professional development.** By adjusting the weekly schedule, the pilot is able to create protected time shared between teachers across the school. As a result, teachers have a specific time built into the week to collaborate with peers, an increase over the previous planning time available. Further, the pilot provides funds to expand professional development for teachers and staff aligned with inquiry and project-based learning practices. Teachers and staff will receive training from an instructional coach to build these skills over the course of pilot implementation.

Innovativeness of the Pilot

RSU 1 (Bath) Middle School's pilot is innovative because:

- **The pilot reimagines the school schedule to connect members of the community.** By redesigning the schedule to include longer class periods and fewer classes within one day, the pilot team has restructured the ways teachers and students interact, prioritizing time for project-based learning, teacher collaboration, small field trips, and nonacademic classes. The structure of teaching staff has been redesigned so more staff can teach across grade levels and houses (student groups within grade levels), and more students will be able to work with peers outside of their grade level.
- **The pilot expands learning spaces available to students and teachers beyond traditional classrooms**. Pilot funds are being used to help reshape the school lobby to feature and reflect student work and student engagement as well as support maintenance of physical spaces in the school. The pilot also facilitates the expansion of learning spaces beyond the building through the investment in school-owned vans so that teachers can take students on smaller, more frequent trips.
- **The pilot facilitates the creation of more authentic, real-world connections between schoolwork and students' values.** The pilot team defines value as "the importance community members place on their experiences" at RSU 1 (Bath) Middle School. The pilot team will identify how students are deriving value in their work at school through a climate and culture committee as well as surveys. In addition, there is an increase in service-learning opportunities available for students to learn and become more connected with their community. The increased focus on inquiry and project-based learning to connect academic work with more practical skills and content related to the world around students.
- **The pilot fosters deeper connections between students and teachers built around interests beyond core subjects.** A distinguishing feature of RSU 1 (Bath) Middle Schools' model is its focus on authentic student-teacher relationships. The pilot provides space for these relationships to flourish through its Connections Classes, during which teachers and students explore nonacademic topics that align with students' interests. RSU 1 (Bath) Middle School' model posits that these classes will help students and teachers form stronger bonds outside of the stress of learning core academic subjects, and these bonds will in turn help students stay engaged and learn across all subjects.

Implementation Successes and Challenges

- **The introduction of Connections Classes has transformed the relationships students and teachers are building at school.** A major success of the pilot is the excitement and joy that Connections Class has brought to the weekly schedule of RSU 1 (Bath) Middle School for both students and teachers. Offering a wide array of opportunities including hacky sack, cooking, rock band, and so forth, students have been able to engage and explore new topics of interest. Teachers reported enjoying developing Connections Classes and being able to interact with students in a setting other than their classrooms. Teachers noted they had the opportunity to interact with more students than they would have otherwise and were able to facilitate more social-emotional development through less structured class periods. Students at all three grade levels reported deeply enjoying Connections Class. Younger students reported enjoying being able to develop relationships with older students in the building. Students noted that Connections Class was a piece of the week to which they looked forward.
- **The passenger van had a mixed impact on pilot success.** In the first year of implementation, RSU 1 (Bath) Middle School purchased one passenger van. This passenger van is large enough to carry 14 students but does not require an additional license beyond a driver's license for teachers to drive. This has allowed several field trips to take place both during regular class periods, during Connections Class, and outside of class times such as after school or overnight trips. Teachers noticed that this provided the opportunity for students who otherwise have stayed home from overnight trips are now able to participate in the daytime activities with their classmates and use school provided transportation to go to and from the site. The passenger van also reduces the cost associated with fieldtrips. Further, the passenger van allowed teachers to take several trips with students and equipment such as a writing Connection Class where students completed prompts in different locations around the community or the after-school mountain biking club, which was able to take students and bikes to a trailhead using the van and the trailer. However, teachers noted that only being able to take 14 students makes it difficult to involve an entire class in an off-campus opportunity and introduces the challenge of finding coverage if a teacher needs to split their class so some students can travel off campus in the van. Additionally, not all teachers reported feeling comfortable driving the van. The pilot team also noted acquiring passenger vans was more expensive than they had originally budgeted for, which limited the number of vans that could be obtained by the school.
- **Teachers appreciated adjustments to professional development activities during the year, especially adding more individualized instructional coaching.** Over the course of the first pilot year, the instructional coach adjusted the model to focus more on coaching cycles with individual teachers over the course of a week rather than unscheduled observations. The instructional coach found this model to be more effective for teacher buy-in and morale. Additionally, the new schedule provided for aligned planning time between teacher teams, but the pilot team left the time open for teaching teams to structure the additional time in a way that would be most effective for their time. Teaching teams developed their own schedules and strategies for using the additional aligned planning time. As a result, some teacher teams found this time to be more impactful than others.

- **Overall, classroom teachers reported that longer class periods facilitated more opportunities for project-based learning over the course of the year**. However, programs that are not classroom-based, such as the special education program or gifted program, reported challenges adjusting to the new schedule. During student focus groups, 8th-grade students pointed out that the reduction of the enrichment period challenged their ability to complete homework during the school day.

Sustainability of the Pilot

RSU 1 (Bath) Middle School's strategies for sustainability include:

- **Maintaining the change in the schedule providing longer class periods, more aligned time for teacher collaboration, and Connections Classes.** By maintaining the schedule used in the last year, the pilot ensures class periods are long enough to facilitate project-based learning, smaller trips, and a weekly Connections Class. Further, maintaining the pilot schedule ensures teaching teams are able to coordinate with each other during the day. Because there is no additional cost associated with the change in schedule, the school will be able to maintain this change for years to come.
- **Purchasing a transport van ensures that RSU 1 (Bath) Middle School will continue to have increased flexibility for student trips both during school and after school.** Because the school will continue to own the transport van, the school will be able to continue offering the additional supports. Having access to the transport van increases the school's ability to be flexible around student transport as well as reducing the costs associated with trips for small amounts of students. The school, however, will still need to factor van maintenance into their regular budget.
- **The shift in school culture will be supported by the curriculum developed and the professional development provided during the award period in order to outlast the role of the instructional coach.** Funds for the instructional coach will stop at the end of the award. As a result, the school will rely on the change in schedule, continuation of Connections Class, and the professional development provided during the award period to support the overall shift in school culture beyond the award. Though the full-time instructional coach position will not be funded long-term, the school plans to set aside a stipend for continued internal professional development.
- **By focusing on purchasing reusable materials, RSU 1 (Bath) Middle School ensures the equipment necessary for future Connections Classes will be available.** One challenge noted by the pilot team was the ongoing monetary support for Connections Classes that relied upon consumable materials, such as cooking items. In the next year, the pilot team noted that they would prioritize purchasing materials for Connections Classes that can be used for many years to come over consumable materials.

RREV School Snapshot – RSU 71 (Belfast) LION Semester

Background

In June 2020, the Maine Department of Education 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 March 2022, regional school unit (RSU) 71 (Belfast) Area High School received an Accelerator award from RREV to implement its remote learning pathway pilot, the Learning Intentionally Online Now (LION) Semester, which is in the Online Learning category.

The goals of this pilot are to:

- Provide an individualized remote learning pathway, the LION Semester, as a part of the summer program to help disengaged high school students transition back to in-person instruction.
- Support students' social/emotional wellbeing by providing enrichment activities and offering in-person opportunities.

Key activities of this pilot include:

- Identify or hire a LION Semester teacher who is a remote learning specialist and would be solely designated for LION Semester.
    - The LION Semester teacher engages with students in remote and in-person settings.
    - The LION Semester teacher coordinates remote classes and weekly in-person offerings and activities, such as field trips to community centers and outdoor activities.
    - The LION Semester teacher is a remediation specialist and provides individualized support focusing on creating personal learning plans outlining student academic goals, remediation efforts of previously attempted courses as applicable, and a plan for earning credits.
- Identify and establish curriculum and technology (remote learning platform, online subscriptions, and so on) to be road maps for students in the LION Semester.
- Foster student engagement through in-person experiences, such as drivers' education and art workshops in the local art center, and activities such as hikes and meetings at coffee shops.

EXHIBIT. RREV AWARD SUMMARY

Category	Year 1
Personal Services – Salaries and Stipend	$48,850
Employee Benefits	$11,788
Purchased Professional Services	$8,000
Other purchased services (Tuition)	$12,362
Instructional Supplies	$5,000
Technology Related Software	$2,000
Miscellaneous	$12,000
Total	**$100,000**

- **Students:** Twelve students enrolled in the LION Semester
- **Grades:** Serves 9th–11th
- **Educators:** One teacher, a remote learning specialist, is directly involved

Responsiveness of the Pilot

Belfast Area High School's LION Semester is responsive to local needs and/or assets because it:

- **Provides a pathway for students to stay on track to graduate on time.** Belfast Area High School's LION Semester is geared toward creating opportunities for students in need of remediation or who are not on track to graduate on time due to credit shortfalls, which may have been exacerbated by the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. The program helps students get a head start on the school year by earning credits during the summer LION Semester. The LION Semester teacher works with students to create and establish a personal learning plan and provide individualized support so that students are prepared for success in the subsequent school year.
- **Re-engages students by offering positive in-person learning experiences.** Belfast Area High School's LION Semester focuses on students who were disengaged from remote learning owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, and, as a result, were identified as being truant or chronically absent and having credit shortfalls. The LION Semester aims to re-engage students by offering in-person experiences that could potentially aid in the transition to in-person schooling. Some of these in-person experiences were weekly check-ins with their LION Semester teacher and peers in coffee shops, walks downtown, and hikes. Other in-person offerings were connected to earning credits where students needed to gain credit for one in-person class. These included art credits for attending art workshops at the local art center and credits for attending drivers' education classes. The purpose of offering these in-person opportunities is to create a learning environment where LION Semester students can have positive social experiences with their peers and instructors. As such, the focus of the LION Semester is to help students build a sense of community both within and outside the school through these in-person

experiences, which would in turn help students acclimate to conventional in-person instruction.

Innovativeness of the Pilot

Belfast Area High School's LION Semester is innovative because:

- **It is a novel option to earn credits for students who experience credit deficiency.** Prior to the initiation of the LION Semester, Belfast Area High School did not have a program in place to focus on students who were experiencing credit deficiencies. The summer LION Semester is more than a conventional summer school educational model. The pilot provides students, particularly 11th-grade students, with much-needed opportunities to gain credits through online and in-person courses so that they can be on track to graduate. To complete the LION Semester, students needed to participate in two online courses and one in-person experience. In addition to this, the LION Semester pilot allows students to socialize and bond with one another and reintegrate within the school and the larger local community through in-person experiences. In this sense, it is flexible because it affords students new ways of earning credit that do not necessarily fit within the confines of the typical school year at Belfast Area High School.
- **It allows stakeholders to stop thinking of the school year as being limited to the traditional school year calendar.** The pilot allows stakeholders, including parents, staff, and students, to have an expanded view of the school year in that learning experiences need not be limited to fall through spring classes. When interviewed, a staff member shared that by having summer programming such as the LION Semester, it opens up opportunities for students and parents to view the summer as a potential period to participate in learning experiences and, as a result, can lead to lower stress levels.

Implementation Successes and Challenges

- **Students successfully re-engaged and maintained re-engagement during in-person learning**. The goal of the summer LION Semester was to re-engage students identified as truant for in-person learning by offering positive in-person learning experiences. Staff from Belfast Area High School shared that in meeting this goal, the LION Semester was categorically successful. A majority of students (approximately 86%) enrolled in the summer LION Semester re-engaged with in-person instruction during the school year. Moreover, staff noted that a large majority of LION Semester students continued to participate in in-person learning throughout the school year. That is, students who completed the summer LION Semester enrolled in in-person school across all quarters.
- **Regular communication between families and the LION Semester teacher contributed to students' transition to in-person learning.** Staff noted that their summer LION Semester teacher, who is a full-time remediation specialist during the school year, was able to build a strong positive relationship with parents and families of students. This was done through regular communication where parents receive updates about their children. In so doing, the teacher was able to leverage this relationship so

that parents and families were able to support their students transition to and engagement with in-person learning.

Sustainability of the Pilot

Belfast Area High School's LION Semester strategy for sustaining its pilot model includes:

- **Continuing to offer the online mode of instruction as an option.** With the RREV award, the LION Semester was able to procure subscriptions for online courses for 2 years. To sustain the RREV pilot, Belfast Area High School is considering continuing to offer online courses as an alternate option to earn credits so that students can stay on track for graduation.
- **Identifying supplemental funding sources for the upcoming year**. Staff noted that the LION Semester facilitator was instrumental to the success of the pilot because the facilitator built strong relationships with students and their families. In order to continue to offer support from the facilitator, plans are in place to fund the position as full time through the school budget so the facilitator supports remediation for students outside of the LION Semester during the school year. The facilitators' summer salary will be funded through the RREV sustainability grant, pending acceptance, which they refer to as LION 2.0.
- **Replacing existing summer school structures with the LION Semester**. At the end of the RREV sustainability grant period for the LION Semester, i.e., LION 2.0, (pending approval), the school is having discussions about making a shift to the LION learning model in place of the existing summer school option given the positive outcomes reported from the LION Semester and strong parental support. As such, plans for the summer LION Semester will be funded through the summer school budget already in the school budget and operational expenses (e.g., technology, in-person experiences, and so on) will be funded through the budget allotted for summer school.
- **Expanding enrollment to middle school students identified as high risk for successful transition to high school**. Plans for the future iteration of the LION Semester (i.e., LION 2.0) include expanding enrollment to middle school students identified as high risk for truancy. Staff shared that the plan for the learning model was to have two facilitators, one that includes the alternative education teacher from the middle school and the other for high school. Given the success seen in engaging high school students and because the transition from middle school to high school can be challenging, staff noted that the LION Semester can be an opportunity to engage middle school students with in-person learning and prepare them for high school courses and expectations, all while building relationships with school staff. In so doing, middle school students identified as high risk for truancy can be addressed early so that they have the necessary tools to graduate on time with their peers.

RREV School Snapshot – RSU 71 (Belfast) Marine Institute

Background

In June 2020, the Maine Department of Education 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 March 2022, regional school unit (RSU) 71 (Belfast) Area High School received an award from RREV to implement its pilot Marine Institute. This pilot is in the Extended Learning Opportunities (ELO) category.

The goals of this pilot are to:

- Provide opportunities for students to gain career and job skills in the community during the school day through the creation of a schoolwide ELO program that includes internships, job shadowing, and work study options.
- Establish the Marine Institute, a program that pairs the core academic curriculum with hands-on project-based field research in the Penobscot Bay and community-based experiences in marine and maritime studies. Some students will enroll in the Marine Institute as their main program of study while others might opt to participate in some Marine Institute offerings for their electives; for example, a student could enroll in the scuba certification pathway as an elective.

Key activities of this pilot include:

- Designing and implementing the Marine Institute, which will require students to complete a combination of core academic credits, internship hours, community service, and a capstone project. The program includes a marine studies course block meeting every other day and various electives that enable students to receive credentials and certifications for marine-based activities.
- Developing and implementing the internship program through partnerships with local businesses and organizations, with the day-to-day responsibilities handled by the ELO Coordinator.
- Making facilities improvements, such as the establishment of a wet lab to house the Marine Institute science labs and gear and equipment purchases to support hands-on learning.
- Inviting teachers to join the Marine Institute team and adapt their curriculum to meet the criteria for the integrated learning model with a marine focus. Examples include a social studies class focused on New England maritime history and an English class based in science fiction that explores fish and wildlife issues.

EXHIBIT. RREV AWARD SUMMARY

Category	Year 1	Year 2	Total
Personal Services – Salaries and Stipends	$5,250	$5,250	$10,500
Employee Benefits	$1,226	$1,226.40	$2,452.80
Purchased Professional and Technical Services	$135,000	$35,000	$170,000
General Supplies	$30,017.20	$26,250	$56,267.20
Technology-Related Software (Supply Asset)	$3,500	$3,500	$7,000
Instructional Field Trip Transportation	$1,890	$1,890	$3,780
Total	**$176,883.60**	**$73,116.40**	**$250,000**

- **Students:** Thirty-two students directly enrolled in Marine Institute during 2022–2023, but all 500 students have the option to participate through electives
- **Grades:** Serves 9th–12th
- **Educators:** Four teachers participate in the Marine Institute as part of their overall courseload (science, English, marine studies and history, and art), plus the technology integrator, Belfast Community Outreach Program coordinator, and two administrators at Belfast Area High School

Responsiveness of the Pilot

Belfast Area High School's pilot is responsive to local needs and/or assets because:

- **The new wet lab facility reflects the first upgrade in science labs at the high school since 1959.** Growing kelp in classrooms has required the use of very loud aquariums, which have drowned out teachers' voices and relied on inefficient energy use. The new customized wet lab provided by OpBox will house the Marine Institute science labs and function as a modern self-contained classroom.
- **Students will gain access to many local opportunities related to Penobscot Bay.** An administrator noted "how crazy it is that so many kids have never accessed the water and don't know about local opportunities that have to do with the ocean." The Marine Institute and the internships will rely on community connections to help develop ocean literacy, build familiarity with local industries, and introduce marine safety.
- **Given the diverse socioeconomic community, a flexible program is needed to span the range of student needs and career aspirations.** The Marine Institute can support combined programs such as marine biology research and marine diesel technology exploration in the same classroom. Immersive field experiences and community-based internships will allow all students to focus on their specific interests.

Innovativeness of the Pilot

The pilot at Belfast Area High School is innovative because:

- **Students have more hands-on opportunities to develop practical job and life skills.** For example, the Marine Institute successfully applied for Limited Purpose Aquaculture (LPA) licenses, and students are now harvesting kelp from three 400-foot kelp lines in Penobscot Bay. Also, an instructor from the Maine Maritime Academy conducted a Coast Guard training course in the Belfast Area High School pool to certify students in saltwater safety.
- **Students engage directly in program design and implementation.** Interviews with students informed the program structure, and student interest has been reinforced through activities such as a Marine Institute logo contest for students held last spring and an elective fair held before registration this fall. One student who had previously performed poorly in a marine science course is now enrolled again as a senior. This time the student is completing an internship serving in a leadership role, helping to design the wet lab and kelp farm. Program leaders have already observed improved student motivation and expect greater student involvement to reduce drop-out rates.
- **The curriculum can reach all students, regardless of their areas of interest, to build ocean literacy.** The program is not limited to science-focused, higher achieving students. Instead, marine themes are embedded through an interdisciplinary approach, with teachers in English and art serving on the pilot team. The increased emphasis on flexibility and student choice means that students can selectively participate in field trips and electives without committing to the full Marine Institute experience if they prefer.

Implementation Successes and Challenges

- **The Marine Institute has already become a respected integrated learning model in the Belfast area.** While still designing the full curriculum, the Belfast Area High School team worked quickly to invest in needed infrastructure and equipment and launch student activities that mix core academic subjects with hands-on experience. The Marine Institute received the 2022–2023 Excellence in Environmental Education Award from the Maine Environmental Education Association in recognition of its "innovation and creativity in providing the highest quality environmental education programming in the State of Maine."
- **Public outreach and community relations have generated positive energy around the Marine Institute activities, enabling what one teacher referred to as "the social license to operate."** This supportive environment is reflected by the approval of the harbormaster for students to learn how to farm kelp in the busy Belfast Harbor and by news stories showcasing Marine Institute activities, such as this News Center Maine evening broadcast featuring Belfast Area High School students harvesting kelp.
- **Students have many more opportunities to learn about local careers in their maritime community.** Growing community support and active outreach by the ELO Coordinator have translated into at least 60 new community-based learning placements this year for student internships, job shadowing, and paid work experiences. Some

example placements include the Penobscot Marine Museum, the local fire department, a veterinary hospital, Belfast Water District, and the police department.

- **Temporary setbacks have been minimized through careful planning and an adaptive approach.** When efforts were unsuccessful to grow kelp seed spools, the Marine Institute was able to draw on funds set aside for this contingency to purchase the kelp seed spools needed for the three LPA lines in Belfast Harbor. Slower than expected decision making related to the location and permit process for the OpBox wet lab means that the structure is not yet connected to plumbing. However, the outdoor structure is an important staging facility for the kelp farming activities and is expected to be a fully functioning wet lab soon.

Sustainability of the Pilot

Belfast Area High School's strategy for sustaining the Marine Institute includes:

- **Continuing to adapt and implement curriculum using new equipment.** The RREV award was invested mainly in one-time costs and was not used to fund any staff positions. One major cost was the wet lab, which is expected to last for 50 years. New courses being offered next year include Physics of the Ocean and Chemistry of the Ocean, both of which have been designed through RREV funding but will have operating costs covered through the regular budget process.
- **Expanding community connections through school outreach activities, parents, and school alumni.** Community placements are perceived as a win-win engagement, where students are gaining real-world experiences and local industries are gaining needed human resources. The growing community support is expected to help maintain the political will needed for sustaining the Marine Institute.
- **Exploring complementary funding sources and partnerships.** For example, the Marine Institute team developed a partnership with the Maine Center for Research in [science, technology, engineering, and math] STEM Education (RiSE Center) funded by the National Science Foundation and is exploring establishing a career and technical education satellite aquaculture program that could sustain a new teaching position.

RREV School Snapshot – Brewer Public Schools

Background

In June 2020, the Maine Department of Education 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 August 2021, school administrative unit, or SAU, Brewer Public Schools received an award from RREV to implement its Nu Program. This pilot is in the Online Education category. The goals of this pilot are to:

- Provide more options to students and families to learn from home full-time while also having opportunities for in-person engagement, including field trips and participation in school-based activities.
- Provide highly personalized online education for students who opt in to remote learning, especially those who have social anxiety, mental or physical health concerns, prefer to learn at their own pace, and/or who thrived in an online environment during the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic.

Key activities of this pilot include:

- Hiring two full-time remote learning specialist (RLS) positions, responsible for developing and implementing personalized education programs for each participating student.
    - The RLS monitors and supports students' progress through courses taken online through Apex Learning, access to which is provided to students via the Nu Program.
    - Each RLS also teaches synchronous online courses in their area of specialty.
    - Each RLS also convenes academic and social-emotional check-ins with each student at least once per week.
- Students are eligible to participate in in-person activities at Brewer Community School and Brewer High School, such as band, art, Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps, and sports.
- Students attend in-person activities with their peers, including field trips and job-shadowing opportunities.

In May 2022, Brewer Public Schools received an Accelerator award to expand the work being done through Nu. The award builds on the goals of Brewer's Round 1 award, and has allowed

Nu to expand their program to include a completely virtual option and a hybrid option in which students learn both online and in person.

The completely virtual and hybrid options were available during the 2022–23 school year, while the Extended Learning Opportunity (ELO) option will be available beginning in fall 2023.

The Accelerator award is intended to help Brewer meet the changing needs of their students by allowing for even more flexibility in how their students reach their educational goals.

EXHIBIT. RREV AWARD SUMMARY – ORIGINAL AWARD

Category	Year 1	Year 2	Total
Personal Services – Salaries and Stipend	$45,500	$101,000	$146,500
Employee Benefits	$16,018.80	$56,373.60	$72,392.40
Purchased Professional Services	$4,000	$4,000	$8,000
Employee travel for Professional Development	$500	$500	$1,000
Instructional Supplies	$3,500	$3,500	$7,000
Technology related hardware (fixed asset)	$2,000	$2,000	$4,000
Total	**$82,518.80**	**$167,373.60**	**$250,892**

EXHIBIT. RREV AWARD SUMMARY – ACCELERATOR AWARD

Category	Year 1/Total
Personal Services – Salaries and Stipend	$72,500
Employee Benefits	$12,500
Property	$15,000
Total	**$100,000.00**

- **Students:** A total of 48 students served during 2022–23.
- **Grades:** Students in 6th–12th participate.
- **Educators:** Two RLS teachers directly involved, plus coordination from the district director of instruction and technology and the principals and guidance counselors at Brewer Community School and Brewer High School. Nu is currently in the process of recruiting an additional RLS member to help support the current enrollment. This makes up the Student Success Team at Nu.

Responsiveness of the Pilot

Brewer Public Schools' pilot is responsive to local needs and/or assets because:

- **Students and families opt in to virtual learning.** Students and families did not have a choice when schools switched to virtual learning at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, but as schools re-opened for the 2021–22 school year, Brewer administrators decided to offer the option of attending in person or continuing to take virtual classes. As one administrator observed, some students realized during the pandemic that they thrived in an online environment and did not want to be forced back to in-person

classes—just as all students had been forced into virtual learning the previous year. Importantly, Brewer administrators wanted students and families to make a considered decision, which is why they require an application and interview process in which students describe why they prefer virtual learning and how they plan to stay engaged during school.

Innovativeness of the Pilot

Brewer Public Schools' pilot is innovative because:

- **Students receive individually tailored support for their academic, social, and emotional needs**. When developing the pilot, Brewer educators specifically sought to be "qualitatively different" than "broad online programs" where students take classes online but have limited interactions with teachers or peers. Brewer therefore built in structures and systems to engage students as individuals, including weekly check-ins with the RLS, a mix of synchronous and asynchronous classes, and in-person group activities such as field trips and service projects. The program point of contact characterized the Nu Program as "the most personalized educational program" she was aware of due to the level of individual attention paid to participating students. This person explained that the individual support provided to students is intended to help them become more confident in themselves, which in turn helped them take more risks exploring classes and activities they otherwise might not have tried. Educators and students both said that the individual student support helped unlock the possibilities of virtual education because it empowers students to choose from a wider array of courses, including some they might consider too challenging were it not for the individual support they receive through the program.
- **Students can choose from a broad array of courses and can take them at their own pace.** During a focus group, students said the individual attention—paired with the greater array of courses available online—empowered them to pursue courses that interested and challenged them. By contrast, if they were attending only in-person classes, they would not have access to the Apex Learning course catalog, which has more options. If they were only taking online courses without the broader support of Nu, they would not have the confidence to explore more challenging or interesting courses. A parent also said Nu "is so much better for [my child's] style of learning because she has more control over when she does the schoolwork and what subject she's going to work on. I think it really helped with her anxiety because if she's feeling overwhelmed, she can take a break."
- **Students have opportunities to join certain in-person classes and activities at their home school, such as art, theater, or sports.** Brewer Public Schools administrators pointed out there are many reasons why some students may prefer virtual learning, and in some cases their preference for virtual academic work may be in tension with their enjoyment of activities or clubs that involve in-person engagement. For example, a student may prefer virtual learning in core subjects because she likes to set her own pace, but also wants to participate in art or theater with her peers. In the absence of Brewer's Nu Program, such a student could choose to attend in-person school but sacrifice her opportunity to learn at her own pace or enroll in a virtual school that does not offer in-person activities. Brewer's pilot program resolves this tension by

allowing students opportunities for both virtual and in-person activities, and thus can reach more students who could benefit from virtual learning.

Implementation Successes and Challenges

- **Brewer Public Schools has established community partnerships to provide extended learning opportunities for Nu students.** Several partnerships have come about this year for the high school students to work in the community. The senior center next door, Brewer Rehabilitation Center, has partnered with junior and senior students for a Certified Nursing Assistant training program, where students are paid for their time in training and certified through the state. Two juniors have completed the program so far with seven others lined up to participate. Additionally, a car mechanics program has also been introduced and at least one student participated in the program in 2022–23. The pilot team expects to continue growing these partnerships so that more students will have similar, and even more extensive, opportunities in the future.
- **Nu has reached an agreement with the Community School to provide two classrooms beginning in fall 2023.** These new spaces will allow the program to expand its reach and add a drop-in component, in which students will be able to receive help from the Nu specialist in person rather than virtually. With the drop-in program, the hope is that an additional 10 to 15 students will participate from surrounding districts. There is already interest from sending or surrounding districts to further give the program sustainability.
- **Many of the students who join Nu experience social anxiety, and this has made in-person, whole-group activities, especially field trips, challenging.** Educators observed that students often struggled to stay engaged during in-person activities, especially those with severe social anxiety. Nonetheless, pilot staff plan to continue to provide these opportunities for students, but with the understanding that students will do better with ample time to discuss expectations and opportunities to opt out.

Sustainability of the Pilot

- Brewer Public Schools' pilot model's strategy for sustainability includes greater outreach to expand enrollment. Between its first and second year, the Nu Program increased the Number of participating students from 29 to 48 and hired a second RLS. Leaders observed that the lessons learned during their first year have sharpened their understanding of who makes for a successful Nu student. A successful Nu student is someone who can manage their time and be self-motivated. Going forward, they will use this information to communicate with school leaders in sending districts and with homeschool families to boost enrollment from these sources. They also plan to supplement this outreach by placing a notice on their website about the program and working with the guidance counselors at Brewer Community School and Brewer High School to attract more in-district students.
- The expansion of the Nu Program, with help from the Accelerator award, provides for even more flexibility for students in their learning. The ELO option is planned to be rolled out in the next school year, which will include the hiring of additional staff, the plan to create a classroom for Nu students who wish to be in-person and the establishment of

more policies and protocols that will allow for expansion. Brewer plans to offer a modified graduation policy and protocols would focus on memoranda of understanding with other districts and an attendance policy. These ELOs will include connections with training in trades and dual enrollment opportunities, just to name a few.

- In 2022–23, three other school districts in the area have been awarded Accelerator grants and hope to partner with Brewer to regionalize the program. This regionalization started at Brewer and replicated by other local districts will allow Brewer Public Schools to build capacity and collaborate, expanding the programs.
- Monthly meetings are held with two other districts— alternative organizational structure (AOS) 47 and Bangor Public Schools—to share knowledge with others in the community looking to mirror what Brewer Public Schools has initiated. This collaboration with other districts is intended to improve the learning experience for students across the state and allow for a broader sharing of ideas and improvements to help with the sustainability of the pilot program, and the longer-term goal is to provide a remote academy.

RREV School Snapshot – Brunswick

Background

In June 2020, the Maine Department of Education 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 May 2022, Harriet Beecher Stowe Elementary School in the Brunswick school administrative unit, or SAU, 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 (CREA) Education Center. 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
Total	**$250,000**	**$0**	**$250,000**

- **Students:** A total of 522 students
- **Grades:** Serves 3rd–5th
- **Educators:** 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 CREA and the Maine Environmental Education Association, 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 in 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 who 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.

Implementation Successes and Challenges

- **Pilot staff noticed a high level of investment and excitement from campus staff and students as construction progressed.** Being able to generate excitement and buy-in with something as significant as a new structure helped motivate further engagement with outdoor learning across the campus.
- **The completion of a custom-built science unit was a high point in this year's pilot implementation.** Pilot staff noted that, historically, their teachers have struggled with curriculum development, so having a customized unit ready for teachers to implement in

the new spaces was a great step toward getting out of the way of the teachers and letting them teach instead of plan.

- **Pilot staff did identify some challenges overall in moving away from more traditional conceptions of classroom education as a barrier for the pilot.** Some teachers, in particular, seemed to demonstrate an emotional attachment to traditional classroom learning, which required pilot staff to take the time to listen and work through teachers' concerns. To address these concerns, pilot staff ensured that there were trained teachers present during planning and implementation so teachers attempting these activities for the first time could go ask questions and have open and transparent communication throughout the process.

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 the Maine Environmental Education Association, 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 training.

RREV School Snapshot – RSU 25 (Bucksport) Applied Learning Lab

Background

In June 2020, the Maine Department of Education 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 May 2022, regional school unit (RSU) 25 (Bucksport) Middle School received an award from RREV to implement its Applied Learning Lab. This pilot is in the Outdoor Education category.

The goals of this pilot are to:

- Foster student voice, agency, and engagement by expanding experiential, hands-on learning opportunities in healthy and beneficial ways.
- Create an educational space where students and teachers find joy in learning together and draw connections across the curriculum and within the community.
- Support student social/emotional skill development and teacher social/emotional wellness.

Key activities of this pilot include:

- **The construction of a four-season greenhouse and kitchen/makerspace**. These facilities will contain aquaponics tanks that house independent, sustainable ecosystems of fish and plants as well as a kitchen and makerspace to help students understand the concept of a grow-cook-eat cycle. The space will also include a resource library as well as storage for various tools and technology for application in various classroom activities.
- **The training of teachers as experiential learning guides**. Three volunteer teachers will receive additional professional development in the creation and implementation of applied learning units that align with their own subject-specific learning standards. These guides will then support other teachers in their ongoing efforts to create an applied learning community of practice at the campus.

EXHIBIT. RREV AWARD SUMMARY

Category	Year 1	Year 2	Total
Personal Services – Salaries	$9,270	$0	$9,270
Employee Benefits	$2,305	$0	$2,305
Purchased Professional and Technical Services	$55,677	$0	$55,677

Category	Year 1	Year 2	Total
Purchased Property Services	$25,000	$0	$25,000
Other Purchased Services	$1,500	$0	$1,500
General Supplies	$106,248	$0	$106,248
Property	$50,000	$0	$50,000
Total	**$250,000**	**$0**	**$250,000**

- **Students:** Serves the student body of 290 students
- **Grades:** Serves 5th–8th
- **Educators:** Three teachers will be trained as experiential learning guides who will then act as coaches for the rest of the teachers at the campus

Responsiveness of the Pilot

RSU 25 (Bucksport) Middle School's pilot is responsive to local needs and/or assets because:

- **The focus on aquaponics connects to other campuses and community organizations that are experienced with technical and educational processes.** A local high school that recently constructed a similar facility as well as the Herring Gut Learning Center, a leader in aquaponics education, will provide ongoing support and allow students to further develop their interest in this form of agriculture.
- **The project integrates community participation and support.** The pilot intentionally integrates the community to support the students in their learning. For example, the goods produced by students based on their own business plans are sold in the community and income is reinvested into the program; the school also hosts community celebrations to demonstrate student accomplishments.

Innovativeness of the Pilot

RSU 25 (Bucksport) Middle School's pilot is innovative because:

- **Experiential learning guides are trained to build institutional capacity and expertise in the school community.** RSU 25 (Bucksport's) pilot trains an initial cohort of experiential learning guides, who in turn will become experts who assist other teachers to find opportunities for hands-on learning within their own subject areas. This community approach is intended to create a climate of creativity and foster a more innovative culture at the school.
- **The model emphasizes cross-subject utilization of experiential spaces and units.** The experiential learning approach offers students opportunities to learn content in social studies, science, math, English language arts, and other content areas as elements of a single ongoing project or topic. This integration can foster increased engagement and deeper learning for students of various interests.
- **It promotes collaboration and innovation by creating a library of experiential learning units, or a curriculum institute.** As teachers develop and implement their

ideas for experiential units, they will be able to share and train others in a formal setting that helps accelerate learning and adaptation of existing units based on the experiences of others.

Implementation Successes and Challenges

- **Construction delays and changes in management of school facilities presented problems in completing the physical spaces for the pilot.** Delays included administrative holds on continuing construction passed down from the Maine Department of Education, local limitations in finding contractors, and weather delays that pushed construction timelines. These delays made it difficult to provide all students with experiential learning opportunities in the new space during the first year of the award but will allow for the first year of the full pilot to be implemented during the 2023–24 school year.
- **Experiential learning guides proved to be valuable assets in their teacher teams.** Administrators noted that these individuals were able to apply their training in advising other teachers in experiential learning and these guides seem to have integrated well into the school's culture without their daily teaching duties suffering.
- **The school hosted a celebration of learning event to show new facilities to community members and parents and received great responses from community members.** As facilities neared completion, members of the public were allowed to come and tour the future learning space as a part of a soft opening celebration. Being able to have students demonstrate their excitement for new facilities and new experiential models was rewarding and encouraging for all involved.

Sustainability of the Pilot

- RSU 25 (Bucksport) Middle School's pilot model's strategy for sustainability includes shifting from stipend positions (experiential learning guides) to a more teacher-driven utilization of outside spaces. As teachers become more familiar with how to make those hands-on, project-based connections, they will be more likely to utilize the space without outside support.
- In addition to the experiential learning guides, the district is also building a foundation for future curriculum development through the proposed Summer Curriculum Design Institutes. The district is committed to continued support of these summer opportunities where teachers will be compensated for their curriculum design work.
- At the end of the 2022–23 school year, staff are confident that the funding to continue paying experiential learning guides and summer training programs could be taken from local funds if supplementary funding is not available from RREV.

RREV School Snapshot – RSU 25 (Bucksport) Remote Learning Pathway

Background

In June 2020, the Maine Department of Education 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 March 2022, regional school unit (RSU) 25 (Bucksport) High School received an Accelerator award from RREV to implement its Remote Learning Pathway pilot, which is in the Online Learning category.

The goals of this pilot are to:

- Provide a remote learning pathway toward a high school diploma for those for whom in-person learning is not a good fit.
- Support social-emotional well-being of students who struggle with in-person learning by offering a remote learning curriculum.

Key activities of this pilot include:

- Hire a remote learning specialist (RLS) solely designated to the Remote Learning Pathway.
    - The RLS is especially equipped to teach and engage students in a remote learning setting.
    - The RLS convenes daily check-ins with each student about their academic and socio-emotional well-being goals and needs.
    - The RLS provides personalized, live, on-call support to students in asynchronous online courses offered by the pathway.
- Identify and acquire curriculum and technology, online subscriptions, and a remote learning platform.
- Deliver professional development needs that are unique to engaging students in a remote learning setting.
- Support students with social-emotional learning activities, including but not limited to activities based on mindfulness and growth mindset.
- Create opportunities for students to attend in-person activities with their peers, including sports, clubs, and other events.

EXHIBIT. RREV AWARD SUMMARY

Category	Year 1
Personal Services – Salaries and Stipend	$53,000
Employee Benefits	$22,279
Purchased Professional Services	$3,000
Other Purchased Services	$5,000
Instructional Supplies	$5,360
Technology Related Supplies	$11,361
Total	**$100,000**

- **Students:** Thirteen full-time students and 16 part-time students
- **Grades:** Serves 7th–12th
- **Educators:** One teacher, the RLS, is directly involved; other staff indirectly involved include the school counselor, the special education teacher, and the standards recovery teacher

Responsiveness of the Pilot

Bucksport High School's pilot is responsive to local needs and/or assets because it:

- **Is tailored to students who have been individually identified as likely to succeed in a remote learning environment.** Prior to the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, students and families did not have an option to enroll in anything but conventional in-person instruction. To meet the learning needs of students who did not or could not access and participate in this mode of instruction, families would have to unenroll from the district to resort to homeschooling. At the time, Bucksport High School did not have an alternative educational model in place for these students. With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent transition to virtual learning, some students were found to thrive in this setting. As schools reopened for regular in-person instruction in the 2021–22 school year, Bucksport High School found that some students struggled with this shift. As such, Bucksport High School wanted to continue to offer students and families the opportunity to participate in a remote learning option. While Bucksport High School does not follow an open enrollment process where students can self-select into the pathway, referrals from teachers, guidance counselors, and/or administrators are utilized to identify and enroll students who can benefit from this pathway. Parents can also seek out this option for their child, but this request is reviewed by key staff with administrators from their child's middle or high school signing off on the decision.
- **Addresses the specific needs of students who prefer remote learning.** As schools returned to in-person instruction, Bucksport High School found that it was challenging for teachers to meet academic and social-emotional needs of all students in both in-person and remote learning contexts. Students for whom in-person learning was not a good fit

desired a remote learning option with an instructor experienced in their specific needs, especially those with anxiety, medical issues, chronic absenteeism, or independent learning styles. The pilot is responsive to these needs because it engages students by having a multi-age RLS involved in personalizing assessments and supports of students in the pilot and supporting students' social-emotional well-being.

- **Provides an opportunity for in-person students to enroll in online courses to fit their schedules.** Bucksport High School opened enrollment to its Remote Learning Pathway to in-person students at the end of the fall semester so that students could enroll in online courses through Edgenuity that were either not available as an in-person offering or because they fit students' schedules better. The purpose of doing this was to provide students with ample opportunities to complete course requirements for on-time graduation. These students were considered part-time students to the Remote Learning Pathway and as such, had access to support from the RLS. Along with full-time students in the pilot, the RLS monitors the progress of these part-time students and checks in with them at regular intervals.

Innovativeness of the Pilot

Bucksport High School's pilot is innovative because:

- **Students are entrusted with more responsibility over what and how they learn.** This pilot casts the traditional teacher-student relationship in a different light, where students are encouraged to be thinking partners in their own learning journey. In practice, this means students have more autonomy over what courses they take, how many courses they enroll in, and their learning pace. School staff have already noticed that offering students more control over their coursework contributes to students becoming more engaged and taking greater ownership over their coursework. For example, although students take asynchronous online courses, some students have been attending courses together on Zoom as a way to encourage mutual accountability. The role of the administrator is also reimagined in this setting where conventional checks for academic rigor in the classroom may not be applicable. The administrator expressed that there is an increased emphasis on being flexible and trusting the instructor and students to do what needs to be done to meet their academic and social-emotional needs.
- **Families have an option for remote learning through their local school district.** Prior to the pandemic, local families who opted not to have their children enrolled in in-person instruction at Bucksport High School could either homeschool or enroll their children in a private online academy, which staff noted may not be ideal seeing as these online academies tend to lack the individual support that students require. The pilot offers these families the option of remote learning through the local school district with individual support contextualized to the students' learning needs. The pilot serves as an additional tool in the school's repertoire to ensure that all students have an opportunity to succeed. Staff shared that by offering the pilot, it helps prevent students from dropping out or falling through the cracks.
- **Students receive personalized learning opportunities and support tailored to their academic and social-emotional needs.** The RLS role offers tailored support for

students' academic and social-emotional needs. Staff noted that personalizing lessons and assessments ensures an appropriate level of rigor for each student and thus makes it more likely for students to become engaged in their own learning. Moreover, the RLS schedules regular check-ins where they go over activities to manage students' social-emotional well-being (e.g., activities based on mindfulness and growth mindset).

Implementation Successes and Challenges

During the site visit, students, parents, and school staff (including teachers, administrators, and support staff) shared some strengths and challenges they observed as a result of Bucksport's Remote Learning Pathway.

- **The Remote Learning Pathway provides students with a positive learning environment**. Students and parents shared that student learning was less stressful in this model primarily because of the flexibility afforded to students to exercise autonomy in choosing what and how many courses they would need to take. Parents also noted that although there was flexibility in the pathway, there was still some degree of structure as to how students could reach their academic goals with content tailored to students' learning needs and the support provided by the RLS in check-ins. In addition to academic benefits, stemming from the stress-free environment, students and parents noticed benefits to students' socio-emotional well-being where students were developing social relationships with their peers and instructors in school. Indeed, some parents noted that their children were noticeably happier and more excited about the idea of going to school where earlier there was anxiety. Furthermore, one parent shared that because of the pilot there was less conflict at home:

  > *There are not as many arguments. Just last night, [student name] was sitting down after work, doing homework just to be ahead. Like, I would never have seen that before, ever. It would have been like pulling teeth to get her to do the homework that she needed to complete, not extra. So, it's brought about a better relationship between me and my daughter.*

- **Regular and timely communication between families and the staff involved in the pilot contributed to parental engagement.** Staff noted that the RLS was able to build a strong positive relationship with parents and families of students during the course of the pilot by providing timely updates, providing regular progress reports, and by being open to feedback. Some parents praised the communication strategy exhibited by staff involved in the pilot and appreciated that the staff were available to them for support as needed. Because this rapport was established, parents shared that they were more open to participating in Parent Teacher Association meetings and that their participation felt "less onerous."

- **The role of the RLS, akin to that of a case manager, ensures tailored support to students.** The role of the RLS is analogous to that of a case manager, where the RLS works with the student to establish their academic and socio-emotional goals, monitor progress toward the goals, and provide support tailored to the student's context to help them reach their goals. The pilot is designed with the intention that students' have more ownership over their learning journey and the RLS provides guidance. Students appreciated this level of ownership and being able to provide feedback to their RLS

about what works for them and what does not—especially since they perceived that they were trusted.

- **The pilot had a slow rollout initially.** Although most staff agreed that the pilot was successful in providing positive learning experiences for students who were a good fit for the Remote Learning Pathway, there were some initial larger discussions related to the pilot's vision, the ideal student profile, and expectations for these students. Specifically, there were questions about whether these students would re-engage with in-person instruction or stay in the Remote Learning Pathway as a more permanent fixture, providing students with yet another pathway to graduation. This uncertainty coupled with discussions related to identifying students with appropriate characteristics who would be able to succeed in this pathway led to a slow start. That being said, staff noted that these discussions were integral to ensure that the pilot was successful in its aims and scope.

Sustainability of the Pilot

Bucksport High School's strategy for sustaining its pilot model includes:

- **Expand student enrollment.** Outreach efforts are planned in order to expand enrollment. The pilot's promising impact, given the attestations of support by students and parents, could be leveraged to market this pathway to a broader audience. This includes directed outreach to the homeschooling community in which students are more likely to have the ideal student profile. Staff noted that because of the pandemic, a considerable proportion of students were homeschooled, and some have yet to return to conventional schooling. This Remote Learning Pathway offers an avenue for students to come back to Bucksport High School while still allowing them to use the learning modality in which they have been successful.
- **Identify supplemental local funding sources**. Key to sustaining the pilot is to identify additional sources of funding. Bucksport High School was able to procure subscriptions for online courses for 2 years through the RREV pilot award. At the end of this period, the plan is to find funding for the online courses through local sources since a part of the pathway is also used for standards recovery. To support the full-time RLS, the plan is to fund this position through the local budget over the course of the next 2 years. For next year, Bucksport High School has applied for the RREV sustainability grant, which will fund half of the RLS position (with the other half included in the local budget). After the end of the sustainability grant (pending approval), the plan is to fund the RLS position entirely through local sources.

RREV School Snapshot – MSAD 28 (Camden)

Background

In June 2020, the Maine Department of Education 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 August 2021, Maine School Administrative District (MSAD) 28 (Camden) received an award from RREV to implement Out and About: The Outrageous Outdoors!, a pilot in the Outdoor Education category.

The goals of this pilot are to:

- To expand outdoor learning opportunities.
- Ensure all students have an equal opportunity to learn outside through extended learning opportunities.

Key activities of this pilot include:

- Collaboration with Hurricane Island, including a 2-day professional development workshop on how to integrate content area standards with guiding principles of outdoor learning, plus ongoing coaching and support for teachers throughout the school year.
- Partnerships and coaching with local and regional experts (such as Hurricane Island and Coastal Mountains Land Trust) to provide outdoor learning community partnerships; and co-planning and co-facilitating student learning activities using a "residency" model where staff will be partnered with a regional expert in that area of study.
- Develop on-site outdoor learning spaces for pre-kindergarten (PreK)–4th-grade students.
- Engage an outdoor liaison (stipend position) who will work with staff to identify local experts to collaborate with each grade level.
- Purchase and prepare learning kits (grab-and-go bags) with necessary tools and materials for outdoor learning opportunities.
- Design and construction of outdoor site planning, development, and preparation of outdoor learning sites; secure a landscape company for Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)-compliant spaces.

EXHIBIT. RREV AWARD SUMMARY

Category	Year 1	Year 2	Total
Personnel Services	$25,400	$5,400	$30,800
Purchased Professional & Technical Services	$40,000	$30,000	$70,000
General Supplies	$30,000	–	$30,000
Property	$80,000	–	$80,000
Miscellaneous and Debt Service	$12,500	$12,500	$25,000
Total	**$187,900**	**$47,900**	**$235,800**

- **Students:** In the 2021–22 school year, 356 students were served
- **Grades:** Serves PreK–4th
- **Educators:** All elementary school teaching staff are directly involved

Responsiveness of the Pilot

MSAD 28 (Camden's) pilot is responsive to local needs and/or assets because:

- **The model promotes environmental stewardship and a sense of connection to the local community.** Staff and community partners emphasized that connecting students with nature and the environment fosters a sense of place in the community through the pilot.
- **It leverages and strengthens the school's relationship with local and regional organizations.** The pilot has helped MSAD (Camden) form and strengthen partnerships with local and regional outdoor organizations and experts in the field to create outdoor learning spaces, provide training opportunities for staff, and deliver programming intended to benefit all its students.

Innovativeness of the Pilot

MSAD 28 (Camden's) pilot is innovative because:

- **The nature-based program is the first public school PreK program in the state to be facilitated almost completely outdoors.** Even though teachers had been incorporating outdoor learning into the curriculum for years before the RREV award, this is the first time students are spending a significant part of their school day outdoors. The nature-based PreK program[13] is the first of its kind in Maine public schools. This program also uses a very adaptable curriculum that is not scripted. One of the PreK teachers shared that while there are some place-based PreK curricula, they were not an appropriate fit for what MSAD 28 (Camden) wanted to do.
- **The model's residency approach supports long-term teacher growth and development.** Teachers partner with an expert to co-plan and co-facilitate student

[13] It is important to note that the PreK program at Camden was not created through the use of RREV funds; however, the RREV funds have contributed significantly to the development of the PreK program through the creation and enhancement of outdoor learning spaces for PreK students.

learning activities. Hurricane Island facilitated a mandatory 2-day summer institute on professional development for all MSAD 28 (Camden) faculty to help move teacher competency in outdoor learning from "good to great." Coastal Mountains Land Trust also provides ongoing coaching and support to teachers throughout the pilot. The experts provide direct instruction in their identified areas of expertise. MSAD 28 (Camden) staff believe this residency model will provide the expertise, support, and confidence teachers need to make outdoor learning a common part of the primary education curriculum.

- **It cultivates and channels the natural curiosity and energy of young students toward new ways of learning.** As one school administrator said, "You don't have to be in school to learn." School staff noted this is especially important because elementary students are at a pivotal age when they are not yet conditioned on how to think and how to structure their thinking, but instead, let their curiosity drive what they learn. By and large, students indicated (through focus group discussions or naturalistic observation) that they prefer outdoor learning to classroom learning because recreational activities (e.g., exercise, outdoor games) enhance their learning experience.

Implementation Successes and Challenges

- **During the second year of implementation, MSAD 28 (Camden) strengthened its partnerships with community and families.** The school is improving its collaboration with community organizations. They looked for ways to expand the variety and number of activities with them and started to work with new organizations. In a focus group with parents, they described their role helping the school to carry out outdoor experiences, for example as chaperones. In one of the 1st-grade classrooms, a parent with a strong background in outdoor education is helping the teacher to develop a new curriculum based on outdoor learning. Some parents also expressed interest in working with the parent association to create a network of families interested in active involvement in outdoor education.

- **MSAD 28 (Camden) has expanded outdoor learning opportunities in its second year, including more outdoor time overall and more opportunities for older students.** Having more available spaces for outdoor learning has helped other grades to adopt the outdoor learning approach pioneered by the PreK class during the first year of pilot implementation. During the second year, teachers and students reported spending more time outside and parents keep supporting this model. Teachers reported that, in general, students exhibited good behavior outside and that they follow security and safety measures. A 1st-grade teacher with no previous experience in outdoor learning was awed by "how much true learning can happen outside."

- **Some teachers desire more guidance on outdoor learning activities, cross-subject collaboration, and access to community resources, especially since two community liaison positions were eliminated.** Some teachers are looking for collaborative experiences across core subjects, such as integrating English and sciences in a same lesson unit. To help smooth the transition to the outdoor learning model, one teacher would like to see a permanent coach or trainer on site to help other classrooms update their own curricula and provide support. Last year, the school had two positions as liaisons between teachers and community resources. This year, these

two positions were eliminated, creating some confusion about the procedure to reach out for help.

- **School and district leaders have been more active in the pilot this year, which solidified support for outdoor learning but also placed substantial demands on their time.** This year, the school's principal and the superintendent are assuming the roles of RREV coordinators, which meant they had to attend more meetings and learn pilot details to a greater degree than in the first year. These leaders were concerned about the added workload to their already busy schedules, but also observed that having the superintendent directly involved simplifies the planning, budgeting, contracting, and other processes related to the building and maintenance of the school's new property that the grant made possible. The superintendent facilitated the district's commitment to financially cooperate with the maintenance of the property.

Sustainability of the Pilot

- MSAD 28 (Camden's) pilot's strategy for sustainability includes investment in building outdoor learning spaces, using professional development and a residency model to change school teaching culture, and looking to hire new teaching staff invested in teaching outside for future teaching roles. This combination of outdoor space and staff training is intended to support a shift in school teaching culture, ensuring that teachers are equipped to facilitate outdoor instruction. Further, since the PreK program is entirely outdoors, students continuing through the school will already be familiar with learning outside. Overall, the pilot team hopes these will lead to a long-term change in school culture. Going forward, MSAD 28 (Camden) is seeking funding streams for a site coordinator to manage ongoing professional development and for continued maintenance of the outdoor learning spaces.
- Two schools have already approached Camden-Rockport Elementary School for more information about their outdoor learning model. The school hosted a public meeting with other PreK schools in the area to talk more about the outdoor learning model and what the RREV pilot is doing to foster the school's philosophy. One parent mentioned that the PreK outdoor learning model is being replicated in another school. Other parents mentioned that thanks to their kids' experiences in school, they are asking for more time to be outside as a family and reducing screen time. In conversations with 3rd- and 4th-grade students about their experiences, they mentioned that outdoor learning is "natural and satisfying," that "observational learning" works best, and that they "are creating scientific knowledge" when they are outdoors. These students would like to have other core subjects outdoors, such as math and English. When asked about their expectations for middle school (they will transfer to another school), they said they expect to be outside at least as much as they are in elementary school. One student even said that she was going to "organize a riot if I can't go outside." They will feel "disappointed" if they do not have the chance to be outdoors. Parents would like to see the outdoor learning model replicated in middle school. As one parent said, "Outdoor learning reaches students that show knowledge and skills in nontraditional ways."

RREV School Snapshot – SU 76 (Deer Isle-Stonington)

Background

In June 2020, the Maine Department of Education 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 August 2021, School Union (SU) 76 (Deer Isle-Stonington) received an award from RREV to implement Classrooms in the Community. This pilot is in the Outdoor Education category.

The goals of this pilot are to:

- Develop outdoor learning spaces including an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)-accessible nature trail.
- Expand the district's existing outdoor and place-based education opportunities.

Key activities of this pilot include:

- Hiring a part-time place-based education integration specialist, called the classroom and community coordinator, who is responsible for supporting teachers in the development and implementation of place-based education in two distinct forms: on-campus outdoor education and off-campus community-centered education opportunities.
- Improving the school's outdoor infrastructure, including expanding the previous nature trail and making it wheelchair accessible, an outdoor classroom adjacent to the nature trail, and repairs to the existing greenhouses.
- Purchasing needed supplies for outdoor education to continue year-round.
- Expanding off-campus opportunities by purchasing a vehicle and safety equipment.

EXHIBIT. RREV AWARD SUMMARY

Category	Year 1	Year 2	Total
Personal Services – Salaries	$69,400	$69,400	$138,800
Purchased Professional and Technical Services	$38,350	—	$38,350
Purchased Property Services	$7,500	—	$7,500
General Supplies	$2,660	—	$2,660
Property	$63,407	—	$63,407
Total	**$181,317**	**$69,400**	**$250,717**

- **Students:** In the 2021–22 school year, 455 students served in the district
- **Grades:** Serves Kindergarten–12th across four schools
- **Educators:** All teachers and staff across the district

Responsiveness of the Pilot

SU 76 (Deer Isle-Stonington's) pilot is responsive to local needs and/or assets because:

- **Outdoor learning responds to the area's specific culture.** The pilot team commented that traditional classroom settings are not always well-attuned to the specific cultural context of SU 76. The outdoor education component of the program is designed to make students' experience more hands-on and experiential in ways that align with the culture of the local fishing community.
- **It provides clear connections between the curriculum and the lived experiences of students.** Since a large proportion of students will likely enter the fishing industry, there is often a disconnect between what they learn in school and what they expect to do after graduation. Classrooms in the Community addresses this challenge by creating new place-based learning opportunities both on- and off-campus that center education around the specific context of their community and draw connections between core content and students' lived experiences and plans for the future.
- **The creation of wheelchair-accessible outdoor learning spaces ensured equitable access for students and community members.** Not only does the nature trail connect the Deer Isle-Stonington Elementary School with the Deer Isle-Stonington High School, provide an outdoor space for students, and incorporate an outdoor classroom, but it is also often used by families and community members outside of school hours. By making the trail ADA-accessible, the pilot team has ensured all community members can access these outdoor spaces regardless of the level of mobility, thus removing a barrier to both teaching outside and engaging the larger community in the space.

Innovativeness of the Pilot

SU 76 (Deer Isle-Stonington's) pilot is innovative because:

- **Teachers can opt in to outdoor and place-based learning.** The pilot designers understood that staff buy-in is critical and teacher capacity had been limited. Direct teacher participation in place-based learning was therefore voluntary rather than mandatory for the 2021–22 and 2022–23 school years. All students could still take part in these opportunities through specials and after-school programs, and specific teachers could expand those opportunities during their own class periods. Those who chose to opt in have additional support from the director of place-based learning in designing and implementing their curriculum. Allowing teachers to opt in is intended to reduce the burden on them and focus resources on teachers who are most engaged in the program.
- **Outdoor learning is integrated across grade levels, subjects, and seasons.** A distinguishing feature of SU 76 (Deer Isle-Stonington's) pilot is its emphasis on creating a culture of outdoor learning across the district, rather than a siloed component of certain

classes or grades. Teachers and administrators emphasized the diverse uses of outdoor facilities, including the nature trail and greenhouse, and buy-in from teachers in subjects such as art, English language arts, science, and math, as well as after school clubs and activities. Teachers also described using the outdoor space throughout the year, for example by helping students observe differences on the trail as seasons changed. The classroom and community coordinator plays a key role helping teachers think creatively about how to use outdoor spaces for many classes and subjects. This space has also been utilized by teachers and school counselors to provide a safe space for individual conversations with students.

- **The pilot helps strengthen connections between the schools and the community.** Teachers and community partners described the pilot as an impetus for stronger connections between the school and the broader community, including many of the artists, retirees, and fishing families who live in the area. The trail has been used to host several official community events and is available to the public, better connecting the community to the school. Both volunteers and community organizations have contributed to maintaining the trail. Events engaging the community such as Pumpkin Carving and December Luminaries are held after school hours and invite families and community members to engage with the trail and school. One of the implementation team members noted receiving positive feedback from families who were able to use the trail outside of school hours.

Implementation Successes and Challenges

- **The trail and greenhouse have been completed and are frequently used, especially by younger grades**. An administrator commented that younger grades seem to use the outdoor facilities more often—kindergarten and 1st-grade students mentioned that they go outside every day—and explained that they will be surveying teachers across the district in fall 2023 to gather more reliable data about frequency and type of use across grade levels and subjects. Several teachers described using the nature trail and green house frequently and perceived positive results with students.

- **Community partners have been highly engaged.** The RREV grant tightened the partnerships with local organizations. For example, a local community organization greenhouse hosts after-school workshops about nutrition and food at the renovated greenhouse. The workshops cover a range of topics from planting the seeds, to the preparation of healthy meals using local ingredients, and the fruit and vegetables that students help to grow. A rabbit that one organization donated to one of the elementary schools gave birth recently, providing students an opportunity to learn about raising animals. A local environmental organization provides teachers with training about how to take advantage of the trails throughout the area for educational purposes. One of the community organization representatives noticed that high school students are more interested in science and environmental majors since they started working with the organization. Additionally, the renovated trails provide a sense of pride to the school and opportunities for students to show leadership and new skills.

- **Superintendent and school principal turnover has diminished high visibility support from district leaders but not materially affected pilot implementation**. Since the pilot began, the principals at Deer Isle-Stonington High School, Deer Isle-

Stonington Elementary School, and the SU 76 superintendent have left their roles. According to teachers and administrators, this turnover has meant less visible support for the pilot in communications with teachers and parents, but new and/or acting school and district leadership has been generally supportive of the pilot and the changes have not undermined pilot implementation. Understanding the key role that supportive administrators play in any schoolwide enterprise, the RREV coordinator makes sure to engage incoming school/district leaders, establishing open communication routes and clear expectations. Schools show commitment through tailored professional development workshops and now include outdoor teaching/learning expectations when hiring new teachers. Teachers and schools use social media and other online resources to add more visibility to outdoor experiences for families and community.

Sustainability of the Pilot

SU 76 (Deer Isle-Stonington's) strategy for sustaining their pilot includes:

- **Leveraging student support to maintain infrastructure over time**. The pilot model's strategy for sustainability includes focusing the upfront investment on the necessary physical infrastructure to facilitate outdoor learning, including completion of the nature trail and greenhouse at Deer Isle-Stonington Elementary School and High School. Going forward, SU 76 anticipates students will help keep the infrastructure in good repair, which they expect will also help build a sense of responsibility for the trail and greenhouse while minimizing expenses.
- **Establishing a half-time role for the classroom and community coordinator.** During the first 2 years of the pilot, this has been a full-time position, but beginning in the 2023–24 school year it will become a half-time role. Administrators felt the reduced role would be appropriate now that the infrastructure is largely completed and community partnerships established. Moreover, they felt district leadership would be more amenable to funding a half-time role from the regular district budget compared to a full-time position.
- **Fostering a districtwide culture of outdoor learning**. Teachers and administrators felt the pilot has contributed to a broader culture in the district in which teachers seek opportunities to use outdoor spaces and collaborate with community partners. They expect this culture to continue and grow in the future without the need for additional financial investment. One way to facilitate it is through the creation of a pool of resources for teachers, with ready-to-implement lessons and quick access to the vans and equipment needed. Likewise, the after-school program, which engages an average of 35–40 students daily in one of the elementary schools, is based on using the local natural resources to provided richer experiences to students.

RREV School Snapshot – RSU 84 (East Grand)

Background

In June 2020, the Maine Department of Education 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 March 2022, regional school unit (RSU) 84 (East Grand) received an award from RREV to implement its Business Pathway pilot program. This pilot is in the Multiple Pathways category.

The goals of this pilot are to:

- Create a mutually beneficial business model to connect a community business to the school.
- Expand and develop a Kindergarten(K)–14 Business Pathway for students to gain hands-on experiences developing financial literacy and business management skills.

Key activities of this pilot include:

- Establishing a co-op for students to get hands-on experience developing employability skills and learning about small business education.
- Developing a K–14 Business Pathway and curriculum aligned with standards for students to learn about employability skills and career opportunities while developing skills in financial literacy, business management, product development, and trades.
- A feasibility study to determine an operational business structure and plan, curriculum development support for K–14 teachers, and legal counsel to identify viability and feasibility of the yet-to-be-determined community business/school partnership.

EXHIBIT. RREV AWARD SUMMARY

Category	Year 1	Year 2	Total
Personal Services – Salaries and Stipend	–	$7,500	$7,500
Employee Benefits	–	$508	$508
Purchased Professional & Technical Services	–	$87,000	$87,000
Instructional Supplies	–	$1,990	$1,990
Property (fixed asset)	–	$153,000	$153,000
		$249,998	**$249,998**

- **Students:** Serving 138–140 students
- **Grades:** Serves K–12th
- **Educators:** All K–8th-grade teachers are directly involved, as well as one teacher in 9th–12th grades

Responsiveness of the Pilot

RSU 84 (East Grand's) pilot is responsive to local needs and/or assets because:

- **The Business Pathway provides educational and economic benefit to the community.** In the original pilot plan, RSU 84 (East Grand) planned to partner with a local hardware store to develop a mutually beneficial partnership between school and community: providing students with project-based learning opportunities while keeping the hardware store open and accessible to all members of the community, thereby contributing to the local economy. Although the hardware store has since been sold, RSU 84 (East Grand) continues to develop their Business Pathway curriculum to provide hands-on experiences for students. By building these connections with the community, RSU 84 (East Grand) hopes that students will remain involved with the community and contribute to the economic development of the region.

Innovativeness of the Pilot

RSU 84 (East Grand's) pilot is innovative because:

- **The co-op and Business Pathway bridge the gap between learning about a skill to actually using that skill.** Whereas many schools only teach business fundamentals, East Grand is connecting what students learn in the classroom to what is happening in the community. Consequently, the pilot helps students gain knowledge in the classroom on topics such as financial literacy and business management while gaining experience in the community in topics such as trades and product development—all while growing in self-confidence and resiliency.
- **The program focuses on employability skills.** One of the goals of the program is to enhance student employability so that students who remain in the community after graduation are able to contribute right away. Educators commented that an added benefit of this focus on employability is increased attendance as a result of students gaining valuable skills both inside and outside the classroom.

Implementation Successes and Challenges

- **Two integral aspects of the program, the K–14 Business Pathway curriculum and the feasibility study, have been completed in Year 1.** One goal of the pilot was to create a Business Pathway curriculum for students to get involved in the local community. One staff member at RSU 84 (East Grand) described how this curriculum has been documented and students are currently "living it" inside and outside the classroom. The completion of this curriculum has allowed students to partake in community engagement and connected what they have learned to college and career readiness preparation. The staff member said that because of the curriculum, students can "see all the places they can work in the community."

- **Legal and administrative hurdles such as registering the business have delayed the opening of the co-op.** RSU 84 (East Grand) expected that creating the co-op would take less than 6 months, but administrative and legal hurdles have postponed implementation. School staff have met every other week for the past 4 months to prepare the legal documents to register the business, write the business education plan, and coordinate with outside economic development organizations to put a plan in place. Now, the last step is for the co-op to generate enough support within the community to pass an official vote. The staff member said that despite these challenges, they think the time investment will make the co-op more sustainable and successful once it is approved.

Sustainability of the Pilot

- **RSU 84 (East Grand) intends to integrate the Business Pathway and curriculum in school policy.** The Business Pathway curriculum will be a main source of sustainability because it will be an established part of the school curriculum and can be replicated at low cost from year to year. East Grand also hopes that this curriculum can be a model for other rural schools and communities for scalability purposes.

RREV School Snapshot – Falmouth

Background

In June 2020, the Maine Department of Education 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 May 2022, school administrative unit (SAU) Falmouth received an award from RREV to implement its pilot Navigator Program. This pilot is in the Outdoor Education category.

The goals of this pilot are to:

- Provide Falmouth Public Schools students opportunities to engage in authentic, interdisciplinary learning and experience place-based learning.
- Provide opportunities for Falmouth Public Schools students to build connections with nature, their community, and Wabanaki culture, past and present.
- Build Falmouth Public Schools students' understanding of the ecological relationships within the Presumpscot Watershed and the importance of water, both locally and globally.

Key activities of this pilot include:

- Select staff participate in a variety of outdoor education planning sessions and Wabanaki studies classes to create interdisciplinary, place-based learning experiences that are aligned to curriculum standards.
- Students engage in a variety of experiential learning activities connected to the Presumpscot Watershed, including water testing and identification of local flora and fauna.
- Grade levels partner with community experts who connect to an area of focus of their experiential learning plan.
- Cross collaboration of grade levels and/or students of different grade levels.
- The outdoor learning educator supports curriculum development, curricular alignment, and implementing place-based learning experiences.

EXHIBIT. RREV AWARD SUMMARY

Category	Year 1	Year 2	Total
Personal Services – Salaries and Stipend	$82,000	89, 000	$171,000
Employee Benefits	$28,000	$35,000	$63,000
Purchased Professional and Technical Services	$8,000	$0	$8,000
Purchased Property Services	$350.00	$350.00	$350.00
General Supplies (Instructional Supplies and Media)	$6,000	$0	$6,000
Property and Technology	$0	$0	$0
Miscellaneous - Field trip transportation	1,300	$0	1,300
Total	**$125,650**	**$124,350**	**$250,000**

Note: These are estimates. This does not reflect adjustments made to the Year 2 budget with the award of $100,000 in sustainability funding.

- **Students:** Approximately 1,100 students involved through a multi-year roll-out of curriculum
- **Grades:** Serves 1st–12th through a multi-year curriculum roll-out
- **Educators:** About 50–60 teachers involved through a multi-year design process

Responsiveness of the Pilot

Falmouth Public Schools' pilot is responsive to local needs and/or assets because:

- **It builds on a robust history of outdoor education at Falmouth.** Falmouth is surrounded by an abundance of parks and recreation areas, including rivers and woods. Over the past 10 years, Falmouth Public Schools has invested a great deal of energy and resources into developing those as learning spaces. For example, Falmouth hired a farm and garden manager who coordinates with teachers to help connect classroom learning to the outdoors. All schools are able to utilize the space for educational as well as social-emotional learning. This year Falmouth also had eco leaders, who are teachers designated to take care of and encourage use of outdoor spaces. However, according to the director of learning at Falmouth, the use of outdoor learning spaces and engagement with outdoor learning is not yet comprehensive. Falmouth's pilot project aims to "recenter outdoor learning" so that all students have an opportunity to experience the outdoors and outdoor learning becomes an embedded part of the curriculum.
- **It utilizes Falmouth Public Schools' local waterways to deepen students' understanding of Wabanaki culture, past and present.** Within the Presumpscot Watershed, Falmouth is special in that it has lake, river, and ocean access. As such, the pilot program seeks to develop students' appreciation and knowledge of these waterways by centering them to teach science and history concepts and make connections with Wabanaki culture.

Innovativeness of the Pilot

Falmouth's pilot is innovative because:

- **It fosters cross-collaboration through its whole school approach.** Though Falmouth is a single school campus, educators said curriculum and communication often feel fragmented across schools. The Navigator Program intentionally builds connections across grade levels and across the elementary, middle school, and high school. By creating collaborative working partnerships (in the form of mentoring, coaching, and co-teaching and learning opportunities) across classes, teams, and grade levels, students are expected to experience an increase in connection to teachers across the district.
- **It positions outdoor learning not as an "enrichment opportunity," but rather as central to Falmouth's overall academic philosophy.** Centering place-based curriculum design will shift the learning experience for Falmouth Public Schools' students from a discrete approach to a more integrated approach that builds over time.

Implementation Successes and Challenges

- **Falmouth Public Schools recruited and hired an outdoor learning coordinator to support curriculum development, curricular alignment, and implement place-based learning experiences for students.** The individual who was hired for this position had extensive experience working with youth in a variety of experiential settings, including over 20 years of experience in the public education sector.
- **Falmouth has facilitated several outdoor learning experiences for students during the 2022–23 school year.** One major learning experience included a fieldwork day at the River Point Conservation Area, which is connected to Falmouth Public Schools via local waterways. River Point was a significant seasonal planting ground for the Wabanaki; today, it is a conservation area with trails that overlook the rivers, wildlife viewing opportunities, and hints of its former use—both in the habitat and physical remains. Sixth-grade students visited this area in May 2023 to understand, through experiential learning, why the Presumpscot River is important, what humankind's relationship has been with the Presumpscot River over time, how connection to place fosters a sense of self, and how to become better environmental stewards. Students achieved these learning goals through observation and interaction with the water, plants, and animals of River Point. The fieldwork day included stations where students learned about water testing, bird biodiversity, beaver ecology, and indigenous plant ecology.

Sustainability of the Pilot

Falmouth Public Schools' sustainability strategy includes:

- **The RREV team will seek approval for permanent funding of the outdoor learning educator position.** The outdoor learning educator is instrumental to sustaining the transformative change in outdoor learning at Falmouth. This position is funded for 2 years through the RREV grant, but would need to be written into the district budget for future years.
- **Ongoing professional development within the faculty.** In addition to securing funding for the outdoor learning educator, Falmouth also holds ongoing professional development within the faculty to help support expansion of the program to the whole district in the future.

RREV School Snapshot – MSAD 11 Gardiner

Background

In June 2020, the Maine Department of Education 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 August 2022, Maine School Administrative District (MSAD) 11 (Gardiner) High School received an award from RREV to implement its Earth Science Outdoor Classroom project. This pilot is in the Outdoor Education Accelerated category.

The goals of this pilot are to:

- Reverse the school trend of declined academic outcomes, increased disengagement, and social-emotional issues among students.
- Change the instructional method of their first-year earth science class and spend 75% of its allocated instructional period outdoors.
- Provide equal opportunities to students of low socio-economic status to access quality equipment for outdoor activities.

Key activities of this pilot include:

- Adapting lesson plans to outdoors, different seasons, and weather with the help of hired experts.
- Acquisition of outdoor wear and equipment such as boots, rainwear, hats, mittens, winter jackets, snowshoes, fly fishing equipment, binoculars, sporting scopes, game cameras, shovels, backpacks, foldable camping chairs, and a storage unit.
- Acquisition of one wheelchair adapted for all-terrain use.
- Acquisition of educational material.

EXHIBIT. RREV AWARD SUMMARY

Category	Year 1
Personal Services – Salaries and Stipend (for Curriculum Development)	$10,000
Professional Services	$5,000
Instructional Supplies	$5,000
Outdoor Gear	$57,000
Outdoor Wear	$15,000
Property-Storage unit	$8,000
Total	**$100,000**

- **Students:** All 9th-grade students served; 84 students in fall and 102 in spring (186 total)
- **Educators:** One teacher is directly involved in the planning and implementation phases (one additional teacher will help to collect data about student satisfaction at the end of the project)

Responsiveness of the Pilot

MSAD 11 (Gardiner) High School's pilot is responsive to local needs and/or assets because:

- **It addresses the specific needs of economically and physically disadvantaged students.** Staff realized that one of the barriers to having an effective academic experience was the lack of appropriate clothing and footwear among students and the lack of the right equipment for students with mobility challenges. The project is intended to help the school provide equal access to quality educational experiences to all their students regardless of their socioeconomic status. One educator noted that some students needed clothing items such as jackets, raincoats, rain pants, and boots. The school also has students with mobility problems. The award helped to secure equipment necessary for outdoor education regardless of a student's physical abilities. "I bought an all-terrain wheelchair," noted the educator. The educator took this project as a personal legacy, saying, "I really felt that I needed to create something before I left that could engage kids and get them back into wanting to learn and, really, truly being a member of our school."
- **It targets the socio-emotional needs of students**. After the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, the school surveyed students and found high levels of anxiety. The school tried to use outdoor instruction to improve their engagement and social-emotional well-being. The school reported that "students, many who had struggled with traditional forms of instruction and assessment, showed improved behavior and greater interest in the lesson. Students began asking to go outside, explaining they felt less stress, more creative, and able to complete more work." The RREV project is a commitment to include outdoor instruction and experiential learning as a beneficial novel approach to the school's teaching practices.

Innovativeness of the Pilot

MSAD 11 (Gardiner) High School's pilot is innovative because:

- **It centers outdoor education in one of the subject core classes.** The pilot has the goal of transforming outdoor education as a schoolwide practice from the traditional sporadic and co-curricular approach. For that, the participating educator plans to spend 75% of the instructional time outdoors during Earth Sciences class. This class is a requirement for all first-year students, and it is a semiannual class. Thus, it provides all 9th-grade students with a new teaching/learning approach but at different times of the year. Initially, only first-year students will benefit from this approach, but the goal is for the pilot to serve as a model for other courses and grades. The training received and the lessons learned will help other teachers to adapt their curricula to a more outdoor experience.
- **It will leverage upper-grade students as teaching assistants and thus provide them a novel leadership opportunity.** The project plans to include mentorship and advising opportunities for participants as they progress as upper class students. The project envisions the collaboration of former students to deliver lessons and assist with organizational functions in the following years. “I'm hoping that that we can make it sort of full circle so that if you really did like it that much, you could come back and be a leader in that class as an upperclassman,” noted the participating educator.

Implementation Successes and Challenges

- **School administrators have provided the Earth Sciences instructor substantial support and freedom to implement the program**. The pilot was created to be implemented in one core subject taught by one educator and in only one grade. The educator not only has several years of experience teaching Earth Sciences at the school, but the support of school administration and the science department when making decisions about the use of funds, logistic arrangements, and how to update the curriculum to outdoor learning.
- **The pilot offers students opportunities to gain leadership skills through independent and group activities outside.** During pilot activities, students have opportunities to work independently and as a team, creating numerous instances to develop leadership skills. In one activity, for example, students used the three key elements to start and maintain small fires for roast marshmallows. All students, regardless of their skills, had a role in the general organization of the day and in their own projects. With clear guidelines and goals, students can perform their learning tasks.
- **Students have shown respect for school property while learning outside**. As noticed during the site visit and by a community partner, students show respect for natural resources and handled with care the materials purchased with RREV funds. Moreover, the community partner remarked on the trust and collaboration between the teacher and the students in the Earth Sciences class.
- **Outdoor learning activities have given students opportunities to show companionship and empathy when working in teams**. The pilot educator observed students encouraging and checking on each other while completing the tasks. During a student focus group, one of the students shared that she has not been outside much since the COVID-19 pandemic confinement. She felt reluctant at first to have the Earth Sciences class outdoors, but now she feels more confident in her physical skills.

- **The pilot has given students new opportunities to demonstrate skills and knowledge.** The educator explained that students perform differently in a classroom compared to outdoors. By giving them different contexts to show their skills and knowledge, students have opportunities to grow their strengths and overcome their weaknesses. "[There are students that] struggle with the paper and pencil quiz or test, but if you put them outside and say 'OK, show me how that works,' they are so good and they want to do that, they want to be able to show you that they know it. ... And the other kids ... they're great with a book or they can memorize material very well, but when they have to start a fire or do some hands-on thing, then that causes a little stress and that that then helps them to be resilient," the educator said.
- **The pilot has exceeded its goals for instructional time outdoors, including 100% outdoor experience by May 2023**. The goal for the Earth Sciences class was to spend 75% of the allocated instructional period outdoors. When the research team visited the school in mid-May 2023, the 9th-grade students in this required class had spent every instructional day assigned to the Earth Sciences class outdoors.
- **The purchased outdoor gear and wear made it possible to have outdoor experiences even in adverse weather conditions**. In fact, the quality of the equipment was one of the things noticed by the community partner who visited the school to provide learning experiences on BMX bikes. The greatest problem this organization has when working with schools in winter is the lack of appropriate clothes and boots for outdoor activities. That was not a problem at Gardiner High School.
- **Gardiner High School was able to implement outdoor learning activities using surrounding areas "as is."** To deliver outdoor learning experiences as soon as possible, the pilot did not include landscaping work or the construction of outdoor facilities. The RREV coordinator spent the summer of 2022 updating the class curriculum to have it ready to provide outdoor experiences on the first day of school back in August of 2022. The school is now working to clean the surrounding areas to extend the learning spaces.
- **The reliance on one dedicated educator placed substantial burdens on this person's time and capacity.** The educator needs to juggle academic functions (teaching) and organizational functions (safety issues, correct use of equipment, and so on) when outdoors. In particular, the development of the curriculum proved to be an exhausting process. The teacher did not have a background in outdoor learning and created lessons plans with the help of workbooks and other materials she found online. The goal is to provide not only a 100% outdoor curriculum for the Earth Sciences class, but a pool of resources for the other science subjects and teachers. One challenge that has arisen is how students could make up an outdoor class if they missed the planned one.
- **Different weather patterns between the fall and spring semesters make it difficult to follow the same sequence of lessons from semester to semester.** While the original intent was to implement an identical curriculum in the two academic sessions—from August to January to one group of students, and from February to June to the other group of students—Mother Nature needs to provide similar weather conditions but in reverse order. This year, the end of the first semester came with very little snow but the

second semester had a tremendous amount, which forced the educator to make last-minute changes to the lesson plans. The educator is continuously revising lessons to teach the same concepts under different outdoor conditions, which is an additional task in an already busy schedule.

Sustainability of the Pilot

MSAD 11 (Gardiner) High School's pilot model's strategy for sustainability includes:

- **Transferability to other science courses**. The project aims to become not only the official curriculum for the Earth Sciences course required for all 9th-grade students, but to serve as a model for other courses. The sciences department acknowledged that creating a completely outdoor curriculum implies some compromises with the content and/or the depth of the learning concepts. Indeed, this was one the obstacles mentioned by the advanced sciences teachers: How to cover the required content while providing rich outdoor learning experiences? Some educators seemed more reluctant than others. Students mentioned that they would like to have other classes—such as astronomy, physics, and English—outdoors. Two promising signs of the school commitment to outdoor education:
    - While visiting the school, a different group of students was outdoors conducting an experiment as part of a physics class.
    - The community partner who facilitated the biking activity mentioned that the principal and other teachers were excited to ride the bikes and join students. He has not seen that in many schools.
- **Shared use with families and the community**. The school envisions making outdoor wear and gear available to students and their families when the school is not in session, through an organized loan system. Likewise, the project wants to involve the community in the maintenance of the outdoor spaces and extend the use of the planned observation centers and trails for exercise and relaxation. As one member of the pilot implementation team said, "It's also hopefully to provide or to help provide some outdoor sort of recreational places for their families as well."
- **Continuity after the current Earth Sciences teacher retires**. The sciences department chair is committed to continuing to implement a 100% outdoor curriculum for the Earth Sciences class by hiring an enthusiastic replacement when the time arrives. However, this could pose a challenge given the substantial demands placed on the person filling this role.

RREV School Snapshot – Gorham

Background

In June 2020, the Maine Department of Education 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 August 2022, Gorham High School received an award from RREV to implement its pilot project: Gorham Outdoors. This pilot is in the Outdoor Education Accelerated category.

The goals of this pilot are to:

- Improve attendance rates by reinvigorating 9th-grade students' love of learning.
- Decrease the number of social/emotional distress referrals by meeting 9th-grade students' social and emotional needs.
- Rebuild community relationships after the pandemic.
- Expand their current outdoor curriculum.

Key activities of this pilot include:

- Creating a project-based, experiential, service-learning curriculum for 9th-grade students.
- Providing professional development for all teachers regarding project-based learning and outdoor learning.
- Purchase of outdoor education equipment.
- Purchase of video equipment to document the project.
- Students' presentation at the end of the project that displays the project and final products.
- Acquiring outdoor education equipment.
- Initially, building a solar-powered greenhouse with a weather station. This proposal was discarded at the end of the first year.

EXHIBIT. RREV AWARD SUMMARY

Category	Year 1
Personal Services – Salaries and Stipend	$11,000
Purchased Professional Services	$5,000
Instructional Supplies	$5,300
Property – Learning Site Development/Construction	$70,300
Miscellaneous – Field trip transportation	$8,400
Total	**$100,000**

- **Students/Grade:** The pilot served 33% of 9th-grade students (60–70 students)
- **Educators:** Four teachers are directly involved (English, sciences, social studies, and math core subjects)

Responsiveness of the Pilot

Gorham High School's pilot is responsive to local needs and/or assets because:

- **It builds on the district's cross-disciplinary curriculum and approach for helping 9th-grade students transition to high school**. At Gorham High School, teaching and learning practices for 9th-grade students are different from the rest of the grades. Students in 9th grade are divided into three teams that together take the following core subjects: math, English, social sciences, and natural sciences. The purpose is to smooth the transition from middle school to high school and to build strong relationships between teachers and students. With a cross-disciplinary lens, the four core teachers assigned to each group work together to foster project-based learning. Gorham's RREV pilot leverages this set up as an innovation "laboratory." This configuration into autonomous work groups of students and teachers allows the implementation of the RREV pilot project in one of the groups, for testing purposes, with the idea of expanding the project to the rest of the 9th-grade students in later years.

Innovativeness of the Pilot

Gorham High School's pilot is innovative because:

- **It uses interdisciplinary, project-based learning to challenge traditional school norms and assumptions about teaching and learning.** A pilot leader said the school had long had a "traditional structure," but following the pandemic many students, staff, and administrators were overwhelmed, disengaged, and discouraged. One reason the pilot is innovative is because it replaces the traditional classroom-based model with a new project-based, experiential, service-learning approach. This transformation is intended to invigorate the school culture and spark curiosity and passion for learning among students and teachers.
- **It leverages video and other technology to increase student engagement and buy-in.** Students will also create a video project highlighting the implementation of the pilot. This activity requires the involvement of the technology department and "builds capacity

for student leadership [and] engagement, and [fosters] relationships throughout the building," said one of the educators involved. Students from different grades will lead and create an audiovisual project displaying the RREV pilot. For teachers, "it takes creative thinking. It takes looking at our classroom time in a different way. It's like retraining our own teaching practices" with the goal of "retraining our students for how to learn outside of the classroom and engaging them in solving real-world problems," one of educators involved said.

- **Project-based and outdoor learning provides more opportunities to connect academic concepts with real-world experiences.** According to the staff involved in the project, students are experiencing "a lack of satisfying and authentic learning." The reason being students do not see the connection between the classroom and the real world. The idea is for students to see how the content learned applies to the real world, "instead of just learning from a textbook and learning from ... worksheets in that more traditional model where we're asking them authentic questions."

Implementation Successes and Challenges

- **Teachers delivered a shortened version of the initially proposed 3-month interdisciplinary project with 9th-grade students.** This project combined units from the sciences, social sciences, English, and career departments to provide students with a comprehensive understanding of climate change effects on the community. In collaboration with the technology department, students created a video highlighting the takeaways from the experience:
    - https://vimeo.com/782906150/876b23ca0d
- **Construction plans needed to be reconsidered given persistent delays.** The initial plan of building a greenhouse depended on collaboration with the local authorities. The school lacks property for construction projects, but the town agreed to provide the land. Delays in permits and other challenges made the school abandon the project and consider investing in outdoor equipment from which students could benefit more quickly. With the grant extension, the school hopes to purchase bikes and allow students and teachers to benefit from the local trail system.
- **Activities demonstrated the school's commitment to incorporate more inclusive physical exercise.** In collaboration with First Push Syndicate and the Community Based Education program, the grant made it possible for students to ride fat tire bikes and explore the local trails, and to allow students with disabilities to be part of the experience. This successful activity made the school consider the purchase of regular bikes and handicap-accessible bikes for the student body's use. The school is collaborating with local biking groups for maintenance arrangements. The school created two videos highlighting the activities:
    - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TAanHq7taz4&t=14s
    - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uB28nAh2N3g&t=1s
- **Previously disengaged students became more engaged after participating in the pilot.** Participating 9th-grade students reported promising results in an internal survey. Some of these students came from a middle school with an alternative student model, and they said that the pilot made possible a smooth transition to the new high school

dynamics. Teachers and the RREV coordinator would like to see the enthusiasm spread to the remaining 9th-grade students. The goal is to keep building the pool of outdoor learning resources to ease the implementation for the other two 9th-grade teams.

Sustainability of the Pilot

Gorham High School's pilot model's strategy for sustainability includes:

- **Changing the school culture.** Positive results from the pilot activities have fueled growing interest by the other multidisciplinary teams to adopt the outdoor and experiential learning model, not only for all 9th-grade students, but also for other grades.
- **Community involvement**. Community partners will play a key role in supporting activities and maintaining outdoor equipment (e.g., bicycle repair). The school has already contacted several community organizations and educational institutions, such as the Department of Environmental Science at the University of Southern Maine, and a couple of bike associations to plan activities for next year. The trail system surrounding the school is a popular spot in the area for trekking and biking activities and helps to attract community support.

RREV School Snapshot – RSU 22 (Hampden)

Background

In June 2020, the Maine Department of Education 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 March 2022, regional school unit (RSU) 22 (Hampden) Academy received an Accelerator award from RREV to implement its individualized learning pathway pilot, the Corral, which is in the Online Learning category.

The overarching goal of this pilot is to:

- Provide an individualized learning pathway with in-person and digital learning options for students who were disengaged and struggling with the return to in-person school, and in so doing support their social-emotional well-being and academic performance.

Key activities of this pilot include:

- Hiring a facilitator for the Corral program who is solely designated to the individualized learning pathway.
    - The facilitator acts as a coach who is especially equipped to handle academic progress and socio-emotional needs of students.
    - The facilitator meets with each student weekly to help them self-regulate their learning and socio-emotional well-being. This includes activities that focus on goal setting and providing strategies to meet those goals.
    - The facilitator supports students by teaching them strategies, including time management, focus, study, and other executive functioning skills, to be effective learners in the Corral program.
- Identify and acquire curriculum and technology, online subscriptions, and a remote learning platform.
- Foster students' sense of connection with their peers through seminars and in-person field trips, such as involvement with workplace and community partners.

EXHIBIT. RREV AWARD SUMMARY

Category	Year 1
Personal Services – Salaries and Stipend	$40,430.31
Employee Benefits	$16,615.90
Purchased Professional Services	$1,500
Other Purchased Services	$5,000
Instructional Supplies	$2,500
Technology Related Supplies	$11,250
Miscellaneous	$22,813.79
Total	**$100,000**

- **Students**: Ten students are directly involved
- **Grades**: Serves 10th–12th
- **Educators**: One teacher, the Corral facilitator, is directly involved

Responsiveness of the Pilot

Hampden Academy's Corral program is responsive to local needs and/or assets because:

- **The Corral pathway focuses on students who benefit from elements of in-person and remote learning.** With the transition to remote learning due to the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, staff noted that while some students reported being disconnected from their peers and from school in general, others thrived in the remote learning modality. With the return to in-person instruction, staff shared that some of these students experienced difficulties with an in-person instructional setting. While Hampden Academy offered an alternative education program consisting of remote learning, they did not have a program in place that offered elements of remote and in-person learning prior to the inception of the pilot. The Corral program is primarily designed to support students who have had success in the past with remote learning and aims to provide positive experiences to help these students reconnect with school, their peers, and their teachers. Students in the Corral program engage in a hybrid mix of online asynchronous courses and in-person activities, such as weekly seminars with the Corral facilitator, courses, and other in-person experiences (such as field trips, community service, and workplace activities).
- **The Corral pathway is both flexible and individualized to students' learning needs.** Hampden Academy's program is tailored to students' needs and offers flexibility for students to achieve their academic and socio-emotional goals. The pilot offers a unique blend of structure, flexibility, and in-person experiences that are tailored to students' academic and social-emotional well-being. As an example of the flexible and individualized nature of the pathway, staff noted that while most students are taking the asynchronous online courses at their own pace, one student completes asynchronous courses in a given time frame, (i.e., not self-paced). This is because, as the staff noted,

this student expressed that they needed deadlines in order to manage their schoolwork. Moreover, the program offers both in-person and digital learning, which students can choose from based on their learning goals. The Corral facilitator provides ongoing one-on-one individualized support and ensures that students are set up for success in the pathway by providing feedback on their progress and performance as well as equipping students with study strategies and self-regulated learning skills.

Innovativeness of the Pilot

Hampden Academy's Corral program is innovative because:

- **Students are entrusted with more control over what and how they learn.** The Corral facilitator provides ongoing support, including one-on-one meetings with students, encouraging them to set their learning goals, assisting them with creating their PowerSchool schedule, and leveraging existing technology (e.g., Google calendars and reminders) to manage their time and resources for the week. The facilitator also provides weekly seminars in which students are taught study strategies, time management, and other executive functioning skills necessary to be successful in the Corral. In doing so, the facilitator's goal is to empower students with necessary strategies and skills to be successful. In practice, this means students have more autonomy over what courses they take, how they choose to take these courses, how many courses they enroll in, and their learning pace. The role of the administrator is also reimagined in this setting where there is an increased emphasis on being flexible and having an open mind so students' voices are at the center of learning in the program. As such, the pilot is considered another tool in their toolbox to ensure all students have an opportunity to succeed in school.

Implementation Successes and Challenges

Staff at Hampden Academy discussed successes and challenges over the course of the Corral program:

- **The Corral was most effective for students who had succeeded in the past with remote instruction**. Support provided to students allowed them to exercise autonomy over what and how they learned, and staff shared that those students with ideal profiles—that is students who were successful in remote learning contexts—were able to thrive in the pilot. For instance, one such student was reported to be on track for graduation and was likely to graduate early.
- **In-person learning experiences increased student engagement to an extent.** The hybrid model combined remote learning with in-person activities, such as field trips at the bird preserve, and career exploration initiatives, such as a discussion about careers at the local hospital. Staff shared that although these initiatives did somewhat help increase student engagement, these experiences did not start until the latter half of the year and hence were too late to engage students in in-person learning.
- **The remote learning platform provided content at appropriate levels of rigor and catered to diverse learners.** Edgenuity, selected as Corral's remote learning platform, was appreciated by staff and students alike and will be opened to the whole school in

upcoming years, such as for students who need credit recovery, for students in the gifted program, and to provide students with opportunities to participate in courses that were previously not offered at Hampden Academy.

- **Frequent turnover at the administrative level resulted in an absence of administrative support.** The original grant writing RREV team left during the school year and the remaining staff relied on the original pilot plan submitted to the Maine Department of Education to guide their implementation of the Corral. In addition, turnover at the administration level at Hamden Academy meant that there was no continuity of leadership, with administrative oversight of the pilot changing hands multiple times throughout the school year.
- **The emphasis on increasing student recruitment led to including students who did not fit the ideal profile**. Given the slow rollout of the pilot owing to several factors, such as selecting a suitable remote learning platform and turnover, there was an effort to ramp up student recruitment to meet the pilot's goals. Furthermore, communication regarding the ideal student profile (i.e., students who thrive in remote instruction but struggle to engage in conventional in-person schooling) to those involved in the referral process was not done in a consistent manner and subsequently students for whom the pilot was not a good fit were added to the program.
- **Low parental support impacted students' participation in the Corral pathway.** Parental engagement in their students' participation in the Corral program was low, specifically for those students who struggled with the requirements of remote instruction. This was specific to those students who were not suited for the Corral pathway as they struggled with remote learning. Staff shared that there were instances where students would not log onto the platform for the day and any attempts to reach out to parents for follow-up would go unresolved. Indeed, staff shared that they faced challenges in building a strong rapport with some parents.
- **The lack of a space dedicated to the Corral pilot made it challenging for students to receive support.** There was no dedicated space for Corral students to meet and get support from their facilitator, so they had to repurpose existing spaces, such as conference rooms or study halls. Staff shared that having a space for the Corral pilot might have helped students feel more at ease about being in-person, engage more with the learning model and peers, and have more access to support from the Facilitator.

Sustainability of the Pilot

Because of the challenges faced by the Corral program this school year, a decision was made to not continue this learning model. However, staff at Hampden Academy shared ideas for improving this model in the future.

- **Students that are part of the homeschooling community may be better suited for this learning model.** Staff identified marketing the Corral program to the homeschooling community during the school year as "a missed opportunity," especially since these students are familiar with and have the necessary skills to succeed in remote instruction. By reaching out to the homeschooling community, Hampden Academy would be able to attract some families back to the school district.

- **A trained mental health professional should be available to support students.** Students who were not successful in the Corral program were recognized as being school avoidant for reasons due to significant mental health concerns. The position of the Corral facilitator is not meant to provide counseling and mental health support to students, but rather to support students in self-regulating their learning and socio-emotional well-being so that they can gain ownership of their learning. Having a trained mental health professional available to support students who struggle with traditional schooling could help expand the scope of such a learning model.

RREV School Snapshot – Harpswell Coastal Academy

Background

In June 2020, the Maine Department of Education 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 August 2021, Harpswell Coastal Academy received an award from RREV to further develop and implement their community-based learning program, Change Your World! This pilot is in the Extended Learning Opportunities category.

The goals of this pilot were to:

- Strengthen and expand community-based learning (CBL) opportunities for all students to help build connections in the community and prepare students for life after graduation.
- Support teachers in incorporating fieldwork and service learning into their curriculum.

Key activities of this pilot included:

- Hiring a CBL coordinator at the start of the 2021–22 school year to develop community partnerships, clarify fieldwork processes and expectations for teachers and students, teach a 12th-grade seminar course, and work with 11th- and 12th-grade students to build CBL into their schedules and long-term academic plans.
- Identify and improve transportation options to ensure high school students have more equitable access to off-campus learning experiences.
- Provide transportation and build community connections to expand class-based fieldwork and whole-class service projects for 5th- to 10th-grade students.

EXHIBIT. RREV AWARD SUMMARY

Category	Year 1	Year 2	Total
Personal Services – Teacher Salary	$68,000	$68,000	$136,000
Employee Benefits	$17,000	$17,000	$34,000
Purchased Professional and Technical Services	$7,000	$7,000	$14,000
Instructional Field Trip Transportation	$12,288	$12,288	$24,576
Administrative Overhead	$1,042	$1,042	$2,084
Total	**$105,330**	**$105,330**	**$210,660**

- **Students:** Two or three students conducting internships each trimester starting in December 2021 (Trimester 2 of Year 1), but all 70 middle school students and 105 high school students engaged in fieldwork or other CBL experiences

- **Grades:** Serves 5th–12th
- **Educators:** All Harpswell Coastal Academy teachers participated by incorporating field work or service learning into their curricula, including two teachers in science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics (STEAM), four in humanities, one in science, and one in math, along with one instructional technology specialist and the CBL coordinator

Responsiveness of the Pilot

Harpswell Coastal Academy's pilot was responsive to local needs and/or assets because:

- **Expanded opportunities for field work, service learning, and internships were designed to build long-lasting connections between students and the community.** The shift away from what educators referred to as a "one-off field trip model" was designed to deepen the school's pre-existing Expeditionary Learning approach for clearer links to life after graduation. More reflective and sustained engagements in the community were supported through a new seminar for students with internships, mentoring, and job shadowing opportunities integrated into the senior capstone projects.
- **The addition of a CBL coordinator and mid-day transportation for students addressed key challenges identified for Harpswell Coastal Academy's Expeditionary Learning model.** Having a staff person dedicated to developing community partnerships and securing internships eased the burden on classroom teachers and allowed for a more focused and concerted effort to link students to the right CBL opportunities. Providing transportation to internships and other off-campus placements removed a key barrier to participation for students without their own cars.

Innovativeness of the Pilot

The pilot at Harpswell Coastal Academy was innovative because:

- **Students gained access to a broader set of CBL opportunities across all subject areas.** Rather than focusing narrowly on science or STEAM-related internships, the Expeditionary Learning approach offered various options for all students. The local newspaper provided an opportunity for a student to conduct fieldwork in humanities. Examples of other community partners offering internships, job shadowing, mentoring, or other off-campus activities include the Harpswell Historical Society, Growing to Give (a farm in Brunswick), the Midcoast Humane Society, Midcoast Hunger Prevention Program, Harpswell Aging at Home, and a wildlife rehabilitator in Bowdoin.
- **Student reflection and parent involvement strengthened the connections to life after graduation.** CBL activities at all levels included a reflective journaling component for students, and seniors attended a CBL seminar and completed a capstone project that articulated how the experiences linked to longer-term plans. Parents or guardians were engaged first through requests to sign permission forms and then through commitments to provide transportation. The school provided mid-day transportation to bring students to their CBL placements, but parents were responsible for ensuring students had a ride

home. These factors were designed to increase commitment to the CBL experiences by students and their parents.

Implementation Successes and Challenges

- **Support for students was customized to serve evolving needs.** In October 2022, the Maine Charter School Commission voted not to renew Harpswell Coastal Academy's charter, so the school closed at the end of the 2022–23 school year. The role of the CBL coordinator was adjusted to not only identify CBL opportunities for students but also help them plan their transition to another academic setting or to connect them to potential employment opportunities.
- **Staff attrition caused by the impending school closure necessitated a more flexible, ad-hoc approach to addressing students' learning, socio-emotional, and transportation needs for the remainder of their time at Harpswell Coastal Academy.** Current CBL electives continued as planned, but developing new community partnerships was no longer the priority.

RREV School Snapshot – RSU 89 (Katahdin)

Background

In June 2020, the Maine Department of Education 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 August 2021, regional school unit (RSU) 89 (Katahdin) received a RREV award ($250,000) to develop their Connect, Reach & Teach Each Child with Outdoor Learning model for Pre-kindergarten (PreK)–12 students. The pilot creates new outdoor learning spaces, provides equipment, and offers professional and curriculum development support to teaching staff for both the elementary school and secondary schools. Through this innovation students, regardless of class assignment, have the opportunity to take part in outdoor learning. The pilot began implementation for all students at the elementary school during the 2021–22 school year and has expanded to include an outdoor learning elective at the secondary school level during the 2022–23 school year. This pilot is in the Outdoor Education category.

The goals of this pilot are to:

- Improve students' overall well-being and happiness at school by incorporating more opportunities for students to learn outside.
- Create outdoor spaces, including paths and classrooms and provide the gear necessary for students and staff to engage in authentic learning opportunities happening outside beyond the years of the pilot.
- Provide professional development to school to staff build confidence in science content to teach outside.

Key activities of this pilot include:

- Development of curricular units that integrate outdoor learning into education.
- Development of outdoor learning spaces at the elementary school, including the construction of trails and learning spaces. Connecting a trail from the elementary school with the high school campus.
- The procurement of outdoor equipment and gear, such as tents for high school outdoor education.
- Professional development opportunities led by consultants to engage in creating curriculum to build confidence in science content to teach science outdoors, implement brain-friendly strategies (including physical movement) to their teaching toolkit, and integrate opportunities for social-emotional learning into the school curriculum.

- Development of outdoor education course and, in the coming years, internships and apprenticeships that students may take as electives at the middle and high school after year one of the pilot.

EXHIBIT. RREV AWARD SUMMARY

Category	Year 1	Year 2	Total
Personal Services	$14,000	$14,000	$28,000
Purchased Professional & Technical Services	$75,300	$74,300	$149,600
General Supplies	$7,000	$5,400	$12,400
Property	$35,000	$25,000	$60,000
Total	**$131,300**	**$118,700**	**$250,000**

- **Students:** A total of 240 of students served, all elementary students as well as high school students enrolled in the outdoor education elective
- **Grades:** Serves PreK–5th, 11th, and 12th
- **Educators:** All elementary school teaching staff and one member of high school staff directly involved

Responsiveness of the Pilot

RSU 89 (Katahdin's) pilot is responsive to local needs and/or assets because:

- **The pilot takes advantage of local outdoor assets to support outdoor education.** Katahdin is located in a rural area with forests, streams, and mountains. It is near Baxter State Park as well as Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument. RSU 89 (Katahdin) has partnered with the Katahdin Learning Project, a place-based learning program in the Katahdin region connecting learners and land in Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument and the surrounding communities. At the elementary school level, students are able to explore the local outdoor assets through the outside-focused specials classes. At the high school level, students are able to engage with local assets through trips and guest speakers.
- **The design of the high school curriculum directly aligns with jobs in local industries.** To meet the goal of providing a pathway for outdoor learning, the pilot team has specifically worked with high school teachers to align the new outdoor curriculum with information about local industries such as forestry, outdoor leadership, outdoor recreation, or logging. The aim is to more directly align the information learned in class with the local industries. During the second year of implementation, the first high school elective included guest speakers from local organizations to discuss their work with students. In future years, this elective will expand to being an option for all four high school grades, and teachers at the middle school level will also work to expand outdoor learning opportunities in the district.
- **The pilot leverages outdoor learning spaces as an opportunity to enhance community engagement.** To build capacity to support students' physical development

with outdoor learning, RSU 89 (Katahdin) has used RREV funding to facilitate the construction of outdoor paths around the perimeter of the elementary school grounds and to develop designated "classroom" spaces along these paths. Further, a gear library ensures students have access to the materials necessary to engage in outdoor activities in all weather conditions. The pilot team has used these spaces as a means for promoting community engagement by using community connections, such as a local carpenter and welder enlisted to help develop and maintain the outdoor spaces.

Innovativeness of the Pilot

RSU 89 (Katahdin's) pilot is innovative because:

- **Its whole-child approach supports students' emotional, cognitive, and physical development**. Katahdin administrators describe their learning model as following a whole-child approach. In one interview, an administrator explained that this approach provides "support to the whole child, meaning that we are expanding from the traditional cognitive focus also to incorporate social-emotional and physical development." Katahdin educators expect that integrating all these components will improve students' mental and physical health, and, ultimately, their overall well-being. At the elementary level, the integration of restorative practices in student engagement across classes has equipped both teachers and students with the tools necessary to support social-emotional learning. At the high school level, the elective has focused on student input and being responsive to student interests and skill building rather than more formal assessments.
- **It integrates outdoor learning across entire grades (PreK–5th) and multiple content areas**. Another aspect is emphasizing integrating outdoor learning strategies throughout students' educational journeys. One of Katahdin's consultants explained that "every classroom has an outdoor space that's being designed to really work for the curriculum, that age group; and the kids seem to be really invested." This commitment is also evidenced by integrating outdoor learning strategies across multiple areas, such as science, art, music, and physical education. At the elementary level, the pilot team has ensured equitable access to outdoor learning by including special classes that teach all grades and take place entirely outside. In doing so, they ensure that all students across the elementary school benefit from regular learning outside in addition to what grade-level teachers might be providing.
- **The pilot integrates outdoor learning across levels of school culture.** The pilot team emphasized that Connect, Reach & Teach is not limited to academic subjects. The instructional coach, guidance counselor, and restorative practices coordinator at the elementary school consistently integrated outdoor learning into their work with students and teachers during the 2021–22 school year. This provided additional opportunities for students to learn outside, additional support for classroom teachers facilitating learning outside, and an overall transition in school culture to incorporate more outdoor learning into daily activities.

Implementation Successes and Challenges

- **The expansion of the pilot into a high school elective has provided more opportunities for students to be connected with learning outdoors and jobs in the outdoor industries.** In the first year of the high school class, students were able to learn about the nature around them and engage with leaders in their community. The class focused mostly on cycles of skill building as well as providing guest speakers to connect students with opportunities in the local outdoor industries. At the end of each skill building cycle, students were able to provide feedback in order to guide the trajectory of the class. This student-led approach supports both the goal of connecting students with local industries as well as supporting student social-emotional growth.
- **The pilot strengthened connections between the elementary school and high school**. The original pilot team included teachers from both the elementary school and high school levels and the pilot was designed to address needs at both levels. Though the implementation of the pilot looks different between the elementary school and high school, teachers and the pilot team have collaborated across the two schools to help build and expand outdoor learning opportunities for both elementary and high school students. In future years, the pilot will expand its reach further to include 9th and 10th grade as well as middle school students. For students at the elementary school level, this means they will continue to have opportunities to learn outside after they have already participated in the elementary school portion of the pilot. Further, this means teachers at both the elementary school and high school level can learn from one another to expand the outdoor curriculum.
- **At the elementary school level, increased class size deterred some classroom teachers from taking students outside.** In the second year of implementation, the average class size increased from 9 to 15. Members of the administration as well as teaching staff noted that larger class sizes may have impacted classroom teachers' ability to take students outside to learn. The principal of the elementary school noted that they plan to decrease the average size of classes in the coming school year, which may help classroom teachers to have the capacity to take more lessons outside.

Sustainability of the Pilot

RSU 89 (Katahdin's) strategy for sustaining the Connect, Reach & Teach Each Child with Outdoor Learning model includes:

- **Continuing to develop relationships with local organizations and community members to maintain outdoor spaces and connect students to local opportunities.** The pilot deepened the existing relationships between Katahdin schools and community organizations including Katahdin Learning Project and the Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument. Maintenance of the outdoor trail and spaces and the inclusion of guest speakers in future internships provide opportunities to invite community members into the schools. Maintaining these relationships will ensure that students will have connections to outdoor-focused community organizations beyond the years of the pilot.
- **Supporting students to pursue relevant credentials as a part of the outdoor education elective at the high school.** By expanding the high school elective course to

include certificates in outdoor related practices such as first aid and a hunter safety course, the high school not only exposes students to local outdoor opportunities but provides them with the further credentials necessary to begin pursuing employment at local outdoor oriented organizations. Offering these credentials will support the school's ability to measure outcomes, students' ability to connect with local organizations, and local organizations' ability to recruit eligible students to the local workforce. Further, one pilot team member is currently working on credentials that would allow them to facilitate classes for some of these certifications without needing to coordinate with outside organizations. This will reduce the ongoing cost for the school to find additional individuals who are capable of leading certification classes for students.

- **Maintaining a gear library to ensure that students have equitable access to learning outside throughout the seasons.** The gear library ensures that students at all grade levels have the equipment necessary to engage with learning outside regardless of family assets. Once the curriculum was designed, the pilot team asked what kinds of activities would engage students and invested in the gear that would make those opportunities possible. This not only provides more equitable opportunities for students, but allows students to access new activities through different seasons and weather conditions. Because of the investment in the materials, the gear library will be able to support students beyond the years of the pilot. Further, the school is working on establishing relationships with local organizations that could provide additional gear on an ongoing basis.
- **Investing in developing in-house talent to support the ongoing maintenance of the outdoor curriculum and on-boarding of new teachers.** Over the course of the next year, the pilot team is focused on utilizing the professional development support and curriculum development to equip current teachers and administrators with the skills necessary to use the curriculum and outdoor learning spaces beyond the years of the pilot. By investing in the creation of in-house experts, the pilot team is ensuring that the skills necessary for teaching outside will continue to be taught to new teachers and staff for years to come.

RREV School Snapshot – RSU 21 (Kennebunk)

Background

In June 2020, the Maine Department of Education 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 May 2022, regional school unit (RSU) 21 (Kennebunk) received an award from RREV to expand and strengthen its Kennebunk High School Alternative Education program. This pilot is in the Multiple Pathways category.

The goals of this pilot are to:

- Change the physical space of the existing Alternative Education program to accommodate more students and allow for project/community-based learning.
- Provide students with individualized social-emotional support and the opportunity to participate in large scale community service projects aligned to academic standards.
- Provide a targeted wellness curriculum to support all students' physical and emotional well-being.

Key activities of this pilot include:

- Hiring two educational technicians to support the needs of incoming students.
- Shifting the daily schedule of the Alternative Education Pathway to accommodate more students, staff, and work on the large-scale community project.
- Purchasing additional vehicles to allow for more flexibility to and from community project sites.

EXHIBIT. RREV AWARD SUMMARY

Category	Year 1	Year 2	Total
Personal Services – Salaries and Stipend	$90,000	–	$90,000
Employee Benefits	$30,000	–	$30,000
Instructional Supplies	$12,000	–	$12,000
Transportation	$113,000	–	$113,000
Other Items – Travel, Fees	$5,000	–	$5,000
Total	**$250,000**	–	**$250,000**

- **Students:** Eighteen students served
- **Grades:** Serves 10th–12th
- **Educators:** Two teachers directly involved, but planning to add two educational technicians

Responsiveness of the Pilot

Kennebunk High School's pilot is responsive to local needs and/or assets because:

- **All aspects of the program are a direct response to student needs**. All pilot elements, including the curriculum, house renovation project, and wellness/social-emotional learning layer have been developed based on conversations the implementation team has had with students. For example, some students are interested in entering the trades field when they graduate, so the team has developed a curriculum and partnered with local community organizations to provide students an opportunity to develop their skills to prepare them for a career in a trade.
- **The wellness curriculum encourages students to re-engage with each other during in-person learning**. When all students learned online during the pandemic, students had "Wellness Wednesday," which included individualized check-ins and encouraged students to make time for physical activity and outdoor exploration. Students and staff valued these connections, so when in-person learning resumed, the new wellness curriculum continued to implement these activities while providing direct instruction on how to bring each student's wellness back in balance. The curriculum includes standards-aligned wellness instruction that provides students with the strategies and tools they can use in their everyday lives to prioritize their mental and physical wellness.

Innovativeness of the Pilot

Kennebunk High School's pilot is innovative because:

- **Most learning and teaching occur outside of the physical school building.** One integral aspect of the Alternative Education program is that it allows students to learn, grow, and socialize outside of a traditional classroom environment. This includes daily visits to the local land trust to renovate a learning space, frequent trips to local community organizations and nature sites as part of "Wellness Wednesdays," and more overall involvements in community projects to encourage active citizenship. Learning outside the classroom provides students the opportunity to learn based on their strengths while remaining active and engaged with the local community.
- **The program gives students the opportunity to learn skills and concepts in a way that is both accessible and meaningful to them.** The curriculum that is adapted to student needs creates a unique opportunity for students to explore their interests through job shadows, business visits, internships, and other project-based learning. One member of the implementation team discussed that they have noticed how excited students are to come to school and students are finding their voice in what they are creating and the relationships they are forming within their community.

Implementation Successes and Challenges

- **The changes made to the daily schedule offered students more opportunities to grow academically, socially, and emotionally.** A common theme that emerged based on conversations with teachers, administration, students, and parents was that the Alternative Education Pathway provided students with the space to grow inside and outside of school. Therefore, the activities offered as a result of the RREV grant, including new "Wellness Wednesdays" activities and everyday trips to a local land trust, provided students with more opportunities to learn outside the traditional classroom environment. According to one parent, the Alternative Education program fostered a "sense of belonging" for their student because it helped their child recognize their "own giftedness" beyond traditional academics, athletics, or the arts. They also said the Alternative Education Pathway takes students' ideas and "expands them" so that they can recognize that they actually have good, valuable ideas that they can develop on their own. One teacher described a success story of a student with a learning disability who entered the program lacking confidence in themselves, but the interdisciplinary and project-based learning they experienced this year resulted in a "total transformation," and the student has since stepped into a leadership role for incoming students.
- **Students thrive in the tight-knit community created through the Alternative Education Pathway**. During the site visit, students were asked about what they like best about the program. Most students identified the close relationships they were able to form with each other and their teachers, describing the culture as a "family" and saying their teachers "are like parents" to them. For example, an aspect of the program involves students working with each other to renovate a house at a local land trust. Students described how this teamwork helps them learn better and that they feel a sense of accomplishment when "we're all collectively working on one thing." Another student said their favorite part of the program is that this is "not just a job" for their teachers—rather the teachers truly care about their growth and well-being.
- **Challenges faced this year included staffing, transportation, and finding a large enough space in the school to serve all the students in the program**. One goal of the RREV grant was to hire an education technician to support the program because, as one administrator described, the current need of the Alternative Education Pathway within the school community exceeds the capacity of the current staff of two full-time teachers. However, hiring staff who can connect with and respond to student needs is a process that takes time. The process for hiring shifted based on student feedback. Additionally, the program has run into challenges finding a large enough space within the school to teach all the students in the program. Purchasing vehicles to transport students from Kennebunk High School to the local land trust that they visit every day has also been a challenge. Staff noted that addressing these challenges will be a main focus in Year 2 of the grant.

Sustainability of the Pilot

Kennebunk High School's pilot model's strategy for sustainability includes:

- **Utilizing performance objective data to advocate for expansion of the program.** Collecting data on the positive outcomes will be beneficial for the long-term vision of the

Alternative Education Pathway, including acquiring more funding, establishing full-time positions, and creating sustainable spaces for students to learn beyond the 2-year pilot program.

RREV School Snapshot – Kittery

Background

In June 2020, the Maine Department of Education 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 May 2022, the Kittery School District received an award from RREV to redesign the existing Expanded Learning Opportunities (ELO) Program at Traip Academy. This pilot is in the Extended Learning Opportunities category for RREV awards.

The goals of this pilot are to:

- Expand the opportunities available to students for learning beyond traditional classroom experiences while building competencies to fulfill graduation requirements.
- Increase student understanding and engagement in solving complex social and environmental challenges facing their community.
- Enable students to explore career options and design their own pathways to postsecondary education and entrepreneurial aspirations.

Key activities of this pilot include:

- Increase ELO staffing by making the existing half-time ELO position full-time and adding support by a new part-time teacher to help implement pilot activities.
- Develop partnerships with community organizations, subject matter experts, and businesses to provide students with afterschool learning experiences, field trips, internships, summer programs, and opportunities for student projects in their areas of interest.
- Establish a new ELO elective class in which students develop hands-on minds-on learning experiences to explore their roles as marine-focused changemakers who could help to address local challenges.

EXHIBIT. RREV AWARD SUMMARY

Category	Year 1	Year 2	Total
Personal Services – Salaries and Stipends	$40,000	$40,000	$80,000
Employee Benefits	$14,000	$14,000	$28,000
Purchased Professional and Technical Services	$44,000	$44,000	$88,000
Purchased Property Services	$2,000	$2,000	$4,000
General Supplies	$13,000	$13,000	$26,000
Property (Underwater Vehicles, Life Jackets)	$10,000	$10,000	$20,000
Instructional Field Transportation	$2,000	$2,000	$4,000
Total	**$125,000**	**$125,000**	**$250,000**

- **Students:** About 10 students enrolled in the ELO Changemaker class during 2022–23, with an additional 36 students participating in other non-credit earning ELO activities. All 265 Traip Academy students have opportunities to join one-off activities and field trips conducted in collaboration with local organizations and industry professionals.
- **Grades:** Serves 7th–12th with ELO program.
- **Educators:** RREV pilot team includes the ELO coordinator and a science teacher. The administration provided support to the RREV pilot team and was actively involved in helping to recruit students to the program.

Responsiveness of the Pilot

Traip Academy's pilot is responsive to local needs and/or assets because:

- **Students explore sustainable solutions for addressing local challenges.** They learn about the maritime heritage of Kittery; the impacts of climate change; and how local fisherman, ocean farmers, entrepreneurs, scientists, nonprofits, and entrepreneurs are developing innovative products, businesses, and programs to help mitigate the impacts of climate change in Kittery, the Seacoast region, and around the state.
- **Students learn about careers tied to the local economy.** Traip Academy is located on the Piscataqua River across from the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, a major employer of the community since the 1800s. Through individual ELO pathways, students can understand better how the advancement of shipbuilding and repair at the shipyard requires the workforce to have science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) degrees. Opportunities can also be explored related to the fishing and lobster industries and local tourism.
- **An expanded ELO program can connect more students with community-based learning opportunities.** Previously, the ELO program has offered support to three or four students to develop individual learning plans through a time-consuming process. Increasing the ELO staffing is intended to enable the development of more community partnerships and support students in planning and pursuing collaboration and learning placements with local businesses, nonprofit organizations, and subject matter experts.

Innovativeness of the Pilot

Traip Academy's pilot is innovative because:

- The ELO curriculum will focus on design thinking, innovation, entrepreneurialism, and sustainability to build the next generation of Maine's leaders. Groups of students and faculty will collaborate with industry professionals to generate ideas and potential solutions to environmental, social, economic, and historic challenges facing Kittery and the broader Seacoast area. Examples of ELO ideas under exploration include work with an aquaculturist to learn about new sea farming strategies and businesses; work with Portsmouth Naval Shipyard engineers to do underwater mapping of the mooring field, kelp, and eelgrass in the river next to Traip Academy; and work with a park ranger at Fort McClary in Kittery Point to manage the influx of visitors since the pandemic.

Implementation Successes and Challenges

- **The new marine-focused Changemaker elective gained popularity between the first and second semesters, increasing from three to 10 students, and appealed both to Advanced Placement students and students who have not thrived in a traditional classroom setting**. During the course, students explored the effects of climate change and then designed a new sustainable product and marketing plan. Structured activities helped students learn about the benefits of sugar kelp for reducing ocean acidification and about existing eco-friendly approaches to address local needs, such as by making buoys out of mycelium and hemp to replace the polystyrene ones.
- **Other non-credit bearing activities to explore and address local social and environmental challenges are being piloted to gauge student interest.** Sustainable Fashion evening sessions enabled 10 students to work with professional designers and textile artists to upcycle used clothing for their personal wardrobes, with students attending eight sessions on average during the month of March. In the State of the Harbor activity planned for this summer, 24 students plan to work with the ELO coordinator, harbormaster, and community volunteers to test the use of an underwater remote operated vehicle (ROV) to survey a debris field left after a 74-foot yacht caught fire and sank. This will be a learning exercise to identify options for integrating the use of the ROV and ocean mapping activities into the school curriculum next year.
- **While the Changemaker class and other activities are supported by organizations and subject matter experts in the community, there is limited involvement by other teachers at Traip Academy.** Local rules negotiated by the Kittery Education Association prior to the start of the RREV grant dictate that any ELO activity taking place in-person during the school day must have a Unit A teacher present, a qualification not held by the current ELO coordinator.
- **Providing student-driven, experiential learning opportunities required an incremental and adaptive approach for introducing new activities.** As students developed their individual projects for the Changemaker ELO, the ELO coordinator and science teacher connected students to local subject matter experts, nonprofits, businesses, and University of New Hampshire leaders to support the development of students' interests. Opportunities for field trips or guest speakers sometimes

materialized on short notice to support student learning, and this approach created the impression of "ad hoc programming" for some students and parents. Reflecting on the experiential learning opportunities created throughout the semester will enable the RREV team to build a curriculum framework that demonstrates the power of student-driven, experiential learning and shift the impressions of students and parents currently based largely on traditional teacher-driven curriculum and learning experiences.

Sustainability of the Pilot

Traip Academy's strategy for sustaining the ELO program includes:

- **Scaling up ELO activities that gain traction in the school community.** Aside from the Changemaker class, which helps to fulfill graduation requirements for students, other RREV-supported activities such as the ROV summer session are being offered to students on a pilot basis to generate and gauge student and family interest. The RREV team will continue to introduce and expand activities throughout the 2023–24 school year to increase the support for and engagement in the ELO program. In addition, the freshman science teacher has expressed interest in joining the Changemaker ELO elective.
- **Continuing to build synergies with existing initiatives.** Examples of community partners connecting with Traip Academy students and teachers include the Rozalia Project, a nonprofit focused on cleaning and protecting the ocean; University of New Hampshire, focused on Changemaker collaboration; Cold Current Kelp, focused on aquaculture; and the Kittery Port Authority, for mapping and understanding the state of the harbor.

RREV School Snapshot – MSAD 61 (Lake Region)

Background

In June 2020, the Maine Department of Education 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 August 2022, Maine School Administrative District (MSAD) 61 (Lake Region) Middle School received an award from RREV to implement its Outdoor Learning Spaces project. This pilot is in the Outdoor Education Accelerated category.

The goals of this pilot are to:

- Foster student engagement and improve social emotional skills.
- Integrate hands-on activities and outdoor field research into the curriculum.
- Improve students' academic and behavioral outcomes.
- Reduce truancy and improve attitudes toward school.

Key activities of this pilot include:

- Build a greenhouse in collaboration with 8th-grade students by the end of the 2022–23 school year.
- Build an outdoor pavilion classroom with seating and Wi-Fi access in collaboration with carpentry students from the local high school by the end of 2023.
- Creation of a schoolwide online check-out system that lists the materials available and where they are stored, the ongoing projects in the greenhouse, and a sign-up sheet for classes wanting to use the greenhouse and/or the pavilion.
- Professional development sessions to design opportunities for schoolwide collaboration and interdisciplinary projects.
- In collaboration with an external educator expert in outdoor learning, adapting current lessons to an outdoor environment.
- Mini-lessons and presentations from the outgoing 8th-grade students to the incoming 6th-grade students.

EXHIBIT. RREV AWARD SUMMARY

Category	Year 1
Personnel Services – Salaries and Stipend	$1,200
Purchased Professional Services	$5,000
Property – Learning Site Development/Construction	$93,800
Total	**$100,000**

- **Students/Grades:** All of the approximately 434 students from 6th–8th grade
- **Educators:** Twelve teachers directly involved (English, English as a second language, sciences, social studies, math, special education, family and consumer sciences, and librarian)

Responsiveness of the Pilot

MSAD 61 (Lake Region) Middle School's pilot is responsive to local needs and/or assets because:

- **It is part of a data-based strategy that aims to improve students' engagement.** In a recent internal survey among 7th- and 8th-grade students, the school found that **"**only 10.2% indicated that they highly enjoy coming to school each day," and 18.1% of them indicated that they are "very proud" to be a member of the Lake Region school community. When asked if they would enjoy coming to school more if more if their classes were held outside, an overwhelming 81.8% of the students surveyed responded affirmatively. When asked how they learn best, the top three responses that the students gave were "hands-on activities" (85.6%), "outdoor games and activities" (72.6%), and "outdoor field research" (55.3%)." In response to the findings, the school will use the award to create new structures and systems that will build capacity for increased outdoor education.
- **It reinforces the school counselors' ongoing strategies to improve students' engagement and social-emotional skills**. In connection with the lack of engagement, the school has been experiencing a concerning increase in student truancy and disruptive behaviors. School counselors have also been overwhelmed addressing social-emotional challenges among students. The school will use the greenhouse to maintain the restorative practices that are already in place at MSAD 61 (Lake Region) Middle School to improve students' behavior and connections with the school. The project will help build collaborative skills and teamwork through experiential learning, which in turn will foster academic engagement and develop social-emotional skills. A staff member noted that the outdoor project's outcomes will extend to the staff and are intended to "improve teacher morale, recruitment, and retainment—especially in the face of the ongoing teacher shortage."

Innovativeness of the Pilot

MSAD 61 (Lake Region) Middle School's pilot is innovative because:

- **It provides opportunities and structures for schoolwide and interdisciplinary collaboration**. The project requires teachers and coordinators to rethink their approach

to teaching and learning to increasingly incorporate outdoor learning into their curriculum. This project will provide a structure for other teachers to feel more comfortable and resources to include outdoor learning in their practices. The project creates more opportunities for collaboration and curriculum alignment as well. The educators noted that some teachers work in silos. With this project, teachers will have access to training to design opportunities for schoolwide collaboration and interdisciplinary projects. As one of the educators noted, "Having a more fluid experience that's interconnected through all three grades I think is the biggest part of this innovation."

- **It transforms students into partners in the teaching and learning process**. The school not only granted students' requests for more experiential learning—which shows the school commitment to become a student-centered space— but through the project, the school made students co-responsible for the design, implementation, success, and sustainability of the project. Students are responsible for "design[ing] the layout inside the greenhouse and build[ing] the raised beds, shelves, and seating area … and harvest[ing] the food that is grown in the greenhouse," as noted in the proposal.

Implementation Successes and Challenges

- **Construction work in process**. The pavilion and greenhouse are scheduled to be finished by August 2023. This is a delay in the original timeline due to the contractor. The initial idea of having the local carpentry students involved needed to be tweaked for safety and liability concerns. Students will collaborate by building a wood table and performing other nonstructural work. Students have already measured and cut the pieces for the wood table, but the 2023–24 8th-grade students will be the ones to assemble the table and make others for the greenhouse.

- **Creation of the outdoor learning committee**. The school created an outdoor learning committee to help with the construction supervising task, and more importantly, to create an outdoor culture at school. Even though the facilities will not be finished until fall 2023, administrators and teachers created a task force to help middle school students and teachers to be ready for its use. Eleven teachers from 6th, 7th, and 8th grades create, share, and pilot learning material and other resources to help colleagues with ready-to-implement outdoor lessons plans. One of the challenges they face is how to engage teachers or subjects without a tradition of outdoor learning.

- **Students are updated on the construction progress and the outdoor learning opportunities**. To foster engagement and create expectation among students and their families, the school keeps students updated about the implementation of the pilot. One educator mentioned that the RREV pilot will create a sense of ownership and legacy among students.

- **Establishment of long-term collaboration with community partners.** Under the RREV pilot, the school established a partnership with the Lakes Environmental Association—a Maine nonprofit focused on protecting waters and watersheds—to come once a month to the school and work with 6th-grade students.

Sustainability of the Pilot

MSAD 61 (Lake Region) Middle School's pilot model's strategy for sustainability includes:

- **Partnerships.** Partnerships with local organizations, such as the Center for an Ecology Based Economy and the Lakes Environmental Association will help to bring experts from the community who can show the students how the skills they are learning in the greenhouse are applicable to the real world. Partnerships with local food pantries and businesses will help to keep the greenhouse running all year long.
- **School and district commitment**. The school's science department has already committed to allocating some of its funds to the project. To extend the benefits of the RREV pilot to other grades and schools, MSAD 61 (Lake Region) Middle School plans to start a conversation with the school district to regularly involve elementary and high school students from other schools in the RREV pilot activities.

RREV School Snapshot – (MSAD 49) Lawrence

Background

In June 2020, the Maine Department of Education 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 September 2022, Maine School Administrative District 49 (MSAD) (Lawrence) High School received an award from RREV to implement its pilot project, which has two components: the Lawrence Education Alternative Program (L.E.A.P) and the interdisciplinary Community-Focused Project-Based Learning (CFPBL) Program. This pilot is in the Multiple Pathways category.

The goals of this pilot are to:

- Support students most at-risk for not graduating.
- Create meaningful connections between students and their community to foster a sense of belonging and commitment to positive change.

Key activities of this pilot include:

- Teacher teams work with students to create authentic learning experiences in students' own communities.
- L.E.A.P. students develop an individualized learning plan that is centered on their interests.
- L.E.A.P. students complete a postsecondary plan that includes college, career, and military options; all L.E.A.P. seniors will leave with a detailed plan and connections made to specific workforce, college, or military support professionals.
- Lawrence High School cultivates relationships with numerous partners to provide workforce exposure, career workshops, financial literacy education, and internship/apprenticeship opportunities to students.

EXHIBIT. RREV AWARD SUMMARY

Category	Year 1	Year 2	Total
Personal Services – Salaries and Stipend	$33,424		
Employee Benefits	$21,576		
Purchased Professional and Technical Services	$5,000		
General Supplies	$22,500		
Property, Hardware, and Vehicles	$165,000		
Miscellaneous – Instructional Field Trips	$2,500		
Total	**$250,000**	**$0**	**$250,000**

- **Students:** Sixteen students directly involved in L.E.A.P.; over 100 students directly involved in CFPBL program
- **Grades:** Serves 10th–12th for L.E.A.P; 9th–12th for CFPBL
- **Educators:** Three teachers (one science teacher, one math teacher, and one English teacher) directly involved with L.E.A.P.; all teachers involved with CFPBL program

Responsiveness of the Pilot

Lawrence High School's pilot is responsive to local needs and/or assets because:

- **It creates alternative pathways for students most at risk for not graduating.** A substantial minority of Lawrence students (approximately 20%) are at risk for not graduating based on myriad factors, including attendance, grades, home stability, and school behaviors. Many of these students have social, emotional, and behavioral needs that regular classroom teachers have struggled to address. For some of these students, the size and expansiveness of the physical campus is a barrier to their learning; for others, the traditional model of punitive discipline has resulted in suspensions that have disrupted their schooling. L.E.A.P. addresses these barriers to graduation by creating alternative pathways that are crucial for these students to meet graduation standards and requirements, to address their social and emotional needs, and to cultivate postsecondary aspirations.
- **It provides an engaging approach to learning that is in high demand amongst the Lawrence High School student body.** According to student surveys, there is a disconnect between the type of learning some students desire and the type of learning that teachers provide. In a survey completed by students in 9th–11th grades, students were asked to rate how often their classroom lessons were engaging and interactive. The frequency average was 5.63 (the lowest of the survey). When asked how important this type of learning was to them on a similar scale (10 being most important), the average was 8.01—the second most important statement in the survey. The interdisciplinary CFPBL Program addresses this gap by creating authentic learning experiences where students will identify, understand, and work to solve problems in their own communities.

Innovativeness of the Pilot

Lawrence High School's pilot is innovative because:

- **It encourages teachers to think beyond the boundaries of the traditional education model at Lawrence.** While providing responsive educational pathways to students that are tailored to their needs and aspirations is not necessarily new to the field of education, it is a significant shift for Lawrence High School. According to the academic dean of students, the educational model at Lawrence is "mostly traditional" and this model is a significant "game-changer" for students, as it simultaneously includes a tier three intensive support program and a tier two targeted intervention program.

Implementation Successes and Challenges

- **Lawrence High School was unable to recruit for the ed tech III position for L.E.A.P.** The RREV point of contact explained that because MSAD 49 (Lawrence) didn't receive the RREV award until the end of September and its business office didn't release the funds until 3 weeks after that, they were unable to post a job announcement until October. This posed challenges for recruiting this position. However, early in program implementation, project staff realized that not having this position filled did not compromise the day-to-day operation or the broader vision for the program. Therefore, they decided to reallocate the funds for this position for purchasing a van for L.E.A.P., which would allow students to participate in off-campus projects.
- **Despite limited capacity to devote large amounts of planning time to new instructional strategies, teachers were able to facilitate novel and authentic community-based learning experiences.** For example, two CFPBL pilot projects that were completed during the 2023 academic year included an elder interview project book for a high school social studies and art class and a chicken coop project for a high school animal science class.
- **Lawrence High School created numerous community partnerships.** Lawrence High School was able to forge new partnerships from the education sector (e.g., Rural Aspirations, Jobs for Maine Graduates, Junior Achievement), the agricultural sector (e.g., Johnny's Selected Seeds, Maine Farm and Sea), higher education (Colby College, Kennebec Valley Community College), and other community partners (e.g., Hannaford grocery store, Alfond Youth Center). These partnerships have been an asset to Lawrence High School in building and maintaining both the L.E.A.P. and CFPBL programs.

Sustainability of the pilot

Lawrence High School's sustainability strategy includes:

- **Funding for L.E.A.P. in the Maine School Administrative District (MSAD) 49 budget for the 2023–24 school year.** The RREV point of contact shared that funding for L.E.A.P. was included in the annual budget referendum that town residents vote on to set the district's spending. If residents of MSAD 49 approve the budget, L.E.A.P. staff and supplies will be covered for the next school year.

- **Exploring additional funding streams and structures.** Throughout the pilot year, Lawrence High School intends to leverage community and higher education resources as well as investigate other grant opportunities and the possibility of creating a foundation or 501(c)3 organization that could serve as a funding stream for the CFPBL Program.
- **Encouraging teacher buy-in.** The academic dean of students described how teachers do not have the capacity to devote ample time to matters outside traditional classroom functions. As a result, a key source of sustainability will come from a systemic approach to change in which the teachers involved in the pilot projects share their experiences and act as mentors for their colleagues.

RREV School Snapshot – Lee Academy

Background

In June 2020, the Maine Department of Education 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 May 2022, school administrative unit, or SAU, Lee Academy received an award from RREV to implement two pathways for students. The first pathway, called ExCEL (Experience Creates Excellent Leaders), focuses on alternative education strategies for students who struggle in traditional classroom settings. The second pathway, called the Outdoor Leadership Program, offers students an immersive outdoor and environmental educational experience. This pilot is in the Multiple Pathways category.

The goals of this pilot are to:

- Help students find success in school, as community members, and in the future by providing an experiential approach to education that offers a personalized and student-centered pathway toward graduation and beyond.
- Improve attendance rates, academic achievement, graduation rates as well as setting and reaching post-graduation targets, especially for students who are at risk for not graduating.
- Develop a connection between learning and self-development to promote student wellness and personal growth.

Key activities of this pilot include:

- ExCEL pathway:
    - Students work with instructors to develop education and careers goals; learn more about career opportunities through real life experiences, such as working toward job-shadowing and internships; and creating and completing a learning plan to prepare them for careers that interest them.
    - Students are learning through hands-on experiences and developing career applicable skills while contributing to the community through service-learning projects.
- Outdoor Leadership Program pathway:
    - Students meet for a full day, every other day, to participate in an immersive outdoor-based integrated curriculum that provides students with deeper connections to their learning.

- Students participate in a series of service-learning based outdoor projects, such as trail work and community gardening, that occur both at school and with local nonprofit organizations.

EXHIBIT. RREV AWARD SUMMARY

Category	*Year 1*	Year 2	Total
Personal Services – Salaries and Stipend	$118,800.00	–	$118,800.00
Employee Benefits	$30,779.27	–	$30,779.27
Purchased Professional & Technical Services	$28,000.00	–	$28,000.00
Other Purchased Services	$4500.00	–	$4500.00
General Supplies	$25,419.84	–	$25,419.84
Property – Student Transportation Vehicles	$37,000.00	–	$37,000.00
Miscellaneous and Debt Service	$5,500.00	–	$5,500.00
Total	$250,000	–	$250,000

- **Students:** Across both programs, 21 students served
- **Grades:** Serves 10th–12th
- **Educators:** Four teachers directly involved

Responsiveness of the Pilot

Lee Academy's pilot is responsive to local needs and/or assets because:

- **The adaptive learning of the ExCEL pathway is responding to the need to help students stay engaged in class.** Schools in Northern Penobscot, Southern Aroostook, and Northern Washington counties have often struggled to meet graduation rates and maintain attendance. Coupled with the economic downturn the community has experienced over the past year as a result of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic and high rates of poverty and substance abuse, school leaders noticed that students were struggling to stay engaged in class. As one member of the implementation team put it, "When you see family members lose jobs, kids don't see a lot of hope or options for careers." In response to these challenges, school leaders wanted to focus on relationship-building to establish trust with the students and the community. By implementing an adaptive learning model—which includes exposing students to career options such as health care, food service, outdoor recreation, and trade industries through workplace visits and job shadowing—the program will develop students' interests and intrinsic motivation while contributing to the economic resilience of the community.
- **The Outdoor Leadership pathway leverages the growing outdoor industry in the community.** Lee Academy is situated in a community that offers exciting outdoor careers in the forestry, recreation, and hospitality industries. The Outdoor Leadership pathway fosters a mutually beneficial relationship between students and the community; students complete hands-on, outdoor service-learning projects that connect them with

careers opportunities while the community makes connections with the school to offer more services to the students and get them involved in the local community.

Innovativeness of the Pilot

Lee Academy's pilot is innovative because:

- **It gives students agency and responsibility over their learning.** The pilot implementation team discussed how this pilot program is unlike anything Lee Academy has offered before. One school leader described newfound excitement for learning among students, which they attributed to the new curricular model that is more tailored toward students' needs. School leaders have already begun to notice positive outcomes as a result of the programs, including increased attendance and positive feedback from teachers and community partners. Additionally, the program seeks to help students find and follow their aspirations, which includes identifying and working toward concrete goals such as filling out college applications. This program has allowed students to go out of their comfort zones to try new learning experiences, and school leaders hope to continue inspiring this excitement among students.

Implementation Successes and Challenges

- **Adaptive learning has made teachers more comfortable tailoring their curriculum to their students.** An administrator pointed out that teachers and administration have started to approach teaching and learning in a different way as a result of the ExCEL and Outdoor Leadership programs. The adaptive learning aspect of the programs, which were designed with students in mind, has also made teachers more comfortable thinking outside the box in how they view instruction and helped them understand the need and benefit of the program throughout the school.
- **The programs give students the confidence to achieve their academic goals.** An administrator discussed how students in both programs are meeting their academic and professional goals as part of the program. Many students in the Outdoor Leadership program are going on to graduate at the end of this year, and the students who are not graduating have signed up for the program next year, where they will serve as student leaders. Students in the ExCEL program, which was designed specifically for students who struggle in traditional classroom settings, have increased enrollment in post-secondary training, such as applying to local community colleges.
- **A strong relationship with their RREV coach resulted in added layers of support and guidance throughout the year.** The pilot team described how they had a particularly strong relationship with the RREV coach in supporting implementation. The main responsibilities of the coaches are to help schools develop logic models and performance objectives; however, the team described how their RREV coach also shared curriculum resources such as "photo interview" activities where students take a photo of an activity they participated in this year and answer some questions about it. The RREV coach also helped the team fill out the application for additional sustainability funds. As the pilot team described, "[our coach] seems to have this treasure trove of ideas … [they are] willing to share."

- **Staff turnover presented some challenges in terms of counseling students.** In the beginning of the school year, there was one guidance counselor at Lee Academy who focused only on students in the ExCEL program and another guidance counselor who worked with the larger student population. The counselor who worked with the larger student population left halfway through the year, which required some shifting in terms of which students the guidance counselor for ExCEL could help. However, one administrator at the school said they have a faculty member who has a counseling background, so they were able to shift them into a counseling position. School leadership described that the new counselor had a background in urban education, so they were able to add a "new perspective" to career options for students.

Sustainability of the Pilot

Lee Academy's pilot model's strategy for sustainability includes:

- **Securing additional funding by attracting surrounding district populations that do not usually attend Lee Academy**. Lee Academy plans to attract more tuition-paying students from neighboring districts and choice towns. They also intend to bring in more students who are currently home schooled, which would increase the state per-student funding.
- **Finding support through community partners**. Lee Academy hopes to raise money through philanthropy, a student-run entrepreneurial program, and contributions from key partners in the surrounding area, including local businesses. Lee Academy also hopes to partner with a local vocational school that is looking to offer outdoor education opportunities to their students to see how the schools can "dovetail" the two programs.
- **Building teacher capacity through professional development**. Lee Academy will work with key teaching staff who have experience and success working with at-risk students to design some of the details of the program and set the tone for professional expectations. This in turn will help other teachers and counseling staff to build capacity and reach a larger population of students.

RREV School Snapshot – Limestone

Background

In June 2020, the Maine Department of Education 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 September 2022, Limestone Community School received an award from RREV to implement the Limestone Outdoor Learning Program. This pilot is in the Outdoor Education category.

The goals of this pilot are to:

- Ensure all students have the opportunity to learn outside.
- Connect students more deeply with the school community and support social-emotional learning.

Key activities of this pilot include:

- Embedding outdoor learning within 90-minute science periods.
- Providing seasonally appropriate outdoor after-school opportunities.
- Purchasing the gear necessary for students to engage in both outdoor learning during school as well as during the after-school activities.

EXHIBIT. RREV AWARD SUMMARY

	Year 1
Personnel Services – Salaries	$26,000
Purchased Professional & Technical Services	$2,500
Other Purchased Services	$5,000
General Supplies	$101,500
Property	$110,000
Miscellaneous and Debt Service	$5,000
Total	**$250,000**

- **Students:** Pilot served 51 students
- **Grades:** Serves 5th–8th
- **Educators:** Two teachers directly involved

Responsiveness of the Pilot

Limestone Community School's pilot is responsive to local needs and/or assets because:

- **It focuses on seasonally appropriate, place-based activities to engage students.** Over the course of the second semester, the outdoor learning component has engaged all students as an embedded part of their science classes. Some of the activities included in the outdoor learning component were ice fishing, maple tree tapping, and working in apple orchards. In addition to the in-school component, the pilot team provided after-school activities such as ski club and mountain biking. Limestone has also been able to invest in the gear necessary to support students trying new outdoor activities through various seasons.
- **It uses after-school outdoor learning opportunities to further connect students to their school community outside of an academic setting.** By expanding the pilot scope to include after-school activities, the pilot offers outdoor engagement beyond work within the school day. Two of the goals of the pilot were to connect students more deeply with the school community and address students' social-emotional needs. After-school activities have engaged all but two students in the school at different points in the school year. These activities provide an ungraded and unstructured time to facilitate student exploration. Further, a member of the school community noted that engagement in outdoor after-school activities is a motivator for student attendance over the course of the year.

Innovativeness of the Pilot

Limestone Community School's pilot is innovative because:

- **It expands equitable access to the outdoors for all students.** Outdoor classes take place as one class session within weekly science classes with all grade levels, so that students can connect what they learn in the classroom during their science lessons to what they learn while outside. Additionally, one science class per week has been extended to 90 minutes to facilitate the outdoor learning activities. A member of the school community said that being able to participate in outdoor learning was a motivator for many students to come to school and engage with the rest of their learning.

Implementation Successes and Challenges

- **Both the in-school and after-school programs functioned as key motivators for students to both attend school and engage in appropriate behaviors.** A member of the school staff observed improved behavior among students, especially those with a history of disruptive behaviors, which she attributed to students' desire to participate in either the outdoor lesson or one of the outdoor after-school programs. Further, only two students chose not to participate in at least one of the outdoor after-school learning opportunities during the course of the second semester.
- **The timing of the RREV award meant the pilot did not begin until the second semester of the school year.** Since the pilot team received award funds during the fall semester, they made the choice to focus on building activities and obtaining gear for outdoor lessons taking place during the spring semester. As a result, students only

experienced the pilot during the second half of the school year. However, this delay provided the pilot team time to design curriculum for both the fall and spring semesters and start to strategize gear purchases.

Sustainability of the Pilot

Limestone Community School's pilot model's strategy for sustainability includes:

- **Investing in reusable gear as well as establishing a storage space will ensure the pilot team has the materials necessary for students to learn outside.** Over the summer, the school will use award funds to refurbish a building on their campus to house all of the gear purchased and associated with the outdoor learning program. Having the gear stored appropriately in a designated space to support the embedded lessons within the science curriculum and the after-school programs will help maintain the investment and materials for years to come.
- **School administration and the district have bought in to the pilot's success.** Despite the slow start to the pilot, school administration is very supportive of pilot interventions during science classes as well as after school. The school administration clearly recognized both the academic value of connecting learning standards to activities outside as well as improved student engagement and behavior over the course of the second semester. The pilot team and school administration are currently coordinating with the district to identify and secure funds for ongoing expenses such as entry fees or trips to support the pilot beyond the years of the award.

RREV School Snapshot – MSAD 59 (Madison)

Background

In June 2020, the Maine Department of Education 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 January 2023, Maine School Administrative District (MSAD) 59 (Madison) Elementary School received an award from RREV to implement its Pathways to Exploration Trail project. This pilot is in the Outdoor Education Accelerated category.

The goals of this pilot are to:

- Increase the physical, social, and emotional health of students.
- Enable more outdoor and experiential learning for all students.
- Create peer-to-peer bonds between high school students and elementary school students.

Key activities of this pilot include:

- Making the school-designated areas for outdoor learning accessible to students with mobility limitations.
- Creating and using outdoor learning spaces, including nature stations/experiences, for exploratory learning in life sciences, art, music, physical education, computer library, remediation services, and guidance counseling.
- Installing a dock system onto the wetlands to be used as an outdoor classroom space.
- Pairing school students with local high school students in the Sustainable Agriculture Program to create a mentorship program.
- Training teachers to convert lessons to outdoor experiences.

EXHIBIT. RREV AWARD SUMMARY

Category	Year 1
Personnel Services – Salaries and Stipend	$5,000
Instructional Supplies	$6,312
Property – Learning Site Development/Construction	$88,688
Total	**$100,000**

- **Students/Grades:** All pre-kindergarten (PreK)–4th-grade students served (250 students) and those in the special education program (K–6th; 15 students).
- **Educators**: Seven teachers are directly involved (physical education, occupational therapist, and life skills teachers; a fourth-grade teacher; and three kindergarten teachers) with the goal of involving the full teaching staff in the future.

Responsiveness of the Pilot

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

- **It builds on a successful and popular summer program that prioritizes outdoor learning experiences**. The school has been holding a Summer Summit Academy, which takes place outdoors and enjoys a high level of attendance. Teachers, students, and families respond positively to this unique hands-on educational experience. The school decided to extend this model and its benefits to all students during the regular academic year. For that, the terrain and other surroundings needed some improvement. The award enables the school to adapt a parcel of land and trails to make outdoor learning a possibility for all elementary-grade students according to their physical development.
- **It responds to community demand for accessible outdoor areas and experiences**. The school plans to share their outdoors with the community, whose trail system is not accessible to people with mobility handicaps.

Innovativeness of the Pilot

Madison Elementary School's pilot is innovative because:

- **It integrates physical activity into many classes beyond the physical education class**. The school identified that 34% of the school kindergarten students and 42% of the 3rd-grade students fall within the category of overweight or obese. The renovated trail system and the experiential learning activities provide students with more opportunities to be physically active during school hours.
- **It addresses the students' social and emotional needs after the COVID-19 pandemic**. The coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic restricted playing and other group activities that are typical in early elementary classrooms and foster not only mental and learning growth, but social and emotional growth as well. The school aims to

reduce stress, improve mood, boost concentration, and increase student engagement with more opportunities for outdoor learning.

- **It provides alternative teaching and learning experiences for students and teachers**. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic and the young age of the school's students, most of their experiences with schooling are strongly associated with online environments and social distance measures. This grant will make it possible for students and their teachers to create teaching and learning opportunities with a focus on hands-on experiences.

Implementation Successes and Challenges

- **Construction is progressing as planned**. Part of the trail is completed, field areas are now accessible to wheelchair users, the nature stations will be completed in summer, and the dock system is scheduled for fall, once the trail work is finished. Madison Elementary School will have the only accessible trail in the area. To reduce maintenance costs, the district and contractors are working closely to find cost-efficient materials and solutions.
- **Collaboration between different grades.** Elementary students have the chance to work with middle school age students in different science projects. One project includes collaboration in a hydroponics project with middle school students in the alternative education path. Students learn how plants can grow in liquid nutrient solutions rather than in soil. In another project, kindergarten students harvest vegetables from the high school's greenhouse to be used in cafeteria meals.
- **Learning activities for educators.** While the construction takes place, the RREV coordinator prepares staff with professional development opportunities about outdoor learning. Additionally, she visited two natural parks to gather ideas about how to transform outdoor spaces in learning stations.
- **Physical and emotional benefits are being provided for younger kids all year round**. The RREV pilot will complement the outdoor summer program already in place to counteract the reported lack of physical activity among students. The summer program was created using COVID-19 relief funds with the idea of providing kids with much-needed outdoor experiences after the pandemic isolation measures.
    - With the RREV pilot, students and families will have access to well-maintained spaces for learning and leisure. As one educator noted, because of the RREV pilot the school can guarantee that young kids benefit from being outdoors at least once a week.
    - Students who were reluctant to be outside at the beginning of the 2022–23 school year are now much more engaged and ask for more time outdoors, not only in school, but also after school with their families.

Sustainability of the Pilot

Madison Elementary School's pilot model's strategy for sustainability includes:

- **District commitment.** The district already committed funds to finish the construction projects, if needed. The district is restructuring the distribution of grades. For the 2023–

2024 year, Madison Elementary School will host students from PreK to 2nd grade and all students from kindergarten to 6th grade under the special education program. The incoming 3rd- and 4th-grade students will attend a different school.

  - The two new PreK teachers are excited about the RREV pilot.
  - The school wants to create projects and activities to continue involving the 3rd- and 4th-grade students in this pilot.
  - With the classrooms that will be available, the school plans to convert them into outdoor learning spaces to store equipment and host guest speakers and activities.
  - The school will keep working with the middle school and will start a collaboration with the high school Sustainable Agriculture Program. Among the activities discussed are the identification of the local fauna and flora to create signs, and the planting of native plants and a garden.

- **Community involvement**. With the help of private business and local organizations, the school plans to open the use and maintenance of the renovated trails and areas to the community year round. The schools will use the district website to highlight students and families' activities—with testimonials, photos, attendance logs, and other resources—to create awareness and expand the use of the spaces.

RREV School Snapshot – MeANS

Background

In June 2020, the Maine Department of Education 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 August 2022, the Maine Academy of Natural Sciences (MeANS) received an award from RREV to implement its Maker Space Barn project. This pilot is in the Outdoor Education Accelerated category.

The goals of this pilot are to:

- Reinvigorate teaching and learning practices by adding outdoor capabilities, resources, and training.
- Connect the on-campus natural resources (a 1-acre farm, two greenhouses, an apiary, and a maple sugaring shack) to daily classroom instruction.
- Increase student engagement and ownership of their learning experience.
- Create a blacksmithing program on campus that provides students with opportunities for vocational careers, certifications, and practical skills.

Key activities of this pilot include:

- Creating two new spaces for outdoor learning (with the Maker Space Barn). One will be dedicated to blacksmithing activities and the other one to food preparation and outdoor learning.
- Hiring an agriculture assistant to support the school in utilizing the school's greenhouses, outdoor classrooms, farm, and apiary.
- Redefining the curricular focus and resources by linking daily instruction with outdoor learning.
- Creating a lasting on-campus blacksmithing and metalworking program.
- Facilitating on campus, outdoor activities for the students who are in a hybrid model.

EXHIBIT. RREV AWARD SUMMARY

Category	Year 1
Personnel Services – Salaries and Stipend	$15,000
Instructional Supplies	$5,000
Property – Learning Site Development/Construction	$80,000
Total	**$100,000**

- **Students/Grades:** Serves all 9th–12th grade students (around 100 students)
- **Educators:** Thirteen to fourteen teachers are directly involved in the project (the director of curriculum and instruction, core subject teachers, the agriculture specialist, and the hired agriculture assistant)

Responsiveness of the Pilot

MeANS's pilot is responsive to local needs and/or assets because:

- **It continues the school legacy of providing project-based and outdoor learning**. The school wants to capitalize on the successful learning experiences in their experiential outdoor classes and extend them to daily instruction. Additionally, the funding and equipment donated by a local blacksmith and the assistance of a former student will help to create a lasting on-campus blacksmithing and metalworking program, which will complement the classroom projects of carpentry, woodworking, and other artisanal pursuits.
- **It responds to students' interest in receiving training in blacksmithing and metalworking.** The school used to use the local blacksmith's premises in town to provide training. After he suddenly passed away, the school needed a permanent facility to satisfy the increasing demand for this program.
- **It capitalizes on the current underused school facilities and resources.** The school has access to a 1-acre farm, a maple sugaring shack, an apiary, and two greenhouses. However, few of the teachers utilize these resources regularly in their daily instruction. The new position of the agriculture assistant will help to connect the classroom content to outdoor learning and the current school resources.

Innovativeness of the Pilot

The MeANS pilot is innovative because:

- **It extends the benefits of outdoor learning to all students, all year round.** School staff described the pilot as an opportunity to make outdoor experiences a "more viable" option and help teachers to "feel more successful in supporting meaningful outdoor education" by providing them the space and resources to bring students outdoors throughout the year.
- **It transforms a community partnership into a lasting commitment for learning.** Pilot staff observed that schools tend to be the center of—and have a significant impact

on—small communities. In this case, the legacy of work and service of a late neighbor inspired an alumnus and the school to give back by developing a new program with a significant meaning to the community.

Implementation Successes and Challenges

- **Professional development sessions for teachers have been well attended and well received.** Teachers worked collaboratively to create ready-to-use outdoor learning experiences. Under the initiative of the RREV coordinator, who is the school academic director, teachers attended 10 professional development sessions during the school year. The topics were geared to project-based learning, outdoor learning, and service learning. Teachers incorporated outdoor learning and project-based learning into the instruction and summative assessments of the quarterly projects they created for their classes. All faculty are also a part of seasonal interdisciplinary 2-week intensives that take place in October, January, March, and June, and focus on experiential learning. By the end of the 2022–23 school year, MeANS had solidified curricula and the RREV coordinator had worked one-on-one with faculty to finalize scope and sequences that align with the school mission. The goal for next year is to continue extending the pool of resources for teachers that are tailored to the specific needs of the student body.
- **The construction of the barn has taken longer than expected, but other outdoor spaces are well used.** Pilot stakeholders explained that the barn has taken longer to complete than expected due to issues with the final permitting from a property owner and the RREV project, arrangements with different construction companies, and weather requirements to advance the construction. Despite it, the barn was completed in mid-July of 2023. The barn will be furnished with blacksmithing equipment and ready to host the first on-campus class in fall of 2023. Meanwhile, the students who are in the blacksmithing and metalworking program continued commuting to the local blacksmith place in town to receive instruction. Even though the barn has taken longer than expected, other spaces—including the school's greenhouses, outdoor classrooms, the farm, and the apiary—have seen significantly more use this year than in previous years.

Sustainability of the Pilot

MeANS's pilot model's strategy for sustainability includes:

- **Establishing a solid relationship with third parties**. One of the challenges of being a charter school is that MeANS does not have a district that could back them financially. The school is actively looking for collaborations with third parties to extend their catalogue of outdoor experiences. The school already started conversations with a few of them:
    - The American Blacksmithing Association and The New England Blacksmithing Association, which will bring their expertise to provide quality training and trainers once the barn is finished.
    - A local community college to share natural resources.
    - Rural Aspirations, who will visit the school for 2 days in summer to deliver interdisciplinary outdoor learning experiences.

- **Engagement with other RREV schools**. After attending the Sustainability Symposium, the RREV coordinator is committed to start collaborations with other RREV schools to share resources and experiences. In summer, the school will share the pilot in a statewide event for educators and administrators.
- **Grant application to sustain the agricultural assistant position.** As part of the pilot, the school created a part-time position for an agriculture assistant. This specialist not only helped to create academic units but worked directly with teachers and students to implement them. The pilot staff believe that part of the program's success is having this specialist onsite. For that purpose, the school already assured the position for next year in collaboration with AmeriCorps.

RREV School Snapshot – Maine Indian Education

Background

In June 2020, the Maine Department of Education 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 May 2022, school administrative unit, or SAU, Maine Indian Education received an award from RREV to implement its pilot project, which has yet to be named in collaboration with Maine Indian Education students and the community. This pilot is in the Multiple Pathways category.

The goals of this pilot are to:

- Engage students in learning pathways that will build connections between students and their culture, community, and school.
- Connect students to ancestral knowledge systems through critical thinking and deep reflection.
- Foster the development of a strong cultural foundation and identity through daily experiences with language, history, and practices based on Wabanaki worldviews.
- Teach stewardship of land, water, and natural resources through cultural knowledge, mentorship, and project-based learning.

Key activities of this pilot include:

- Students engage in immersive project-based experiences with emphasis on cultural and real-world learning.
- A daily language and culture routine is established at each school and students are connected to daily language and cultural practices (20–30 minutes per day).
- Maine Indian Education engages community partners to ensure students have access to place-based learning opportunities that match their interests and needs.

EXHIBIT. RREV AWARD SUMMARY

Category	Year 1	Year 2	Total
Personal Services – Salaries and Stipend	$119,000		
Employee Benefits	$55,028		
Purchased Professional and Technical Services	$36,000		
Employee Travel	$5,000		
Instructional Supplies	$13,972		

Category	Year 1	Year 2	Total
Instructional Field Trip Transportation	$21,000		
Total	**$250,000**	**$0**	**$250,000**

- **Students:** Over 100 students directly involved
- **Grades:** Serves 6th–8th
- **Educators:** Nine teachers directly involved

Responsiveness of the Pilot

Maine Indian Education's pilot is responsive to local needs and/or assets because:

- **It centers Wabanaki knowledge, culture, and identity.** The coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic posed a significant barrier to school-based cultural celebrations, which historically have connected students to culture and community. Student surveys showed that students felt disconnected from their learning in school and yearned for immersive practical and cultural learning experiences, particularly those that centered Wabanaki culture and language. This pilot is responsive to these student needs by providing programming that includes an increased focus on Wabanaki culture, language, and practices as well as by creating a structure in which students can make learning choices that puts their Wabanaki knowledge, culture, and identity first.

Innovativeness of the Pilot

Maine Indian Education's pilot is innovative because:

- **It takes a decolonizing approach to education.** The historic legacies of assimilation and cultural bleaching under the guise of education for the "betterment" of Indigenous peoples has resulted in a great deal of ethnostress among American Indian/Alaska Native students today. Ethnostress can be understood as the stresses that occur when Indigenous students attempt to reposition a sense of self in a largely Western/Anglo-dominant environment while being fully aware of their historical and cultural connections and significance to Indigenous identity. According to the RREV pilot project instructional leader, Maine Indian Education students experience a degree of ethnostress in their day-to-day school lives, and this learning model is an opportunity to address this problem through balancing curricular standards and requirements with a recentering of Indigenous identity.

Implementation Successes and Challenges

- **Maine Indian Education was successful in building new community partnerships and connections.** Throughout this initial pilot year, Maine Indian Education connected with numerous local organizations, beyond those initially identified in their application for funding. A major collaborative partner this year was Wabanaki Public Health and Wellness, which has been instrumental in providing expertise with regalia making, language, Indigenous science, and outdoor education. Maine Indian Education has also

connected with local banks and local farmers to develop educational materials to educate students on the homesteading process.

- **Maine Indian Education experienced some challenges in implementing daily cultural experiences.** Maine Indian Education's original program design included daily language culture routines (20–30 minutes each morning) that were intended to connect all Maine Indian Education students to Wabanaki language and cultural practices. While Maine Indian Education was successful to a degree in implementing this program component (e.g., one of the Maine Indian Education schools implemented a morning routine in Passamaquoddy and has been consistent with daily exposure of the Passamaquoddy language throughout the school year), Maine Indian Education realized that this requires a greater level of professional development for teachers, particularly those who are not closely connected with Wabanaki language and culture. Moving forward, Maine Indian Education will continue to have teachers and staff take small steps toward realizing this vision, such as using introductions and greetings in Wabanaki languages and building from there.

RREV School Snapshot – RSU 35 (Marshwood)

Background

In June 2020, the Maine Department of Education 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 September 2022, regional school unit (RSU) 35 (Marshwood) Great Works School received an Accelerator award from RREV to implement its Great Works Ventures Outdoors. This pilot is in the Outdoor Education category.

The goals of this pilot are to:

- Increase student engagement and attendance by reducing the number of days students are absent.
- Increase social-emotional development by reducing the number of students who indicate they felt only somewhat, a little, or not understood by a person at their school.
- Increase teachers' outdoor teaching skills through professional development and community partnerships to promote more outdoor teaching.
- Increase students' eco-literacy, defined as the understanding of connections in natural systems and the development of empathy for all life, through an expansion of the current curriculum.

Key activities of this pilot include:

- Expanding the curriculum and outdoor learning opportunities offered through the Woodland and Wonder class, one of the rotating special classes offered to all students on Thursdays. This class focuses on expanding students' observation skills and understanding of ecology while engaging students in outdoor lessons and hiking activities.
- Teachers can opt into additional curriculum design support from a curriculum coach focused on outdoor education as well as additional funds to support outdoor activities such as trips or hikes.
- Engaging a nature connection coach who offers additional curriculum support and professional development to teachers who opt in.
- Providing more outdoor learning opportunities for students to participate in RSU 35 (Marshwood) Great Works School-run afterschool programs. The pilot has a particular focus on students that teachers have recommended receive additional support.

- All 4th-grade students participate in outdoor learning opportunities facilitated by the Browne Center of the University of New Hampshire for outdoor team-building activities and SEL development.

EXHIBIT. RREV AWARD SUMMARY

Category	Year 1
Personal Services	$4,046
Employee Benefits	$953
Purchased Professional & Technical Services	$24,000
General Supplies	$12,800
Property	$43,200
Miscellaneous and Debt Service	$15,000
Total	**$100,000**

- **Students:** Serves 290 students
- **Grades:** Serves 4th and 5th
- **Educators:** All teachers directly involved

Responsiveness of the Pilot

RSU 35 (Marshwood) Great Works School's pilot is responsive to local needs and/or assets because:

- **The pilot provides individually tailored opportunities for students in need of social-emotional support.** The pilot focuses on identifying gaps in social-emotional learning (SEL) and providing additional support to students in need. Using the data sources the school already has (e.g., attendance, guidance referrals, friendship/lunch group requests, and so forth) along with teacher and counselor recommendations, the pilot team has identified and specifically invited students who need additional SEL support to afterschool activities. Further, the pilot utilized an SEL survey developed by Panorama Education for use in schools. This tool collected data on student SEL. In addition, the school counselor conducted individual check-ins with students to gauge emotional well-being and connectedness to school. In doing so, the pilot has been responsive to the ongoing SEL needs of students as the year progresses.

Innovativeness of the Pilot

RSU 35 (Marshwood) Great Works School's pilot is innovative because:

- **All students in the school will participate in a common class focused on eco-literacy.** At RSU 35 (Marshwood) Great Works School every student participated in a special class called Woodland and Wonder for three class periods each semester. This class is designed to support the development of eco-literacy skills while students are engaged in outdoor nature-based instruction. Using this time, the pilot team has ensured

a degree of equity regarding outdoor learning opportunities across classrooms. The focus on the eco-literacy curriculum, the ability to understand the organization of natural systems and the processes that maintain the healthy functioning of living systems and sustain life on Earth, connects student learning directly to the outdoor spaces they are exploring as a part of this special.

- **All students in the school will participate as active citizen scientists on a project impacting Maine's ecology.** At RSU 35 (Marshwood) Great Works School every student participated in a collaboration project with the Gulf of Maine Research Institute. Students learned observation and measurement skills necessary to identify and collect data regarding the spread of the invasive hemlock woolly adelgid insect in the local preserves. These data points are uploaded to lead researchers at the institute. The focus of this work is to provide every student with the opportunity to engage in active science and practice applying skills to a local ecological problem.
- **Teachers opt into professional development as a way to promote buy-in and recognize the competing priorities of teachers.** The pilot team selected an opt-in opportunity for professional development to ensure that teaching staff would not feel overburdened by the requirement to participate in pilot professional development. Further, all teaching staff, regardless of participation in professional development, have access to the outdoor learning spaces around the school. Teachers can opt into professional development at any time during the school year. Teachers were also able to shadow the pilot team during the outdoor special and citizen science trips.
- **Students have opportunities both during the school day and after school to be involved in the pilot.** In addition to ensuring all students have the opportunity to participate in the schoolwide special class, pilot funds have been used to support access to after-school activities. The pilot team has focused this support on students identified as needing additional SEL support and to get them more engaged in the school community. Further, these after-school activities are able to utilize outdoor spaces associated with the school and pilot funds to participate in trips focused on ecology.

Implementation Successes and Challenges

- **Establishing a gear closet provided equity of access for all students to learn outside.** During the first pilot year RSU 35 (Marshwood) Great Works School established a gear closet with clothing and supplies necessary for students to engage with outdoor learning. The school ensured that gear purchased for students to wear was gender neutral. One pilot team member noted that it was essential to ensure "that the things that we purchased are things that kids would want to wear."
- **Woodland in Wonder class ensured equitable access to participating in the pilot.** Though professional development was available to all teachers, that did not necessarily directly connect with teachers taking students outside. By providing a dedicated class, the pilot team ensured all students would have the opportunity to learn outside. Providing this time along with the gear supported the goal of achieving equitable access for all students.

- **The pilot team had to overcome staffing challenges both within the school and with partner community organizations.** Establishing buy-in from teaching teams within the school was sometimes difficult, particularly when those teams were dealing with additional staffing challenges unrelated to the pilot. Teachers were able to engage with the pilot indirectly by shadowing the Woodland in Wonder trips, but they were stretched thin from other challenges and may not have engaged as fully with the professional development provided by the pilot. Additionally, a vacancy at the Great Works Regional Land Trust delayed the work between the school and the organization.
- **The pilot team used the opportunity of addressing invasive species and threats to native trees as teachable moments to help grow student understanding and investment in the pilot.** When the school found out the surrounding ash trees were starting to be infected by the emerald ash borer, the pilot team proposed involving the students and creating plans for identifying the ash trees that needed to be cut down and replanting organisms that would continue to support the ecosystem. The pilot team has leveraged student engagement to help "figure out what can we replant here" and by involving students in the planning process.

Sustainability of the Pilot

RSU 35 (Marshwood) Great Works School's strategy for sustaining its Great Works Ventures Outdoors includes:

- **Buy-in from the administration, school board, and families was essential to the success of the pilot in the first year.** One pilot team member said, "It was really interesting when we started creating our plan. I was like, 'Why do we have to have an administrator on board?' ... but without that support, I don't think we would have gotten the traction that we have." The investment from administrators allowed the pilot team to connect with the school board to gain support for the longevity of the pilot. The pilot team also engaged families through volunteering opportunities and hosted 21 volunteer family members over the course of the year. Volunteering supports the buy-in from parents and guardians as they can see firsthand the experience of students participating in Woodland and Wonder.
- **The pilot team has already begun expanding the funding sources available for maintaining outdoor learning at the school.** The school board budgeted funds to support the 4th grade to continue engaging with the Browne Center in the next school year. Additionally, another teacher received a grant to support the school's orchard growing initiative. By diversifying the sources of funds and expanding to more permanent funding sources within the district, the pilot team is ensuring that financial support is available beyond the term of the pilot.
- **Community and student volunteers help with the ongoing maintenance of outdoor spaces.** The new outdoor spaces will need to be maintained beyond the term of the pilot, so the pilot team reached out to community volunteers to participate in a Community Work Day. Maintaining the practice of finding community volunteers as well as utilizing student assistance will support the ongoing maintenance necessary for the newly established outdoor learning areas beyond the scope of the pilot.

- **Keeping accessibility in mind will ensure that students and teachers can continue using outdoor learning spaces beyond the scope of the pilot.** By considering accessibility and the Americans with Disabilities Act compliance during the pilot, the team ensures that spaces designed with accessibility in mind can continue to be used by students and teachers with diverse needs in the future.

RREV School Snapshot – RSU 9 (Mt. Blue)

Background

In June 2020, the Maine Department of Education 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 August 2021, regional school unit (RSU) 9 (Mt. Blue) High School received an award from RREV to implement its Oxbow Outdoor Pilot. This pilot is in the Outdoor Education category.

The goals of this pilot are to:

- Provide an integrated, interdisciplinary, and engaging outdoor learning experience for students to earn both high school and college credit.
- Create a system for instructing students in elements of resilience and emotional wellness.
- Leverage local natural resources and community partnerships to help prepare students for potential careers in local outdoor industries.

Key activities of this pilot include:

- **The construction of a yurt as an outdoor space to enable additional learning opportunities.** The yurt provides space for an array of different nature-based learning units as well as supporting a place for students to "unplug" from technology and traditional classroom environments.
- **Integrating training and certification in various outdoor skills.** Students have the opportunity to study for and receive certifications, such as wilderness first aid, under instruction from community partners. Students will also be empowered to actively participate in various decision-making activities and be exposed to different leadership opportunities.
- **Increasing focus on student socio-emotional wellness.** Students will learn about various strategies related to coping, resilience, and mindfulness as a part of the course. Their progress in these areas will be measured using the Partnerships in Education and Resilience (PEAR) assessment.

EXHIBIT. RREV AWARD SUMMARY

Category	Year 1	Year 2	Total
Personal Services – Salaries	$0	$28,000	$28,000
Employee Benefits	$0	$17,137.20	$17,137.20
Purchased Professional and Technical Services	$80,000	$5,000	$85,000
Other Purchased Services	$7,000	$0	$7,000
General Supplies	$2,000	$0	$2,000
Property	$110,800	$0	$110,800
Total	**$199,800**	**$50,137.20**	**$249,937.20**

- **Students:** The course is open to all students at the high school, but the class size is limited to about 25 students each semester
- **Grades:** Participation available to 9th–12th, but generally students are in 11th and 12th
- **Educators:** Two teachers are directly involved in instructing the program, but others that are qualified as Maine Guides participate in some activities throughout the year

Responsiveness of the Pilot

RSU 9 (Mt. Blue) High School's pilot is responsive to local needs and/or assets because:

- **The program takes advantage of plentiful natural resources and opportunities.** By design, the pilot utilizes the nearby woods and waterways in order to help students develop a sense of place as well as to link them to local industries, such as logging and nature tourism, in which they could utilize new skills.
- **Many community partnerships contribute to the program's success.** The pilot leverages many different community partnerships with educational organizations, recreational areas, and student service organizations to connect students with resources and promote various activities and trips. These connections supplement pilot activities and provide additional experts to assist in instruction.

Innovativeness of the Pilot

RSU 9 (Mt. Blue) High School's pilot is innovative because:

- **It utilizes the resources of both a traditional high school and a post-secondary training center.** The placement of the pilot at a campus that houses both educational institutions expands the program's reach, and allows for additional resources to be utilized as needed in various program activities.
- **The intentional focus on student socio-emotional growth includes a unique mix of curriculum content, outdoor experiences, and resiliency training.** In this way, students can be more engaged while still participating in necessary unit content via the outdoor components and gain important life skills in a setting where the instructor can monitor students' mental well-being.

Implementation Successes and Challenges

- **After months of planning and construction, the yurt is almost entirely completed and is being used for student activities.** Students played a major role in the planning and construction of the space, and with only specialized elements remaining—such as electrical work—staff are confident it will be entirely ready for the next school year.
- **The process of construction presented some challenges throughout the year.** Elements such as weather delays and obtaining permits caused some initial hurdles, and the construction did require substantial contributions from both students (during class time) and personal time (on the part of involved staff members). These contributions involved hands-on construction and material prep for the completion of the yurt.
- **Student engagement in the course has become even deeper as the course shifted to career and technical education (CTE)**. This year, the Oxbow pilot moved under the administrative umbrella of the CTE school attached to RSU 9 (Mt. Blue), resulting in longer class periods, additional budget and resources, and added flexibility in determining curricula and class activities. Student now have more time in the class, can pursue more depth in their skills and certifications, and will be able to further customize their learning as a second-year option is added in coming years.

Sustainability of the Pilot

- RSU 9 (Mt. Blue) High School's pilot model's strategy for sustainability includes ongoing relationships with community partners and the allocation of available district resources through the CTE center.
- Staff will continue to investigate different options for outdoor trips and experiences to supplement the curriculum and will provide annual summer trainings for those interested in learning about the program.

RREV School Snapshot – RSU 60 (Noble)

Background

In June 2020, the Maine Department of Education 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 August 2021, regional school unit (RSU) 60 (Noble) received an award from RREV to create a student wellness program at Noble Flexible Learning Experiences (FLEX) called Be Well Connected. This pilot is in the Online Education category.

The goals of this pilot are to:

- Provide more options to students and families to learn from home part-time while also having opportunities for in-person engagement, including field trips and participation in school-based activities.
- Provide support for the socio-emotional needs of students, while building connectedness to their peers and community through academic coursework.

Key activities of this pilot include:

- Hire Noble FLEX staff, including a remote learning director; a licensed social worker; and two learning coaches who develop project-based learning opportunities tailored to the needs, interests, and goals of each student. Noble FLEX staff also help monitor student learning and socio-emotional well-being. The funding for this is both RREV funds and Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (coronavirus disease 2019, or COVID-19) funding.
- Create a dedicated space where Noble FLEX students attend in-person activities with their peers 1–2 days per week. Noble FLEX students participate in special group classes and work on self-directed passion projects. Students also participate in whole class field trips such as the LEGO League competition and a Book Buddies program that partners with North Berwick Elementary school. The support and connections to local and regional organizations, such as the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, D.A. Hurd Library, and Primal Fit (a gym) give students an opportunity to expand their experiences and give back to the community.
- Family training occurred once a week in Year 1 via informal virtual coffee talks and tapered to a monthly basis due to parent feedback and attendance. In Year 2, meetings continued as monthly to start and then moved to every other month. At these meetings, parents could drop in to talk with other parents and staff and have any questions that came up answered. In Year 2 there have been increased opportunities for families to be

present at the yurt for both meetings and to experience what the students are working on.

EXHIBIT. RREV AWARD SUMMARY

Category	Year 1	Year 2	Total
Personal Services – Salaries and Stipend	$0	$15,424	$15,424
Employee Benefits	$0	$6,632.36	$6,632.36
Purchased Professional Education Services	$2,325	$0	$2,325
Transportation to Field Trips	$1,170	$0	$1,170
Instructional Supplies	$1,278.64	$0	$1,278.64
Property (fixed asset) Learning Space	$75,993.11	$147,176.89	223,170
Total	**$80,766.75**	**$169,233.25**	**$250,000**

- **Students:** A total of 27 students served during 2022–23
- **Grades:** Serves 5th–9th
- **Educators:** remote learning director; a licensed social worker; and two learning coaches

Responsiveness of the Pilot

RSU 60 (Noble) FLEX's pilot is responsive to local needs and/or assets because:

- **It addresses the socio-emotional needs of Noble students, especially those who felt stressed about returning to in-person learning.** Noble staff observed that even if many students struggled with remote learning during the pandemic, there were still some students for whom a return to in-person learning created anxiety and stress. These included students who experience social anxiety and students who appreciated the flexibility of remote learning. The pilot is responsive to the needs of students because it provides opportunities for them to learn remotely, while also benefiting from some in-person activities, class camaraderie, and a wellness programming.
- **It expands transition time for 9th-graders.** One of the lessons from Year 1 was that students in 8th grade were struggling with the transition into high school. Be Well Connected expanded their program to include the 9th grade to give these students extra time to access resources and develop coping strategies for continuing their educational journey into high school.

Innovativeness of the Pilot

RSU 60 (Noble) FLEX's pilot is innovative because:

- **It promotes a culture of inclusion through the use of shared space, experiences, and activities.** A key component of Be Well Connected is its intentional approach to building a culture where students empathize and support each other academically and socially. The program builds this culture through educator training on student wellness and through activities, policies, and practices that reinforce solidarity, kindness, and empathy as core values. Schoolwide in-person activities play a key role in these efforts

by promoting deep relationships between students and a sense of camaraderie and shared culture among FLEX students.

- **It incorporates a wellness component into the student's educational experience.** Many middle school students experience physical, mental, and emotional challenges that affect their learning. When in-person schooling was paused during the pandemic, the RSU 60 (Noble's) district school health coordinator noticed increasing signs of anxiety and depression, isolation, and academic struggle among many students in the district. At the same time, remote learning offered students more flexibility and independence, which was particularly beneficial to students who experienced social anxiety when attending school in person. Be Well Connected is innovative because it draws a direct connection between students' wellness and their overall educational experience through its emphasis on socio-emotional learning, stress management, and physical and mental health resources. To achieve this, Be Well Connected encourages students to practice empathy toward themselves and others, develop a sense of personal responsibility, and become "advocates for positive change." By doing so, the program integrates wellness across students' entire educational experience.
- **Students have more opportunities to exercise agency over their learning and pursue their interests through project-based learning.** The virtual aspect allows students to learn at their own pace and take classes that interest them. In addition to exercising greater control over their course content and pacing, students are also encouraged to discover their interests by working on a "passion project," which is a self-directed exploration of a topic of interest to each student, with support from their learning coach, culminating in a presentation to their peers.

Implementation Successes and Challenges

- **The completion of the yurt has strengthened the culture of the FLEX program and expanded access to outdoor spaces.** With the completion of the yurt in November 2022, the pilot team has observed a better sense of community among students compared to the previous year. Last year, FLEX students attended the program in a dedicated space within the same building as Noble Middle School, which for some students heightened a sense of difference between them and students attending school in person full time. Pilot staff observed that students felt "at home in their own space to learn, which has been really powerful" to observe. The completion of the yurt also helped students to spread out beyond the four walls to include local trails, which "has helped to better address the lifelong wellness" of the program. The yurt has also provided greater access to the local community center and additional community trails.
- **The addition of a social worker has strengthened the program's support system for students.** Hired to start at the beginning of the school year, the introduction of the social worker has allowed the program to further manage behavior plans and provide creative options and services to families and build a stronger connection. The social worker has "been like the linchpin in keeping [students] connected and helping us be creative with the ways we support them." The addition of the social worker has been "key helping with the transition [of middle school students] and giving them the support

to feel a part of the community and regroup" from bullying situations they have encountered previously.

- **In the 2022–23 school year, Be Well Connected expanded its outreach by including a 9th-grade class**. This allows students who are heading into high school—but who are not quite ready for full-time in-person instruction in a larger school environment—to transition more easily. Both the high school and middle school students will have their own yurt days next year, where they can complete work and socialize with other students in their age group, further building community and connection.
- **The program has expanded community connections.** This year students were able to volunteer at a local gym called Primal Fit that has a program for supporting adults with Parkinson's disease and a boxing class. They were also able to work with veterans at the Berwick Library. Similar to last year, the students participated in a LEGO competition and the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard for The Expo, and other students volunteered at the Special Olympics Maine for York County.
- **Finding transportation to field trips and community events has been a challenge.** One of the challenges has been transportation to the field trips and local community events. District buses can only be used during certain hours, which can be limiting. As an alternative, they have been able to use school vans from the Mary Hurd Academy.

Sustainability of the Pilot

- RSU 60 (Noble) FLEX will use Sustainability RREV funds to support the social worker and enrichment activities in the coming year. FLEX leaders are developing plans to expand to the high school level and putting plans in place for students to be able to earn graduation credits through FLEX. As part of this expansion, FLEX is in discussions with the local high school health teacher to teach health to students in 9th and 10th grades. Flex is also exploring the dual enrollment options so students can earn high school and college credits at York County Community College.
- Additionally, being right next door to the Mary Hurd Academy, an alternative high school, there will be opportunities for extended learning opportunities moving forward. This year "they were really generous with their space … we were able to go into the gym and that was really helpful this past winter." They have also allowed RSU 60 (Noble) to utilize some classroom space to spread out a little bit more.
- Going forward, FLEX will focus on maintaining consistent numbers of students. According to the assistant superintendent, continued consistent enrollment will justify the teaching position to maintain the learning coach staff. "We will continue to work with the high school leadership and guidance office to provide flexible learning paths for all district students, including those who have been part of Noble FLEX ... . The high school has other students that are doing fully remote learning and are crafting a pathway to better serve all students looking for remote learning options. From a district staffing perspective, it makes sense to keep FLEX as 5th–8th [grades] and let the high school handle the flexible learning path for 9th–12th. It will be a cooperative effort!"

RREV School Snapshot – RSU 13 Oceanside

Background

In June 2020, the Maine Department of Education 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 October 2022, regional school unit (RSU) 13 (Oceanside) High School received an award from RREV to implement its Expeditions project. This pilot is in the Outdoor Education Accelerated category.

The goals of this pilot are to:

- Facilitate connection between the students and the outdoors, students and their peers, and students and their teachers.
- Increase attendance, academic outcomes, social-emotional well-being, student engagement, and student self-ownership of their individual educational pursuits.

Key activities of this pilot include:

- Provision of training in outdoor education to designated staff to develop recurrent outdoor activities for students of focus. These activities will receive academic credit.
- Purchase of a minivan solely for the outdoor learning program.
- Purchase of hiking, camping, and other outdoor equipment and instructional supplies.
- Delivering the Wilderness First Aid certification and Junior Maine Guide certification to students.

EXHIBIT. RREV AWARD SUMMARY

Category	Year 1
Personnel Services – Salaries and Stipend	$4,000
Property (Minivan)	$30,500
Minivan Maintenance and Driver	$6,000
Instructional Supplies & Outdoor Gear	$11,500
Professional Services (Student Training)	$48,000
Total	**$100,000**

- **Students involved:** Around 13 academically at-risk students, from 9th and 10th grades who show high rates of absenteeism and are at risk of failing the requirements for graduation or promotion to the next grade.
- **Educators involved:** Two alternative education teachers, a physical education/health teacher, an English teacher, and an assistant principal, who share the goal of expanding to the school's ISP program in the spring.

Responsiveness of the Pilot

RSU 13 (Oceanside) High School's pilot is responsive to local needs and/or assets because:

- **It continues a successful initiative in place since 2018.** The special education department's behavioral program at Oceanside High School began collaborating with a third-party provider to develop and implement hands-on outdoor learning in 2018. The lessons learned allowed the school to leverage the positive outcomes and to expand it with the RREV grant.
- **School behavioral and attendance data collected reflected a high level of disengagement.** Recovering from the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic seems to be a slow and sometimes discouraging journey for the school. The school is having problems returning to the pre-COVID data and is seeing alarming rates of truancy and behavioral events among students compared with previous years. The educators from the departments involved in correcting these trends showed higher burnout. A staff member said, "In the behavior programs at Oceanside High, four out of five ed techs reported they seriously considered quitting at the end of the school year."

Innovativeness of the Pilot

RSU 13 (Oceanside) High School's pilot is innovative because:

- **It fosters cross-collaboration among teachers and staff.** The project seeks to involve different departments in a collaborative effort to address at-risk students' needs. The goal is to address students across their whole educational journey in school.
- **It brings experiential learning approaches to remedial interventions.** Shifting from the traditional remedial interventions with at-risk students, the pilot pursues a move beyond office/classroom sessions to provide students a different environment in which they can continue learning and adapting to the school norms and requirements. "We are therefore seeking innovative methods of meeting students' educational needs [in] engaging and fulfilling ways, particularly focused on the environment," noted a staff member. More specifically, the program is partnering with local people with expertise and experience implementing cultural activities.
- **Its cohort model is specifically designed to foster a sense of belonging among at-risk students.** The project aims to create a sense of belonging using the cohort model. Besides providing rich academic experiences, students and educators will collaborate to foster teamwork, team spirit, bonding, and meaningful relationships with peers and educators. The goal is to create a positive and elevated environment in which students not only can grow academically, socially, and emotionally, but where they can find a

solid and sustainable supporting network to success. As one member of the implementation team from RSU 13 (Oceanside) said, “Community-based outdoor education with an emphasis on teambuilding and skill building is an essential part of that.”

Implementation Successes and Challenges

- **Fragmented leadership delayed implementation.** While the school has already acquired the minivan, the outdoor experiences for students will have to wait until the next academic year. The staff involved in the pilot want first to establish a structure with clearer guidelines and expectations. This involves the expansion of professional development capabilities, the addition of experienced staff, and the building of trust. With changes in the RREV pilot coordination roles and at the district level, the school is reframing the pilot to fit the school’s needs and to train teachers to provide rich experiences to students of focus.

Sustainability of the Pilot

RSU 13 (Oceanside) High School’s pilot model’s strategy for sustainability includes:

- **Engaging community partners.** To relieve teachers’ already busy schedules, the school will partner with TREKKERS, an organization that specializes in social/emotional wellness, to provide mentoring activities in classrooms once a week. This organization is grounded in outdoor experiences and will create opportunities for local youth to explore the world around them at the ground level. TREKKERS will organize one outdoor trip/activity every quarter. The school wants to collaborate with experienced community partners to provide professional development activities for teachers.
- **Creating mentoring connections between high school and middle school students across the district.** One long-term aim of the project is to give high school students the opportunity to mentor and engage middle school students, which in turn, will lead middle school students to mentor elementary school students.

RREV School Snapshot – RSU 34 Old Town

Background

In June 2020, the Maine Department of Education 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 September 2022, regional school unit (RSU) 34 Old Town received an award from RREV to implement its Coyote Online Opportunity (Co-Op). This pilot is an Accelerator award in the Online Education category.

The goals of this pilot are to:

- Provide more options for students and families to learn from home full-time or in a hybrid environment, while also having opportunities for in-person engagement.
- Meet the social, emotional, and educational needs of all students in RSU 34 Old Town.

Key activities of this pilot include:

- Hiring one teacher/case manager who is directly involved in the online program, monitoring participating students' high school progression, and collaborating with middle school teachers for the one middle school student who is enrolled in the program.
- Establishing systems and structures for the program, including student identification and enrollment policies. Currently, teachers and families refer students for participation, and there is a rolling admissions policy.
- Students in 6th–8th grades use the same curriculum as their in-person learning peers. Google Classroom is used to assign and share work with students and teachers. Adjustments and accommodations are made when needed for cases of catching up after a sickness or needing additional learning on a subject. Videos and articles as well as other media are used to fill those voids for students to be able to complete tasks and meet standards. Students in 9th–12th grades use the online platform Edmentum for all remote coursework and credit recovery work. This is an online platform that has been in use at the high school level for several years. Using this same platform gives students consistency and eases transitions to Co-Op and then back to in-person learning.

EXHIBIT. RREV AWARD SUMMARY

Category	Year 1/Total
Personal Services – Salaries and Stipend	$75,941.20
Employee Benefits	$17,959.56
Purchased Professional Services	$1,500
Online Subscriptions/Internet Connectivity	$1,530
General Supplies	$3,069.24
Total	**$100,000**

- **Students:** A total of 22 students served during 2022–23
- **Grades:** Serves 8th–11th, but is available to 6th–12th

Responsiveness of the Pilot

RSU 34 Old Town's pilot is responsive to local needs and/or assets because:

- **It addresses the demand from students and families to opt in for virtual learning.** The Co-Op program emerged out of a desire to offer the option of continuing to take virtual classes post-COVID, but this was initially only for students with a medical need. The pilot allows Old Town to expand participation to other students whose families opt-in to the program because they prefer virtual learning for reasons besides physical health. Students receive individually tailored support for their academic, social, and emotional needs. When developing the pilot, Old Town sought to meet the needs of students who may have had some medical roadblocks to their educational goals. In addition to students with a medical need for online learning, there was also a desire to meet the needs of students who wanted a more accelerated learning experience and opportunities to choose courses that fit with their educational goals.

Innovativeness of the pilot

Old Town RSU #34's pilot is innovative because:

- **It builds student ownership over their education by offering them more choices about what courses they take, how quickly they progress through them, and when they complete activities.** Prior to the Co-Op program no online program existed for students. Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) shed light on the strengths of some students excelling in an online environment due to the flexibility of the classes, both in choice and in the time of day they could complete the work. The Co-Op program also expands students' choices about what courses they can take and opens up more opportunities to take classes that are of interest to them. The online platform, coupled with the individual support of the administration, guidance counselors, and the Co-Op teacher, allows students to work through the material at their own pace, accelerated in some instances, and this facilitates buy-in on their educational goals. The guidance provided by the Co-Op teacher/case manager ensures that students are taking the necessary courses along the way, while still having access to all staff at the high school. As one program stakeholder explained, "Students are no longer sitting in a class

wondering 'Why do I need this? I'm never going to use it.' " Instead, they can pursue their own interests while reaching their larger educational goals.

- **It increases students' agency over their learning as a way to build independence and self-advocacy.** The program model gives students opportunities to learn their own strengths and weaknesses and reach out as needed. The case manager's role goes beyond a traditional teaching component and involves helping students learn to ask questions and reach out for additional support when necessary. In so doing, the pilot will allow students to take greater ownership of their learning and build confidence and independence.

Implementation Successes and Challenges

- **The role of the case manager was more challenging than expected, especially because of differences between grade levels and students' expectations for subject-specific tutoring.** At the start of the school year, the role of case management was not clear. The high school students require more of a case management role, while the middle schoolers in the program need both case management and tutoring/teaching assistance. Some courses that required tutoring were in subjects beyond the expertise of the teacher/case manager, which they found "a little daunting." Part of tutoring required resource gathering, such as supplemental videos from Khan Academy or YouTube, to better explain some concepts. In addition, some students struggled to make gains at the start, so the case management part of the position was more time consuming than anticipated.

- **Middle school students needed more live teaching and tutoring than expected.** It was found that the online platform did not meet the needs of middle school students in the program due to the platform not providing grade-level content for middle schoolers. This meant that the students needed more teaching/tutoring and therein lies the challenge with the current level of staff. There has been more of a team mentality when it comes to the middle school curricula between the case manager for the program and the teachers at the middle school level. Lessons for the week are placed in the Google Classroom for the middle school students from their teachers and the case manager then pulls together lessons and individualized learning plans for the students, ensuring that grade-level standards are being met. The case manager also created Zoom lessons for students to watch, which was more time-consuming than anticipated at this level. In the next year, they hope to find a platform that will better suit the needs of middle school students, so the case management/tutoring levels will be cut back significantly to a more manageable level.

- **Banked online class modules for multiple courses for lower grades.** Throughout COVID-19, teachers in lower-level grades were able to record, save, and bank class modules for young students and this was used throughout this year when a child was sick or missed a class, and so on.

Sustainability of the Pilot

- RSU 34 Old Town's Co-Op program intends to expand their model in the coming years by partnering with other schools—Brewer Public Schools, RSU 22 (Hampden), and RSU

25 (Bucksport)—that are using a similar model for joint field trips and special guest speakers for the students. The hope is that by doing this, “kids get a sense of school and community, but in an environment that works for them,” one administrator explained. Future goals include matching the needs of students with local resources. For instance, if there is a desire to join a trade, the program would make those connections and create mentorship opportunities for the students. In other cases, Co-Op would be used as a springboard for a return to traditional learning or a hybrid learning environment to finish out a student's education.

- Challenges with the platform for middle school students have prompted some proactive activities, including the building of a repository of middle school content videos and resources. RSU 34 Old Town is still researching an online platform that would better meet the needs of middle school students' educational content; but the creation of this repository will be a backup for the future. It will supplement the online space, so that when a student misses a lecture or needs to review after the class, they can make it up later using prerecorded sessions. This will allow the case manager to get ahead of the need and provide additional resources as needed.
- In an effort to gain as much knowledge and to maintain sustainability, the leadership at RSU 34 Old Town has joined a monthly meeting that includes other local districts and is led by the staff at Brewer, to share ideas and to increase buy-in across the state. The connections and shared knowledge that comes out of these meetings can solidify the Co-Op program and create stronger community bonds and resources that will keep the program going.
- RSU 34 Old Town plans to increase buy-in from families and other educators by expanding their communications and marketing about their program in the future. Currently, they are feeling some pushback from teachers and staff who still feel that traditional in-person learning is best. Some parents have expressed that had they known about the Co-Op program, they would have liked to participate, but some staff at the regional offices are not recommending the online option or making parents aware that it is available. Other parents who already have children in the program are upset that more teachers and staff are not making other parents aware, as they want the opportunity to continue and are frustrated. Old Town staff has said that the administration is doing everything they can to get the word out and have already secured funding for the Co-Op for the 2023–24 school year.

RREV School Snapshot – Portland Public Schools

Background

In June 2020, the Maine Department of Education 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 March 2022, Portland Public Schools received an award from RREV to implement its Outdoor and Experiential Learning pilot. This pilot is in the Outdoor Education category.

The goals of this pilot are to:

- Create a coherent, integrated, standards-aligned model for how to embed Outdoor and Experiential Learning into the daily classroom experience.
- Transform the current classroom-based summer credit recovery model for high school students into a dynamic, experiential, and outdoor learning intensive experience.

Key activities of this pilot include:

- Extending and deepening Outdoor and Experiential Learning within the district through curriculum integration, environmental literacy practices, and teacher capacity building. A cohort of pre-kindergarten (PreK)–8 teachers will spend a year designing and implementing units of study that integrate outdoor and experiential components, as well as content related to local indigenous tribes, into a standards-aligned curriculum.
- Gathering a group of teachers to assist in planning and delivering a 1-week credit recovery experience for students in 9th–12 grades who need to earn credit from courses required for graduation.

EXHIBIT. RREV AWARD SUMMARY

Category	Year 1	Year 2	Total
Personal Services – Salaries and Employee Services	$58,420	$17,160	$75,580
Purchased Professional and Technical Services	$90,000	$0	$90,000
Purchased Property Services	$2,000	$2,000	$4,000
Other Purchased Services	$11,500	1,000	$12,500
General Supplies	$45,000	$29,000	$74,000
Property	$0	$0	$0
Miscellaneous	$5,000	$15,000	$21,000
Total	**$211,920**	**$38,060**	**$249,980**

- **Students:** About 6,700 students across Kindergarten (K)–12th grade will be able to participate in outdoor and experiential learning once the pilot model is fully integrated. Students in K–8th grade will be able to participate in outdoor learning through their normal classroom instruction and students in 9th–12th grades who need summer credit recovery are eligible to participate in the Credit Recovery Experience (in the 2021–22 school year, 53 students needed credit recovery in the district).
- **Grades:** K–8th grade will integrate outdoor and experiential learning; 9th–12th grades will be able to utilize the summer credit recovery experience.
- **Educators:** Cohorts for developing both the experiential learning model as well as the credit recovery experience will be made up of multiple Portland Public Schools teachers and led by a cohort lead.

Responsiveness of the Pilot

Portland Public Schools' pilot is responsive to local needs and/or assets because:

- **It builds on the district's ongoing initiatives to support outdoor learning.** Parallel to the RREV grant, Portland Public Schools has invested significant funds and effort into developing their outdoor infrastructure, including the hiring of a full-time outdoor education coordinator and the construction of 156 outdoor classroom spaces at 17 campuses in 2020 with district funds. The units of study the RREV-supported cohort of teachers are creating will help Portland Public Schools get the most from its investments in infrastructure for outdoor education.
- **Outdoor learning addresses the local educational and socio-emotional needs of students post-pandemic.** Creating a safe space and supportive model for student engagement is intended to help support students' mental health, which has been a priority in the district, especially since the pandemic. In particular, the pilot is responsive to students who have struggled in a traditional classroom.

Innovativeness of the Pilot

Portland Public Schools' pilot is innovative because:

- **It brings outdoor learning to some of the most urban and most diverse schools in the state.** Portland Public Schools' pilot shows that schools can implement outdoor learning activities—even in an urban environment. The pilot is helping teachers and school leaders think creatively about how to use their campuses for outdoor activities, especially in ways that engage students from a variety of backgrounds and experiences being outside.
- **It provides local teachers the opportunity to build capacity in implementing outdoor education while allowing them to be full contributors to the model they will be implementing.** Teachers engaged in these planning and development cohorts will be trained and supported in a way that builds their capacity to engage in the model in addition to ensuring that the model meets the needs of local teachers. This will also assist in building buy-in across the district for when the models are ready to be implemented at various campuses.

- **It uses a place-based approach to environmental literacy.** Portland Public Schools' pilot integrates aspects of local history as well as the culture of Indigenous tribes in the area. This place-based approach is intended to help students gain a greater understanding for the cultural heritage of the area they live while learning core curricular concepts through an environmentally-focused lens.

Implementation Successes and Challenges

- **As outdoor education is being spread to additional campuses and integrated into more classes, pilot staff are seeing additional buy-in from leadership and staff throughout the district.** This support has led to additional excitement and has assisted in the involvement of additional teachers with supportive campus leaders.
- **The pilot experienced some challenges with district leadership turnover and community response to the overall district push toward outdoor learning.** Though not solely focused on the pilot's implementation, some of these difficulties facing the district as a whole added additional obstacles to the first year of implementation. From anecdotal accounts, some members of the community disagree with investment in outdoor education and prefer the traditional model of school rather than an emphasis on environmental sustainability and connection.
- **As most RREV awardees represent single campuses, or sometimes two or three, the implementation of the grant across a large district presented its own challenges.** Trying to coordinate across multiple schools and coordinate data collection and other aspects of the grant can be challenging among a single district supervisor's other responsibilities.

Sustainability of the Pilot

- Portland Public Schools' pilot model's strategy for sustainability includes leveraging local funds that have been secured for ongoing outdoor education activities. Portland Public Schools intentionally designed this grant to cover primarily the one-time startup costs for establishing their outdoor models, such as outdoor learning supplies and teacher professional development for creating outdoor learning units.
- Once the models are developed, training and capacity building will take place in connection with local professional development and any related position salaries are already being covered by district funds.

RREV School Snapshot – RSU 20 (Searsport)

Background

In June 2020, the Maine Department of Education 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 May 2022, regional school unit (RSU) 20 (Searsport) District Middle High School received an award from RREV to implement its Viking Longhouse pilot. This pilot is in the Outdoor Education category.

The goals of this pilot are to:

- Create a culture of connection and inclusion for all students and staff.
- Provide relevant and meaningful educational experiences by developing authentic and engaging curriculum and instruction that incorporates experiential education and utilizes the new longhouse outdoor educational facility.
- Enhance community connections for regular involvement in educational interactions through volunteer opportunities, service learning projects and internships.

Key activities of this pilot include:

- **The construction of the longhouse building to serve as an outdoor classroom.** The space will also be used for various service-learning projects and promote opportunities for engagement in class content outside of the traditional classroom environment.
- **Training teachers and staff in experiential learning**. The pilot supports a new position—the experiential learning and community outreach coordinator—who will act as an in-house facilitator, working with staff to integrate experiential education into their curriculum. Teachers will also participate in professional development to further deepen their understanding of experiential education, service learning, and project-based learning.

EXHIBIT. RREV AWARD SUMMARY

Category	Year 1	Year 2	Total
Personal Services – Salaries	$56,101.50	$0	$56,101.50
Employee Benefits	$11,898.50	$0	$11,898.50
Purchased Professional and Technical Services	$17,0000	$0	$17,0000
General Supplies	$30,000	$0	$30,000
Property	$120,000	$0	$120,000
Miscellaneous and Debt Services	$15,000	$0	$15,000
Total	**$250,000**	**$0**	**$250,000**

- **Students:** The pilot serves the entire student body of 250 students
- **Grades:** Serves 6th–12th
- **Educators:** The experiential learning and community outreach coordinator will be available to assist all teachers in experiential education curriculum development and implementation as well as arranging logistics for experiential units

Responsiveness of the Pilot

RSU 20 (Searsport) District Middle High 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.** The pilot provides new and ongoing opportunities for school staff to collaborate with community organizations, such as Coastal Mountains Land Trust and Kieve Wavus Education, and learn from their knowledge and expertise.
- **Outdoor learning addresses mental health challenges local educators observed among students emerging from the pandemic.** The pilot team described a need for a safe space and supportive model for students struggling with mental health issues, which they observed were more common since the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. In particular, the pilot team expressed a need for additional engagement opportunities for students who may be struggling in traditional classroom settings.

Innovativeness of the Pilot

RSU 20 (Searsport) District Middle High School's pilot is innovative because:

- **It invites teachers to share their knowledge and lived experience in the planning, implementation, and dissemination of outdoor learning units.** The pilot team described a bottom-up, participatory approach for engaging teachers in ways that integrate their expertise and build more authentic buy-in across the school community. In contrast to programs where teachers receive professional development to implement an externally developed model or intervention, Searsport teachers were engaged in planning and developing outdoor-related units from the beginning. The pilot team expects this approach will also assist in building buy-in across the campus for when the models are implemented across more subject areas.
- **The project integrates community participation and support into their educational practice.** The pilot includes community participation in the design and implementation of the new longhouse facility, allowing them to learn about and support the school's new initiatives. Additionally, students engage in service-learning activities to further connect them to their community and provide additional engagement opportunities.

Implementation Successes and Challenges

- **The time commitment for building relationships between the outdoor learning coordinator and teachers across the district was greater than expected.** As the point person for outdoor learning across the entire district, and as a new staff member,

the outdoor learning coordinator sought to build relationships with teachers, students, and families across many schools. During the first year of pilot implementation, teachers' busy schedules sometimes made it difficult to form strong connections.

- **The pilot has led to students being able to attend more field trips and engage in additional learning opportunities.** During the first year, the pilot has enabled Searsport students to attend additional field trips compared to previous years. The pilot has led to the integration of field trips into the curriculum and schedule and—by adding in a smaller van that teachers could drive themselves—has presented opportunities to address logistical issues, such as driver shortages, that were previously prohibitive.

Sustainability of the Pilot

- RSU 20 (Searsport) District Middle High School's pilot model's strategy for sustainability includes a focus on integrating new teaching practices and enhancing community involvement through the temporary coordinator position created by award funds. This position would only last a year but would be focused on implementing practices and making connections that would not require a specific coordinator after award funding ends. All other purchases are generally one-time expenses and maintenance will be covered by normal district funds.
- Plans now involve scaling the pilot to include the nearby elementary school, effectively doubling the population of focus, and spreading the potential costs across the district in order to both expand impacts and reduce the burden on local operating budgets. Because of the proximity of the elementary school, students will be able to utilize new outdoor learning spaces without additional construction costs. Pilot staff are also working to solidify partnerships with local organizations, such as the Coastal Mountains Land Trust, to assist in funding future programming.

RREV School Snapshot – RSU 73 (Spruce Mtn.)

Background

In June 2020, the Maine Department of Education 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 August 2022, regional school unit (RSU) 73 (Spruce Mtn.) Elementary School received an award from RREV to implement its Nature Ed project. This pilot is in the Outdoor Education Accelerated category.

The goals of this pilot are:

- To address students' truancy and behavioral issues, and teacher engagement needs of the school.
- To increase teachers' confidence in planning and executing outdoor education lessons.

Key activities of this pilot include:

- Creating a library of standards-based lessons, units, and projects focused on the outdoors for teachers to use in their science, social studies, reading, writing, and math classes.
- Providing teachers with appropriate professional development on outdoor learning.
- Building two small greenhouses that serve as outdoor classrooms.
- To have all students and teachers in at least one outdoor learning experience in 2022–23.

EXHIBIT. RREV AWARD SUMMARY

Category	Year 1
Personnel Services – Salaries and Stipend	$1,000
Professional Development	$6,000
Instructional Supplies	$4,000
Outdoor gear	$29,000
Property – Learning Site Development/Construction	$60,000
Total	**$100,000**

- **Students**: All of the approximately 311 students from 3rd, 4th, and 5th grades

- **Educators**: Six educators are directly involved (three teachers from 4th grade, the principal, and the school social worker)

Responsiveness of the Pilot

RSU 73 (Spruce Mtn.) Elementary School's pilot is responsive to local needs and/or assets because:

- **It aligns with the school culture**. In the last few years, different teachers have implemented diverse initiatives to integrate outdoor learning into students' experiences, such as Fun Fridays and the Kids Winter Games. Some teachers received training and implemented an outdoor education program with 4th-grade students. However, these efforts have been either temporary or impacted only specific classes. The school already has two rustic outdoor classrooms and access to a swamp, forests, and trails. The school expects this award will unify efforts, add sustainability, and overcome identified barriers by teachers to implement an outdoor program, such as "materials, lesson plan ideas that integrate with standards, differentiating for different learning styles, and space" as cited in the proposal.
- **It addresses concerns raised by students.** The school regularly distributes a social and emotional survey among students. Its findings and internal data showed that out of the 600 behavior incidents in the 2021–22 school year, the majority happened in the classroom and were overwhelmingly related to failure to follow directions and off-task behavior; the number of truant students increased by 140% over the past 3 years; and 19% of students have an extremely elevated risk of behavioral and emotional problems.

Innovativeness of the Pilot

RSU 73 (Spruce Mtn.) Elementary School's pilot is innovative because:

- **It is an effort to institutionalize good practices**. The project will help to institutionalize outdoor learning and experiential practices across the school, expanding them to all grades, and sustaining the positive outcomes of outdoor experiences for elementary students. When teachers asked 4th-grade students to write persuasively about how nature's education has been important to their education, they wrote: "We learn how to work together and how to be independent," "Nature Ed calms me down," and "Nature Ed is the best thing that happens in my week."

Implementation Successes and Challenges

- **Teachers are creating an outdoor learning culture.** Teachers from 3rd and 4th grades already created several lesson units to implement outdoors. These educators are leading the effort to engage the rest of their colleagues and staff. The social worker is already using outdoor experiences in interventions. For next year, the goal is to expand the pool of resources and find ways to compensate teachers for their time and effort in curriculum development tasks.

  - Peer-to-peer mentorships: Teachers from 4th grade are assuming leadership positions and partnering with teachers from other grades to advance the development of the outdoor curriculum. The 3rd-grade teachers are now able to work independently.
  - Student engagement: Interdisciplinary outdoor experiences are impacting students. Students in 4th grade, for example, are using the science outdoor activities as inspiration for their writing assignments in the English Arts class. Teachers reported that students are showing awareness about environmental issues.

- **Construction contractors are determined to help**. The school initially planned to build one large greenhouse. The concrete contractor donated the labor, which allowed more room in the budget for construction. While completing the district-mandated quote process, the school found a second builder who could offer two smaller buildings for the price initially planned for one. The planning team agreed this would allow the school to broaden the outdoor education offerings by making one of the buildings a full greenhouse, and the second building an outdoor learning center. Construction is expected to finish in fall 2023.
- **Addressing special education needs is difficult**. Around 30% of the student body qualifies for special education services. The special education teachers need additional help to meet the strict learning requirements of this student subpopulation while being outdoors.

Sustainability of the Pilot

RSU 73 (Spruce Mtn.) Elementary School's strategy to sustain the pilot model includes:

- **Partnerships with the community**. Through their stipend position, the coordinator—and leadership team—will work with community partners and access grant opportunities to replenish supplies and improve materials. Currently, they are talking with the Healthy Community Coalition to offer some classes to the community in the greenhouses, and to provide an outdoor curriculum expert to help teachers create lessons. To increase the public's awareness and support of the pilot and to expand the pool of community organizations interested in collaborating, the school uses social media to share news about the RREV project, which was highlighted in a local newspaper.
- **Collaboration with the school district**. The proximity with the high school eases collaboration. Part of the RREV pilot includes the maintenance of the trails that connect both schools and the creation of common learning stations. The high school created a chaga farm (a type of mushroom), which allowed learning moments with the Spruce Mountain Elementary students. At the end of the school year, students displayed the RREV project in an activity to which parents, representatives from the district board of education, local newspapers, and other community members are invited.

RREV School Snapshot – St. George Public Schools

Background

In June 2020, the Maine Department of Education 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 August 2021, St. George Public Schools received an award from RREV to implement its pilot—which combines career and technical education (CTE) with hands-on projects—the CTE/Makerspace Initiative. This pilot is in the Multiple Pathways category.

The goals of this pilot are to:

- Introduce all students to new ideas, career opportunities, and ways of learning.
- Expand access to CTE by developing a pre-kindergarten (PreK)–8th grade curriculum that can be shared with other schools or districts.
- Allow all students to engage in hands-on/minds-on projects and develop technical, creative thinking, and social-emotional skills.
- Strengthen the local economy by providing CTE programming to students and adult residents to meet existing labor force needs and create the businesses and industries of the future.
- Provide a model for other communities to re-engage students in learning and promote rural economic development.

Key activities of this pilot include:

- Development of a curriculum scope and sequence to extend hands-on/minds-on technical education opportunities to all students in PreK–8th grade.
- Students use a range of abilities and creativity to demonstrate successful learning through hands-on educational opportunities not previously available to them. For example, students engage in CTE activities (3D printing, laser cutting, and so on) and attend a science, technology, engineering, arts, and math (STEAM) class once per week to participate in hands-on, kinesthetic learning.
- Each class visits, or is visited by, a local business or contractor working in the trades or technical fields at least once per year.
- Construction of a CTE/Makerspace Building that has a shop space for boatbuilding, woodworking, and metal work as well as a Makerspace with 3D printers, laser cutters, CNC routers, robotics, and sewing machines; and a showcase gallery area for students to work together and display their work.

EXHIBIT. RREV AWARD SUMMARY

Category	Year 1	Year 2	Total
Personal Services – Salaries and Stipend		$12,000	
Purchased Professional Services			
Instructional Supplies			
Property – Learning Site Development/Construction		$238,000	
Miscellaneous – Field Trip Transportation			
Total	**$0**	**$250,000**	**$250,000**

- **Students:** There are 210 students directly involved
- **Grades:** Serves PreK–8th
- **Educators:** Thirty teachers directly involved

Responsiveness of the Pilot

St. George Public Schools' pilot is responsive to local needs and/or assets because:

- **It is integrated into the local community.** St. George Public Schools convened a community working group of 20-plus individuals (including teachers, administrators, other school staff, parents, local contractors, and small business owners) to inform the development of their CTE programming.14 This input is reflected in several aspects of the program, including its emphasis on helping students develop employable skills that are in demand locally (e.g., town, region, state). The technical skills and innovative thinking students can learn through the PreK–8 CTE program at St. George and the high school courses at Mid-Coast School of Technology (MCST) are intended to prepare them for jobs in their local community. The skills they develop—from woodworking to welding, from computer programming to operating a CNC router—are in high demand and necessary to the economic resilience of the community.
- **Programming is made available to the broader community.** St. George Public Schools recognizes that there is a need for CTE training not just among students, but also for the larger community. St. George will meet this need when the CTE/Makerspace Building is completed by providing adult education programming as well as "open shop" times for community members interested in learning traditional trades, woodworking, and other CTE skills.

Innovativeness of the Pilot

The St. George Public Schools pilot is innovative because:

- **It provides CTE across all grade levels, including students younger than those traditionally served by these programs.** CTE programs have generally been offered to

[14] This working group continues to advise St. George Public Schools and provide ongoing input for the project.

students in higher grades, so St. George Public Schools program is innovative because it extends CTE programming to students starting in PreK. Moreover, St. George's partnership with MCST provides a pathway for CTE opportunities throughout a student's entire PreK–12th grade experience.

- **It promotes new ways to demonstrate learning.** The pilot provides new opportunities for students to demonstrate learning compared to traditional assessments or writing assignments. Specifically, the CTE program will allow students to use a range of abilities and creativity to demonstrate successful learning through hands-on educational opportunities not currently available to them. For example, a St. George Public Schools administrator explained that instead of taking a written test on water quality, students could build a probe to monitor the salinity and temperature of the marsh next to the school.

Implementation Successes and Challenges

- **St. George Public Schools finished the draft of the CTE PreK–8 curriculum scope and sequence.** This is a particularly noteworthy implementation success because St. George did not have a curriculum model or template to provide guidance. St. George Public Schools teachers worked for a full year to develop a draft outline of the CTE PreK–8 curriculum scope and sequence.
- **Twenty-eight new partnerships have been created.** St. George Public Schools has forged new partnerships with 28 private businesses to help support hands-on learning in the classroom. For example, 1st-grade students were visited by a local general contractor who showed students how to use hand tools. The students learned how to work with hammers, screwdrivers, safety glasses, and work gloves, and built their own birdhouses and wooden toolboxes.
- **The cost of the CTE/Makerspace construction has been an ongoing challenge**. Construction costs have been higher than anticipated, in part because of the lack of local residents working in the trades fields. The average time for construction has increased because locally there is a shortage of electricians, plumbers, welders, fabricators, and other tradespeople to do the work. As noted in the sustainability section below, St. George Public Schools has initiated fundraising efforts to help meet the expense of construction, and has also redesigned the CTE/Makerspace Building, reducing construction costs by over $500,000. The construction project went out for bid in July 2023 and construction of the CTE/Makerspace Building is scheduled to begin in spring of 2024.

Sustainability of the Pilot

St. George Public Schools' sustainability strategy includes:

- **Situating the CTE/Makerspace Building as a place for innovation and supporting the whole community.** Administrators at the school reported that they intend for the CTE/Makerspace Building to serve as an economic development and resource center for the larger community. Administrators at the school further explained that they

envision the CTE/Makerspace Building as being a resource for developing tools and resources that are not commercially available.

- **Private fundraising efforts to offset higher-than-anticipated construction costs.** St. George Public Schools has initiated private fundraising efforts to cover construction costs through grants, private donations, business sponsorships, and fundraisers. Due to higher-than-expected construction costs, St. George is continuing its fundraising effort and working to find ways to reduce costs while remaining true to the pilot vision. Any money raised beyond what is needed for construction costs will go to support CTE programming. St. George started a summer celebration fundraising event in summer of 2022 and held the event again in August 2023. Thus far, St. George has raised over $1.9 million; of this, about $1 million was donated by approximately 100 individual donors.
- **A working group will continue to advise on the project long-term.** St. George Public Schools started a CTE/Makerspace working group consisting of staff, community, and business owners who will continue leading and advising the project past the RREV funding period.

RREV School Snapshot – RSU 44 (Telstar)

Background

In June 2020, the Maine Department of Education 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 March 2022, regional school district (RSU) 44 (Telstar) High School received an award from RREV to implement the Local Ecology and Aspirations Pathway (LEAP). This pilot is in the Extended Learning Opportunities (ELO) category.

The goals of this pilot are to:

- Provide a more experiential, interdisciplinary, and community-based curriculum that increases student engagement by applying traditional academic concepts to a real-world context.
- Empower students as change agents for sustainable community development by fostering a collaborative innovation mindset among students, teachers, and community partners for tackling local challenges and building on local assets.
- Create sustained connections between the community and the high school curriculum to support responsive education that prepares students for local opportunities and challenges.

Key activities of this pilot include:

- Linking science and social studies courses to the local economy and history by having the ELO coordinator and department chairs develop a sequence of alternative core courses for students in 10th–12th grades that include an experiential focus, opportunities for off-campus independent projects, and potential internships and work placements.
- Engaging students directly in the design and construction of eco-friendly learning spaces through LEAP classes and internships, including:
    - Having a contractor work directly with students to construct an outdoor pavilion for use as a community hub and outdoor classroom, with building decisions informed through a design challenge process built into LEAP science classes.
    - Renovating the sugar shack on campus as part of the industrial arts curriculum.
    - Engaging a landscaper as a community partner to advise students on greenhouse and garden design and to ensure the natural flow of water from the wetlands surrounding the Telstar school complex.
- Scheduling field trips to community venues and guest speakers for school visits to build stronger awareness across the Telstar complex (6th–12th grades) about community needs and opportunities.

EXHIBIT. RREV AWARD SUMMARY

Category	Year 1	Year 2	Total
Personal Services – Salaries and Stipends	$0	$2,500	$2,500
Employee Benefits	$0	$500	$500
Purchased Professional and Technical Services	$0	$26,000	$26,000
General Supplies	$0	$55,000	$55,000
Property	$0	$160,000	$160,000
Technology Related Hardware	$0	$6,000	$6,000
Total	**$0**	**$250,000**	**$250,000**

- **Students:** About 45 students served during 2022–23 by the LEAP core courses, including one social studies and one ecology class. However, all 185 Telstar High School students have opportunities to participate through the internship component, field trips, and guest speaker events.
- **Grades:** Serves 10th–12th grades with LEAP core courses; serves 9th–12th grades with internship component, field trips, and guest speakers.
- **Educators:** LEAP team includes one history teacher, one science teacher, and the ELO coordinator.

Responsiveness of the Pilot

Telstar High School's pilot is responsive to local needs and/or assets because:

- **Students learn about careers tied to the local economy.** The curriculum draws on community partnerships and connections with local businesses to increase awareness of local opportunities and challenges. Participation by Irving Forest Products Sawmill and the Maine Forestry Collaborative help students explore forestry careers. Interactions with land conservation groups through field trips and speaker visits teach ecology concepts. Hands-on experience constructing the outdoor pavilion cultivates interest in building practices, with at least one student now seeking an internship and exploring college programs related to post and beam construction.
- **Continuity in experiential, hands-on learning is now available to students following their immersion in the Telstar Freshman Academy.** A partnership between University of Maine 4-H Camp and Learning Center at Bryant Pond and Maine School Administrative District (MSAD) 44 launched the experiential Testar Freshman Academy for 9th-graders in 2015, but the options for students in 10th–12th grades have been limited mostly to a more traditional academic experience.
- **Learning activities leverage local natural resources to teach relevant skills for addressing local community needs.** For example, a functioning sugar shack will allow students to tap the maple trees throughout the Telstar complex and develop entrepreneurship skills by producing and marketing maple products. Designing eco-friendly structures such as the outdoor pavilion and greenhouse relies on an

understanding of wetland conditions and requirements to allow for the natural flow of water through the environment.

Innovativeness of the Pilot

Telstar High School's pilot is innovative because:

- **Learning is interdisciplinary exploration of academic concepts in real-world contexts.** Core social studies and ecology classes focus on the local economy and history. Hands-on activities are comprehensive. For example, students will be engaged in all phases of building the outdoor pavilion, including planning the design, identifying what materials are needed, applying for permits, and participating in construction activities.
- **The student-driven curriculum empowers students.** Students are creating learning spaces and opportunities to address their own learning needs and aspirations. In designing the outdoor pavilion, students opted for scaled-down technology, rejecting the proposed television screens to create the community space they wanted. They can also opt in and out of the LEAP curriculum throughout high school to participate in other Telstar pathways when desired.
- **Students discuss their aspirations with their parents.** The nontraditional curriculum with field trips and internships requires parents to be involved. Parents must approve their kids' LEAP schedules, increasing the likelihood of conversations at home about learning. An increasing number of events are planned to engage parents in the LEAP experience, particularly through using the new outdoor space for community events such as community theater, evening fire pits, and other gatherings.

Implementation Successes and Challenges

- **The student-driven design process generated a sense of ownership among students and motivation to engage in LEAP activities.** Students in the design class surveyed the student body (9th–12th grades) to explore preferences for place-based learning and inform the design of the outdoor learning spaces. They also had a facilitated conversation with a code enforcement officer and interaction with local builders to create a holistic vision for the outdoor pavilion that included partial walls to create a sense of openness, raised garden beds, and an outdoor pizza oven that could be used during community gatherings.
- **LEAP has increased student engagement and effectively serves students with diverse interests in a rural setting.** The pathway helps students explore connections between the local economy, environment, and cultural practices. One unit in the new integrated learning curriculum focused on nearby Rumford as a mill town and the power of the Androscoggin River, with student teams collecting data and generating a series of "then and now" maps focused on one of four local industries (logging, agriculture, fishing, tourism). Teachers noted that students who had failed in a traditional classroom setting flourished with project-based learning, "doing fantastic work" and "getting great grades."

- **Construction of the outdoor learning space is proceeding on a delayed schedule.** Deciding where to place the pavilion fueled a prolonged debate given trade-offs between access and safety with the envisioned immersion in the natural environment on the 50-acre school campus away from road noises. The budget for removing a portable classroom on the chosen site was set too low at first, requiring three rounds of bidding. The pavilion will be constructed during the summer to be ready for the 2023–24 school year, and a planned survey of students in the fall will be designed to facilitate renewed enthusiasm and engagement in the stalled process for implementing outdoor learning activities.

Sustainability of the Pilot

Telstar High School's strategy for sustaining LEAP includes:

- **Engaging the local community to help maintain the new and improved structures.** The RREV award is being used largely for investing in physical structures and professional services rather than in recurring expenses. The limited need for supplies can be addressed through the regular school budget process, and community volunteers could help maintain the outdoor pavilion, sugar shack, and greenhouse. Planning is underway to reinstate the Annual Contractor Day—canceled by the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic—in which local community members are invited to volunteer their time and resources one Saturday to complete a list of projects including painting, renovation, landscaping, and other tasks.
- **Leveraging other partnerships and funding sources to support a long-term shift toward more integrated, place-based learning.** Teachers and administrators alike commented that the RREV funding cannot be transformative as a "flash in the pan" effort and must instead complement other new and ongoing ventures. Some of the related initiatives at Telstar High School to strengthen place-based learning in a rural setting include the separately funded Extended Learning Opportunity (ELO) program, the Portrait of a Graduate process with the Western Maine Educational Collaborative, and Telstar's 7 Peaks Program that started with GEAR UP support in 2018 to foster postsecondary opportunities and aspirations for students and now offers programming in 6th–12th grades.
- **Fostering a culture change across the Telstar campus.** The RREV award helped to start a process for the whole school community to be innovative in reshaping programming to match better the needs of the students and the local ecosystem and economy. An all-staff workshop was scheduled for the end of June to continue building this interdisciplinary vision, to understand how the different initiatives fit together, and to plan the professional development strategy for the next year. In addition, the current K–12 principal, who is the RREV point of contact, will begin serving as the MSAD 44 superintendent of schools effective July 1, 2023, and expects to continue building support for the LEAP pathway in this expanded leadership role.

RREV School Snapshot – Wayfinder Schools

Background

In June 2020, the Maine Department of Education 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 September 2022, Wayfinder Schools received an award from RREV to implement its pilot Passages Responsive Education Project (PREP). This pilot is in the Multiple Pathways category.

The goals of this pilot are to:

- Provide individualized instruction to youth involved in the justice system.
- Expand the Wayfinder School PREP model to Hancock County.
- Increase high school retention and graduation rates for all students in the service region through outdoor education, arts education, and career exploration activities.

Key activities of this pilot include:

- Individualized, student-centered, strengths-based education provided in students' own homes.
- Increased focus on arts, outdoor education, and career and technical education by connecting students with opportunities in their communities.
- Weekly in-person and online connections with Wayfinder Schools staff to build relational trust and improved learning engagement.

EXHIBIT. RREV AWARD SUMMARY

Category	Year 1	Year 2	Total
Personnel Services – Salaries and Stipend	$112,500	–	$112,500
Employee Benefits	$27,089	–	$27,089
Purchased Professional Services	$7,000	–	$7,000
Purchased Property Services	$1,000	–	$1,000
Other Purchased Services	$14,000	–	$14,000
General Supplies	$12,911	–	$12,911
Property	$62,500	–	$62,500
Miscellaneous – Administrative Staff Time	$13,000	–	$13,000
Total	**$250,000**	–	**$250,000**

- **Students:** Sixty-five students served, ages 14–22
- **Educators:** Eight teachers directly involved

Responsiveness of the Pilot

Wayfinder Schools' pilot is responsive to local needs and/or assets because:

- **It builds the resilience of students by creating community connections**. One integral aspect of Wayfinder Schools' PREP project is providing support to court-involved youth through mentoring supports and other community connections. For example, students are taught how to make doctor's appointments, open bank accounts, budget their money, and give back through community service. Learning these skills while making real life connections with the community is intended to increase students' chances of success after graduation. Additionally, Wayfinder Schools hopes to build relationships with businesses in the area who may employ program participants after graduation.

Innovativeness of the Pilot

Wayfinder Schools' pilot is innovative because:

- **It centers each student's lived experience.** Roughly 90% of Wayfinder students live at or below the poverty line. Therefore, having the means and materials to pursue their interests does not always come easily. As a result, Wayfinder intentionally designed its core curriculum to allow students to pursue their specific interests. By traveling to student homes for instruction, teachers are offering individualized instruction while serving as a caring and trusted mentor in students' lives.
- **It is planning to partner with local land trusts, businesses, and arts organizations to include outdoor activities, career exploration, and arts integration.** The implementation team at Wayfinder Schools discussed how one goal of the pilot is to instill lifelong learning by connecting students to outdoor, career, and arts resources in their own communities across the state so they can utilize them beyond school. As for outdoors, one team member said the program will "allow kids to see how easy it is to be outdoors." Activities will include hiking, museum visits, and worksite tours. Wayfinder will increase their collaboration with organizations such as the Center for Maine Contemporary Art and 317 Main Community Music Center, as well as with local land trusts and businesses.

Implementation Successes and Challenges

- **Wayfinder Schools was able to successfully implement two key projects for their students.** One activity in their pilot project was to offer students increased focus on arts, outdoor education, and career and technical education. Wayfinder staff described two programs—a community development workshop and a "Lullaby Project"—as major successes this year. The community development workshop, which was put on through the Center for Maine Contemporary Arts, offered students monthly arts integration activities in the community. One staff member said that students "on a monthly basis wanted to keep going back to that." The other program, the Lullaby Project, offered

students with children the opportunity to partner with professional musicians to create their own songs. This year, the Lullaby Project was expanded to include youth without children to create a personal song.

- **Hiring new teachers presented a challenge.** Wayfinder Schools staff planned to hire two new teachers using RREV funds: one full-time teacher and one part-time teacher. However, similar to other school districts throughout the state, a teacher shortage resulted in very few applicants for these positions. Despite this shortage, Wayfinder staff were very pleased with the way in which current teachers and staff were able to step up and fill any gaps. Looking into next year, Wayfinder staff are hoping to hire a coordinator to assist with implementation of the program.
- **Building relationships with justice system resources.** The PREP leaders have spent the year meeting with groups connected to the Maine Department of Corrections, Maine Department of Health and Human Services, and the Maine Department of Labor to explain the project and to build connections with the other systems in supporting system-involved youth.

Sustainability of the Pilot

Wayfinder Schools' pilot model's strategy for sustainability includes:

- **Expand the donor pool to secure more funding for the program.** The implementation team discussed how Wayfinder Schools recently received multi-year grants from the Onion Foundation and the Sewall Foundation to increase their focus on arts education and support their expansion into Hancock County. They are also planning to apply for additional foundation grants throughout the school year as well as to spread the word about the program through press releases to help expand the donor pool and support for the program.
- **Exploring the possibility of changing the designation of Wayfinder Schools to a Special Purpose Private School.** According to Wayfinder staff, being a Special Purpose Private School would create an easier path for public schools to partner with them in supporting students who continue to struggle in public school.