

**Nature-based Outdoor Learning for PreK – 4  
MSAD #28  
Contact: Debra McIntyre**

**Overview:**

The MSAD #28 RREV proposal focuses on increasing outdoor learning experiences for our youngest learners, specifically 380 learners in grades PreK – 4. Our schools are built among the mountains, lakes, rivers, harbors, and shorelines of Midcoast Maine. As a result, our students are surrounded by an array of accessible ecosystems. We want to create outdoor learning spaces and offer programming for students and teachers that will enhance their educational experience. Due to research ([Greater Good Magazine](#), Cultivating Outdoor Classrooms, Lens on Outdoor Learning) on the positive impacts outdoor learning can have, we began looking more closely at outdoor learning opportunities in 2017. With the onset of the pandemic outdoor experiences **became a daily necessity**. In 2021 we will introduce our first Pre-K program and it will be grounded in nature-based learning experiences for young children. We believe that through partnering with local and regional outdoor organizations and experts in the field we can create outdoor learning spaces, training opportunities for staff, and innovative programming that will benefit all PreK-4 students.

This proposal will provide learning experiences on-site at identified outdoor learning spaces as well as in the “wild-spaces”. Students will learn through play, exploration and have opportunities to utilize a variety of tools and materials to enhance and extend their learning, via their grade level learning kits. In addition, these experiences will be connected to off-site learning field trips that are directly connected to the learning standards and curriculum. Staff will be partnered with a regional expert in an identified area of study. Staff will partner with their expert to co-plan and co-facilitate the student learning activities. We believe this “residency” model provides the expertise, support and confidence our staff needs to make outdoor learning a common part of our curriculum. A learning coordinator (stipended position) will work with staff to identify local experts to collaborate with each grade level. This will be a true partnership.

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