

Supporting Maine's Education Innovation and Improvement Through Rethinking K-12 Models Education Grant (Maine RREV Project)



High-Leverage Problem

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, there were large gaps in Maine's high school graduation rates, high school dropout rates, college persistence, and college completion across socio economic status, racial and ethnic groups, English learner status, and disability status. The pandemic has highlighted and exacerbated existing inequities and challenges, especially for rural students and students of color who disproportionately represent the state's COVID-19 cases. To help address this issue, Commissioner of Education Pender Makin and her administrative team have committed to finding innovative solutions to these problems. Because of these efforts, Maine Department of Education (DOE) was awarded a Rethinking K-12 Education Models Grant from the U.S. Department of Education to support districts in designing and implementing innovative solutions to systemic challenges. The Region 1 Comprehensive Center (R1CC) was asked to support Maine DOE in implementing the grant.



R1CC Approach

Because the grant team was small and new within the department, the R1CC technical assistance activities prioritized support for Maine DOE as a thought partner and materials co-developer while Maine DOE Rethinking Responsive Education Ventures (RREV) team made critical decisions and supported grant implementation. The technical assistance included building the capacity of RREV team leaders and innovation coaches to support district awardees. Activities included co-developing a coaching framework of skills and knowledge required of innovation coaches, facilitating meetings to deepen knowledge of evidence-based practices and tools, building capacity to develop and use logic models, and co-developing a process to help Maine DOE ensure equitable access to RREV opportunities for underserved schools and regions across the state.

Key Partner(s): Maine Department of Education

● — ⊙ — ⊙ → Key Milestones

- Defined the innovation coaching skills and knowledge necessary for success
- Developed an innovation coaching framework
- Conducted an assessment of innovation coaches' skills and knowledge
- Developed and facilitated a cross-agency logic model workshop
- Developed a process and guidelines to support equitable access to RREV opportunities for underserved schools and regions across Maine

Outputs

- Innovation Coaching Framework
- Equity Considerations Guidance Document
- Logic Model Training Materials

Outcomes

- RREV coaches have increased capacity to apply evidence-based approaches.
- RREV coaches have provided targeted support to districts implementing innovation pilots.
- Logic model support has been well received by coaches and districts (as documented in outside evaluation support and in meetings with RREV leadership).
- Districts from low-income areas of the state have successfully submitted applications for RREV funding (Awards in the news: <https://www.maine.gov/doe/rrev>).



“The project work has gone from helping us start thinking about how to do this, what we should do, what we should include to giving us a framework that we’ve shared with others and that we are committed to. We’re starting to work with other departments that are also considering coaching. And so, we’re just sharing ideas with them and looking at ways we can cross-pollinate our projects since we’re cross-pollinating coaching. It’s really taken on a life of its own far greater than we had hoped but absolutely in the direction that we had wanted.”

“The RiCC team is very real, very genuine, very much a thought partner, very much a supporting agency. It’s just like talking to somebody from the department.”