

RREV's Innovative Pilot for RSU 25

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.

RSU 25 provides a rigorous and inspiring education in partnership with our community.

There is a global movement where a reconsideration of what high school graduates should know and be able to do is based on the new economy of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. This shift requires schools to provide learning experiences that are a blend of personalized and project based learning with advisory teams guiding students on what to learn next and prepare them for career pathways. It is important to think of ways to provide ideal learning experiences in order to prepare our students for the world ahead of them. If we, as a school system, do not make changes in the way we offer learning, then our students will be grossly underprepared to be successful in their new world. In addition, our forced remote learning experiences during the pandemic have highlighted the need for new ways to teach remotely and new ways to reach remote learners. Student and teacher surveys highlight the fact that remote learning directly correlates with significantly disengaged students. If we offer hybrid education, or if we are forced into more remote learning, failure to engage students can lead to a generation of undereducated and unprepared adults.

In RSU 25 we work in partnership with our community to update our RSU 25 Strategic Plan. The purpose of our strategic plan is to provide a road map to the desired outcomes our communities have expressed for their children and their educational programming, and to bring to life the Mission and Vision of the District. The RSU 25 Strategic Plan has been an outgrowth of two strategic planning processes, first in 2010 and most recently in 2017. The goal has been and continues to be to develop a strategic plan for our educational program based on the values and beliefs of our four communities.

Through the 2016-2017 school year the School Board and Administration used a series of meetings and surveys to review our original Mission and Vision as well as the four overarching goals and elicit feedback from our communities. In all we received **four hundred twenty-one (421) completed surveys** with representation from all four of our sending communities including parents, business owners, elected officials, students, and employees. From this feedback we found continued support for our Mission and Vision statements, and the original four goals with strong support to include a fifth goal focusing on the actual learning environment.

Our **mission** of RSU 25 is to provide a rigorous and inspiring education in partnership with our community. The four cornerstones of our **vision** are 1) a comprehensive curriculum, 2) achievement and accountability, 3) innovative learning opportunities, and 4) our partners in learning. RSU 25 defines innovative learning opportunities as meeting the needs of all students by embracing flexibility and innovation. The creative use of time, scheduling, programming, and year round learning opportunities provides different pathways to meet graduation requirements. Through the use of technology, we enhance and expand learning experiences.

Since 2010 our four communities have led the way supporting our schools to integrate technology to expand learning experiences, and in 2021 - 2022 we are ready to move forward with the next technology innovation to add a remote learning pathway for our students in RSU 25 in partnership with our community and our regional school district partners.

In spring 2021, when all of Maine was forced into online remote schooling, many lessons were learned. First, and most importantly, we learned that remote learning could be done. But, almost as importantly, in RSU 25 (Bucksport), we learned that extremely unpopular because it was unsuccessful in many areas.

When asked, high school students reported that their experience with remote/hybrid learning was challenging because the teachers attention was split between the in-person and the remote students. They claimed that it was harder for them to make connections with their teachers and their peers. Teachers shared some of the same challenges when asked about their experience. Trying to teach both in-person and remote students is hard because the type of instruction needed to be successful is very different for each group. They stated that it is much easier to teach either fully in-person, or fully remote.

The problem in Bucksport seems clear: remote learning can work, but changes have to be made from what we learned in spring 2021. We need to find a way to connect with students, to communicate with students, to connect with students with social emotional learning resources, and to educate students in new and engaging ways that were more appropriate for the online world. Also, feedback from the community that they wanted to see remote learning options in the future, when the world around us has “returned to normal,” meant that we needed to create a plan that would address the needs of families who continued to want their children educated remotely.

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 EIs, 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.

System map, insight and future mining and blue card.

In RSU 25, we have identified a population of students where traditional in person learning or traditional alternative education does not meet their needs. They are in need of a remote education that we are not currently able to provide at an adequate level. The population this project will provide services for is in great danger of not graduating without an alternative opportunity to complete their high school education.

Our research indicates that Bucksport middle schoolers, with one-to-one computing devices, experience with online remote education, and experience using online educational tools such as Google Suites, also stand to benefit from a revised remote learning experience. During the 2021 – 2022 school year, we currently have four of our middle school students fully remote due to circumstances. Each teacher currently offers instruction remotely for these students, but our model is in need of a designated teacher to connect and form relationships with these students. Feedback from these students has provided us feedback that we need to address student engagement and attendance during our remote instruction.

Using the data from student surveys, teacher surveys, family questionnaires, and extensive research into best practices around remote learning, we believe that we have come up with a solution that will not only work for Bucksport, but is also adaptable for partnering with other districts as well. We are collaborating with our Penobscot River Educational Partnership (PREP) district partners of Old Town, Hampden, and Orrington to bring together smaller districts to provide remote learning services to districts that have a smaller student population and might not be able to support a full time teacher, as this model provides.

Additionally, we have used the above mentioned metrics to focus on students for whom an in-person education is not a good fit. This includes families that have until now chosen to homeschool, as there was no remote option in Bucksport, as well as families of children who experience serious anxiety when forced to attend in person, those who found having students home during the pandemic worked better for their family's needs, and those independent learners who thrived during past remote learning times. We currently have six students that have an out of district placement (i.e. tutoring, different school, online academy, etc.). We also have two other students that are accessing remote learning as part of a 504 or IEP. At the start of the year, there were 11 students that inquired about attending school remotely, however that was not an option in our school. Our initial focus on just 7th through 12th grader means that we have the capacity to enroll a maximum of 15 students in this program during the pilot year.

Bucksport's Remote Learning Pathway curriculum will be uniquely designed using the UDL framework where instructional goals, assessments, methods and materials are customized to meet the students' needs as well as meeting the state standards. With these customizations, students with IEP's, 504's and other accommodations will be able to be successful in this environment, as well. Because they are considered a RSU 25 student, they will also have access to all the programming that in person students have. For example, speech therapy, occupational therapy, & adaptive physical education to name a few. Accommodations will be easily met as the Remote Learning Specialist will partner with our special education department and tailor lessons and assessments based on students in their class. With this unique curricular design, the full remote pathway will not only be engaging and enriching but once again meet student and family needs.

Finally, in addition to increasing student engagement, our approach also leverages student schedules to allow remote students to attend school with their in-person peers, thereby supporting students' social and emotional health. It is critical for students to be able to have the involvement of school activities like sports, clubs and events. Just because the instruction is not in the building, does not mean that students cannot be involved in the school environment. With this multi-pronged approach, students can experience learning anywhere and still be a part of the school's culture.

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.

Yellow card - Promise, proof and also data from some PDSA cycles.

The problem in RSU 25 is that families have not had a choice of what learning environment is best for their children. If parents did not want to send their child to school, they would have to homeschool and unenroll their child from the district. In person schooling was the only option that RSU 25 families had, and therefore the only option they had ever known until the pandemic closed down school buildings.

With our new RSU 25 Remote Learning Pathways plan, parents of 7th through 12th graders will now have the choice of what type of learning environment is best for their student: at home or at school. Research indicates that allowing students to choose their educational path can increase student engagement by over 20%.

If families feel that a home learning environment is best for their students, they will now have the option to apply for this pathway. Students that choose to be a part of the Remote Learning Pathway will have access to a full time multi-age teacher for instruction. This will be a brand new position, filled by a Remote Learning Specialist. If families like having their students at school for instruction, they will also have that option. Both Pathways will provide engaging and high academic instruction to meet student and family needs. Both Pathways will offer students enrichment and extracurricular activities. Both Pathways offer 4 days of core subject instruction and the 5th day will be enrichment and personalized instruction. On that 5th day, remote students can come to the school to be with friends and participate in the activities if they choose. This schedule adaptation not only increases interactions and builds relationships among peers, it is also supporting the social and emotional learning of all our students.

RSU 25's Remote Learning Pathway ensures that students who did not thrive in person--the anxious, the awkward, the easily distracted, those with incompatible home responsibilities, and more--will still have access to a high quality education while now engaging with curriculum in a modality that fits their needs.

A unique aspect of our RSU 25 application is our collaboration with neighboring schools that provides a model of a structured virtual pathway to a Bucksport High School diploma. This model will include access to staff solely dedicated to this pathway and provide a case study model of social-emotional-educational support for students.

Our district will find/hire a teacher to be part of this collaborative. They will be a team member on the faculty with our collaborating partners that will assist and support our students in this innovative model of education, while the students remain Bucksport High School students.

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

- **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
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Describe the Program	To communicate clear expectations for our plan	P	Winter 2022	Josh Tripp, Principal
Conversations with RSU 25 superintendent, Jim Boothby, administrators, career aspirations project, and community members	To determine if the support for improved remote learning is a community need.	P	Winter 2022	Josh Tripp and Evelyn Beaulieu, Director of Curriculum
Interview/survey students, parents and teachers	To gather feedback on remote learning improvement and student engagement	P	Winter 2022	Josh Tripp, Principal
Write Teacher Job Description	To hire new teacher for remote learning pathway	P	Winter 2022	Josh Tripp and Evelyn Beaulieu, Director of Curriculum
Post ad for new teacher position/hire new teacher	To hire new teacher for remote learning pathway	P	Winter 2022	Josh Tripp and Evelyn Beaulieu, Director of Curriculum
Create Student Profile	To aid communication for our student expectations and fit for the services.	P	Winter 2022	Josh Tripp, Evelyn Beaulieu, and Sarah Lanpher, Teacher
Student Application	To maintain fidelity to the remote learning pathway	P	Winter 2022	Josh Tripp, Evelyn Beaulieu, and Sarah Lanpher
Timeline for Implementation	To communicate plan and expectations with all district partners	I	Winter 2022	Josh Tripp, Evelyn Beaulieu, and Sarah Lanpher, Teacher
Hire Case Manager (if needed with our collaborating partners instead of a designated teacher)	To support students with social emotional learning instruction	I	Winter 2022	Josh Tripp, Principal
Choosing Learning Platforms	To ensure students, teachers, and schools have the platform for remote learning pathways	I	Spring 2022	Josh Tripp, Principal, and IT Director, Jim Morrill
Identify and purchase technology equip.	To ensure students, teachers, and schools have the equipment for remote learning pathways	I	Spring 2022	Josh Tripp, Principal, and IT Director, Jim Morrill
Identify synchronous activities	To provide engaging learning activities that meets the needs of the students in the remote learning pathway	I	Spring and Summer 2022	Teacher, collaborating partner teachers, Evelyn Beaulieu, Director of Curriculum
Deciding what professional development is needed	To meet with collaborating district partners and roles to identify professional development needs	I	Ongoing	Josh Tripp and Evelyn Beaulieu, Director of Curriculum
Identify Opportunities Team and Community Building	To meet with collaborating district partners and roles to identify team building	I	Ongoing	Josh Tripp and Evelyn Beaulieu, Director of Curriculum
Update Community Partners to support the program	To provide updated information to gather ongoing community support	I	Ongoing	Josh Tripp, Principal

Create an evaluation plan with collaborating partners	To collect data on plan effectiveness and use results for program improvement and decision-making.	I	Summer 2022	Josh Tripp and Evelyn Beaulieu, Director of Curriculum meet with collaborating partners
Ensure there is time for ongoing collaboration and discussion between all partners	To connect at monthly Penobscot River Education Partnership meetings	I	Ongoing	Josh Tripp and Evelyn Beaulieu, Director of Curriculum
Sustainability when the grant money runs out	To communicate with MDOE representatives the lessons learned to integrate remote learning into school pathways.	I	Ongoing	Josh Tripp and Evelyn Beaulieu, Director of Curriculum
Establish and complete curriculum templates and roadmaps for remote learning students.	To provide a curriculum that meets the needs of remote learning students in this pathway	I	Winter-Spring 2022	Teacher and Evelyn Beaulieu, Director of Curriculum
Get together with partner districts to make agreements as a collaborative	To aid communication between partnering districts and share resources	I	Ongoing	Josh Tripp and Evelyn Beaulieu, Director of Curriculum
Communication with each district's Alternative Education program	To aid communication with all district education partners	I	Ongoing	Josh Tripp, Principal
Community Centers - accessed by students from various districts	To collect data to aid in decision-making for our plan	I	Ongoing	Josh Tripp, Principal
SEL - pre and post survey/scale	To support students with social emotional learning activities	I	Fall and spring	Josh Tripp, Principal

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).

Impact math game plan and yellow card promise and proof and PDSA cycles

There are several success criteria outcomes for the implementation of the learning pathways.

For student outcomes, we will use local and state assessments to track the growth of students compared to the growth of students that are in person. State assessments are given in the fall and spring using NWEA and local assessments will be given accordingly. For the first year, the expectation is that students in the full remote pathway will perform equivalently or higher than their peers that are in the other pathway according to NWEA scores. For the following years, it is expected that the growth of students from year to year will be the same or higher than peers of the in person pathway.

Another outcome will be an increase in student participation with the full remote program. If we continue to attract students from our partnering districts as well as students in our own system, this will not only support the sustainability of the program but will also support that this pathway of learning is engaging for students to want to participate in it. To be fiscally sustainable, we will need to have 15 students enrolled in this pathway. Additionally, if we were to add more teachers or specialists to the full

remote pathway, we would only need 10 more students to cover the costs of salary and supplies. We would also need to make sure stipends for in person teachers are covered to “sign off” on the full remote students’ learning. This allows us to hire a teacher without having to worry about certification in multiple areas.

Another outcome will be an increase in student attendance with the remote learning pathway. We will also track our graduation rates of students who enroll in this pathway. (Josh, add attendance data and graduation rates here)

Other measurements that are available and will be collected on students are:

Social Emotional Learning data

Career development readiness tools are completed through our MELMAC grant and JMG Aspire Golden Bucks projects

Another expected outcome for the full remote pathway will be expanding to the high school with families continuing to ask for this option. The unique design of this pathway will allow students to accelerate through the learning standards in more of a credentialing structure versus a seat time, credit based structure. Once students have met the learning criteria, they will move on to the next learning requirement. With this type of structure, we anticipate that families of gifted and talented students may also want to participate. A long-term outcome would be that more students at the high school level would want to be a part of this pathway, therefore, in person instruction would need to think about restructuring the learning experience that they offer so that students are not “stuck” in a credit based/seat time structure.

- A. Describe your plan for collecting and reviewing data to assess your innovation outcomes. **Fermi estimating impact game plan.**

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) System map Interim (I) Summative (S)	Frequency of Data Collection	Person(s) Responsible for Collection and Data Quality
1. Student Enrollment	B, I,	Information on our student requirements for this program will be shared with our administrative team, school leadership teams, staff meetings, and families to aid in student enrollment in remote learning.	Josh Tripp, Principal
2. Students engaging in experiences across collaborative districts	B,I	Our teacher will track student participation in experiences in and across districts	Josh Tripp, Principal and teacher to be hired
3. Attendance	B, I, S	Our high school tracks daily attendance, we will adhere to the in person attendance policy in our district for expectations for remote students	Josh Tripp, Principal
4. Course Completion (Credits)	B, I, S	Our hired teacher will work with our BHS Guidance Department to ensure students enrolled in remote	Josh Tripp, Principal and BHS Guidance Department

learning are on track for course completion and course credits.

5.	Shared Professional Development Opportunities Setting and Keeping Collaborative Meetings	B	Our partnering districts are all members of Penobscot River Education Partnership (PREP) and meet on a monthly basis. Information will be shared in this network.	Josh Tripp, Principal, and Evelyn Beaulieu, Director of Curriculum, PREP contact
7.	Student academic assessments: State and Local	B, I, S	The state assessment testing are given in the spring and fall for ELA and math, spring testing for science. Local assessments are given according to our local assessment plan throughout the school year. We will track student academic performance to ensure students are at the same level as their peers.	Josh Tripp, Principal, and Evelyn Beaulieu, Director of Curriculum
8.	Capturing the experience through qualitative data	B, I, S	Remote learning students and families will be interviewed throughout the school year for feedback	Josh Tripp, Principal and teacher to be hired
9.	Social Emotional Data PEAR Assessment (\$10/student) https://www.pearinc.org/	B, I, S	Our hired teacher will integrate social emotional data collection into the instruction. We will work with our partnering district to all use the same tools and timeline for data collection.	Josh Tripp, Principal and teacher to be hired
	Coordinating with our special education services, social work	B, I, S	Monthly updates at administrative and staff meetings will communicate student progress with all educational partners.	Josh Tripp, Principal and teacher to be hired
	Narrative stories of pursuing goals – student interviews Measuring Career Readiness	B, I, S	RSU 25 is the second district in Maine to partner with MELMAC and JMG for a local K – 12 Aspire Grant. The focus of this grant is to coordinate and communicate career development opportunities for our students.	Josh Tripp, Principal and teacher to be hired Jen Therrien and Jordan Daley, Aspire Golden Bucks
	Teacher Evaluation	S	An evaluation of staff will be done on an ongoing basis and summarized yearly to be sure our teacher is effective in instruction, online engagement, management, communication and planning.	Josh Tripp, Principal

B. 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.

PDSA and Fermi estimates (first year and long-term estimates)

The first 2 years of costs will be supported by the award funds. An advantage of the model we are proposing is we have two options to move forward, the first is to work to recruit students in our district and hire a full time teacher in our local district to provide remote learning. The second advantage is because we are working in partnership with four PREP districts, and if after two years, our local district student numbers go below sustainability for a full time teacher in our district, we can purchase seats with another district. This is a unique aspect of our application with four partnering districts. If we do purchase student seats in partnership with another district, the expectation is our RSU 25 students will still participate in Bucksport High School activities and events.

One of our PDSA cycles was sustainability, is this remote learning pathway sustainable after the life of the grant? We propose the following ongoing steps to ensure sustainability.

Task/step 1 – Identify the successes from the pilot year. (i.e. # of students, # of credits earned)

Task/step 2 - To the greatest extent possible, quantify these successes in regards to impact on local budget

Task/step 3 –Provide data gathered above to the Superintendent of Schools to make the case for continued funding for the collaboration.

Task/step 4 – Identify other potential revenue sources

- Grants
- Tuition students
- Reallocation of local resources

If after two years we do purchase seats with another district, RSU 25 will use local tuition funds that are already in our local budget to support and sustain our model of remote learning. As long as we continue to recruit students from within and from area districts that want to be able to pursue a remote pathway, this model will sustain itself.

- C. 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.

Summary of PDSA cycles (including prototyping PDSA cycles)

We have a distinct advantage when working with our community partners; we have the written Brewer document, staff, and their experience with students to share with our teacher leadership teams, local School Board members, and Curriculum Steering Committee members. During these feasibility review conversations, the major topic of conversation became one of our PDSAs, student recruitment: “Will RSU 25 be able to recruit the number of Grade 7 – 12 students needed whose educational needs match our criteria for our remote learning collaborative?”

Our desired outcome is to recruit 12 – 15 students by fall 2022, whose educational needs match our criteria for our remote learning collaborative, and our community partners support the following steps:

Task/step 1 – Finalize our local school plan and our partnership with our area remote learning schools.

Task/step 2 - Finalize our student participation criteria for our remote learning collaborative.

Task/step 3 – Meet with our school teacher leadership teams to update them on our remote learning collaborative and request student nominations.

Task/step 4 – Have our teacher on board and students recruited to participate by fall 2022.

During our conversations with our teacher leadership teams, local School Board members, and Curriculum Steering Committee members, another topic of conversation that became another PDSA is scheduling. We will look to establish an asynchronous program for students. Students will access the instruction for their courses through a

common, online platform among the partnering districts. Students will access synchronous sessions with teacher/case worker who will be a content specialist, more as a tutorial session. These can be scheduled around courses taken in person in school or at CTE centers.

Our desired outcome is to provide remote learning pathway for our students that meet the established criteria for this pathway and our community partners support the following steps:

Task/step 1 – Decide on a platform that will address the academic needs of all students.

Task/step 2 - Identify content specialists available to everyone in the collaborative.

Task/step 3 – Create a schedule of tutorial blocks that students can access based on their individual schedules.

Task/step 4 – Monitor to ensure students are getting the support that they need.

Students will successfully complete the courses needed to graduate while simultaneously being able to access in-person courses that meet their individual needs at their own school.

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.

Fermi estimation

Funding for this project will need to fund the first two years in order to build revenue from tuition students or RSU 25 students that want to continue with our remote learning pathway. For the first year, we will hire a full remote teaching specialist. The anticipated cost of this would be \$65,279 with salary and benefits for the first year. We also anticipate that we will need to make sure this specialist has curriculum supplies for an estimated cost of \$3,500, online subscriptions as purchased services of \$3,500 and technology at an estimated cost of \$12,000. We also have budgeted to work in collaboration with our partnering school districts to contribute to a remote learning evaluation for a cost of \$3,000. Our budget provides stipends, \$10,000 for high school in person teachers so that they can “approve” the assessments and standards for students. This way we will not need to hire multiple certified content area teachers.

The total costs for our remote learning pathway for RSU 25 is \$97,279.00