

Teaching Outside: The Box

MSAD 17

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Overview:

Research unequivocally shows that learning outdoors benefits children in a number of ways, both academically and socially. However, teaching outdoors can be a logistical nightmare. Balancing curriculum, behaviors, and materials all while providing an enriching, fulfilling experience for students is nearly impossible to do without extensive planning and preparation. Providing teachers with the support they need, through co-teaching, modeling, coaching, instructional resources, professional development, and curriculum will make outdoor learning productive and meaningful. Our innovation would provide a two-year, full-time Outdoor Learning Coordinator who will support student learning by modeling instruction and co-teaching in outdoor learning settings. The Outdoor Learning Coordinator will work together with classroom teachers to enrich the curriculum and provide students with a learning environment that boosts engagement and fosters self-esteem and motivation. Standards in all subject areas will be covered using online unit plans and Unit Resource Boxes created by the coordinator. A fully furnished yurt classroom will provide storage for outdoor learning materials as well as an alternative space for classroom activities in inclement weather. Most importantly, the Outdoor Learning Coordinator will work regularly with students and teachers to provide meaningful outdoor learning experiences.

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