# 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.*

Harpswell Coastal Academy is committed to engaging students in authentic learning through experiences in our local communities and ecosystems. Students in grades 5 - 12 regularly participate in fieldwork in their classes by doing service projects, collecting data on and making observations of natural phenomena, interviewing local experts, or experiencing something related to their studies. Students have also periodically done internships, work/study and service learning projects in our high school grades. This kind of work is integral to our place-based approach to education, though it has not been as fruitful or consistent (over time and across grades) as we need it to be.

One of our current challenges is this: how might we use community-based learning to help students find their life's work(s)? Community-based learning is a category of experiences we define as involving internships, work study, and service learning. It is alongside the aforementioned category of fieldwork, which is a current school-wide practice and a core component of Expeditionary Learning, which is the school model HCA follows. In our thinking, both fieldwork and community-based learning fall under the umbrella category of field experiences.

Additionally, HCA currently offers opportunities for students in grades 9 - 12 who know they want to go to college (early college) and students who know they want to go right to work after graduation (Region 10 Technical School), but these programs do not fit the needs of all of our students, nor do they necessarily give the students participating in them a clear sense of direction.

**So, we would like to increase our capacity for more individualized community-based learning opportunities in grades 11 and 12 through providing service learning, internship, and work study opportunities.** Students are eager for more purposeful and tailored learning experiences as they approach graduation, and we want to see more of our students graduating with community connections that will help them achieve their post-secondary goals.

**Our innovation is establishing a Community-Based Learning Program for our 11th and 12th graders, accompanied by building student and organizational capacity for learning from experience in grades 5 - 10.**

**We will also build capacity into our current transportation system for providing more regular access to off campus experience for our students.**

Recovering from the pandemic will not just be done on an individual basis, but on a community basis. So, to a significant degree, people will recover depending on how connected they are to the communities (e.g. school, home, work) they find themselves in. After a year of remote or hybrid learning, many students are looking for opportunities to do authentic work and help others in their local communities, which HCA intents to build into the "new normal" of the coming years. Our goal is to give our students opportunities to apply what they learn in classes and in earlier grades to the novel contexts they encounter through our Community-Based Learning Program, and that this will be a motivating and clarifying force as they approach graduation and enter life after high school.

B. Identify which students would be impacted, targeted, or supported by the innovation.
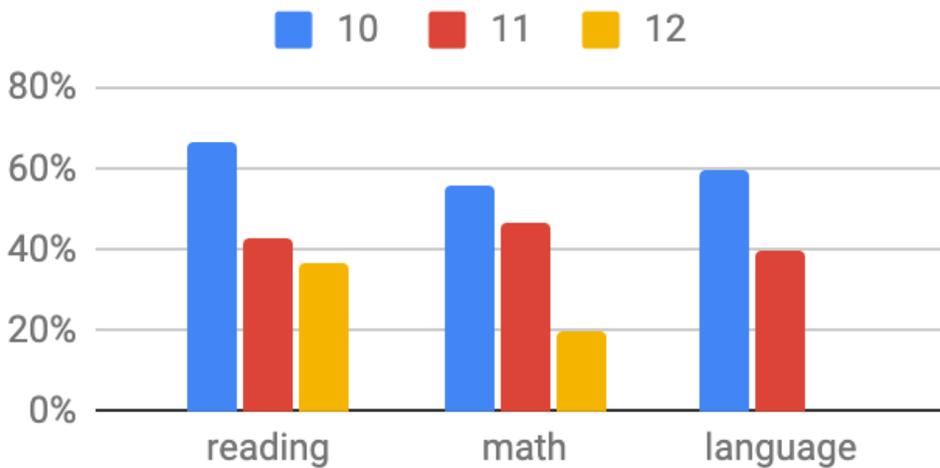
*Review the evidence – quantitative and qualitative data and research – that indicates this group of students is considered the most vulnerable and would benefit from the described innovation.*

*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.*

HCA's Community-Based Learning Program will focus on our 11th and 12th grade students. A problem that is not unique to HCA is decreasing academic engagement and achievement for seniors, which can be affectionately known as senior slump. For a significant number of HCA students, though, senior slump can start as early as their junior year. This decrease in academic engagement and achievement is expressed through our NWEA data through the following table and graph:
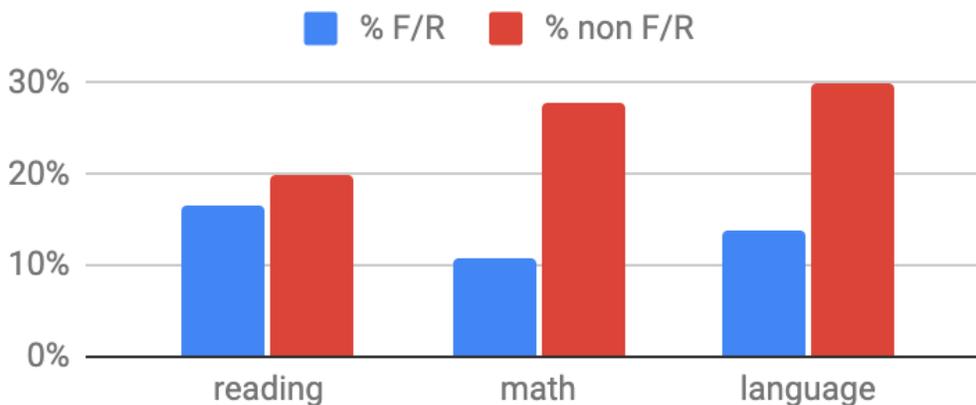
| GRADE | 10 | 11 | 12 |
|---|---|---|---|
| reading | 67% | 43% | 36% |
| math | 56% | 47% | 20% |
| language | 60% | 40% | NA |

## Percent of Grades 10, 11 and 12 Students Meeting NWEA Growth Targets

Legend: 10 (blue), 11 (red), 12 (yellow)

Bar chart with y-axis from 0% to 80%. Categories: reading, math, language.
- reading: 10 ≈ 66%, 11 ≈ 43%, 12 ≈ 36%
- math: 10 ≈ 55%, 11 ≈ 46%, 12 ≈ 19%
- language: 10 ≈ 59%, 11 ≈ 39%

While academic under-engagement for 11th and 12 graders might not be a "big deal" for students of privilege or who have multiple protective factors in their lives, it can be debilitating for students in poverty, with disabilities, or with other barriers to their education (see Risk and Protective Factors for ACES). HCA's school-wide percentage of identified students with IEP's is 28%, which is 44% above the state average of 19.4%. Our percentage of students receiving Free and Reduced lunch is 49%. In the below chart, average percentages of students meeting their growth targets on the 20/21 NWEA's who receive free and reduced lunch is up to half as much as those who do not receive free/reduced lunch.
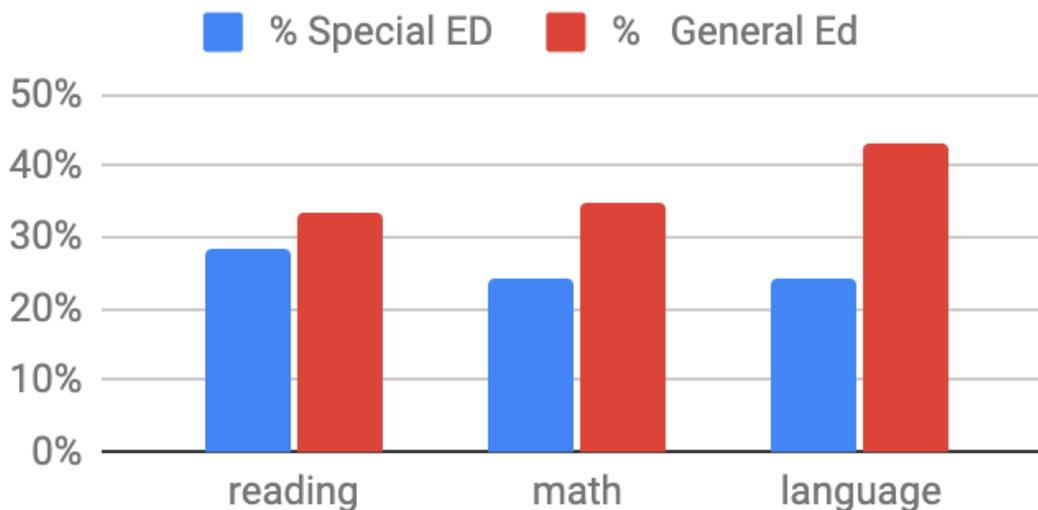
## Free/Reduced Lunch Recipients v. Non Recipients (Percent reaching growth target for NWEA)

Legend: % F/R (blue), % non F/R (red)

Bar chart with y-axis from 0% to 30%. Categories: reading, math, language.
- reading: % F/R ≈ 16%, % non F/R ≈ 20%
- math: % F/R ≈ 11%, % non F/R ≈ 27%
- language: % F/R ≈ 14%, % non F/R ≈ 30%

Percentage of students meeting their NWEA growth goals:

The difference in percentage of students who meet their projected growth is similarly alarming, though not as dramatic, for special education students. This makes sense due to the targeted supports special education students receive through their IEP's:

## Special Education Growth v. General Education Growth (Percent reaching growth target for NWE...

**■ % Special ED     ■ %  General Ed**



Importantly, the above charts represent growth, not achievement. So, they are not comparing the end points for both groups, but rather how often the change from fall to spring testing met individualized growth targets. One thing this data suggests is that academic disengagement has a bigger negative impact on special education students than on general education students.

Anecdotally, we see an increase in senior engagement each year as graduation approaches and students clearly see how uncompleted assignments or coursework could keep them from graduating. This recovery after the dip is not without its cost, as students can be disengaged 4 - 12 months before graduation. One of our goals for including both 11th and 12 graders in this innovation is so that they do not fall into this dip in the first place and stay engaged throughout their junior and senior years.

Also, each year we have 1 or 2 students out of 20 to 25 seniors who dropout of high school.  Very often, these students are in part pulled out of school by the need to work and have an income, and we believe a stronger connection between work and schooling would give them more support to get to graduation. In the past, this option has been mostly accessed by our more motivated students because work/study has largely been something students initiated independently without school supports or clear structures. Having it as a part of our Community-Based Learning Program would formalize the supports and make it more accessible to all kinds of students, increasing equity.

Finally, we envision community-based learning opportunities as a key part of students' IEP transition plans. The work envisioned for Community-Based Learning has many parallels to transition planning, and the infrastructure and support we build for it would support both our general education students as well as our special education students set and transition into their post secondary plans.

While our Community-Based Learning Program is not focused on any one of the NWEA testing areas or any one of the identified subgroups, it is focused broadly on school engagement for our 11th and 12th graders. We believe that this will have a positive impact on all of our learners who participate in the program, and most notably on our students with risk factors that correlate with lower levels of academic growth.

## 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.*

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**<u>Meeting the needs of the identified target student population</u>**

Current 11th and 12th grade students:
- We are targeting our 11th & 12th grade students with the goals of increasing their:
  - academic engagement and growth
  - levels of community engagement
  - graduation rates
  - awareness of and access to post secondary work and study opportunities

After 12th Grade:
- We will decrease our 5th year enrollment numbers using community-based learning opportunities to motivate under-engaged students to complete their high school education within 4 years.
- We will develop and support an alumni network to support them in achieving their next steps as adults.

<u>Practice / Structure</u>
- We will intentionally use whole class experiences and external partnerships in grades 5 - 10 to support the individual and small group Community-Based Learning opportunities for 11th and 12th graders. Students in grades 5 - 10 will:
  - participate in class-based fieldwork and service regularly across the curriculum
  - use Inquiry Journals to develop meaning from their field experiences
  - practice communication skills and develop the habits necessary for success in community-based learning placements
- We will build a culture of service and community engagement by:
  - engaging students in grades 5 - 10 with whole class service opportunities
  - providing students in grades 9 - 12 with scheduled time for individual service
  - creating a clear system and routines for logging and celebrating service hours.
- We will increase our transportation capacity to get 11th and 12th graders to their community-based learning opportunities.
- We will develop and maintain strategic community partnerships.
- We will create a position to run the Community-Based Learning Program.
- We will provide professional development opportunities for teachers around creating and supporting meaningful fieldwork and service learning opportunities.

<u>Policy</u>
- We will develop clear policies and procedures around fieldwork (e.g. what is a teachers role, admin role, family role in responding to disengagement).
- We will develop policy around passage (grades 8 and 10) and 5th year enrollment.
- We will revise the graduation policy to incorporate elements of service, as well as to include community-based learning alongside recognition of early college and CTE options.

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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. Hire a Community-Based Learning Coordinator | To ensure quality and consistency of the program, and to build organizational capacity. | I | August, 2021 | Head of School |
| 2.Articulate how Community-Based Learning fits into our Strategic Plan. | To align our Community-Based Learning goals with our broader organizational goals. | P | July, 2021 | Head of School w/ Leadership Team |
| 3. Clarify fieldwork processes and expectations for teachers and students, grades 5 - 12 | To provide consistency around field experiences organization-wide. | P | August, 2021 | Teacher Leaders |
| 4.Developing processes, routines and structures for the Community-Based Learning program. | To enable 11th & 12th grade students to access Community-Based Learning in the fall | P | November, 2021 | Community-Based Learning Coordinator |
| 5. Design and schedule professional development on fieldwork and service learning with EL Education (Expeditionary Learning) | To increase teacher capacity to incorporate work with community partners into classes | I | August, 2021 | Dean of Studies & Students |
| 6. Identify community partners | To have CBL opportunities ready for interested 11th and 12th grade | P | August - September 2021 | Community-Based Learning Coordinator |

| | students and identify opportunities for class fieldwork or service learning | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 7. Identify transportation options (school, public, bikes, etc.) for students doing CBL | To remove barriers to student participation in the program | P | | August 2021 | Community-Based Learning Coordinator |
| 8. Work with students to build CBL into their schedules and long term academic plans | To make community engagement a purposeful and motivating part of a student's education | I | | Fall 2021 and Winter 2022 Trimesters <ul><li>Orientation</li><li>Senior Seminar</li></ul> | Community-Based Learning Coordinator |
| 9. Regular check ins with students teachers, and community partners | To ensure the quality of student experience and performance in CBL placements | I | | Ongoing throughout the school year | Community-Based Learning Coordinator |
| 10. Create and administer surveys for formative and summative feedback on the program by trimester | To inform our next steps in developing the program | I | | November, March, June of 21/22 and 22/23 school years | Community-Based Learning Coordinator |
| 11. Develop and revise school policies on passage, graduation and fieldwork | To align HCA policy and practice | P | | October/November 2021 | Head of School |
| 12. Year-end review | Monitor outcomes and measures of goals | I | | June 2022, 2023 | Community-Based Learning Coordinator |
| 13. Establish alumni network | To maintain connections with and among HCA alumni. | I | | June 2022 | School Counselor and school secretary. |

## 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).*

| | | Student Outcomes | Instructional Practices | Student Practices |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1st year** | **Inquiry Journals** (grades 5 - 12) | Increased ability to develop meaning out of field experiences | Beginning use of inquiry journals for fieldwork | Develop routines around journaling during and after fieldwork |
| | **Culture of Service** (grades 5 - 12) | Increased community engagement | Increased opportunities and expectations for service | Students can articulate the purpose and expectations for service<br><br>Student voice in choosing service opportunities. |
| | **Path to graduation** (grades 11 & 12) | Students articulate how field experiences support graduation and post secondary goals. | Incorporate Community-Based Learning Seminar into student schedules. | Increased participation in service learning, internship or work study. (grades 11,12) |
| | **Post-secondary planning** (grades 11 & 12) | Students' post secondary goals are broadened and driven by their field experiences. | Creating structures for student voice. | Students have voice in finding and choosing community-based learning opportunities (grades 11, 12). |
| | | | | |
| **2nd year** | **Inquiry Journals** (grades 5 - 12) | Students present about and reflect on their learning in fieldwork experiences though summative work, portfolios, and student-led conferences | Consistent use of inquiry journals for fieldwork grades 5 - 12 | Students use several methods/ strategies/ formats for inquiry journaling |
| | **Culture of Service** (grades 5 - 12) | Increased student awareness of and engagement with community partners | Students are held accountable for meeting a number of service hours for passage and graduation | Students seek out service opportunities |
| | **Path to graduation** (grades 11 & 12) | Students can articulate how they expanded their knowledge and skills related to a standard in a novel context through CBL. | The CBL Coordinator maps possible connections between experiences and HCA standards or other graduation requirements for use with students. | Students connect their work in CBL placements to standards and Habits of Work and Learning (HOWLs) in CBL seminars. |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Post-secondary planning** (grades 11 & 12) | Students in 10th and 11th grades have the ability to customize their high school education with community-based learning experiences that support their personal and graduation goals. | Faculty and the CBL Coordinator prepare students to begin CBL experiences 1-2 trimesters in advance. | Students use portfolios, crew conversations, and seminars as places to explore possible community-based learning experiences. |
| | | | | |
| **5th year** | **Inquiry Journals** (grades 5 - 12) | Students are comfortable presenting the results of their fieldwork experiences to community audiences | Consistent and independent use of inquiry journals for fieldwork, especially in grades 9 - 12 | Students independently use a variety of strategies in their inquiry journals to develop meaning in field work |
| | **Culture of Service** (grades 5 - 12) | Students have a consistent presence and access to opportunities in the work of partner organizations. | Teachers and students work together to plan and schedule opportunities for meaningful service, with several year-to-year projects established. | Teachers and students work together to plan and schedule opportunities for meaningful service. |
| | **Path to graduation** (grades 11 & 12) | Students play an active role in creating their own community-based learning experience that is aligned to their academic program. | Teachers regularly use learning targets to help students connect field work tasks with content standards. | Students in grades 5-12 connect the work they do in the field with academic standards and plan their path towards passage and graduation. |
| | **Post-secondary planning** (grades 11 & 12) | Students broaden their understanding of community resources and local opportunities for work and education through their learning at HCA. | Teachers discuss post secondary opportunities with students in conjunction with fieldwork, service, and CBL. | Students plan for their life's work by reflecting on their learning and experiences in the community. |
| | | | | |

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)<br>Interim (I)<br>Summative (S) | Frequency of Data Collection | Person(s) Responsible for Collection and Data Quality |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1.IEP transition goals that the program directly supports | B, I, S | Annual: spring | Director of Student Services & Community-Based Learning Coordinator |
| 2.Alumni survey for post secondary activities and engagement with the alumni network. | S | Annual: fall | School Counselor and school secretary |
| 3. Percentage of current 11th and 12th graders who have post-secondary plans and are actively taking steps on the plan | B, I, S | Biannual: fall, spring | School Counselor |
| 4. Student surveys around their experience of the Community-Based Learning Program | S | Annual: spring | Community-Based Learning Coordinator |
| 5.Use of EL fieldwork checklist tool - comparing fall to spring each year | I, S | Biannual: fall, spring | Dean of Studies & Students |
| 6. Demographics of students participating in the Community-Based Learning Program | S | Annual: spring | Community-Based Learning Coordinator |
| 7. NWEA growth measures for students participating in Community-Based Learning Program as compared to individual's scores in the year prior and to current year cohort not participating. | S | Annual: spring | Community-Based Learning Coordinator |
| 8. Site surveys - monitoring the quality of experience of the individuals and | S | Trimester (3x annually) | Community-Based Learning Coordinator |

| organizations who host our students. | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |

C. Describe how you will scale 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.*

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The Community-Based Learning Program will scale in several key ways: organically, strategically and sustainably.

The first is organically. Both the quality of our students' experiences and the quality of the hosting individual/organizations' experiences are key to maintaining and growing the number of students who opt in to the program and the number of placements we have available. Having tight feedback loops - especially for our host sites - will be key for getting the program off the ground as well as ensuring it will grow organically.

Strategically, we need to be partnering with organizations that align with our school's mission and vision as well as with the needs and aspirations of our students. We will need to be thinking about establishing partnerships with organizations for our school wide service efforts in grades 5 - 10 that can then become a host site for an individual student or small group for our Community-Based Learning Program. A great example of this would be the organization Harpswell Aging at Home ([link](link)). This is an organization that we have done intermittent service projects for (leaf clean up for individuals, baking for the weekly meal) that could become an internship or service learning placement for our Community-Based Learning Program. Also, being geographically centered between our two campuses increases our ability to provide transportation for both whole class and individual involvement.

Finally, sustainability for HCA comes down to finances and personnel. When HCA was begun, we had internships and service learning as a core activity. Initially, responsibility was distributed among the staff for making this happen, but that came into conflict too often with daily teaching duties. The next stage was to add this to an administrator's list of responsibilities, but that, too, would suffer from competing with the day-to-day campus demands of being a building administrator. So, what we have realized is that in order to effectively shift field experiences from the whole class level (fieldwork) to the individual and small group levels (community-based learning), we need a designated position to manage and tend to this.

Financial sustainability comes down to enrollment numbers at a public charter school. After several years of declining enrollment, we are now increasing our enrollment numbers (176 students for 20/21; 195+ projected for 21/22; with a charter contract cap of 210 +/- 10%). Key to sustaining our enrollment numbers and growth is our retention rate. A successful program that both retains and attracts 11th and 12 grade students would support this current trend and lead to financial sustainability.

D. Describe the feasibility study 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.

When we started the design thinking course, we were concerned about how student access to community-based learning in terms of geography, transportation, and scheduling would impact our ability to build capacity for off campus learning for our older students. The design thinking process was extremely helpful in drawing in more perspectives on the topic. We did individual interviews with current students, alumni, teachers, and community partners. We also had discussions with groups of students and faculty to explore our vision for community-based learning and how it fit within our long-term strategic plan for the school.

We learned that internships and service learning opportunities students experienced through school in the past were valuable experiences, but were often disconnected from what students were learning in school or towards graduation requirements. Based on this, we envision that a large component of the Community-Based Learning Coordinator's role will be to help bridge this gap between field experience and in-school learning. This will be done through in-school seminars for students participating in community-based learning, individual check-ins with students and community partners, and long term academic planning regarding how community-based learning experiences contribute to graduation readiness. Many of our older students who have struggled with attendance or dropped out have had jobs or been pursuing goals outside of school; in the future we'd like to help students like these connect their work experience to graduation requirements and other professional opportunities to decrease dropout rates.

We also learned that teachers need more training and support in incorporating fieldwork and service learning into their regular practice. Finding and maintaining community partnerships is something we need a dedicated staff member to help manage if we want a more streamlined process for teachers and older students interested in exploring experiences outside of school. We plan to incorporate professional development from EL Education on fieldwork and service into next year, as well as developing consistent expectations and practices for off campus learning that will prepare students for more independent community-based learning experiences for 11th and 12th grades. A core component of this practice will be the use of inquiry journals as a tool for developing meaning and discovering curricular connections after a field experience.

Through the course of developing this plan to innovate our approach to community-based learning, we widened our focus to consider how we engage students with learning outside of school systemically. The inclusion of fieldwork and service practices in grades 5 - 10 over the course of the next several years will enable our students to begin planning and broadening their horizons for their life's work after school early on, and will build the foundation for more meaningful community-based learning experiences on the path to graduation.

## 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.*

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Additional Position: $68K salary (ceiling on salary steps) plus benefis  for a  total of $85K annually, time 2 years.
**$170K**

Professional Development (coaching plus PD session) through EL Education: 2 full days a year for 2 years ($3,500 x 2 x 2 = $14k):
**$14K**

Transportation Capacity (extra driver hours/gas): 2 hours of a mid-day run: 340 hours a year @ $19.50 an hour plus benefits (19.50 X 25% = 24.37).    $8,287.5 X 2 years = $16,575. Fuel: $4k annually, X 2 year = $8k
**$24,575**

Administrative overhead  - 1% of $208, 575:  $2,085.75
**$2,085**

**Grand Total: $210,660**

QUESTION: Do we include time of existing staff staff (e.g. schools counselor collecting data) - **???**

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