RREV Academic Innovation Sustainability Template

This template provides an outline of the components required of a RREV Innovative Pilot Sustainability Plan. The information in this template will serve as the basis for requests for schools/districts to proceed with an individually designed RREV Pilot Sustainability Plan.

Section 1: Define the Primary Sustainability Need

Sustainability for your pilot innovation can be described in three different levels of impact which we will define below.

Maintain – Least amount of contextual change. You are basically working with the same group of students and teachers to solidify the potential impact of your pilot and gather enough data to consider the pilot's potential in new contexts.

Spread – Innovation or reform implemented in greater numbers of **similar grade level classrooms** and includes the activities, structures, materials, and underlying beliefs, norms, and pedagogical principles associated with the change strategy. –Coburn, 2003

Scale - Innovation or reform is implemented in greater numbers of **diverse grade level classrooms and schools** and includes the activities, structures, materials, and underlying beliefs, norms, and pedagogical principles associated with the change strategy.

A. In the table below, select the level of implementation and **describe the pilot-identified student needs / problems that your plan will continue to address** for both the 2023/2024 school year and for the next 3-5 years.

2023 / 2024 School Year
Identify: MAINTAIN / SPREAD / SCALE

Our sustainability plan will include maintaining what we have already started with our Connect, Reach and Teach All Children with Outdoor Learning, as well as, spreading to include more teachers/staff and students.

Sixty-six percent of students at Katahdin Schools (RSU 89) are identified as low socio-economic status (SES). This group of students is considered the most vulnerable and would benefit from our innovation. In addition, the school systems in low-SES communities are often under-resourced, negatively affecting students' academic progress and outcomes (Aikens & Barbarin, 2008). With an integrated curriculum and focus on the whole child, students will benefit in many ways.

The RSU 89 innovation will focus on a whole child approach to education in order to support our students' cognitive development, social-emotional development, and physical development. A whole-child approach to education with outdoor learning as the central focus is a way to strengthen educational equity and ensure every child reaches their full potential.

This innovation will meet the needs of all PreK-5, middle school students, and high school students through a comprehensive whole-child approach that focuses on cognitive, social-emotional, and physical development that uses outdoor education as its central feature. Children will be happier and more successful at school potentially decreasing the instance of childhood obesity, diagnosis of attention deficit disorder, increasing the physical stamina, coping skills, self-regulation and overall wellbeing of children. The creativity and novelty of incorporating the outdoors into everyday teaching will lead to teachers having greater job satisfaction and

less burnout. Teachers being happier and experiencing less stress will lead to an increase in teacher retention which in turn will benefit all of our students.

Providing students with open-air outdoor learning spaces that can be used throughout all seasons of the year and will be conducive to whole-child learning. These spaces will support the integrated curriculum and also the connection to nature that research has shown, which is so vital to building resilience and healing from trauma. Physical benefits will also result from outdoor learning spaces. Recent research highlights the increase of occupational therapy in schools and an overall decrease in endurance and strength of young children (Hanscom, 2016). Having frequent opportunities to walk and run on uneven ground, balance on logs and climb natural structures all support gross motor skills and core strength. Giving children the opportunity to move will allow for more focused individuals with an increase in the ability to cope with small problems and self-regulate at a higher level.

3-5 year plan

Identify: MAINTAIN / SPREAD / SCALE

Numerous studies have shown that an integrated curricular approach that includes place-based strategies and outdoor learning leads to academic success and positive social-emotional outcomes. By continuing to utilize innovative outdoor learning pedagogy we believe that we will continue to increase positive outcomes for all students. The need for a whole child approach to education to support cognitive development, social-emotional development, and physical development will continue to be a need for our students.

B. Identify which additional students would be impacted, targeted, or supported as a result of your sustainability plan.

Review and describe the evidence (quantitative and qualitative data and research) that demonstrates the impact your pilot had on the original student populations and describe how this data informs your choice to Maintain / Spread / Scale.

Use data that will provide evidence your innovation supports the target student population. This may 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 additional students that would be impacted will be the classes of the teachers who opt into the Whole Staff Cohort program. With 20 slots available this will expand our student group by approximately 12 additional classes which results in approximately 180 students having increased opportunities to learn outdoors.

As a result of data collected, and more fully explained later, we recognize that in order to sustain this innovation we need to spread it to more staff members. Doing so will increase the frequency and opportunities for more students to have access to the benefits of outdoor learning to support whole-child development.

With the goal of reaching more staff, more students would have the opportunity to participate in outdoor learning as they progress through their educational years.

Section 2: Data Informed Sustainability

A. Provide the Logic Model your school used to implement your Pilot

Here is a sample of our district logic model.

RREV District Logic Model

District: Katahdin Schools

Instructions: First in the box below, write two to three sentences describing the problem your RREV project is addressing. Next, create a logic model in Table 1. Please refer to your project application for the resources, strategies and activities, outputs, outcomes, and impacts.

Problem Statement

The problem is that the public schools have not been focused on the whole child (cognitive, social/emotional, physical). Additionally, our region has difficulty attracting and retaining quality personnel. There are evolving needs in the region and currently we do not have a pathway to support students who desire a career in the outdoors.

Table 1. Project Logic Model[1]

Resources	Strategies and Activities	Outputs	Short-Term Outcomes (Year 1)	Long-Term Outcomes (Year 2)	Impact
Staff	Engage in creating curriculum	Teaching the Curriculum	K-5 teachers build confidence in science content	K-5 teachers build confidence in science content to teach science outdoors	All teachers recognize the outdoors as a place for teaching and learning
	Engage in PD around brain friendly strategies	Implement brain friendly strategies with students	Teachers will add brain-friendly strategies to their teaching tool-kit	Teachers will add brain-friendly strategies to their teaching tool-kit outdoors	Improved teacher effectiveness and job satisfaction
	Collaborating with RREV Coach and RREV Team	Contacting local contractor to develop trail	Students learn more efficiently and effectively		

B. Describe the data you collected about your innovation pilot outcomes that will be used to inform and shape your plan to MAINTAIN / SPREAD / SCALE

The data that we have collected includes math and literacy data:
Targets: 75% of students will show growth in literacy. 75% of students will show growth in math.
Results:

1. Out of a total of 113 students (assessed F21-S22) 96 students (85%) showed growth in literacy.
2. Out of a total of 90 students, 70 students (78%) showed growth in math.

Additionally we collected data to determine students feelings about learning outdoors and teacher job satisfaction:
Targets: At least 80% of elementary students will report that they enjoy learning outside. At least 80% of elementary teachers will indicate job satisfaction on the teacher survey each year of the pilot program
Results:

1. Out of a total of 104 students, 96 (92%) reported that they enjoyed learning outside.
2. Out of a total of 14 teachers, 13 reported (93%) satisfaction with their job.

As a result of this data, we recognize that in order to sustain this innovation we need to spread it to more staff members. In order to do this, we will create an incentive program in which staff may participate and reduce the class size PK-2.

C. List new data that you will need to collect to further inform and shape your plan to MAINTAIN / SPREAD / SCALE

The new data we will need is a pre and post survey conducted with staff who participate in the incentive program. We will continue to collect student data.

Section 3: What is the intended impact of your sustainability plan

A. Describe the goals/milestones of your sustainability plan.

Consider how your plan will continue to meet the needs of the identified target student population(s) and describe changes in policy, practice, or structures necessary to MAINTAIN / SPREAD / SCALE your innovation.

2023 / 2024 School Year

One goal is to increase the number of staff members participating in outdoor learning - making it a part of the district culture so that it is not dependent upon specific people. This plan will allow additional teachers to become involved in utilizing the outdoors as a place of learning. Currently students at the elementary building are involved and this will allow for an increased amount of time elementary children spend learning outdoors as well as spread to middle/high school students as all teachers and ed techs are eligible to participate in the Whole Teaching Cohort.

We have made significant progress with our pilot program. We have worked closely with consultants to support curriculum design that is teacher driven and infuses strategies that support effective and efficient learning while incorporating movement and outdoors to support the whole child (cognitive, physical & social emotional). The curriculum shifts have taken place in our elementary school (PK-5) and we now have curricular frameworks that integrate learning that is focused on science content. Curriculum is being designed for our middle and high school outdoor education programs as well. We have carved out 10 outdoor spaces behind our elementary school and created a .6 mile path that will be open to the community and is utilized by the schools.

The current problem that we are planning to address with the additional funding possible with this plan includes supporting staff so that they are better equipped to support the students' whole child development. Many of our teachers lack the understanding of the academic benefits that may be reaped by increasing time outdoors. Our sustainability plan focuses on supporting the staff with developing the habit of utilizing the

outdoors more regularly to support whole child learning. Additionally, staff have expressed that class sizes that exceed 20 students present a barrier to incorporating more outdoor learning. Teachers have also expressed the personal benefits they have experienced when spending more time outdoors. Following are the main components of our sustainability plan.

Define sustainability need(s):

- Support reduced class sizes in PK-2
- Incentive program called the *Whole Staff Cohort* to support increased participation in outdoor teaching and learning by all staff members
- Support staff health and wellness
- Plan staff participation criteria with the aim of increasing the comfort level of incorporating the outdoors into their teaching; weekly journal reflection, weekly wellness activities, minimum of 1 outdoor lesson per week

This additional funding will allow us to fund one additional classroom teacher to reduce the class size of our PK-2 classes and develop 20 stipends for any staff member to participate in a structured and supported plan to increase their own wellness and offer students more opportunities to learn outdoors. The funding will allow us to maintain what we have already started and spread outdoor learning to all teaching students and staff district-wide through the optional incentive program. Interested staff can opt into the pilot extension and will be paid a $1200 stipend for participation. The participation will include weekly Whole Staff Cohort meetings where staff will record and discuss their thoughts, celebrations (personal and professional) and barriers to connecting with students outdoors. Staff will also have consultant support to integrate a minimum of 1 lesson outdoors per week. Support staff including administrative assistants, food service staff, custodians and bus drivers have the opportunity to participate through our after-school program. This has already been approved by our after-school coordinator. The goal is that consistent support and reflection will lead to the habit of incorporating outdoor learning into classroom lessons more often in the future and positively contribute to the health and wellbeing of all staff.

3 – 5 Year Plan

Define sustainability need(s): In the years beyond the RREV funding we will need minimal funding to support the systemic changes that we have made. The following will be implemented to sustain this pilot program beyond the RREV funding:

- continue to embed outdoor learning into the elementary curriculum
- continue revising and implementing policies around the following related topics:
    - Curriculum
    - time outdoors
- curriculum frameworks housed on the school website
-continued partnership with the Northern Maine Outdoor Education Cohort
-continued partnership with the Maine Outdoor Education Program
-continued partnership with the Katahdin Children and Families Foundation
    1. to support reduced class size PK-2
    2. to support increased self-directed learning opportunities for students

Utilization of Title II funds to continue to partner with curriculum consultants to ensure teachers are equipped with the newest research-based strategies to continue to support whole child development and learning. In addition, we will secure local budget support for trail maintenance and equipment replacement/repair.

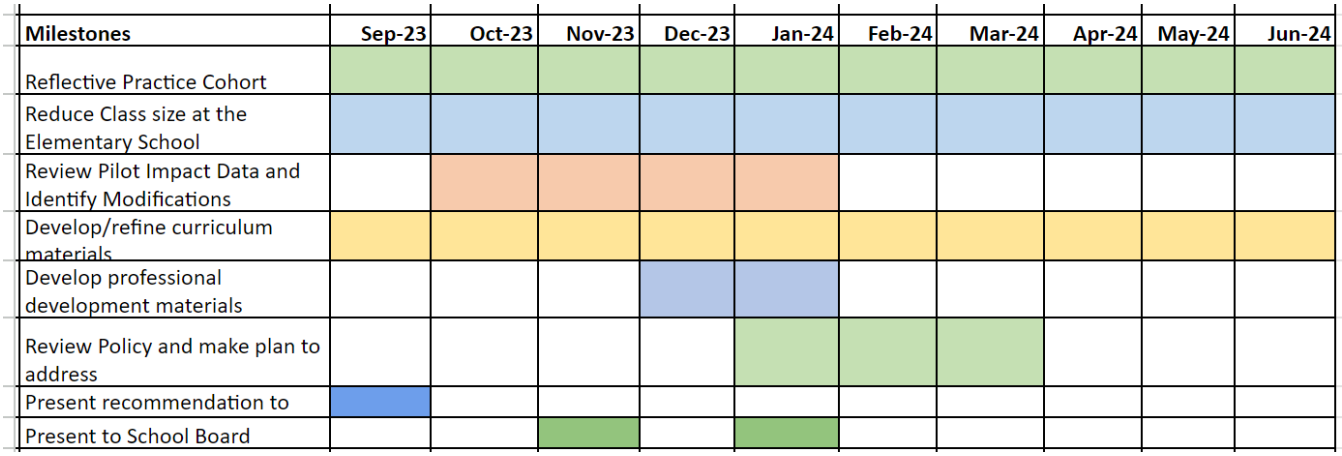
By the end of FY24 curriculum frameworks PK-5 will be uploaded to our website. This will support the systemic changes that are being made and address the challenges of new staff having access to curriculum and assessment that supports integrated and outdoor learning (whole child approach).

We have created a non-profit foundation, the Katahdin Children and Families Foundation, which is gaining much attention for its mission to support children and families in rural communities. This foundation will serve as a partner to aid in maintaining small class sizes at the PK-2 level and continue to offer self-directed learning opportunities through the foundation's self-directed learning center called The Orchard. This year we have been able to offset our school budget by $30,000 through MOUs with the foundation. This partnership will continue to grow and aid in our systemic changes at Katahdin Schools.

Additionally, we will continue to utilize our Title II funding to support the ongoing professional learning with our consultants, Anita Stewart McCafferty and Korah Soll of Rural Aspirations. Our Foss Science partnership with University of Maine will also continue for grades K-5. This ongoing professional development will ensure that teachers have the most up to date research-based strategies to implement and support whole child learning.

Finally, we will also be using our local budget for a portion of the costs that will be required to maintain this systemic change. The local budget will cover costs to ongoing trail maintenance, replacement of outdoor learning gear and equipment as well as repairs that may be needed for our equipment.

B. UMaine GANTT Chart



Section 4: Identify Key Expenses and Necessary Resources

A. Describe budget expenditures and necessary resources required to MAINTAIN / SPREAD / SCALE your innovation through June 2024.

Essential Expenditures:

- teacher salary and benefits $65,000
- staff stipends for participation in…… (Reflective Practice Cohort) $24,000
    - $1200 pp - 20 people
- wellness activities $7,000
- Instructional Supplies - $2000 (For example: pens, colored pencils, pencils, quality journals)
- Outdoor gear (Such as footwear reimbursement) $2000

Necessary Resources:

- MOU's with Katahdin Children and Families Foundation,
- Curriculum Consultants: Stewart PLC and CoWork, Stewart Learning Center Dr. Anita Stewart McCafferty
- Rural Aspirations (Korah Soll)
- Foss Science Partnership with the University of Maine
- Northern Maine Outdoor Education Cohort
- Maine Outdoor Education Cohort
- Volunteers/Community Service to Maintain Outdoor Spaces
- student volunteers (community service hours)
- Outdoor Learning Handbook
- Curriculum created during the pilot implementation
- Curriculum frameworks housed on the school website
- Trails and outdoor spaces created and maintained during the pilot

B. Describe budget expenditures and necessary resources required to MAINTAIN / SPREAD / SCALE your innovation BEYOND June 2024

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.

Essential Expenditures:

Essential expenditures moving forward are not anticipated to be high as the pilot innovation was designed to build necessary support structures with a gradual release of those supports, as the instructional shifts have become incorporated into the school culture.

- $12,000 allocated for gear replacement and trail maintenance
    - replacement of gear - rain pants, warm/waterproof gloves, boots

- replacement of equipment used for outdoors - wooden benches, storage containers
- staff time for trail maintenance

Necessary Resources:

- MOU's with Katahdin Children and Families Foundation,
- Curriculum Consultants: Stewart PLC and CoWork, Stewart Learning Center Dr. Anita Stewart McCafferty
- Rural Aspirations (Korah Soll)
- Foss Science Partnership with the University of Maine
- Northern Maine Outdoor Education Cohort
- Maine Outdoor Education Cohort
- Volunteers/Community Service to Maintain Outdoor Spaces
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