

## RREV's Innovative Pilot Template

As part of the **Innovative Mindset and Pilot Development** courses being offered through several of Maine's institutions of higher education, the RREV project uses a consistent template for the creation of all future pilots. Because every pilot created and tested with RREV funds WILL BE published in EnGiNE, we want all of Maine's educators to have the assurance of consistency.

This template provides an outline of the components required of an Innovative Pilot. The information in this template will serve as the basis for requests for school/district level project funding.

### Section 1: Define the Need

#### A. Describe your innovation.

*Consider what evidence supports the need for an innovation, and the evidence that suggests your innovation will improve the current situation.*

According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), the number of adolescents reporting poor mental health is increasing. In 2019, the CDC reported that, "more than 1 in 3 high school students had experienced persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness in 2019, a 40 percent increase since 2009." Data collected at Kennebunk High School confirms that mental health and wellness ratings among students are similarly declining, especially as COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact day to day lives of students in and out of school.

Persistent feelings of sadness, hopelessness, and anxiety can impact many different areas of a students' life. At school, it can manifest in a lack of engagement in learning, poor attendance, interest in dropping out of school, an increase in poor decision making, and receiving failing grades in classes. At Kennebunk High School, we have many levels of support in place to help students who are exhibiting any of these behaviors and reporting any of these feelings, but the numbers of students are rising. It is important to assess what supports are working and what could work better for the increasing number of students who are not currently finding success in a mainstream setting.

One of the supports that is currently meeting the needs of 12 (plus three part time) students who fall into this category is the Alternative Education Program. The program aims to provide an experiential, community-based learning environment and space for students. This environment supports students to grapple with and discover the importance of active, engaged citizenship through a curriculum rooted in real world application and aligned to the Kennebunk High School academic standards. Quantitative and qualitative data show that this model of education- one that connects students to their communities, to the outdoors, and to the idea of becoming an active participant in their own educational journey- works.

The data from Kennebunk High School demonstrates the efficacy of the Alternative Education program. In a January 2022 survey, 100% of current Alternative Education students at Kennebunk High School reported that they are finding more success in the Alternative Education program than they were in the mainstream setting. 90% of students reported that the program prepares them for success outside of high school. One student reported that the program, "helped me feel comfortable in school again." Noting that, "last year I had trouble coming to school because of nervousness and anxiety, but now it's easier to be in a class with consistent times and people." This "feeling of success" was also evident in students' responses to an Alternative Education version of a TNTP survey that the entire high school took in the Fall of 2021. Highlights from the data include:

100% of students feel supported by the Alternative Education Program, 100% of students like what we do in the Alternative Education Program, 100% of students feel that their teachers think of them as a partner in their education, and 100% of students feel like their teachers make them feel like they belong. Additionally, based on Powerschool and attendance data, 100% of current Alternative Education students have better attendance now than they did before joining the Alternative Education Program and 13 out of 15 students passed all of their classes for Semester 1.

Parents also reported a positive impact of the Alternative Education programming. Parents of recent Alternative Education alumni were asked to share a couple of words about their students' participation in the program. One parent wrote, "I have been so very thankful for the alt ed program, it has significantly helped [student] grow into the young man he is today. My eyes water looking back at where he was and the emotional growth he has done. Thank you so very much you will never know how significant this program has been to me." Another parent noted, "My adolescent child was presented with significant social, emotional, academic and personal obstacles. These obstacles were immense to her and she was unable to unlock her inner strength which impacted her ability to learn. The Alt Ed program assisted her in developing independence, courage and life long skills to be successful in her adult life. Those social emotional skills that were instilled, gave her the confidence and inner strength to access her academic talents and believe in herself. The access to real life experiences accompanied by the practical application of traditional academic skills, were instrumental to who she is today. She was given the opportunity to contribute to her school and community."

The Alternative Education program is positively impacting the lives of students who are not finding success in mainstream settings. However, the program is currently only reaching 12 (plus an additional 3 part time) students. We are applying for RREV funding to build on what is already working in the KHS Alternative Education program and create a learning environment that not only reaches far more KHS students, but can also be used as a model for programs around the state. Expanded, the program could systemically change the way that teaching and learning happens for our most vulnerable students in our district.

These changes would include providing a targeted wellness curriculum to support student well being, deepening the connection between students in the program and our school and town communities by completing large scale community-based projects, providing opportunities for students to explore possible career paths through job shadows, business visits, and internships, as well as to enhance the existing project based curriculum to meet the students where they are and give them opportunities to meet the academic standards for graduation.

B. Identify which students would be impacted, targeted, or supported by the innovation.

*Review the evidence – quantitative and qualitative data and research – that indicates this group of students is considered the most vulnerable and would benefit from the described innovation.*

*Data you can use to inform your innovation, rationale, and targeted student population include the performance of various groups of students (e.g., students in rural locales, students from low socio-economic conditions, students with disabilities, students who are Els, students at risk for dropping out, student who are homeless) with regard to academic achievement, graduation rates, social emotional and mental wellness, economic data, and/or workforce participation.*

The target audience for this innovation is the group of students who are not currently being served by the Alternative Education program and who are not finding success in the mainstream environment. These students may be expressing challenges with their mental health, feel like their education lacks purpose, have an interest in dropping out of school, have poor attendance, be failing two or more classes, and/or have an interest in a hands-on/project based learning environment. We know that these students are already enrolled in Kennebunk High School.

As of January 2022, at Kennebunk High School, there are 50 students failing more than two courses. Nine students have been sent an official truancy letter from the district, which signifies that they have been absent more than 10 times. Six students have been suspended more than one time this school year, which is already more than the complete 2020-2021 school year. On the school wide TNTP data, only 49% of students reported that they enjoy going to school. 56% of students agreed that their teachers think of them as a partner in their education. 52% of students find what they are learning in their classes interesting. And only 64% believed that when they feel like giving up, their teachers ask them to keep trying. Five current students have received more than one in or out of school suspension this school year. And lastly, in a recent survey, counselors identified 44 students who meet the following criteria: are failing two or more classes and are expressing challenges with their mental health, or are not coming to school consistently, or are expressing feeling disengaged to their counselors.

We believe that these students could benefit from a different model of teaching and learning- one which provides additional academic and social emotional support as well as makes the community the classroom and the setting for self discovery and re-engagement in learning.

## Section 2: Describe the Innovation

### A. Describe the goals of your innovation.

*Consider how your innovation will meet the needs of the identified target student population(s) and how you plan to achieve your goals. Additionally, consider any changes in policy, practice or structures you expect as a result of the innovation.*

Currently, the Alternative Education program serves students who fall under the following categories: expressing challenges with their mental health, feel their education lacks purpose, are expressing interest in dropping out of school, lack confidence in their direction or vision of their future beyond high school, are not attending school regularly, are failing two or more classes, are not on track to graduate on time (credit deficient), and have an interest in a hands-on/ project based learning environment.

We teach with the following core values:

1. We connect with our students.
2. We pre-assess and develop individual academic plans for each student that meet them where they are and set goals for where they want to go.
3. We actively and flexibly plan how we deliver our instruction and assessment so that it is engaging and always transferable to “real world” skills.
4. We think of our students as partners in their education.

Our new alternative education model would build on these core values to meet the needs of a much larger group of students who fall under the above categories at Kennebunk High School and would lead to systemic change across our district.

Our goals for the new innovation are as follows:

1. To increase our physical space to house more students and allow for true project/community based learning. This space would ideally be located off campus and include: a kitchen, a project space, a workshop, an outdoor classroom, access to trails, a meeting room for one-on-one or small group sessions, and a large community meeting room.
2. To add three to four additional staff members to support the needs of the incoming students. These staff members include: 1 Humanities Teacher, 1 STEM teacher, 1 Wellness Teacher, 1 Community

Project Coordinator, 1 Social Worker, and 1 Director (there are currently two teachers in the Alternative Education program).

3. To provide students with consistent, individualized social work support.
4. To provide a targeted wellness curriculum to support student well being (social emotional, mental health, and physical health).
5. To deepen the connection between the students in the program and the Kennebunk, Kennebunkport, and Arundel communities as well as the other schools in the RSU 21 School District. This would include completing large scale projects in the community as well as in schools/classrooms around the district.
6. To provide transportation to internships, business/college visits, job shadows, and community project sites.
7. To add to and enhance the existing project/place based, interdisciplinary curriculum to meet students where they are and give them opportunities to meet the Kennebunk High School proficiency standards.

In order to meet these goals, the structure of the current Alternative Education program would need to change in the following ways:

1. The daily schedule would have to shift to accommodate more students and staff.
2. The structure of transportation (and the policy that dictates it as it exists now) would need to shift to allow for more flexibility throughout the school day and to provide access to more students (especially if the program is housed off campus).
3. The staffing structure would shift. Each staff member would be responsible for their own section of the program, but would meet together on a daily/weekly basis to discuss the program as a whole.
4. The district would need to give permission for the program to be housed completely off campus OR provide a large enough space on campus to accommodate the needs of staff and students.

B. Describe activities included in your plan for each stage – preparation (P) or implementation (I) – of your innovation.

- **Preparation** includes building stakeholder awareness, establishing routines and processes, and coordination of logistics.
- **Implementation** includes planned implementation activities, as well as professional development for the educators participating in the innovation.

	Activity	Purpose	Stage (P or I)	Date of Completion	Person Responsible
1.	Participate in the Design Thinking Course (UNE EDU650)	Engage in the design thinking process to develop the pilot model for Kennebunk High School's innovation.	P	2/28/22	Edward Sharood (Alternative Education Teacher), Jacqui Holmes (Alternative Education Teacher), Molly Dilworth (KHS administrator)
2.	Data collection and best practice research	Collect data to further understand and communicate the "needs" in our district, to review recent best practices research, to examine other program models so that we are not unnecessarily	P	January-February 2022	Edward, Jacqui, Molly

		re-inventing the wheel, to understand what parts of the existing program are working well and can be built upon.			
3.	Meet with District Administration	Share and further explore the idea of the innovation, to get buy in and feedback from the decision makers, and to increase stakeholder awareness.	P	1/27/2022 2/3/2022 2/10/2022 2/17/2022 3/17/2022	Edward, Jacqui, Molly, Anita Bernhart (Assistant Superintendent), Dr. Terri Cooper (Superintendent)
4.	Build stakeholder team	Discuss and determine the feasibility of our 1,3 & 5 year goals as well as identify and problem solve around potential roadblocks for achieving our goals.	P	March 2022 3/23/2022 3/31/2022	Edward, Jacqui, Molly, Anita RSU 21: Business Manager, Transportation Director, Facilities Director, Human Resources Director
5.	Meet with Elaine (RREV) and RSU 21 Business Manager	Develop budget to ensure process is in place for grant funds to be received and spent	P	3/4/2022 3/28/2022 3/31/2022	Edward, Jacqui, Molly RSU 21 Business Manager and Elaine Bartley (RREV)
6.	Meet with community partners	Determine possible physical spaces for the new, innovative program in the community.	P	February-March 2022 2/18/2022	Edward, Jacqui, Molly Tom Bradbury, Kennebunkport Conservation Trust Executive Director
7.	Press Release/ Community Awareness	Present the innovation to the school board and community members (within the school district and beyond).	I	May-June 2022 4/4/2022	Edward, Jacqui, Molly
8.	Design and order supplies for the new space.	Ensure there is furniture, designated spaces, supplies, IT/ Tech support to meet the needs of the new program. Purchase vans.	I	April- June 2022	Edward, Jacqui, Molly Facilities Director and IT Director
9.	Hire staff/ Restructure the current staffing model.	Hire 1 new teacher and 1 Ed Tech II as well as restructure the current staffing model to build up the team.	I	May- August 2022	Edward, Jacqui, Molly, Scott Harrison (Human Resources Director)
10.	Recruit New Students	Employ the process currently in effect for new Alternative Education	I	May- August 2022	Edward, Jacqui, Molly KHS School Counselors

		students. Assemble the support teams for each student.			
11.	Build new policies, procedures, processes.	Ensure that we have structured and supported policies in place for transportation, media coverage, outdoor education, community engagement, special education services, and social work support.	P/I	May- August 2022	Edward, Jacqui, Molly + Entire Stakeholder Team
12.	Build on the existing curriculum and decide on the final day-to-day schedule and structure.	Complete an inventory of what curriculum exists and works well in the current Alternative Education Program. Build on this curriculum for Humanities and STEM as well as develop new curriculum and models for the Wellness classes and Community Project component.	P	June-August 2022	Edward, Jacqui, Molly + New Teaching/ Social Work Staff
13.	Development of Parent/Community Group to support the innovation.	Bring together stakeholders to act as an advisory board as we embark on this process.	P/I	August-September 2022	Edward, Jacqui, Molly + New Teaching/Social Work Staff
14.	Set Up New Space	Ensure that the space is ready for students and supports the needs of staff in order to meet the goals of the new program/innovation.	I	August 2022	Edward, Jacqui, Molly, + New Teaching/Social Work Staff
15.	Data Collection + Reassess + Refine	Collect “pre-data” as well as data throughout the first couple of months of the innovation to determine what is working well, what needs to be tweaked, and what impact the program is having on the students.	I	Ongoing August 2022- Year 2	Edward, Jacqui, Molly, + New Teaching/Social Work Staff

### Section 3: Define Innovation Outcomes & Measure to Assess Outcomes

- A. Identify the outcomes (*i.e., student outcomes, changes in instructional practices, changes in student practice*) that you expect to see as a result of your innovation.

Consider both short-term and long-term outcomes, at different points in the time (e.g., at 6 months, 12 months, 2 years and 3+ years).

Within the first six months of the innovation, we expected to be settled in a new space off campus. The space will have room for projects, group meetings, one on one meetings, and wellness activities. The space will support the development of a “family like” environment that students feel safe and comfortable in. This space will also help support a learning environment that is both engaging and applicable to “real world” skills and situations. This includes opportunities for students to grapple with challenges and take more ownership over their own education. Additionally, in the first six months, students will engage in wellness and social emotional learning on a consistent and structured basis. This includes targeted wellness sessions (outdoor exploration, cooking, mindfulness) as well as social work sessions. After six months, 80% of students will be re-engaged in their education, as reported on the TNTP survey. 80% of students will be passing all or most of their classes. 100% of students will have completed an independent learning plan to set short, mid, and long term goals for the remainder of their high school experience.

After one year, 100% of students will show improvement in their attendance. 80% of students will show growth on their writing, reading, and math NWEA scores as well as made progress on the graduation proficiency standards. 90% of students will report higher mental health, social emotional and belonging ratings on the TNTP survey. Furthermore, Alternative Education will be known throughout the school as more than just a classroom at the end of a hallway, but instead as a pillar of Kennebunk High School and a pathway to help students who are not finding success in the mainstream environment. This includes a deeper, more ingrained presence of the program in the tri-town community as well as in all schools in our district.

After two years, 90% of students will graduate with a Kennebunk High School diploma. 100% of students will engage in a work component prior to graduation (job shadow, apprenticeship, directed study). 100% of students will complete at least 60 hours of community service. 100% of students will continue to engage in hands-on, place based, and project based learning of the core content areas as well as engage in a comprehensive social emotional and wellness curriculum. 100% of students will have opportunities to complete independent and group projects to positively impact their community and learn valuable leadership and group work skills.

After three years, the district will support the new innovation without the support of RREV funding. This will include staff within the program, a space for the program to run out of, and transportation. The program will be known as an invaluable pathway for students who would benefit from a different learning environment and/or additional support.

B. Describe your plan for collecting and reviewing data to assess your innovation outcomes.

*Potential data to collect includes qualitative and quantitative data (e.g., surveys, interviews, focus groups, observations, exit tickets, and on-demand assessment(s) that can be considered.*

	Data Type	Baseline (B) Interim (I) Summative (S)	Frequency of Data Collection	Person(s) Responsible for Collection and Data Quality
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1.	TNTP Survey (wellness, social emotional, belonging)	B- Upon Entry I- Late Fall S- End of year and/or end of program	3 times a year	Alt Ed Team
2.	Alternative Education Application/Interview (student and parent)	B	Once upon entry	Alt Ed Team
3.	NWEA Testing (Writing/Reading/Math)	B- Fall (whole school) I- Upon entry (if in the middle of the year) S- Spring (whole school)	3 times a year	Alt Ed Team with support from Instructional Strategists
4.	Independent Learning Plans (outlining credits, standards met, academic and personal goals)	B- Upon entry I- Check In at semester mark S- End of the year and again end of program	3 times a year	Alt Ed Team
5.	Parent Teacher Conferences	I- Fall S- Spring	Twice a year	Alt Ed Team
6.	Exit Interview	S	Once a year	Alt Ed Team
7.	Observations	B/I/S	Ongoing	District and school administration, advisor board, social workers, case managers, teachers, instructional strategists

- C. Describe how you will **scale and sustain** your innovation, including necessary policy changes, changes in mindsets, capacity-building activities, and **long-term financial sustainability**.

*Consider the systems changes that this innovation will require and promote.*

After the pilot is complete, it will be essential that the district supports the additional staff and maintenance of a new space moving forward. To aid in the long-term financial sustainability, we have discussed several options. The first is to open the innovation up to students from other districts. When we develop more flexible transportation options, we could provide transportation to and from school and our district would receive funding from sending schools. The second is to complete community projects for a small fee, which would go directly back into the program budget. This could include building sheds or picnic tables, designing and maintaining trail systems, etc. Lastly, we have discussed developing an alumni fund to provide a space for Alt Ed alumni to give back to the program through monetary donations. We are also working on a more



structured system to allow alumni to give back to the program through hosting students for job shadows, talking to the whole group of students, or helping out on community projects.

In addition to financial stability, it will also be important that the innovation is showcased district wide. Community members, faculty members, students, and parents need to be aware that this program exists, that it is viable, innovative, quality, and available for all students. It needs to be seen as a legitimate alternative pathway that is a privilege to be part of. This will come with increased attention to website development, social media promotion, communication with local media sources, use of our logo on projects in the community, and the development of a newsletter. It will also come with increased presence of the innovation and it's students in other schools in the district as well as in projects around Kennebunk High School. The more the students' work is showcased in a positive way, the better.

To ensure that all of this occurs, our district will have to approve the use of a space off campus. Additionally, we will need to come to an agreement with the transportation department about the use of buses or vans outside of the current 11:30-1:30pm timeframe to meet the needs of the students who are accessing the innovation.

Lastly, our intention is to document the entire innovation throughout its development and evolution with the goal of bringing together a guide or model that can be shared publicly through the DOE, the Alternative Education Association of Maine, and through presentations at local and national conferences so that other schools and districts looking to support students in experiential and project based learning can benefit from the model we have developed.

- D. Describe the feasibility review you engaged in during the development of your innovative pilot plan, including which aspects of the plan for the pilot were reviewed, which stakeholders were engaged, feedback received and revisions made to the plan as a result of the feedback.

After deciding to embark on the RREV application process, we brought a Kennebunk High School (KHS) team together. The team consisted of Alternative Education teachers and an Assistant Principal. Once we had developed the initial innovation, the KHS team met with the Assistant Superintendent to introduce RREV and our innovation. The Assistant Superintendent gave the go ahead to continue outlining our vision and suggested that the team collect more data on what is working and what the current need in the district is. As a result, the KHS team consulted students in the current Alternative Education program to collect data and feedback. The team then created a document to both describe the innovation and present the data to make the case for the need of the innovation.

With additional data, the team moved forward in completing Section 1 (A&B) of the pilot in which we defined the innovation and the target population. The team met with the Assistant Superintendent again to present the new data and refined innovation. The Assistant Superintendent recommended that we provide a visual to present the data and the connection between the needs and the innovation. Furthermore, she asked the team to develop a 1,3, and 5 year plan for the innovation. With this feedback, the team continued to add in new wording to emphasize how the innovation is indeed new, innovative, and necessary in the district. Additional data was also collected from alumni, students, and parents.

After these changes were made, the team met with the Assistant Superintendent for more feedback and a green flag to continue the process. She reviewed Section 2 in which we outlined the timeline and goals for the innovation. We had an important conversation about the feasibility of our timeline and made several adjustments to ensure that the goals are clear and achievable for year one.

On March 17th, we met with the RSU 21 Superintendent to share our innovation, goals, and needs. She gave her support of our pilot submission and asked our team to present our idea at the RSU 21 school board meeting on April 4th. Following that meeting, we also met with the Director of Facilities to share our ideas and brainstorm solutions for some of our potential logistical needs. As we move forward, and especially if we receive funding, it will be important to continue adding members to the team and communicating about the innovation with stakeholders so that we can proactively solve challenges that will inevitably come up with this important, systemic change.

#### Section 4: Identify Key Expenses

- A. Identify the key expenses associated with the preparation, implementation, and ongoing refinement of your pilot.

*Expenses could include staff time, materials, professional development activities, facilities, and other related expenses. This section does not need to include specific costs, but rather list out the different costs that should be considered to implement the innovation.*

##### Staff Time

In year one, we anticipate hiring one new teacher, one new Ed Tech II, and restructuring one of the current Alternative Education teaching roles to become a part time teacher, part time social worker. This would result in one .75 professional counselor/.25 teacher, one STEM teacher, and one Humanities teacher, and 1 Ed Tech II. **\$120,000 total.**

**Teacher-** \$80,000

**Ed Tech II-** \$40,000

##### Materials

We will purchase instructional materials (\$1,000-\$2,000 per staff). This could also include tools to complete community projects, equipment to engage in outdoor wellness activities, entry fees for museum/business/lab visits etc. **\$16,000 total.**

**Instructional Materials-** \$6,000- lab equipment, books, art supplies, project materials, field guides, tools/ tool maintenance, kitchen supplies, music/art therapy equipment

**Outdoor Equipment-** \$3,000- personal protective equipment, yoga mats, supplementary foul weather gear, bike repair supplies

**Technology-** \$5,000- two computers, projector and smartboard

**Entry Fees-** \$2,000 museum passes, park passes, activity passes

##### Professional Development Activities

At this time, we do not anticipate any funds being used for specific professional development activities.

##### Facilities

We are hoping to use a space off campus for the majority of our teaching and learning. As the program expands, we will need to look for a larger space that ideally the district supports and maintains. We will not need to pay to use the space off campus, however we will need to purchase cleaning supplies and furniture for the space. **\$9,000 total.**

**Furniture-** \$8,000 (includes supplies to refinish furniture that is purchased from the restore)

**Cleaning Supplies-** \$1,000 vacuum, shovels, broom, cleaning products

Transportation

We would like to purchase two 15 passenger vans to transport students to and from the off campus space and to off site project locations. **\$100,000 total.**

**Vans-** \$50,000 each (not including insurance, registration, gas, maintenance)

Other Related Expenses

We would like to take the students on a multi-day trip to support their learning beyond our community. We are specifically looking into the Schoodic Education Adventure Program (SEA) through Acadia National Park.

**\$5,000 total.**

**Multi-day trip-** \$5,000