



Rethinking Responsive Education Ventures (RREV)

Background

Rethinking Responsive Education Ventures (RREV) is funded by a \$16.9 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education's Rethink K–12 Education Models program and is intended to promote innovation in Maine schools so that all students across the state have access to high-quality and responsive learning opportunities. Since August 2021, over 40 school districts throughout Maine have been awarded federal funding from RREV to support innovative education pilot projects.



Attributes of Innovative Education Programs

RREV awards empower schools to develop and implement innovative educational programs. Based on three years of implementing and evaluating RREV, we have identified the following four key attributes of innovation:

1. **An emphasis on local context**, meaning programs are responsive to specific local needs, leverage local assets, and reflect the ideas, priorities, and lived experiences of the educators, students, and families at participating schools.
2. **Openness to new approaches and a commitment to continuous improvement** using principles of design thinking, which is a problem-solving approach that involves iterative creation, testing, and improvement based on feedback and/or changing circumstances.
3. **Programming that centers the whole child**, meaning teaching and learning consider the unique needs, interests, and styles of the specific students involved, including their mental, emotional, and physical wellness.
4. **A collaborative spirit**, meaning educators, students, and families feel comfortable and willing to share feedback with each other and reflect on and respond constructively to feedback they receive.

Innovation In Action: The Pilot Models



Multiple Pathways programs offer students more options and routes to complete their high school education and pursue career goals, especially in ways that align with specific industries in high demand. Participating students have access to rigorous academics, career technical education, work- and project-based learning, and supportive services that guide their innovative learning.



Extended Learning Opportunities (ELO) programs provide hands-on credit-bearing experiences for students outside of the traditional classroom, with an emphasis on community-based career exploration. Participating students have opportunities to develop college, career, and life skills through new interdisciplinary curricula for place-based learning and through internships, job shadowing, work-study, and field trips.



Online Learning programs are an alternative education pathway that offer students more options than 100% conventional in-person schooling. Participating students have more autonomy over the pace and content of their lessons, and many online programs also include in-person components, such as field trips and community service, to strengthen students' social-emotional skills and sense of community.



Outdoor education programs use nontraditional learning spaces—including woods and waterways near schools and community partners—in diverse ways to support student learning. Participating students have the opportunity to develop and showcase their skills outside the traditional classroom environment while improving their social-emotional wellness by being surrounded by nature.

“This teaching experience has shown me that just focusing on academics, as I did in the past, does not help my students increase in self efficacy and reach their full potential. It is important to nurture and empower the whole child, and provide opportunities that foster growth in mind, body, and soul.”

~ RREV Teacher