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 impact 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

We will use this award to continue to scale the project from establishing support for outdoor learning for grades PreK through Grade 6 at one elementary school to all grade levels, PreK through Grade 6, at all eight elementary schools in the district.

Define sustainability need(s):

Students at our district's eight elementary schools are struggling academically, socially, and emotionally. Socio-economic and cultural issues that made learning difficult for many of them were exacerbated by the pandemic. The constraints of traditional learning expectations now make academic progress and adherence to behavioral expectations a challenge for many of our district's learners.

According to the needs established in our first pilot, research unequivocally shows that learning outdoors benefits children in a number of ways, both academically and socially. Specific studies show that students who engage in learning experiences outside of the classroom report having higher levels of motivation, recall learning more vividly, and have improved academic performance (Takeuchi et al., 2016; Ryan and Deci, 2017). Research also indicates that as a result of learning outside, students develop social emotional learning skills in the areas of self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision-making (Price, A., 2019).

The academic and social advantages of learning experiences outside of the traditional classroom setting have been made evident in our first two years of outdoor learning programming, at the Agnes Gray School and then with coaching support in 6-week cycles at each of our other seven elementary schools. A third

year of funding would give us the opportunity to solidify the programming that we have introduced to the elementary schools in our district and expand opportunities to additional teachers and their classes.

3-5 year plan

Identify: MAINTAIN / SPREAD / SCALE

The long-term plan is to scale the project to provide outdoor learning opportunities to all students, PreK-Grade 12, in the school district.

Define sustainability need(s):

Our original pilot intended for the first year of our work to focus on Agnes Gray School and, in the second year, to offer limited support to the other elementary schools in the district, primarily in the form of site visits, modeling, and professional development. However, the overwhelming requests for support that came from the other elementary schools led us to shift to a coaching model, with a cycle scheduled in each building. These requests made it evident that there is a need for continued and increased support across the district, not only for our elementary students but at the upper grades as well. They also made it evident that our teachers are energized and excited for this work.

The need for alternative learning experiences is abundantly evident, based on our preliminary work and programming; scaling the pilot to include the Middle and High School students in our district would allow them to benefit from outdoor learning as well. These students, while older, are experiencing many of the same issues that are affecting our elementary students, affecting their academic, social/emotional, and behavioral success. Attendance is suffering, as well as a sense of well-being and belonging. Traditional teaching and learning is not a solution for many of our learners.

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 first year of the pilot, 2021-22, included working directly with 120 students and 8 staff at one elementary school. It also included more intense programming in the form of daily work with one group of first grade students. Data showed an increase in student engagement when learning outdoors and also in teachers' interest in participating in outdoor learning.

The increased scale for the 2023-24 school year will be significant. As part of Oxford Hills' Strategic Goals, outdoor learning will become a district focus for elementary schools. Over 1500 students and 120 staff across eight schools will be supported to engage in outdoor learning. This award will help us create systems for

sustainability. It will also provide a model that can be further scaled to include middle and high school students and staff.

This sustainability plan has been informed by data collected through student surveys that showed that more than 2/3rds of the students expressed that they were glad to learn outside, believed that going outside helped them to learn, liked the outdoor learning experience, and agreed or strongly agreed that they had more opportunities to learn outside than in the past.

In addition, observational data of the first grade focus group indicates that as students adapted to outdoor learning experiences, their ability to stay engaged with tasks during independent work time increased. Similarly, students were more likely to stay engaged with a lesson during whole group instruction having had regular exposure to outdoor learning experiences. Furthermore, students of all ages reported feeling calmer, happier, and more focused when learning outside.

During the 2022-23 school year, or year two of the pilot, the Outdoor Learning Coach (OLC) had the opportunity to support teachers and students with outdoor learning across the district's eight elementary schools. Originally, we had expected that the coach would provide limited support at the district's other elementary schools in the form of providing professional development, coordinating use of outdoor spaces, and hosting site visits to the Agnes Gray School. In anticipation of these offerings, we reached out to elementary principals in the spring of 2022 with a survey to gauge interest for the following school year, expecting that a handful of schools would be interested in participating.

The response was much bigger than had been anticipated. Teachers and administrators at every elementary school requested coaching cycles and support in designing and creating outdoor learning spaces. With this significant change, we also realized we needed to collect different data than during the pilot year. We began measuring how many teachers and students participated in work with the coach. By June of 2023, the OLC had worked directly with 536 students and 36 staff across 8 schools. We also realized that it would be important to find an efficient way to scale up the collection of student and teacher perception data, which we did not collect consistently across the district this year.

Section 2: Data Informed Sustainability

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

RESOURCES	STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS	SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES	LONG-TERM OUTCOMES	IMPACT
• RREV program funds • Roberts Farm • Bryant Pond 4-H • OHCHS Technical School • ME West • District-wide outdoor learning community • Volunteers • Community members	Project-based, integrated curriculum units and other resources PreK-6	Coach writes unit plans that build on existing district curriculum and curates resources	Availability of units and resources for outdoor teaching.	*Through the integration of outdoor learning into their school day, elementary students in MSAD#17 are:* • *more engaged in their learning* • *less likely to be referred for behavioral issues* • *more likely to meet or exceed grade-level expectations in reading and math* • *more prepared for academic and social challenges due to increased motivation and self-esteem*	Through a regular outdoor learning approach, students' social and emotional needs are met, allowing them to have more positive interactions with their school community as well as improved academic engagement and success.
	Coaching for teachers in their work instructing outside	Coach models, observes, and provides feedback for teachers	Teachers gain the confidence and knowledge needed for teaching outside		
	Professional Development for teachers	Coach provides PD at staff meetings around the district	Teachers will be supported in the theory and practice of outdoor education		
	District-wide outdoor learning community to support the sustainability of outdoor programs	Coach, Teachers, and Administrators collaborate monthly	Teachers will be supported in outdoor learning programming		
	Infrastructure that supports teachers' and students' work outside	Coach provides consultation for outdoor spaces. Administrator and Teacher create and manage the structures that facilitate outdoor learning	Infrastructure that supports outdoor learning is in place		

RREV District Logic Model

	Communication of successes and learning to support other schools	Coach and Administrator develop various methods (website, presentations, etc.) to communicate and celebrate successes	Schools, community, and district are aware of successes at Agnes Gray to adopt similar structures		
	Visits to our site from other schools	Coach facilitates site visits with schools and community partners	Schools and community partners learn first-hand about Agnes Gray's Outdoor Program		
	Outdoor Volunteer Corps to support teachers and students	Administrator will train and schedule volunteers	Teachers and students receive the support needed to take learning outside		
	Gear lending library	Administrator/ teachers manage gear for use by teachers and students	Gear lending library with outdoor equipment that can be used district-wide		

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

During the first year, we hired an outside consultant to capture and report out on data regarding the specific group of first grade students who were participating in daily, outdoor learning experiences. Highlights of this included: increases in on-task behavior/paying attention, question asking, and following directions from the start of the pilot to end. The consultant also had students complete a Likert scale for perceptions of school and compared this to a control sample of district students. Students in the pilot group showed statistically significant increases in liking school, as compared to the control group.

Staff perception was also measured, with teachers reporting "greater engagement and fewer disruptive behaviors during outdoor lessons. Teachers identified that students with ACEs who might otherwise struggle in a classroom context seemed calmer and more attentive while learning outdoors," according to the Year One report from ICF.

During the second year, we began scaling the work across other district elementary schools. Requests for coaching came from staff across the entire district, eventually totaling 36 teachers requesting the opportunity to work with the coach to engage in a coaching cycle and outdoor lessons with their classes. The coach used coaching logs and schedules to document cycles. Her work with staff directly affected 536 learners who were involved in outdoor learning opportunities as a part of these coaching opportunities with their teachers.

This data demonstrates the enthusiasm from teachers and learners across the district for outdoor learning experiences and points to the need for further opportunities for teachers and students across our elementary schools and, eventually, our entire district. This capacity would not be possible without an Outdoor Learning Coach devoted to the work of coaching teachers and coordinating outdoor learning facilities.

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

Moving forward, it will be important to continue to keep records as to the number of classes who participate in outdoor learning. It would be useful to collect information about not only the teachers and students who shift learning outdoors with the direct support of the OLC, but also those who are taking learning outside after this support has ended, demonstrating that the coaching cycle has resulted in teachers who are confident in the skills needed to teach outside.

We also plan to collect behavior data in outdoor classrooms by adding a category to the Office Discipline Referral forms that will reflect behaviors in these spaces. Data about problem behaviors in these spaces will be captured in School-Wide Information Systems through Positive Behavioral Intervention Systems Apps.

Additionally, a survey recently sent to all elementary teachers will provide data about what needs they perceive regarding outdoor learning professional development. This data will inform PD planning in the coming school year.

Additional surveys regarding teacher and student perception and impact will provide further data to inform and shape our work in year three and beyond, as we continue to scale to more classes in grades PreK through 6 and, eventually, 7-12.

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

A. Describe the goals 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

The primary goal is to scale the project from establishing support for outdoor learning for grades PreK through Grade 6 at one elementary school to all grade levels, PreK through Grade 6, at all eight elementary schools in the district.

There are no policies that need to change in order to scale our plan, but several practices do. We will begin embedding outdoor learning opportunities in curriculum documents so teachers are supported in delivering grade level curriculum outside. Each grade level has Long-Range Plan documents that give the scope of units. taught across the entire year. Outdoor learning opportunities will begin to be embedded into these, starting with science.

The team will also continue the work of collaborating and consulting with each building's administration, teachers, and custodians/maintenance staff to create outdoor spaces that meet the needs of our schools' unique needs and facilities. Additionally, the team will create the structures needed to upkeep these facilities and support the work of teachers and learners.

Through our work of the past two years, it has become evident that classroom teachers, who are already struggling to find the time to create lesson and unit plans in regard to existing expectations, are in need of support with curriculum that can be meaningfully taught outside. They also need support with behavioral and management expectations that are necessary as learning shifts outdoors. Given the opportunity this past school year to respond to surveys and to make requests for support from the Outdoor Learning Coach, teachers have overwhelmingly vocalized these needs in each of our eight elementary schools. Therefore, program goals include planning and delivering professional development to support teachers, continuing to construct and enhance outdoor learning spaces and forming and running an outdoor learning committee.

3 – 5 Year Plan

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. Because of this a goal is to provide teachers at the middle and high school level with the resources, professional development, and curriculum they need in order to make outdoor learning possible on a regular basis and in a meaningful, productive way. This is imperative to the success of an outdoor learning program. Via outdoor learning, students will improve their academic scores while learning to interact positively with their teachers and peers.

The long-term plan is to scale the project to provide outdoor learning opportunities to all students, PreK-Grade 12, in the school district.

Outdoor learning will be a hallmark of learning in the Oxford Hills. Programming at Roberts Farm will expand and merge with initiatives started through RREV funding. At every grade level and school building, teachers

will lead students in outdoor learning opportunities that meet district curricula across all subjects (reading, social studies, writing, math, health). All necessary documents to support teaching lessons/units outside will be developed and easily accessible.

Additionally, leadership and learning pathways for outdoor learning will be developed at the middle and high school level. These will be developed in future years and will impact practices and structures at those schools.

Outdoor learning facilities will be built at every school and at the Roberts Farm site. The structures and protocol for use of these facilities will continue to be developed so that their use is maximized and students receive the very best outdoor opportunities possible as frequently as possible. At this time we have not identified any policy changes that may arise but recognize this may be a possibility as we scale to the middle and high school level.

B. UMaine GANTT Chart

MSAD 17- Outdoor Learning GANT

	5/23	6/23	7/23	8/23	9/23	10/23	11/23	12/23	1/24	2/24	3/24	4/24	5/24	6/24
Teaching and Learning														
Survey PD Needs														
Plan PD														
Deliver PD														
Gather Data														
Update Curriculum Documents														
Infrastructure														
Determine budget														
Inventory Existing Spaces														
Construct Outdoor Learning Spaces														
Establish MOUs for Private Lands														
Sustainability														
Rollout Vision to School Board, Staff, and Families														
Form and Run Outdoor Learning Committee														
Publicize Outdoor Learning														
Budget for Future Years														
Review/Respond to Policies														

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:

The funds received will cover 80% of the salary and benefits for the Outdoor Learning Coach position ($94,966.07). Outdoor learning kits (totes, clipboards, portable dry erase boards, easels, and seats) for each school (roughly 1 kit per 100 kids) will also be purchased with these funds ($4,833.93). Materials for messaging and branding ($200) will be needed as well.

Necessary Resources:

Professional development time: Our Curriculum Director, who is part of our RREV Team, has committed to time during our August, October, and March district-wide professional development days so that teachers can collaborate on the long-range planning that will support outdoor lessons. Additionally, our OLC will continue to provide ongoing PD at Wednesday afternoon early release building-based professional development time.

Coaching support for teachers: The OLC will continue to support teachers with coaching cycles as well as planning meetings so that modeling, collaborating, and co-teaching can happen around the district.

Volunteers: Our original pilot included the creation of a Volunteer Corps that supported teachers in classroom management while working outside with students. This continues to be a need, particularly as the project is scaled, and further need for volunteers has presented itself in terms of the creation of outdoor facilities (trail work, classrooms, etc.). A particular source of volunteers would be our community of retired educators as well as high school students in need of community service hours.

Community partners: The Oxford Hills has a strong commitment to outdoor opportunities, so we have a wealth of community partners: our Roberts Farm program, which is linked with the Western Foothills Land Trust, Healthy Oxford Hills, the New Balance Foundation, which continues to support local health initiatives through donations, Farm To School, and ME West.

School system departments: Curriculum, Facilities, the Tech School program at Oxford Hills Comprehensive High School, the Business Office, and the Executive Team have all been integral in the success of our pilot so far. These departments will need to come together in continued and more structured ways in order to scale our program across the district.

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:

We will also need funding to cover the salary for the outdoor learning coach(es) and any other positions that support outdoor learning at the middle and secondary levels. This money will need to either be allocated from the local budget, or we will need to seek additional grant funding.
Outdoor Learning Coach(es) Middle Level: $95,000
Outdoor Learning Coach(es) High School Level: $95,000
Funding for ongoing professional development (attendance at events/workshops outside the district and continuous professional development for the OLC) as well as continuous purchasing and replacement of materials needed for outdoor learning: $3,000

Necessary Resources:

Stipends for the Outdoor Learning Subject Area Committee members have been budgeted through the local curriculum budget. Continued improvement and maintenance of infrastructure at all schools (and Roberts Farm) will happen through ARP funding. The resources required for continued expansion of programming will be the same as in Section 4, Part A above.