PILOT YEAR STRATEGIES

During the pilot year, the Cedarburg School District chose to focus on integrating outdoor learning in grades 4, 6, 7, and 8 in a 6-week program. While 3 elementary and 1 high school class participated, teachers reported increased use of school green space and nearby parks as a result of initiating the SIR program.

BUILD RELATIONSHIPS WITH TEACHERS

Our process theory of change states: Build relationships with teachers to incorporate outdoor learning in a variety of ways to accommodate the needs of all students.

During the pilot year, teachers reported:

- They were more likely to use local parks and natural areas around Cedarburg for teaching and learning.
- Teachers also said, “It allowed us to try something new.”
- They were more likely to collaborate with SIR to gain confidence or learn about school greenspace assets, resources, and opportunities to integrate outdoor learning into classrooms and school culture.

Course to curriculum.

The SIR program was featured on Milwaukee Public Radio and can be linked to the recorded version on the WRUM website.

RAISE COMMUNITY AWARENESS

One of the long-term goals of the SIR program is to raise awareness of the benefits of outdoor learning through the community.

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

GETTING THE WORD OUT

The SIR program was featured on Milwaukee Public Radio and can be linked to the recorded version on the WRUM website.

SOLUTIONS TO ENSURE SUSTAINABILITY

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

- Establish a steering committee of teachers and administrators to support the SIR and clearly define the goals and objectives for the year.
- Offer a 1-day professional development (summer academy) to gain confidence or learning about school greenspace assets, resources, and opportunities to integrate outdoor learning into classrooms.
- Attend principal and administrator meetings regularly in order to encourage district-wide support for and recognition about the SIR program and its goals.
- Document successful use of resources, curriculums modifications, school/greenspace mapping, and other tools to continue to be leveraged to make the program sustainable beyond the five-year implementation.

COMMUNICATION

- There seemed to be some confusion among teachers, staff, students, and their families regarding the purpose of the SIR program.
- There was some concern about where the SIR would spend the majority of their time.
- Communication of the school year calendar for outdoor spaces.

LOGISTICS

- There was some ambiguity about when the SIR would be available to support outdoor learning.
- Staffing changes.

Our theory of change:

In five years, we aim to see students in Cedarburg healthier, happier, more confident and engaged by the world around them.

- We envision a school system where outdoor learning is integrated into every school day.
- We will pilot schools that do not have to make the choice between less recess and more outdoor learning.
- Providing SIR suggests that outdoor spaces become a classroom.

CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED

STAFFING CHANGES

One of the long-term challenges during the pilot year was the departure of the first CSD SIR just two months into the school year. The program was fully staffed with support from teachers and students alike. However, there was a need for ongoing retraining for teachers and students alike.

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