

RREV School Snapshot – Bonny Eagle (MSAD 6)

Background

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

Pilot Description

In May 2022, Bonny Eagle (MSAD 6) received an award from RREV to implement its pilot, *Innovative Transitions Pathway* (ITP), which is in the Online Learning category.

The goals of this pilot are to:

- Provide flexible pathway option that is connected to The Learning Center (TLC), an alternate education program for high school students at Bonny Eagle, for Grade 8 and 9 students for whom conventional in-person mode of learning is not a good fit.
- Provide learning experiences in a hybrid setting as a bridge to allow students in the ITP to graduate with their cohort.
- Re-engage students who are disconnected from schools and may be considered chronically absent by supporting their social-emotional wellbeing and learning experiences in dual modalities (i.e., remote and in-person experiences).

Key activities of this pilot include:

- Create a hybrid curriculum that mirrors the standards-based curriculum followed by TLC.
- Identify or recruit an additional teacher for TLC to increase capacity and support instruction for the ITP.
- Plan for professional development focused on incorporating effective instructional strategies in an online synchronous environment to TLC teachers engaged in the remote pathway.
- Three days a week, students attend virtual synchronous instruction with TLC teachers in a traditional block schedule.
- For two days a week, students attend in-person instruction with the focus on the development of students' executive functioning skill, such as strategies for effective notetaking, managing anxiety and time management. Students also have opportunities to participate in numerous in-person experiential learning activities with their TLC peers, including field and service trips, and team building activities.

Exhibit: RREV Award Summary

Category	Year 1
Personal Services – Salaries and Stipend	\$46,920
Employee Benefits	\$25,337
Purchased Professional & Technical Services	\$4,000
Online Subscriptions	\$13,000
Other Purchased Services	\$3,000
Instructional Supplies	\$4,743
Miscellaneous (Costs for instructional field trip transportation & parent nights)	\$3,000
Total	\$100,000

- 8 students currently enrolled with 2 more on hold – A maximum capacity of 10 students
- Serves Grades 8 and 9
- 1 social worker
- 4 TLC subject teachers

Responsiveness of the pilot

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

- **It addresses the specific learning needs of disconnected Grade 8 and 9 students as they transition to higher grades.** The pandemic put a spotlight on issues pertaining to chronic absenteeism and truancy where some students in Bonny Eagle were struggling to adapt to the conventional in-person learning modality. Staff noted that there were many reasons for some students being disconnected from school resulting in chronic absenteeism and/or truancy. One such reason includes being averse to school with some students experiencing anxiety stemming from COVID-19 pandemic, bullying experiences, or other sources. While Bonny Eagle houses a robust alternative education program, The Learning Center (TLC), it is open to high school students. Staff noted that there was no alternative education model in place offered to Grade 8 students before the inception of the pilot. Furthermore, there is a waitlist at TLC with higher grades being prioritized. The Innovative Transitions Pathway offers an opportunity for Bonny Eagle to increase their capacity to better address Grades 8 and 9 students' underlying reasons for chronic absenteeism.
- **Students receive individualized support and meaningful learning experiences through a mix of in-person and remote learning options tailored for students with chronic absenteeism.** The Innovative Learning Pathway endeavors to create opportunities for students who struggle in in-person instructional contexts, especially students who demonstrate chronic absenteeism and truancy, to reengage with school. The remote pathway aims to do this by offering activities that focus on social emotional wellbeing and developing executive functioning skills during one in-person learning day a week. The second in-person learning day focuses on providing students opportunities to interact with their peers and instructors at TLC through field and service trips and team building activities. Additionally, the pilot's virtual learning sessions are synchronous, which allows teachers to provide immediate support and scaffolding as needed, allowing for structure. Moreover, staff shared that while students in the ITP attend virtual courses in a traditional block schedule, there is some degree of autonomy where students are entrusted to complete their schoolwork independently.

Innovativeness of the pilot

Bonny Eagle's pilot is innovative because:

- **Its unique learning model includes activities and supports designed to help students form connections with their peers, teachers, and student community.** Bonny Eagle's Innovative Transition Pathway combines both remote learning and in-person instruction to offer a hybrid learning experience that was previously not available to students. The pilot is primarily designed to support students who experience chronic absenteeism and truancy with the aim of providing positive learning experiences to help them reconnect with school. This is done by leveraging the time dedicated for in-person learning to focus on promoting social emotional wellbeing and mental health through activities to develop their executive functioning skills with their social worker, creating opportunities for students to interact with their TLC teachers and peers, and experiences with experiential learning activities, such as field trips and service trips.
- **It offers a pathway designed to target at-risk students early.** Currently the alternative education pathway in place at Bonny Eagle, i.e., the TLC, tends to focus on providing high school students with opportunities for credit recovery so that they can graduate in a timely manner. The pilot pathway is designed to target disengaged students early, specifically from Grades 8 and 9, to prevent them from falling through the cracks. That is, by catching students early, it gives them more time to catch up with their peers and avoids any spinoffs that arise from being disengaged in school or chronic absenteeism. In the long term, with more opportunities to catch up academically with their peers, Bonny Eagle can offer those students more opportunities in their later years, such as career and technical education.
- **Students and their families have more flexibility for choosing their pathway to graduation.** Upon recommendations from parents, teachers, counselors and administrators, students are identified to be a part of Bonny Eagle's Innovative Transition Pathway based on their grades, attendance, and data from the MTSS screener. Once students are selected, parents can either opt in or choose not to be a part of the pilot. Once enrolled in the *Innovative Transition Pathway*, the pathway is intended to be flexible where students begin or end participation in the learning model at the end of the trimester after consideration from relevant staff and their parents. Should students and their families find that the remote pathway is not a good fit for them, they can opt out and join the regular classroom with their respective cohort.

Sustainability of the pilot

Bonny Eagle's strategy for sustaining its pilot model is twofold and includes:

- **Leveraging support from district-level staff.** The district and school leaders are supportive of providing an alternative education model for Grades 8 and 9 students, especially considering there was no offering prior to the inception of the pilot and that it may increase graduation rates in MSAD 6. To this end, Bonny Eagle intends to capitalize on this support to sustain efforts of the pilot with the goal being to eventually increase capacity to serve more students in future years.
- **Identify supplemental funding sources from local avenues.** Staff noted that the main challenge to sustaining the pilot is ensuring there is adequate budget to support the hybrid modality of the remote pathway; key program costs include subscription services and technologies along with the staffing of the pathway. Crucial to this is to identify additional sources of funding at the

district level that would continue to be available at the culmination of the RREV award year that could be used to continue to offer the pilot.