

Rural School and Community Trust Fund for Teachers

Project Planning Guide

Project Leaders: Lynn Talamini & Donna Stone

Project Title: Creating Primary Unit Educational Play Space

School Name: Cabot School

School District: Washington Northeast

Grade Level(s) 1&2 Multiage

Content Areas: X Science X Arts X Math

X Technology X Social Studies X Literacy

1. **Essential Question:** What is the project theme that will guide the work of students and community partners?

How can we create an educational play space/ outdoor classroom for guided and unstructured play and learning?

2. **Project Description:** Include the following information: What is the scope of the project? That is, how many teachers, students, and community members do you expect to be involved?

There are currently approximately fifty students in our Primary Unit (grades PK – grade 2). This project will involve parents and grandparents of Primary Unit children, community members, Primary Unit teachers, Primary Unit students, community children not involved with the school including home schoolers, and the younger siblings of Primary Unit students.

Who are your community partners and how are they involved in planning and implementation?

The Parent, Teacher, Student Organization will be involved as our primary fundraising organization. High school students will be involved as a part of their community service plan. Middle school students (grades 6 & 7) will be involved through their roles as learning buddies with the 1 & 2 multiage students.

How will students be involved in planning?

Students will be involved in the following components of the project:

- design of the play space with a focus on planning for multi-season use
- research into creative, multi-season outdoor play and learning spaces
 - visiting playgrounds to “test drive” equipment and layout
 - learning about the history and geography of places we visit; why did people move here?; how did the play spaces



- presentations by and interviews of experts in designing and building playground/outdoor learning spaces
- fundraising
- building and construction
- landscaping to include vegetable gardens (may in the future be connected to whole school plan)

3. Community and School Connection: How is the project connected to the unique identity of your place (e.g., culture, economy, infrastructure, natural resources)? What specific community or school need or interest will it address?

Cabot is a rural community of 1,200 people located in northeastern Vermont. Cabot School is a PK – 12 school serving approximately 240 students located in the center of Cabot Village. Throughout the state, and beyond, Cabot is known as home of Cabot Creamery maker of Cabot cheeses. Within the community, however, the town’s identity is largely defined by the school. As a rural community, Cabot residents rely on the school to provide more than education; it is an important source of recreation and entertainment.

Community members attend sports events, musical and drama presentations, fundraising functions and graduations. In addition to its value as an education resource for students, the creation of a second playground designed specifically for smaller children would offer residents an additional recreation option for young families.

4. Student Learning Outcomes, Standards, Activities and Assessment:

Learning Outcomes: What will students know and be able to do as a result of this project?	Standards Addressed: Which learning results or benchmarks do these outcomes address?	Activity. What activity(ies) will students engage in to accomplish stated learning outcome.	Assessment: How will you assess each student learning outcome?
1. Students will use mathematical skills and problem solving strategies to design and create a playground/outdoor learning space for use by the Cabot School Primary Unit and community children.	Mathematical Dimensions: Problem Solving 2.6 , 2.7 , 2.8 , 2.9 Application: Students apply prior knowledge, curiosity, imagination, and creativity to solve problems. Information: Students respond to new information by reflecting on experience and reconsidering their opinions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ After visiting other “playgrounds” in Vermont, students will be grouped cooperatively to design and plan their play space. ▪ Students will answer the questions through discussion including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What materials will be needed 	Student learning will be assessed in these ways: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Interviews with students ▪ Check lists ▪ Data entry ▪ Understanding geometric Concepts ▪ Application and validation of “smart thinking” as it applies to this project.



	<p>and sources of information. Taking Risks: Students demonstrate a willingness to take risks in order to learn. Persevering: Students persevere in the face of challenges and obstacles.</p>	<p>to accomplish this task?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cost analysis that is “authentic” to the student’s development. ▪ Students will understand through the use of hands on geometry including how their understanding of mathematical concepts, especially geometry, will support their design of the play space. ▪ Students will gather input and data from other students and community members through interviews about the design and function of their new educational play space. 	
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<p>2. Students will use writing to elicit and share information.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students will write reports on an event. ▪ Students will write a friendly letter. 	<p>Writing 1.5 Writing Dimensions Students draft, revise, edit, and critique written products so that final drafts are appropriate in terms of the following dimensions: Purpose Intent is</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students will conduct written interviews with students in New Zealand in order to find out about use and design of outdoor play spaces. ▪ Students will keep personal journals recording their 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students’ writing will be assessed to determine if state and local standards in writing have been met. ▪ Students’ writing will be assessed through comparison with school and state benchmark writing
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	<p>established and maintained within a given piece of writing. Organization: The writing demonstrates order and coherence; Details contribute to development of ideas and information, evoke images, or otherwise elaborate on or clarify the content of the writing.</p> <p>1.8 Reports In written reports, students organize and convey information and ideas accurately and effectively.</p>	<p>responses to the playground project.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students will write reports chronicling the progress of the Primary Unit playground for publication in the school newsletter and local newspaper. 	<p>pieces.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Additionally, students' writing will be compared to examples of earlier writing to determine personal growth.
<p>3. The students will be able to ask questions in order to find out needed information.</p>	<p>Speaking/Expression 1.15 Students use verbal and nonverbal skills to express themselves effectively. This is evident when students: Share information; Use accepted conventions of the English language (e.g., grammar, usage, word choice, pronunciation) in formal settings (e.g., class presentations, job interviews); Show awareness of an audience by planning and adjusting to its reaction; Make effective use of such devices as pace, volume,</p>	<p>The students will conduct verbal and written interviews with students in New Zealand and with local playground construction experts.</p>	<p>Student skills in question asking will be assessed in the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ self-assessments using the KWL format ▪ teacher assessment based on questioning rubric designed by teachers. ▪ use of writing measurement tools listed above.



	stress, enunciation, and pronunciation; Use language expressively and persuasively; and constructively express preferences, feelings, and needs.		
4. Take an active role in creating something positive for their school and community.	4.1 a. Students take an active role in their community. This is evident when students: Plan, implement, and reflect on activities that respond to community needs.	The students will participate in the research, design, and construction of a Primary Unit playground and outdoor learning space.	Student learning will be assessed in these ways: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Interviews with students ▪ Check lists ▪ Student artifacts including maps, drawings and other artwork, journal entries, and written documentation including news articles.

5. Literacy Goals, Strategies, and Assessment:

Goals: What specific literacy goals will the project address?	Strategies: What literacy strategies will the project employ?	Assessment: How will you assess students' literacy acquisition?
1. Writing for a purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students will communicate through writing with students in two New Zealand elementary schools to collect information about playground design and use. ▪ Students will write articles chronicling the planning, fundraising and construction process for publication in weekly classroom newsletters, monthly school newsletters, and on the school website. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students' writing will be assessed to determine if state standards in writing have been met. ▪ Students' writing will be assessed through comparison with school and state benchmark writing pieces. ▪ Additionally, students' writing will be compared to examples of earlier writing to determine personal growth.
2. Development of interviewing skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students will interview students in New Zealand about their use of and 	Student skills in question asking will be assessed in the following ways:



	<p>opinions on playgrounds.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students will interview playground design experts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ self-assessments using the KWL format ▪ teacher assessment based on interviewing rubric designed by teachers.
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6. Community Outcomes and Assessment:

<p>Community Outcomes: What will change in the community or school as a result of this project: e.g., new resources, new partnerships between school and community, new services or products?</p>	<p>Assessment: How will you document and assess community or school outcomes and support?</p>
<p>1. As a result of this project a Primary Unit playground and outdoor learning space will be created for use by grades preschool through two. The space will provide a much needed free play and outdoor guided-learning space appropriate for Cabot School’s youngest students. It will be an additional recreational resource for community children during out of school hours</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A student and community survey will be conducted at the end of each phase of the project. The results will be used to guide future planning and construction phases. ▪ Photographic documentation of classroom use for both play and directed learning will be kept and used to augment news articles for the school newsletter and the school website.

7. Who will be involved in assessing student learning and community or school outcomes? How will they be involved? How will students be involved in assessment?

Primary Unit teachers, the school principal and members of the school steering committee, community members, parents and students will be involved in assessing students learning and community and school goals in the following ways:

- Teachers will be responsible for assessing student learning through the use of interviews, checklists, rubrics, and comparisons to school and state benchmarks;
- The school principal and members of the school steering committee will be responsible for assessing progress toward school goals with the aid of the school’s action plan;
- Community members and parents will participate in assessing the success of the project through the completion of surveys;
- Students will assess personal learning and growth through interviews, written journal entries, and reflection based on KWL protocols.



8. Major Activities Timeline:

Major Activities: What will you and students do to accomplish the stated student learning and community outcomes?	Timeline: When will these activities happen?
<p>1. Planning and design</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Research including field trips, interviews of NZ students and local playground design experts; journaling; creation of models, and conducting and analyzing surveys of Primary Unit students and teachers concerning current use of playground spaces 	September 2008 – April 2009
<p>2. Fundraising Drive</p> <p>Participating in fundraising projects including salesmanship and bookkeeping.</p>	September 2008-June 2009 (It is important to note that this timeline may extend into following school year if current year goals are not met.)
<p>3. Construction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Building at least one structure for the play space with the aid of the school building trades teacher and/or parents with experience in the building trades. 	April 2009 – June 2009 (It is important to note that the timeline for construction of additional structures may extend into the summer or following school year.)

