

## 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

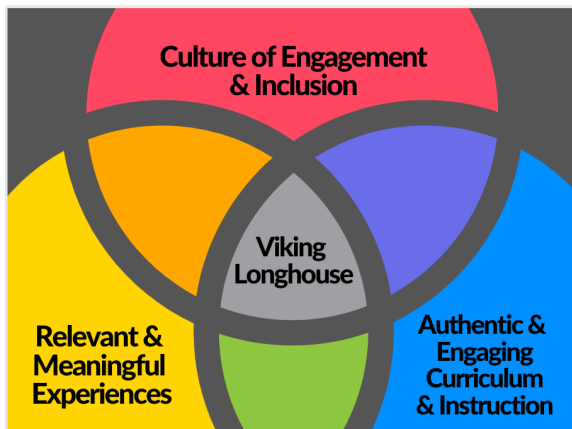
#### A. Describe your innovation.

*Consider what evidence supports the need for an innovation, and the evidence that suggests your innovation will improve the current situation.*

Over the past few years, students and staff have had to adapt to a period of extraordinary uncertainty and change. A pandemic, political and social strife, and economic uncertainties that exacerbate systemic poverty have all contributed to troubling trends in student engagement and achievement.

When we asked staff and students about their experiences as teachers and learners at Searsport District Middle High School, it was obvious that many feel isolated, lost, or overwhelmed by this tsunami of issues. In empathy interviews, staff and students alike identified several common desires: more engaging teaching and learning, a school culture that encourages connections to each other and to a sense of place, and meaningful experiences for students. These common themes are what form the foundation for our innovative pilot: The Viking Longhouse.

Our mascot at SDMHS is the Viking. Traditionally, Viking longhouses were part of tightly knit communities, providing shelter, warmth, and a sense of belonging. In our pilot, the Longhouse exists where the needs expressed by our students and staff and our project goals overlap:



1. Culture of Connection & Inclusion
2. Relevant & Meaningful Experiences
3. Authentic & Engaging Curriculum and Instruction

The Viking Longhouse program seeks to create and expand spaces that allow innovative teaching and learning to flourish, support the development of creative and engaging curriculum and instruction, and provide students with experiences they would not otherwise have access to.

The first major component of the Viking Longhouse is the 'longhouse' itself - an outdoor classroom space, partially covered, partially open, with a greenhouse. This will serve as a hub for outdoor learning, with the potential to add additional structures and programming in future years as the program grows. Not only will the structure itself be valuable as classroom space, it offers the opportunity for classes to engage in service learning projects that enhance our campus and connect students together through collaboration. Possibilities include an outdoor kitchen, a bread/pizza oven, raised garden beds, a community garden, and creation of outdoor gathering spaces are all projects that have both an appropriate scale and easy curricular connections for service learning projects.

The second, and arguably as important, component to the Longhouse pilot is bringing in specialist staff to work with students and teachers. The pilot creates the position of Experiential Learning & Community Outreach Coordinator, who will lead both stand-alone and classroom-integrated experiences. They will work during the school year and in the summer to support and lead programming for students, to help connect them to a sense of place and the outdoors, as well as develop leadership and social skills. They will also help staff with project-based service learning, hands-on, outdoor experiential teaching and learning, and other relevant PD. Finally, they will serve as a liaison to the wider community, supporting connections between the school and local businesses and organizations to facilitate projects and student internships. In addition to the ELCO Coordinator, the pilot will also provide funding to support teacher professional development, stipends for summer programming, and to bring in outside professional consultants from partner organizations like KIEVE, UMaine Cooperative Extension, and others.

As we work to embed more experiential and hands-on learning into our classes, teachers will collaborate with each other, the ELCO Coordinator, and other professional staff, including the school's Makerspace and Technology Integration Specialist. Both the physical Viking Longhouse space and this professional support are pivotal to the expansion of innovative teaching and learning at Searsport. Additionally, the program will help furnish supplies, technology, and tools for a variety of creative, hands-on, service learning projects, from museum exhibits to trail building to food production to digital media presentations.

This pilot will also support opportunities for meaningful experiences for our students, both embedded in the curriculum and beyond the school day. Pre-COVID, we partnered with Camp KIEVE to work with our students, including sending our 8th grade students for a three-day experience at the camp, hosting KIEVE Educators in Residence, and having KIEVE staff run a full-day, off-site experience for our 10th grade. This grant will allow us to revive and expand this partnership, making opportunities to bring KIEVE here to campus to work with students. The ELCO Coordinator would work with students and staff in the classroom on service-learning projects like trail and garden building and other outdoor-oriented experiences. As many of our students do not have the opportunities to attend camps or engage in the fun, skills-growing activities they can provide, the Viking Longhouse program will also offer summer programming. Led by the ELCO coordinator and teachers, programs will have a variety of topics, including focusing on creativity, STEAM and hands-on work, gardening and food cultivation, and outdoor leadership skills.

With the Viking Longhouse, students will experience classes that are rich with hands-on learning, forge connections with community through authentic service learning, and engage in outdoor and experiential learning both in and out of the classroom. This program will connect students to our towns, our campus, and each other, while helping develop critical thinking and 21st century skills. The resulting engagement will have positive impacts on our school culture, while helping students become more engaged, well-rounded citizens of Maine, the country, and the world. We expect to see graduation rates increase, improved student engagement and achievement, and a greater sense of community.

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 EIs, students at risk for dropping out, students who are homeless) with regard to academic achievement, graduation rates, social emotional and mental wellness, economic data, and/or workforce participation.*

Searsport District Middle High School (SDHMS) is in RSU 20 and serves a student population of approximately 250 students with a teaching staff of 22. RSU 20 comprises SDHMS and Searsport Elementary School and is located in Waldo County, serving the towns of Searsport and Stockton Springs. SDHMS serves a rural population that has significant socio-economic needs. Historically SDHMS has a free and reduced lunch rate that holds at about 60%.

School climate surveys show that the student body identifies that they feel most connected through engaging and authentic learning experiences where they are supported by caring adults. The Viking Longhouse program seeks to embed these experiences through hand-on, STEM-based, learning that is connected to the local community. With the creation of outdoor learning spaces that can support experiential opportunities through the classroom as well as our 6-12 advisory program, all students will have access to opportunities to deepen their connection to their school and local community as well as supplement their program of studies to include experiences that link their classroom learning to authentic settings. In all of this, the hope is to open the door to students who have limited exposure to opportunities after graduation as well as increase aspirations within the student body.

## 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.*

The Viking Longhouse program seeks to create and expand spaces that allow innovative teaching and learning to flourish, support the development of creative and engaging curriculum and instruction, and provide students with experiences they would not otherwise have access to.

The primary objectives of our innovation are:

1. Create a physical hub for outdoor and experiential learning in the form of the Viking Longhouse, which will incorporate an 'outdoor classroom' pavilion space, a greenhouse, garden beds, gear storage, and other outdoor gathering and learning areas.
2. Support and expand engaging, authentic, and relevant classroom learning experiences that incorporate the Longhouse and the other outdoor learning spaces, hands-on projects, service learning, the arts, and STEM education.
3. Strengthen school-community partnerships through authentic, hands-on service learning projects and senior internships.
4. Offer meaningful experiential learning opportunities for students both during and outside the school day. These include visits to and work with KIEVE and other local camps/organizations, activities coordinated through the advisory program, and during summer programming.

This pilot will require us to rethink the way some traditional courses are taught and actively support teachers in transforming their instruction. The Viking Longhouse will provide both an inspirational location and professional support for making these instructional shifts as we work to steadily increase the integration of service learning, place-based education, and hands-on STEAM activities into the curriculum and our advisory program.

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
Informational presentations w/Board, community and students	Engage the wider community, help them understand the grant and the goals of the Longhouse program, recruit for Longhouse Advisory Council	P	June 2022	Grant Team
Conduct rising senior interest survey re: internships	Determine availability, nature, and the level of student interest in internships for the 2022-23 school year	P	June 2022	Guidance, ELCO Coordinator
Hire ELCO Coordinator	Bring on specialist staff as soon as possible in order to shape the 2022-23 school year	I	June/July 2022	Grant Team, Admin
Create Longhouse Advisory Council	Form a group of stakeholders (staff, students, parents, community) to help the Grant Team, guide decision-making around things like building design/location, programming, etc.	P	June 2022	Grant Team
Conduct Ideation Sessions	Teachers and students will engage in ideation sessions around building design, use, projects, etc. to provide ideas and input to the Longhouse Council & Grant Team.	P	June 2022	Grant Team, Advisors
Conduct campus site walk	Locate sites for potential Longhouse construction, identify locations for trails, gardens, outdoor gathering spaces, gear storage	P	June 2022	Grant Team, Longhouse Council, Facilities
Develop outdoor classroom space site plan/design ideas	Ideate the design for the physical outdoor classroom area, using feedback from students and staff	P	June 2022	Grant Team, Longhouse Council
Initial PD and training opportunities for staff	Staff will engage in workshops, planning time, and training to support integration of the Longhouse program into their courses and Advisory	P	Aug 2022	Specialist Staff, Admin, Faculty Leadership Team

Develop shared calendar, plans/budgets/supplies lists for classroom service learning and hands-on projects	Prepare a comprehensive draft calendar that notes approximately what projects will happen when, in which classes and in Advisory	P	Aug 2022	Admin, Staff
Advisory Program Development	Realign advisory program to better meet the needs of students, with an emphasis and meaningful experiences and connection.	P	Sept 2022	Admin, Staff
Plan & schedule student experiential work with KIEVE and other local orgs	Develop calendar of experiential learning opportunities for students, both on-campus and off-site, including 8th grade and 10th grade KIEVE Experiences	P	Sept 2022	Admin, ELCO Coordinator, Staff
Engage professional services for Longhouse construction, finalize build schedule	Obtain professional help as needed for site survey, building, etc. to finalize design and begin planning site work and construction	I	Oct 2022	Admin, Grant Team
Identify and connect with community partners	Activate already-existing partnerships with local organizations, cultivate new partnerships and prepare community partners for service learning projects and senior internships	P	Oct 2022	ELCO Coordinator
Identify and engage professional consultants	Identify other specialist consultants needed to support curriculum & instruction development and student experiential learning	P	Oct 2022	Grant Team, Admin
Program site visits	Visit other schools/similar programs in the region to get ideas and advice, and help inform implementation plan	P	Oct 2022	
Ongoing training and PD for staff	Provide regular supports and trainings for teachers as they work to transform their instruction to integrate the Longhouse program	I	SY 2022-23	Specialist Staff, ELCO Coordinator, Admin
Conduct on-campus classroom-based service learning projects	Engage students in projects that have direct benefit to the student body campus, including outdoor projects (eg. bread oven, trails, outdoor gathering, etc)	I	SY 2022-23	Teachers, ELCO Coordinator, Specialist Staff
Secure community partners and prepare them for 2nd semester senior interns and service learning projects	Activate already-existing partnerships with local organizations, cultivate new partnerships and prepare community partners for service learning projects and senior internships	I	Dec 2022	ELCO Coordinator
Recruit staff for summer programming	Recruit and hire staff for summer programming (stipended)	I	January 2023	Admin

Conduct on-campus and off-site experiential programming for students with KIEVE and others	Experiential programming for students	I	Spring 2023	ELCO Coordinator, Specialist Staff
Summer programming interest survey and planning	Plan summer programming around both academic needs and student interest	P	April 2023	Admin, ELCO Coordinator, Summer Programming Staff
Recruit students & register for summer programming	Determine # of students attending summer programs and prepare	I	May 2023	Admin, ELCO Coordinator, Summer Programming Staff
Site Work for Longhouse completed		I	May 2023	Professional Staff
Community Barn Raising - Longhouse Built		I	June 2023	Admin, Facilities, Professionals
Provide Summer Programming		I	June-July 2023	ELCO Coordinator, Summer Programming Staff

*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*).

As a result of our pilot, we expect to see an increase in student engagement and the growth of a more positive school culture where students and staff feel connected to the school and each other. This in turn will bolster student achievement and improve career and college readiness.

Dec 2022	June 2023	June 2024	June 2025
<p><i>6 mos</i></p> <p>Teachers begin making shifts in instructional practice, incorporating hands-on/service learning/STEAM into at least 25% of their classes.</p> <p>3 existing partnerships revived/enhanced, and 1 new community partnerships developed</p>	<p><i>1 year</i></p> <p>Primary structures of Longhouse building/outdoor classroom area complete</p> <p>50% of all courses integrate hands-on/service learning/STEAM, with established connections to experiential learning and community resources in place.</p> <p>5 seniors (approx 10% of the class) complete internships</p> <p>3 new community partnerships developed</p>	<p><i>2 yrs</i></p> <p>At least 1 new course will fully integrate the Viking Longhouse, with hands-on/experiential learning 100% embedded in the course curriculum.</p> <p>50% of all courses use the Viking Longhouse in some capacity.</p> <p>75% of all courses integrate hands-on/service learning/STEAM, with established connections to experiential learning and community resources in place.</p> <p>15 seniors (approx 30% of the class) complete internships</p>	<p><i>3 yrs</i></p> <p>75% of all courses use the Viking Longhouse in some capacity.</p> <p>100% of courses integrate hands-on/service learning/STEAM, with established connections to experiential learning and community resources in place.</p> <p>25 seniors (approx 50%) complete internships</p>



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.*

	<b>Data Type</b>	<b>Baseline (B) Interim (I) Summative (S)</b>	<b>Frequency of Data Collection</b>	<b>Person(s) Responsible for Collection and Data Quality</b>
1.	Student Attitude Assessment Survey: taken by all students, quick rating scale form with set questions, to be used as a pre- and post-assessment	B, I, S	End of each academic quarter (4x yr)	Grant Team will coordinate, surveys will be administered in class/advisory
2.	Student Attitude Assessment Circle Discussions: discussions in small student groups (advisories), information taken down as a group, questions are more open-ended	I, S	January 2023 (6m) June 2023 (1y) June 2024 (2y)	Grant Team, Admin, discussions facilitated by advisors
3.	Empathy Interviews: Conduct mid-stream and end of year 1 interviews with staff and students to get narrative feedback on outcomes	I, S	January 2023 (6m) June 2023 (1y) June 2024 (2y)	Grant Team
4.	Project Counts: Keep track of # of hands on projects, STEAM Lab projects, Service Learning Projects, Longhouse & Experiential Projects in each classroom	B, S	Yearly	Grant Team, Teachers
5.	Graduation Rate	B	Yearly	Guidance, Admin
6.	Post Secondary Placement/Success Rate	S	Yearly	Guidance, Admin
7.	Course Counts & Student Load: Keep track of # of courses that integrate hands on projects, STEAM Lab projects, Service Learning Projects, Longhouse & Experiential Projects, and # of students in each course	B, S	Each semester	Guidance, Admin, Specialist Staff, Teachers
8.	Internship Placement Rate	B, I	Each semester	Guidance, Admin, ELCO Coordinator
9.	Community & Partner Reflection and Survey	I	Yearly	ELCO Coordinator

- C. Describe how you will **scale and sustain** 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.*

To shift instructional practices requires a fair amount of mindset-change and capacity building, so beginning with a small ‘focus group’ to pilot the innovation is crucial. Additionally, the innovation will build in professional development in the form of instructional retreats where staff can have the time and support to work on exploring and creating new lessons, units, etc.

The first year of the innovation will begin with examination of curriculum and advisory programs, and work to establish authentic pathways that connect experiential, community-based learning opportunities to existing classes and programs.

At the end of year 2, 50% grade levels will have established connections with experiential learning and community resources in place. These connections will be reflected in the written and approved district curriculum.

At the end of year 3, 100% of grade levels will have established connections with experiential learning and community resources in place. These connection will be reflected in the written and approved district curriculum

Part of what will make this innovation sustainable – especially the hoped-for transformation in instructional practices – is to support teachers as they are making this shift. Having specialist staff to help can make the difference between launching and failure. This can take the form of co-teaching, professional development, resource acquisition, project planning etc. Specialist staff would include:

- ELCO Coordinator will work with staff to incorporate experiential learning and service learning into their classrooms, network with outside organizations, businesses, etc. to facilitate projects and senior internships.
- Technology Integrator will continue engaging staff in instructional coaching and support around tech and hands-on instructional needs, and support integration of the school’s Makerspace into classroom and advisory activities
- Other professional support consultants to assist with experiential learning or professional development around curriculum and instruction as needed.

We will conduct regular and ongoing evaluations of each objective and activity, and make course corrections as needed.

- D. Describe the feasibility review 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.

This pilot program has undergone several iterations, shaped through discussions, surveys and other feedback from staff, students, and other stakeholders.

We began the process looking at answers from student surveys that included a range of questions about their experiences as learners at our school, their hopes and concerns, and their interests. Alongside this survey was one for staff that asked them to reflect on their experiences as educators, both at Searsport and elsewhere in their lives, and to share their struggles and successes, their perceptions of the roadblocks to student success and causes of student disengagement, and their ideas for overcoming those roadblocks. We also held in-person discussions with staff and students to pull out some more of these thoughts. Combined with other sources of data, including student achievement, graduation, and truancy, what emerged was the first iteration of the Viking Longhouse program.

As our Grant Team examined the overall feasibility of the Viking Longhouse pilot, we took into account several key factors, including the impact on teachers, institutional capacity for change, and long-term sustainability. We actively engaged staff and students to look at early versions of the pilot in order to ensure it reflected needs, interests, and reality, as well as being aspirational and inspirational to our community.

Early feedback was overall positive, but the general sense especially from staff was that the pilot was trying to do too much, and needed to be more focused in order to be sustainable. In response to that we made some changes to the scope of the pilot. Other feedback led us to use a scaffolded, scaled approach to making instructional changes and adding new programming, to allow for adequate time and planning for staff to ensure successful integration into more classrooms.

Once we refined and focused the pilot, we looked at various aspects of each of the activities, including:

- Finance
- Community Resources
- Internal Supports
- Transportation
- Time
- Facilities and Grounds

Reviews consisted of discussions with individuals and programs who would be impacted or have increased opportunities with the pilot, research and reports from key players including the district Business Manager, Transportation, Central Office, and others.

*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.*

<b>Staffing/Salary/Stipends</b> ELCO coordinator salary, purchased professional services, stipends	\$70,000
<b>Transportation</b>	\$20,000
<b>Longhouse/Outdoor Classroom Physical Plant</b> professional services, site work, building materials, construction	\$125,000
<b>Project Materials</b> tools, technology, equipment, consumable supplies	\$35,000
<b>TOTAL \$250,000</b>	