

St. George Public School Creates Pathways to Career Technical Education Opportunities



Key findings from ICF's external evaluation of RREV.

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 in Maine schools so that all students across the state have access to high-quality and responsive learning opportunities. In August 2021, St. George Public School received a RREV award to develop and implement the *Makerspace Initiative*, which began in the 2021-22 school year. MDOE engaged an outside research firm, ICF, to conduct an evaluation of the RREV program, including implementation of this learning model at St. George.



Image: Construction of the St. George Makerspace building began in the 2021-22 school year.

What Makes this Learning Model Innovative?

- Expands CTE to younger students
- Allows students to demonstrate learning in non-traditional ways
- Creates career pathways to high paying jobs in the local community

About St. George's Innovative Learning Model

The Makerspace Initiative aims to make career technical education (CTE) programming more accessible to all students and to create pathways for students to continue CTE programming after high school. Here are some highlights from the first year of this pilot:

- Architectural drawings for a CTE Makerspace building were drafted by an architect and reviewed by a working group. Additionally, St. George secured over \$1.4 million in fundraising to support construction of the building.
- St. George developed a curriculum scope and sequence to extend CTE opportunities to students in fifth through eighth grade.
- Students practiced a variety of CTE activities, such as 3D printing and laser cutting.
- Students participated in a Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math (STEAM) class once per week to engage in hands-on, kinesthetic learning.
- Teachers incorporated CTE activities into their classroom lessons.

Promising Findings

ICF's evaluation of RREV revealed several exciting insights about the *Makerspace Initiative*. These include:

- **Students found hands-on activities exciting and engaging.** During a site visit, students and teachers described feeling excitement about learning at the Makerspace, especially when they created tangible products. Teachers also shared examples of students spending time in the Makerspace and being able to create goals around future career ambitions. For example, one teacher described a previously struggling fifth grade student who became more engaged after becoming inspired to be an engineer when he grows up.

- **Students and families reported positive experiences.**

Eighty-five percent of students agreed that they were glad they participated in the program, and 80 percent agreed that they liked their experience overall. One student commented that **“there is no limit on what I can make.”** One hundred percent of families said that they would recommend this program to other families.



Future Plans

St. George is excited to be entering its second year of implementing its RREV pilot. Here are some things St. George has planned to ensure the long-term success of the *Makerspace Initiative*.

- **K-8 Makerspace Building Construction.** St. George has begun construction on the K-8 Makerspace building and hopes this space will be fully operational by the 2023-24 school year.
- **K-8 CTE Curriculum.** St. George anticipates completing a K-8 curriculum scope and sequence by spring 2023. This curriculum is intended to offer K-5 students a flexible and natural introduction to CTE while providing a more focused CTE curriculum to students in grade 6-8. Completion of the K-8 curriculum is anticipated by spring 2023.