

PILOT YEAR STRATEGIES

3 ELEMENTARY
1 MIDDLE
SCHOOLS = 1 HIGH SCHOOL = Reached over 4,377 students

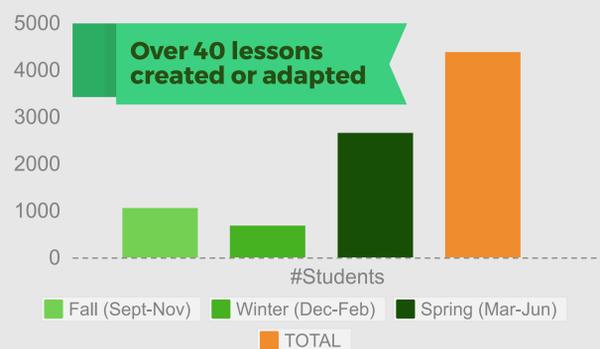
FOCUSING ON GRADES 4K, 6TH, 7TH, AND 8TH & CO-TEACHING AND MENTORING TEACHERS

During the pilot year, the Cedarburg School District chose to focus on integrating outdoor learning in grades 6, 7, and 8 as well as the new 4K program. While the majority of lessons took place across these grades, opportunities to incorporate outdoor learning were infused into elementary as well as some high school classes as well.

YEAR ONE OUTCOMES:

INCREASED USE OF SCHOOL GREENSPACE

From the beginning of the school year to the end, teachers reported increased use of school green space and nearby parks as a result of initiating the SIR program.



Participation with SIR by Season 2016/17 School Year

BUILD RELATIONSHIPS WITH TEACHERS

Our process theory of change states:

In order to integrate experiential, outdoor learning into classrooms and school culture, an embedded SIR is needed to build relationships, develop curriculum, and show broader understanding of how outdoor environments can support student learning.



During the first year, teachers reported: 48% They were more familiar with green space and available outdoor resources.

88% They were more likely to use local parks and natural areas around Cedarburg for teaching and learning.

Teachers also said,

"It's allowed us to try some new or different things without putting more things on our plate."

"We as teachers know how to handle our kids outside but we might not know what kind of tree that is. So, having that expert really helps bridge and make it interesting."

IMPROVED STUDENT OUTCOMES

Students participated in outdoor learning roughly 40% of the total days in the school year (66 out of 170 days).



We asked teachers, "how does the program benefit you and your students?"

"The more they can get outside, the more they can learn, and the more excited they are. They have really been engaged with the [SIR] just excited about learning and being outside."

"Students have benefitted from building background knowledge and getting out there and working as a team. Thinking about how to take their skills of collaboration and perseverance and working together and exploration outside of the classroom."

RAISE COMMUNITY AWARENESS

One of the long-term goals of the SIR program is to support a culture among the Cedarburg community that embraces a conservation mindset.

During the pilot year, the SIR program utilized parents and chaperones to assist with outdoor programs.

86 volunteers

COMMENTS FROM THE SIR

When asked about what an ideal SIR program will look like in five years time, administrators described community involvement as a key area to embrace.

"I enjoy being part of an additional support system for students and teachers, to be an energetic positive presence in the schools and communities."

GETTING THE WORD OUT

The SIR program was featured on Milwaukee Public Radio. You can listen to the recorded version on the WUWM website.

CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED

STAFFING CHANGES

"One of the main challenges during the pilot year was the departure of the first CSD SIR just two months into the school year. The program was really picking up momentum and there was lots of excitement from teachers and students alike. It took some time to rekindle that enthusiasm when the second SIR started in January." - SIR Supervisor

COMMUNICATION

"There seemed to be some confusion among teachers about what the role of the SIR is. Clear communication to the entire faculty about the vision and goals of the program could help alleviate this." - SIR Supervisor

LOGISTICS

There was some ambiguity about where the SIR would be when. The SIR suggested the following potential solutions, "Organizing a schedule, having maps of outdoor features, and possibly also creating a google calendar for outdoor spaces."

SOLUTIONS TO ENSURE SUSTAINABILITY

Since its inception, it has been assumed that there will be early adopters and those who buy into the program later in the five-year timeline. It is anticipated that each year of the program will positively influence the number of teachers who are actively participating in the program.

To overcome the challenges stated, beginning in the 2017-18 school year, the SIR will:

1. Establish a steering committee of teachers and administrators to support the SIR and clearly define the goals and objectives for the year, thereby contributing to the overall success of the program.
2. Provide 1/2 day professional enrichment (summer academy) to gain confidence or learn about school greenspace assets, resources, and collaborate with SIR.
3. Attend principal and administrator meetings regularly in order to encourage district-wide support for and communication about the SIR program and its goals.

Documentation of resources, curriculum modifications, school greenspace mapping, and other tools will continue to be logged to ensure program sustainability beyond the five-year educator placement.



OUR THEORY OF CHANGE

In five years time, we see students in Cedarburg healthier, happier, more creative, and inspired by the world around them.

We envision a school system where the outdoors is integrated into everyday activities.

We witness schools that do not have to make the choice between less recess and more reading time because teachers have learned ways of transforming their local outdoor spaces into classrooms for learning.

SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR SUPPORTERS

- Greater Milwaukee Foundation's Richard E. Stephenson Fund
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- The Greater Cedarburg Foundation
- Evan & Marion Helfaer Foundation
- Cedarburg Education Foundation
- Cedarburg Junior Women's Club
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