



Rethinking Responsive Education Ventures

Pilot Point of Contact Survey



Prepared by ICF for the Maine Department of Education

September 2024

Background

In April 2024, ICF surveyed Rethinking Responsive Education Ventures (RREV) pilot teams with questions about the following topics:

- Experiences implementing RREV pilots
- Sustainability of pilots
- Recommendations for sustaining RREV pilots and supporting innovation
- Experiences with RREV coaching
- Recommendations for RREV coaching

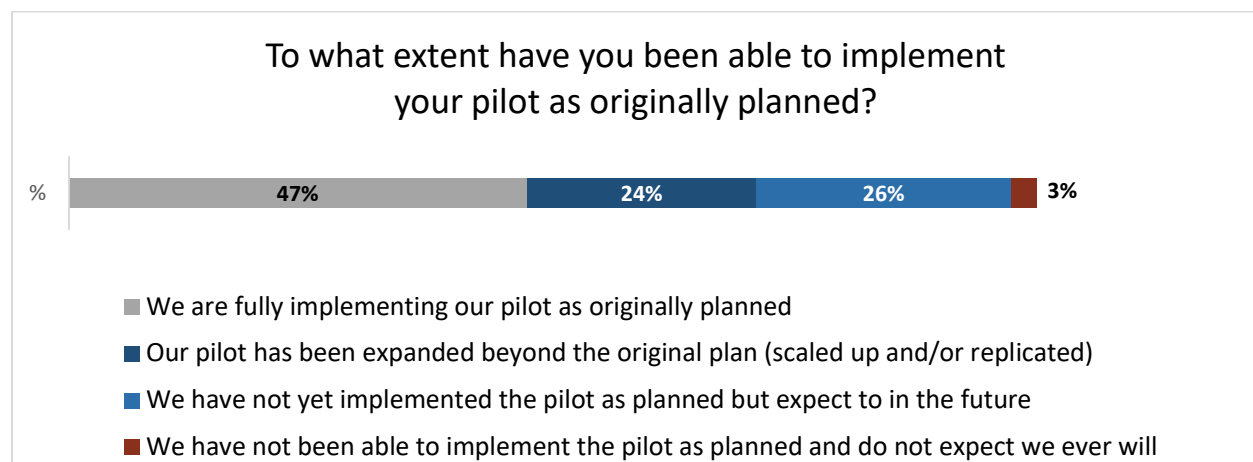
Pilot teams were encouraged to complete the survey as a group so that their responses reflected experiences and perspectives of their school as a whole.¹ The survey response rate at the pilot level was 95%.

Findings

RREV Implementation Experience

Almost three-quarters of the pilots (71%) indicated they are either fully implementing their pilots as planned or have expanded beyond their original plan, while roughly a quarter (26%) have not yet implemented the pilot as planned but expect to in the future (Exhibit 1). Only one school indicated they have not been able to implement the pilot as planned and do not expect they ever will.

EXHIBIT 1. PILOT IMPLEMENTATION (N=38)



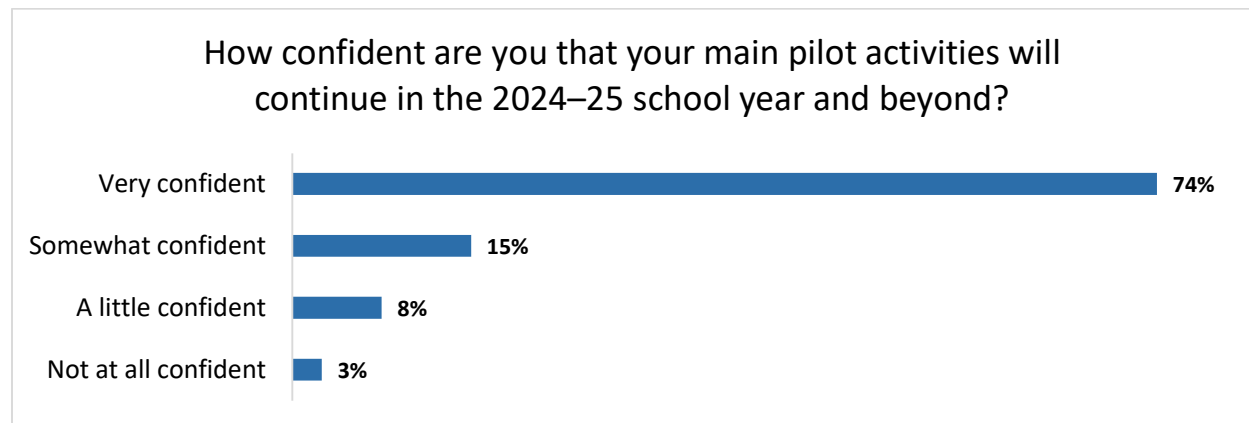
Pilots that indicated they have expanded beyond the original plan (24%) described how they had done so. Some examples of how pilots have expanded include:

¹ There were six schools from which more than one individual submitted separate survey responses. In these cases, ICF treated the primary point of contact as the representative from the pilot team in closed-ended questions but included all individual responses in our analysis of open-ended comments. Some pilots did not respond to certain questions, so we report the number of responses (n) on a question-by-question basis.

- Extended outdoor experiences to staff by offering a stipend to participate in weekly wellness professional learning
- Created an edible schoolyard space around existing greenhouse
- Expanded program from one school to districtwide
- Scaled to create a Learning Lab that includes community members
- Expanded interest in programming from one content area in middle school to additional content areas, as well as high school and elementary school

Almost all pilots expressed confidence their innovative model would continue even after their RREV award funding ceased. Respondents were asked to rate their confidence that their main pilot activities would continue in 2024–25 and beyond (Exhibit 2). Nearly three-quarters of respondents (74%) were very confident that activities would continue, and another 15% were somewhat confident. Fewer respondents were a little confident (8%) their pilot activities would continue next year, and only one school (3%) did not expect to continue their innovative model next year.

EXHIBIT 2. LEVEL OF CONFIDENCE IN PILOT CONTINUING (N=39)



The most important factor in supporting the implementation of RREV pilots was commitment from school or district administrators to the pilot. Respondents were asked to consider how different factors helped support the implementation of their pilot (Exhibit 3). Almost all respondents said commitment from school or district administrators helped them implement their pilot, including 82% who said this helped them a great deal and 13% who said it helped a little. Nearly two-thirds of respondents (61%) said that community partnerships to provide learning opportunities related to the pilot helped their pilots a great deal. Half of respondents indicated that community partnerships to provide equipment or learning spaces for the pilot supported implementation a great deal.

The least influential factors for supporting pilot implementation include EnGiNE, incentives for teachers to participate in pilot activities, and credit or eligibility policy changes related to the pilot. (See the [Appendix](#) for respondents' explanations of factors that helped support their pilot implementation "a great deal.")

EXHIBIT 3. HOW MUCH VARIOUS FACTORS HELPED SUPPORT PILOT IMPLEMENTATION²

Factor	A great deal	A little	Not at all	Not relevant
Commitment from school or district administrator to the pilot	82%	13%	5%	0
Community partnerships to provide learning opportunities related to the pilot	61%	32%	8%	0
Community partnerships to provide equipment or learning spaces for the pilot	50%	32%	16%	3%
Support from your RREV coach	47%	39%	11%	3%
Community partnerships to help maintain property or equipment for the pilot	39%	26%	21%	13%
New teaching or staff positions	39%	24%	11%	26%
Professional development related to the pilot	37%	55%	8%	0
School schedule changes for the pilot	29%	16%	18%	37%
Funding support through the regular school budget	26%	37%	21%	16%
Innovative Mindset Pilot Development (IMPD) session	19%	49%	16%	16%
Transportation made available through complementary funding	18%	11%	37%	34%
Credit or eligibility policy changes related to the pilot	16%	18%	16%	50%
Incentives for teachers to participate in pilot activities	8%	66%	16%	11%
EnGiNE online hub	0	42%	50%	8%

The most commonly identified challenges for sustainability were lack of continued funding and staff turnover:

- **15 respondents** selected lack of funding to continue supporting key personnel positions

² Thirty-eight respondents replied to each of the factors listed except for Innovative Mindset Pilot Development (IMPD) session (n=37).

- **14 respondents** selected turnover of key personnel with institutional memory of pilot design and activities
- **11 respondents** selected restrictive school schedule or policies that limit program activities
- **9 respondents** selected lack of teacher interest to participate in pilot programming

Other challenges noted by respondents are listed in the Appendix. These included inadequate transportation, inadequate engagement or buy-in from administrators, lack of student interest, inadequate professional development, inadequate facilities or spaces to carry out programming, inadequate curriculum for building students' competencies, not enough community partners providing opportunities for students, limited equipment or supplies, and lack of parent support.

Respondents were asked to rate their overall satisfaction with the professional development opportunities available to support their RREV pilots. More than half (56%) of respondents were very satisfied with the opportunities, whereas 38% were somewhat satisfied and 5% were not at all satisfied.

Sustainability

There were 23 pilot teams who indicated on the survey that they had sought a sustainability award. These respondents were asked about the effects of the award (Exhibit 4).

Pilot teams found the sustainability award most helpful for understanding sustainability challenges, developing a realistic sustainability plan, and planning their budget. Over three-quarters of respondents (78%) indicated that participating in the sustainability award and Sustainability Symposium helped them understand challenges to the pilot's sustainability plan a great deal. Approximately three-quarters of respondents (74%) answered that sustainability activities helped a great deal to develop a realistic sustainability plan, and 70% thought they could find essential budget expenditures and resources needed to sustain their pilot after participation.

Sustainability award activities seemed to have the least impact around making academic policy changes related to scheduling, credits, or eligibility, with only 17% of respondents saying the activities helped a great deal.

EXHIBIT 4. EFFECTS OF SUSTAINABILITY SYMPOSIUM

Effects of the Sustainability Symposium	A great deal	A little	Not at all
Understand challenges to the pilot's sustainability plan (n=23)	78%	17%	4%
Develop a realistic sustainability plan (n=23)	74%	26%	0%
Define essential budget expenditures and resources needed to sustain pilot (n=23)	70%	26%	4%

Effects of the Sustainability Symposium	A great deal	A little	Not at all
Collaborate with colleagues in other schools and share knowledge on how to promote sustainability (n=23)	48%	43%	9%
Establish community partnerships (n=23)	48%	26%	26%
Use data to assess program outcomes (n=23)	43%	57%	0%
Involve key decision-makers in planning sustainability (n=23)	39%	52%	9%
Integrate essential expenditures into the annual budget (n=23)	39%	35%	26%
Help replicate or scale the pilot (n=22)	32%	55%	14%
Identify new funding to sustain the pilot (n=23)	26%	61%	13%
Identify non-financial resources (professional development opportunities, equipment donations, etc.) (n=23)	22%	52%	26%
Develop dissemination or outreach strategies (n=22)	18%	59%	23%
Make academic policy changes related to scheduling, credits, or eligibility (n=23)	17%	39%	43%

Program participants were asked to rate their overall satisfaction with the Sustainability Symposium, and the results were positive: Every attendee was at least somewhat satisfied, of which 57% were very satisfied and 43% were somewhat satisfied (n=39). No respondents indicated they were unsatisfied.

Suggestions for the Maine Department of Education

Respondents were asked if they have suggestions for processes, systems, or other resources that the Maine Department of Education (DOE) could provide to help sustain RREV pilots and support further innovation in schools. Below are some key themes and a few illustrative responses per theme. The appendix includes all open-ended responses submitted in the survey.

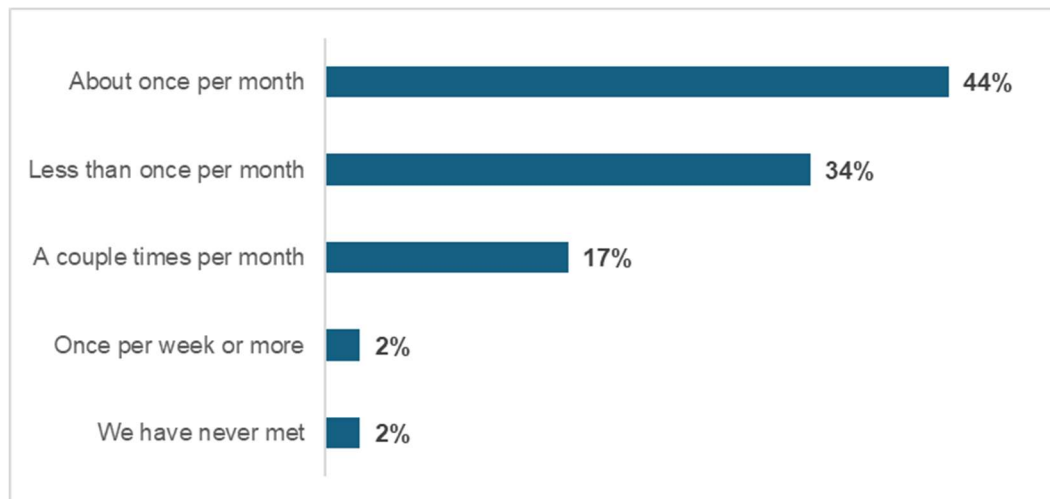
- **10 individuals mentioned ongoing funding** as necessary to sustain and support innovations such as RREV:
 - “It always comes down to money and people. More funding opportunities for innovation will help keep this going.”
 - “Innovation takes time. One year of funding (thank goodness ours was extended to two) is not enough. Future funding initiatives should build in longer time frames and scaffolded support based on district needs.”

- **8 individuals identified the need for more professional learning opportunities** to support the sustainability of RREV pilots:
 - “Something similar to the [Transformational Leaders’ Network] that is offered, but have it focused on sustaining the pilots. Meeting 5–6 times a year, sometimes in person, sometimes virtually. Problem solve, share successes, etc.”
 - “Virtual professional development that can be accessed after school hours—we have a severe lack of [substitutes] and it is near impossible for us to attend workshops during the school day.”
 - “Opportunities for other programs to network, problem solve, and support each other going forward.”
- **5 individuals noted that resources and support from Maine DOE** would help sustainability and innovation efforts:
 - “Although RREV required administrative support from the building and the signing of a contract at district administration level, there was no accountability for district leadership to follow through on what they committed to. Support from RREV to hold them accountable would have been helpful. An encouragement to think more broadly on the ground with other teachers across the district would have been beneficial as well.”
 - “If the Maine DOE could create a timeline or set of resources that have been successful in other schools for implementing outdoor learning—just to help guide us throughout the school year to know if we’re on track. Also, the more that they can help connect teachers doing outdoor learning, I think the better we could learn from each other. We also think that if the Maine DOE could actively encourage school districts to bring students outside for learning, that would help with encouraging the whole district to value what our school is trying to do.”
 - “Perhaps more clarification about monies involved as to timeliness and dispersal of funding, who controls it, and what the procedures are to make use of the funding.”
- **4 individuals mentioned coach support** as key to sustaining RREV:
 - “Having coaches conduct site visits at least once a year would make a big difference. If a coach isn’t seeing what’s happening on the ground level, it’s difficult to support change.”
 - “Making sure that all pilots have coaches that regularly check in.”

Coaching

Most pilot teams reported meeting with their coach at least once per month (Exhibit 5). A plurality of respondents (44%) reported meeting about once per month, while 17% met with their coaches a couple times per month (16%) and one pilot team (2%) met with their coach once a week or more. About a third of respondents (34%) met less than once per month, and one school (2%) said they never met with their coach.

EXHIBIT 5. FREQUENCY OF MEETING WITH RREV COACHES (N=45)



When respondents met with coaches, most of them (69%) met in EnGiNE at least some of the time. About a third of respondents (31%) did not meet with their coaches in EnGiNE at all. Generally, respondents preferred to correspond with their coaches via email or through video and phone calls using platforms other than EnGiNE.

Nearly all respondents said that they meet in EnGiNE versus another platform because they are encouraged or required to do so by their coach or the Maine DOE. One respondent shared, “We know this is something that RREV would like us to do, so we try to!” Another stated, “I only meet on EnGiNE when it’s the only option.”

Respondents who stated they have met on platforms besides EnGiNE had a few reasons for doing so. Some mentioned that they are more accustomed to other platforms and that “ease of use” factored into the decision. Others indicated their schools or districts prefer that they use a particular platform (e.g., Zoom or Google Meets). A few respondents said that they encountered issues in EnGiNE, with two noting that EnGiNE can be “cumbersome” to use for meetings.

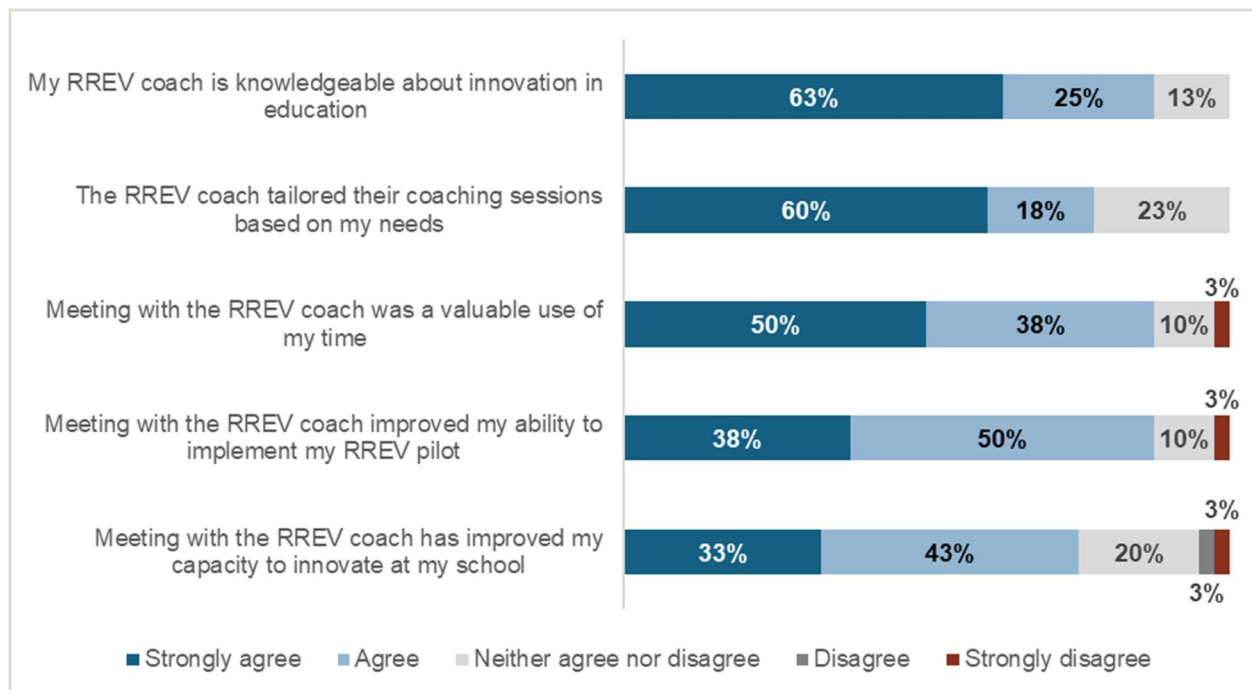
Almost all pilot teams found RREV coaching to be valuable. Respondents were asked the extent to which they agree with the following statements related to RREV coaching (Exhibit 6).

- 88% agreed or strongly agreed that meeting with their RREV coach was a valuable use of their time
- 88% agreed or strongly agreed that meeting with their RREV coach improved their ability to implement their RREV pilot
- 88% agreed or strongly agreed that their RREV coach is knowledgeable about innovation in education
- 78% agreed or strongly agreed that their RREV coach tailored their coaching sessions based on their needs

RETHINKING RESPONSIVE EDUCATION VENTURES: PILOT POINT OF CONTACT SURVEY

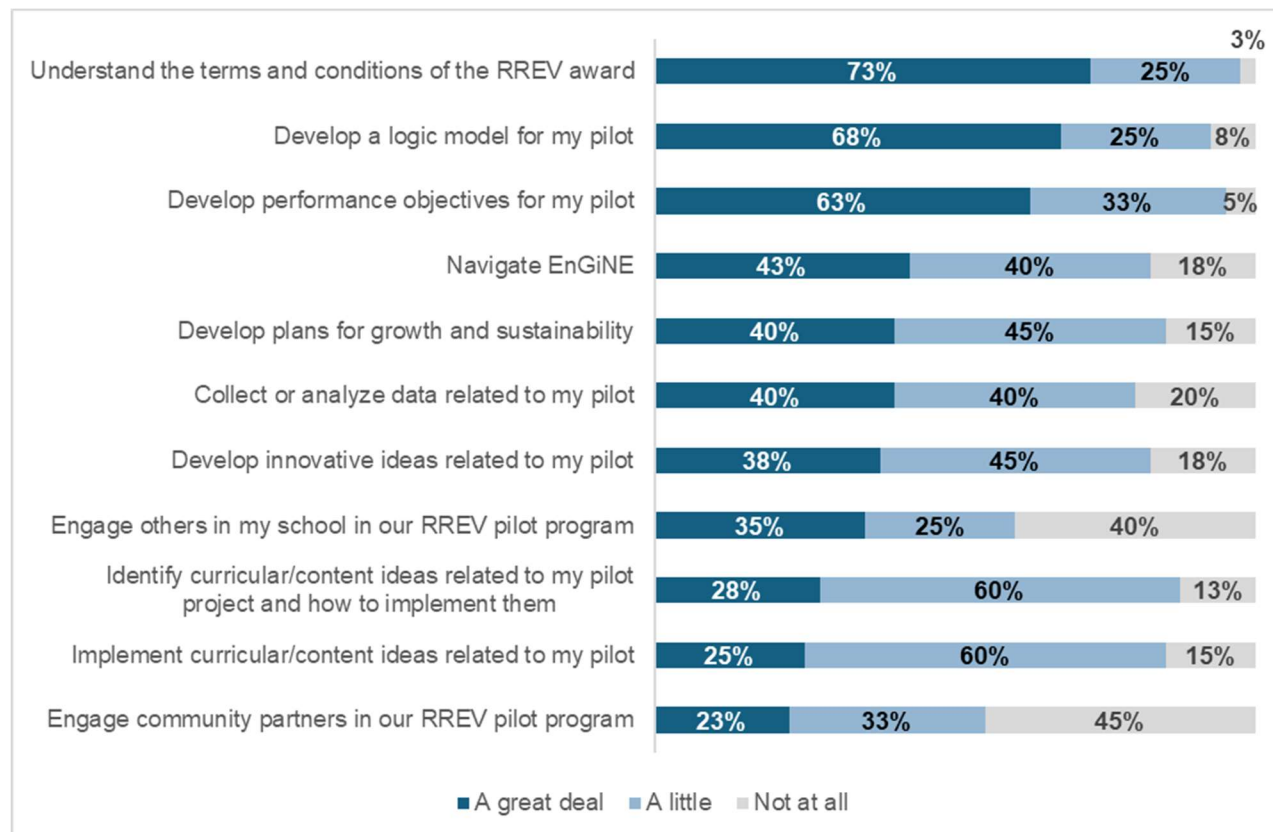
- 76% agreed or strongly agreed that meeting with their RREV coach improved their capacity to innovate at their school

EXHIBIT 6. LEVEL OF AGREEMENT WITH STATEMENTS ON RREV COACHING (N=40)



Respondents were also asked to what extent their RREV coaches helped them with a variety of pilot-related activities (Exhibit 7). Respondents reported that RREV coaches were particularly instrumental in helping them understand the terms and conditions of the RREV award, with just under three-quarters (73%) reporting that their coach helped with this “a great deal.” Similarly, respondents found coaches helpful in assisting with the planning and data-driven phases of the grant, with over two-thirds reporting that their coach helped “a great deal” with their logic model and 63% reporting their coach helped “a great deal” with developing the performance objectives for their pilot.

EXHIBIT 7. HOW MUCH RREV COACHES HELPED WITH PILOT ACTIVITIES
(N=40)



Coaching recommendations

Respondents frequently shared that coaches were friendly, helpful, responsive, objective, and supportive. A few highlights from comments about coaches are below and all responses are included in the appendix.

- “Being new to my district (specifically for this role) and being the only one of my kind in my district, my mentor was a very important confidant and guide. It was super helpful to have someone I could speak to candidly about the challenges I was facing in my role and have someone who was a line of communication to the central operations of the grant. I sincerely appreciated her support and guidance.”
- “Her objective perspective was so refreshing. She understood what we were trying to do and provided guidance and support throughout the entire process.”
- “We appreciated her absolute support when we faced a big problem. It was so nice to know that we had a shoulder to lean on when we were frantically trying to find our feet again.”
- “[His] energy, enthusiasm, and support is very much appreciated. He's been a strong advocate and supporter from the beginning. He's also been incredibly helpful to address the RREV requirements and developing goals and impact measures.”

Respondents were also asked to identify the most challenging part about working with their RREV coaches this year. **Most respondents indicated that finding time to meet was the most challenging part of working with their RREV coaches.** A few respondents indicated that physical distance from their coach was also challenging. Other challenges mentioned included how to best use a coach; the triangulation between RREV, the coach, and their pilot team about what needed to happen; and not receiving all the information needed during quick or infrequent virtual meetings. See the Appendix for all responses about the most challenging part of working with their RREV coaches.

Lastly, respondents were asked for recommendations on improving coaching initiatives in the future throughout the State of Maine.

- **6 respondents** mentioned that having a **consistent meeting schedule and including meeting agendas** would be helpful.
- **4 respondents** stated that **having a coach who was geographically nearby** would make things easier.
- **3 respondents** felt that **additional time for in-person visits and feedback**, both with coaches and with other cohort members, would improve similar initiatives.