# Characteristics of

# High-Quality Outdoor Schools

Outdoor Schools
WASHINGTON

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**Outdoor Schools Washington**

# Creating an Outdoor School Culture of Growth

**Published October 20, 2023**

## History of the Project

It was 2021 and the world was in the middle of a pandemic. Recognizing the restorative effects of time spent in nature, Governor Jay Inslee and the Legislature earmarked $10 million dollars to send 20,000 students in Washington to Overnight Outdoor Educational Experiences*. Outdoor Schools WA (OSWA) was organized and immediately set to work finding ways to get funding to schools so kids could have time outside learning with their classmates.

Part of the initial legislation called for the use of accredited* outdoor schools. While there are many outstanding outdoor learning programs in Washington, the state does not accredit outdoor schools. This did, however, lead to conversations about how to make sure all students attending outdoor school have high-quality, robust, and enduring learning experiences that are tied to their classroom science education and include an interdisciplinary* approach that aligns with Washington State Learning Standards*. In the fall of 2022, a task force was formed consisting of OSWA staff, outdoor education community groups, and outdoor school professionals.

Work began with a set of rubrics developed by Oregon State University Extension Service Outdoor School. The task force is thankful to have had access to OSU's work as a starting point for Washington's Characteristics of High-Quality Outdoor Schools rubric. After the initial drafting process, a group of professionals from the

outdoor school and environmental education field met to evaluate the rubric. The task force met to incorporate the feedback, as well as held several additional meetings devoted to revision. The "close-to" final draft of this document was evaluated by a Snoqualmie Tribal Member, a college instructor in environmental studies, a pre-service outdoor educator, a program leader, and a team of high school student leaders. The result of many individuals' efforts is what you see before you.

From the very beginning, team members held to the idea that the Characteristics of High-Quality Outdoor Schools should, above all, be a useful tool that leads to positive change. The rubric, Program Survey, and Action Plan Template are designed to help outdoor schools identify and celebrate their strengths, recognize areas that need improvement, and create the changes that lead to the best outdoor schools possible.

Through your use of this tool, we hope you'll provide us with feedback regarding the ease of use, clarity in process, and how it was used to help your outdoor school grow. Please reach out if you have questions or if you need assistance in any way!

*Words throughout accompanied by an asterisk (*) are defined in the glossary at the end of this document.*

# Introduction

Overnight Outdoor Educational Experiences provide an unparalleled and amazing opportunity to foster learning communities, build local ecological understanding, and experience independence as a preadolescent in a safe space. Students' learning experiences at overnight outdoor school depend on many influences, including the site*, curriculum, and method of instruction.

## This document has three sections:

1. *The Characteristics of High-Quality Outdoor Schools* (CHQOS), a rubric that identifies key components of outdoor school with descriptive indictors and resources to help your team learn about and implement positive change. These characteristics will form the foundation for a future set of criteria that will be required for outdoor schools.

2. The **Program Survey** to assist outdoor schools in identifying their program's areas of strength and areas needing improvement.

3. The **Action Plan Template** to help outdoor schools plan for and make changes to improve their programs.

**Through robust experiences at high-quality outdoor schools, all Washington students will have outdoor learning experiences that:**

- Are welcoming and safe
- Build an appreciation of, respect for, and connection to nature
- Value meaningful experiences that occur in place-based learning outdoors
- Honor students' heritage, backgrounds, identities, and cultures
- See students' lived experiences as a valuable and vital to outdoor school programs
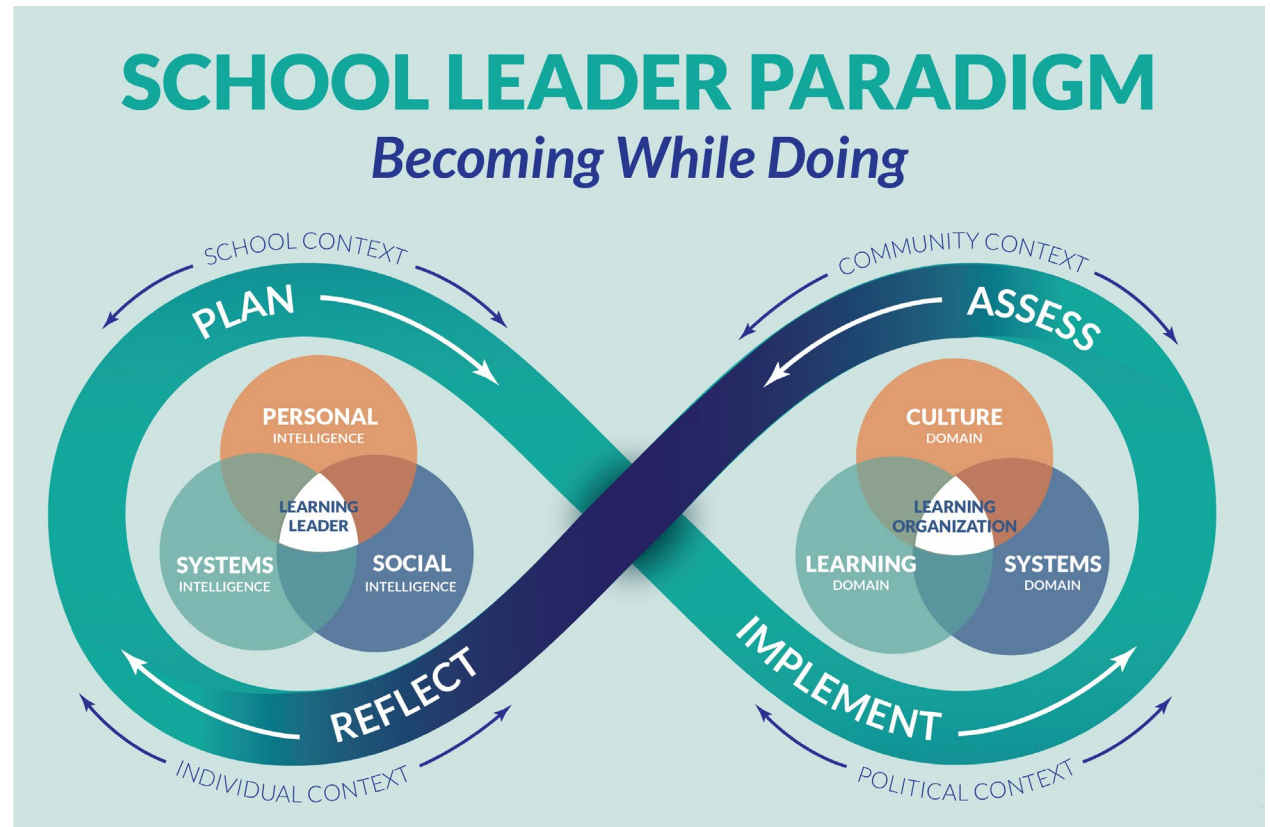- Connect academic classroom learning to learning that happens at outdoor school

## Key Components: The Rubric, the Program Survey, and the Action Plan Template

The *Characteristics of High-Quality Outdoor Schools* rubric is divided into three characteristics:

- **The Outdoor School Site (The Where):** The focus on place-based learning
- **The Learning (The What):** The curriculum and instructional resources for a cohesive program
- **The Instructional Practices (The How):** The pedagogy* or the ways in which materials are presented and accessed for learning

Within each component, there are four to seven indicators that describe the characteristics. The first step in this process is for a review team (outdoor school director, staff, community group members, formal educators, etc.) to use the Program Survey to examine their outdoor education program through the lens of the components. During this in-depth examination, they'll designate current outdoor school practices as "less like/not evident," "developing toward," or "more like." Next, the team determines the areas in need of growth and create a plan for improvements using the Action Plan Template.

The rubric, the **Program Survey** and the **Action Plan Template** are meant to support growth for established outdoor school* programs and foster the planning of a well-rounded and connected program at emerging outdoor schools*. The intent is to highlight best practices, thereby creating and supporting high-quality, immersive experiences for all children in Washington. Outdoor Schools WA is committed to supporting programs and outdoor learning communities in the ongoing process of growth and development.



## SCHOOL LEADER PARADIGM
### *Becoming While Doing*

SCHOOL CONTEXT — PLAN — COMMUNITY CONTEXT — ASSESS

PERSONAL INTELLIGENCE — LEARNING LEADER — SYSTEMS INTELLIGENCE — SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE

CULTURE DOMAIN — LEARNING ORGANIZATION — LEARNING DOMAIN — SYSTEMS DOMAIN

INDIVIDUAL CONTEXT — REFLECT — IMPLEMENT — POLITICAL CONTEXT

## Moving Towards Continuous Growth and Improvement

At its most basic level, the process for growth and improvement begins with a recognition of current program practices and then follows four steps for change: plan, implement, assess, and reflect. This system is based on a model called The School Leader Paradigm from the Association of Washington Principals (AWSP). Their graphic explains it best (see graphic on page 4).

The Paradigm promotes a continuous cycle of growth, making deep reflection a consistent practice in the administration of outdoor school programs.

## Diversity of Program Models: Implication for the Use of the CHQOS Tool

Outdoor School program models vary across Washington State. The models are different in both the number of days spent at an outdoor school and the business relationship the school has with the outdoor school site. Outdoor School sites may provide a total program with instructional support, recreational, and evening support in addition to the food service and lodging, or they may provide just the learning spaces, lodging and food service.

Time spent at an outdoor school will determine how instructional practices can best be achieved. Many of the "More Like" indicators from the rubric may be difficult to achieve with a two-day overnight outdoor educational experience. Each school, in partnership with the site, will be responsible for creating robust experiences that inspire learning prior to and after the students' outdoor school. Schools or sites that have historically supported a two- or three-day program may now consider a longer stay. More time in nature, with authentic living and learning situations, supports positive learning communities and more impactful experiences for children.

## Outdoor School and the *Washington State Safety & Management Review*

Sites need to complete the Washington State Safety & Management Review prior to welcoming schools to their program and beginning work on The Characteristics of High-Quality Outdoor Schools. The Safety & Management Review supports the well-being of students and staff, and the professionalization of Washington State Outdoor Schools. Site compliance, by supplying appropriate documents for the review, confirms your program meets the standard of the specific requirements, as demonstrated by the submitted evidence*. Here is the link: Washington State Outdoor School Safety & Management Review. Completing the Safety & Management Review is a prerequisite for beginning work on *The Characteristics of High-Quality Outdoor Schools.*

In the section following *The Characteristics of High-Quality Outdoor Schools* rubric, you'll find in-depth instructions on using the **Program Survey** and the **Action Plan Template.**



## Reading the Rubric

The rubric consists of three **Characteristics**, described in a colored bar at the top of each section (blue, green, and orange). Below and to the left, you'll find the **Component**, which is a quality that supports the Characteristic. To the right, you'll find the **Indicators**, which describe the degrees of performance for each Component. Indicator descriptions fall into three categories:

- **Less Like/Not Evident** for practices that are non-existent or in great need of improvement
- **Developing Towards** for current practices in the process of improving
- **More Like** for practices where the component expectations are met or exceeded.

While in the process of improvement, the *More Like* category serves as an exemplar* for outstanding practices.

| Characteristic | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | INDICATORS | | | |
| COMPONENT | LESS LIKE/NOT EVIDENT | DEVELOPING TOWARDS | MORE LIKE | RESOURCES |
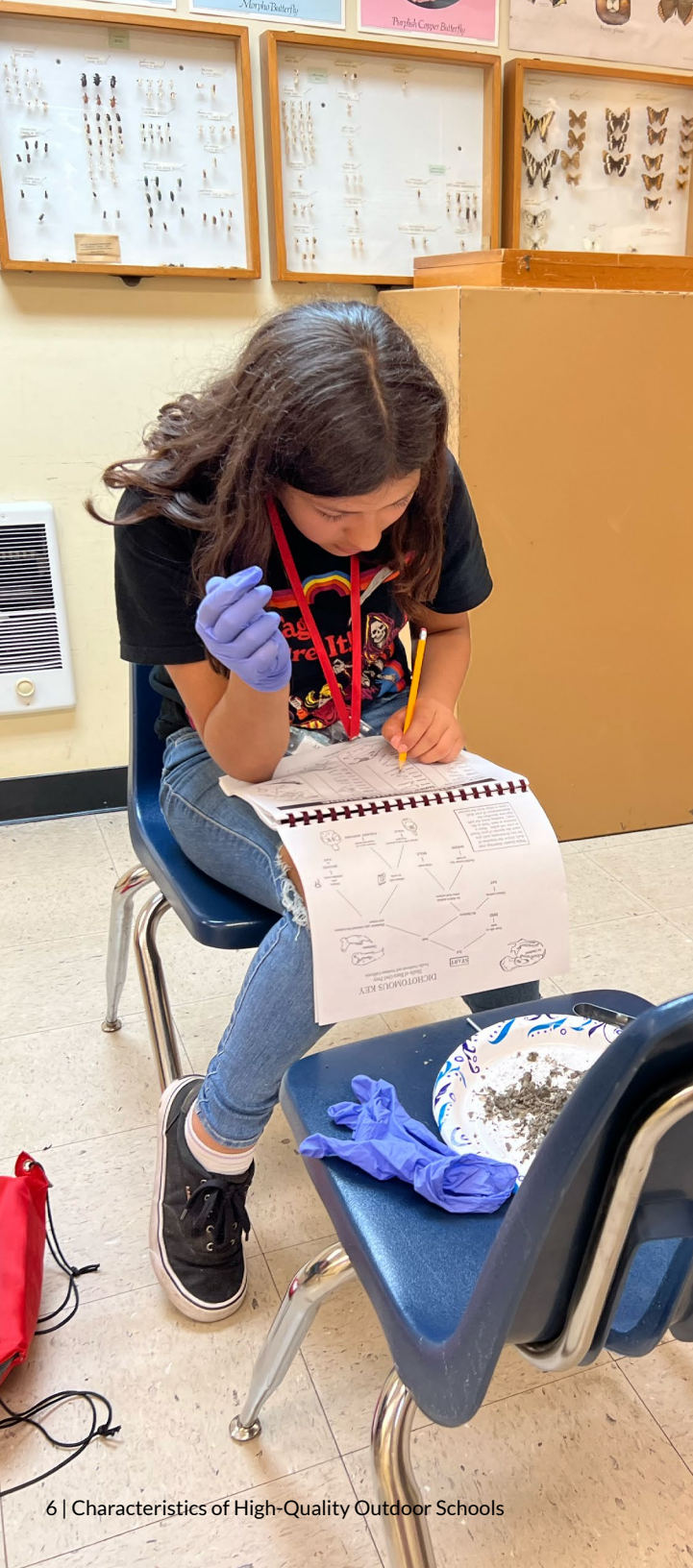
# Rubric:
## The Characteristics of High-Quality Outdoor Schools

## The Outdoor School Site (The Where)

Learning takes place predominantly outdoors. The overnight outdoor school site identifies and accentuates its distinctive attributes* and utilizes them to create wonder and curiosity in an immersive nature experience. Those who develop and care for the site know its place in the social ecosystem* and have thoughtfully prepared for learners of all backgrounds, cultures*, and identities to be enriched by their outdoor school experiences.

### ☐ We have completed the Safety and Management Assurances

| COMPONENT | INDICATORS | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | LESS LIKE/NOT EVIDENT | DEVELOPING TOWARDS | MORE LIKE | RESOURCES |
| **S1: Inclusion of Native American History, Culture, Knowledge, and Science**<br><br>Respectfully integrates Indigenous* knowledge and experiences and relationships with the natural world.<br><br>*It is strongly recommended Outdoor schools/schools provide compensation to tribes for their time and support.* | • Materials and presentations are absent of Indigenous history, culture, knowledge, and/or culture<br>OR<br>• Indigenous knowledge is generalized and not specific to the region. Information is presented in the past tense, with stereotypes* and/or romanticized language<br>• Materials are created with no input or permission from local Indigenous communities. Co-opted without reference or compensation | • Created with little and/or indirect input from local Indigenous communities (e.g., general online sources or adapting materials developed for another outdoor school or content area)<br>• Indigenous knowledge is presented, but predominantly through the lens of a dominant culture | • Respectfully invites and involves local Indigenous people in partnerships and programming<br>• Provides ample opportunities for participants to learn about the cultures, experiences, perspectives, and languages of Indigenous people in the region<br>• Provides accurate representation of Indigenous voices related to stories, issues, culture, knowledge, science, and other local tribal recommendations | Since Time Immemorial Curriculum<br><br>Learning in Places<br><br>Location of Tribes for Sites and Schools<br><br>Teaching STEM* with Indigenous Students and Families<br><br>Exploring Indigenous Science and STEM |

# The Outdoor School Site (The Where) - *Continued*

| COMPONENT | INDICATORS | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | LESS LIKE/NOT EVIDENT | DEVELOPING TOWARDS | MORE LIKE | RESOURCES |
| **S2: Physical Space (Site) is Culturally Responsive**<br><br>Site understands and communicates its place within the social ecosystem and is a space built to support the unique needs of the learners attending outdoor school. | • Site sets parameters (intentionally and/or unintentionally) around who is and is not welcome to participate, based on beliefs, culture, and identity*<br>• Site does not recognize and honor the needs of participants based on identity<br>• Site includes symbolism*, art, and messages that might make participants feel uncomfortable or unwelcome as part of programming (e.g., songs, stories, traditions, lessons)<br>• Site does not make adjustments to deemphasize symbolism that makes participants feel uncomfortable or unwelcome | • Site welcomes all participants, but practices don't always align with this message<br>• Site makes attempts to recognize and honor the needs of participants based on identity, but some areas still need to be addressed<br>• Site acknowledges some symbolism, art, and messages on display may make some participants feel unwelcome<br>• Site deemphasizes symbolism that makes participants feel uncomfortable or unwelcome, but only when asked by school or participants | • Site welcomes all participants, regardless of the site's affiliation<br>• Site is prepared to meet the needs of all participants regarding identity<br>• Site is sensitive to symbolism, art, and messages on display and the effect those elements may have on participants of differing faiths/no faith, cultures, and identities<br>• Prior to group visits, site makes adjustments (to the best of their ability) to deemphasize symbolism that might make participants feel uncomfortable or unwelcome | |
| **S3: Natural Learning Spaces**<br><br>Site has ample outdoor spaces with intact ecosystems* of native living communities. | • Outdoor school is manicured spaces, managed forests, and grasslands<br>• Limited number and variety of ecosystems<br>• Limited acreage, where all groups at outdoor school can see others while experiencing their learning | • Mix of ecosystems with more manicured than natural spaces<br>• Adequate space for groups to learn without interference from others | • Outdoor school has many intact ecosystems and ample spaces that allow learners to explore and learn without interference from another learning group | |

| | INDICATORS | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| COMPONENT | LESS LIKE/NOT EVIDENT | DEVELOPING TOWARDS | MORE LIKE | RESOURCES |
| **S4: Seasonally Relevant Programming**<br><br>Learning experiences are aligned appropriately with seasons, local ecology, and geography. | • Programming focuses on seasonally irrelevant phenomena* (e.g., studying bud break in fall)<br>• Not aligned to the ecology and/or geography of the outdoor school location (e.g., focuses on organisms not present in the region)<br>• Does not utilize the natural assets of the outdoor school for immersive* learning | • Programming is mostly aligned to seasonal phenomena or mostly aligned to ecology and/or geography of the outdoor school location, but may include experiences that are out of synch<br>• References site environment but doesn't fully utilize it for immersive learning (e.g., indoor learning about ecological concepts, which could easily be observed outside OR an outdoor activity that could just as easily be done in a classroom) | • Programming is fully aligned to both the seasonal phenomena and ecology/geography of the outdoor school location<br>• Fully utilizes the natural assets of the outdoor school for immersive learning | |
| **S5: Green Procurement***<br><br>Utilizes green procurement practices in order to cause minimal adverse impacts on the environment. | • Has not identified green procurement strategies or only implements a few of them | • Has identified green procurement strategies and is working to implement several | • Has a policy for green procurement<br>• Considers life cycle analysis of materials, and materials purchased to support outdoor school program are those producing the least adverse impacts | [Green Procurement Guidance](#) |
| **S6: Recycling and Waste Management**<br><br>Makes recycling and waste management practices a part of daily life at outdoor school. Uses conservation of resources as an educational opportunity that encourages learners to continue these practices beyond outdoor school. | • Uses single use (non-recyclable/not compostable) materials<br>• No signage and no encouragement from staff to support conservation practices<br>• Recycling and waste management practices are neither seen nor used as educational opportunities | • Most materials are compostable or able to be reused/recycled<br>• Some signage supports conservation practices but little encouragement from staff to follow expectations<br>• Some recycling/waste management practices are emphasized as educational opportunities | • Low-waste management practices are modeled with a goal of having zero waste. This includes food, power, and water consumption, as well as other materials used for outdoor school<br>• Signage to educate and encourage positive practices is posted throughout the outdoor school<br>• Staff regularly encourages learners to make positive ecological choices<br>• Most recycling/waste management practices are used as educational opportunities | |

# The Learning (The What)

Learning is place-based and includes historical and current perspectives. Learning involves physical location, community*, and outdoor school culture. Outdoor learning plan contains facts, ideas, perspectives, topics, issues, and questions that challenge, encourage, and grow students' academic, social, and personal selves. Learning is integrated with classroom curriculum and is aligned to state standards. Learning goals and experiences take into consideration students' schools, lives, needs, and cultures.

| COMPONENT | INDICATORS | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | **LESS LIKE/NOT EVIDENT** | **DEVELOPING TOWARDS** | **MORE LIKE** | **RESOURCES** |
| **L1: Integrated with Classroom Curriculum**<br><br>Outdoor school site staff and school staff* partner to discuss the experience and design programming for outdoor school that is aligned to classroom curriculum.<br><br>*Several indicators in this component apply when sites with program staff and schools work together to provide outdoor school. If school staff provide program and rent a facility without program staff, these indicators are the responsibility of school staff. Impacted indicators are in bold font.* | • Programming is not integrated with classroom curriculum<br><br>• Outdoor school staff* and school staff do not meet and plan curriculum alignment or discuss annual outdoor school plans<br><br>• Schools choose from a menu of lessons from the outdoor school, regardless of learners' prior knowledge or the lessons' connections to classroom learning | • Programming is related to content covered in the classroom but is not part of an explicit, holistic progression (i.e., outdoor school learning seamlessly integrates into learners' overall learning)<br><br>• **Outdoor school site staff and school staff partner to connect and discuss the experience**<br><br>• **Outdoor school site staff and school staff provide pre and post experience lessons**<br><br>• **Outdoor school site staff and school staff do not discuss the current student cohort*, their assets, and needs** | • Programming is fully aligned with classroom curriculum, with pre and post outdoor school lessons supporting that connection<br><br>• **Outdoor school staff and school staff *partner* to discuss the experience and how it aligns with transdisciplinary learning**<br><br>• **Outdoor school staff and school staff *partner* to plan a learning sequence that integrates classroom learning (pre and post) and outdoor school learning**<br><br>• **Outdoor school staff and school staff *partner* before and during outdoor school to discuss the current student cohort, their assets, and their needs** | |

# The Learning (The What) - *Continued*

| | INDICATORS | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **COMPONENT** | **LESS LIKE/NOT EVIDENT** | **DEVELOPING TOWARDS** | **MORE LIKE** | **RESOURCES** |
| **L2: Aligned with Washington State Learning Standards**<br><br>Lessons are aligned with the several sets of learning standards required by the State of Washington (see links in the right column). | • Curriculum is not aligned with grade-appropriate standards<br><br>• There is no training for nonformal educators* and volunteers who will be involved in standards-based lessons | • Pre-existing curriculum relates to standards but is weakly aligned or the alignment is incomplete or outdated<br><br>OR<br><br>• Updates were made to pre-existing curriculum, but more revision is needed for full alignment with standards<br><br>• Nonprofessional educators and volunteers have some training on standards-based instruction | • Pre-existing curriculum was kept only if it was possible to make updates for full alignment with the standards<br><br>OR<br><br>• New curriculum materials are designed or procured with grade-appropriate standards<br><br>• Includes resources and training for nonformal educators or volunteers who will be involved in standards-based instruction | [Next Generation Science Standards](#)<br><br>**Common Core Standards for:**<br><br>• [English Language Arts](#)<br>• [Mathematics](#)<br>• [Environmental and Sustainability Education Standards](#)<br>• [Career and College and Readiness](#)<br>• [Social Studies (Civics)](#)<br>• [Social Emotional Learning Standards](#)<br>• [Since Time Immemorial](#)<br>• [WA State Cultural; Competency, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Standards for Educators](#)<br>• [21st Century skills](#) |
| **L3: Interdisciplinary Learning**<br><br>Content and skills from multiple disciplines (science, art, physical/health education, math, social studies, language arts) are utilized to help learners understand questions, problems, issues, and opportunities. | • Programming is unidimensional and pertains to only one discipline | • Programming addresses multiple disciplines but does not integrate them as ways to explore questions, problems, issues, and opportunities<br><br>• Multidisciplinary activities are offered but in isolation | • Programming examines questions, problems, issues, and opportunities using multiple disciplines in a cohesive manner<br><br>• Encourages learners to use the content and skills from multiple disciplines to examine questions, problems, issues, and opportunities | |

## The Learning (The What) - *Continued*

| COMPONENT | INDICATORS | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **LESS LIKE/NOT EVIDENT** | **DEVELOPING TOWARDS** | **MORE LIKE** | **RESOURCES** |
| **L4: Promotes Culturally Responsive\* Content, Interactions, and Learning**<br><br>Learners' cultural strengths and identities (emotional and physical) are used as assets for developing social-emotional and academic skills. | • Content is not connected to and/or is dismissive of learners and their identities, communities, and cultures<br>• Content represents one dominant culture\*<br>• Perspectives and accomplishments of people reflecting a full range of diversity are absent from programming<br>• Includes no support for learners' social and emotional well-being<br>• Discourages critical and creative approaches to learning, thinking, and communicating | • Content does not connect with all learners. Content may only represent a small subset of learners and their identities, communities, and cultures<br>• Presents fixed perspectives that are not responsive to learners' contributions and perspectives<br>• The perspectives and accomplishments of people reflecting a full range of diversity are sometimes emphasized<br>• Includes some attempts to support learners' social and emotional well-being, but not consistently throughout the experience<br>• Permits, but does not encourage critical and creative approaches to learning, thinking, and communicating | • Content includes opportunities for all learners to engage their backgrounds as resources and connect content with their identities, communities, and cultures<br>• Most of the questions, problems, issues, and perspectives explored are relative to learners' identities, communities, and cultures<br>• An emphasis is placed on perspectives and accomplishments of people reflecting the full range of diversity in the community<br>• Support for learners social and emotional well-being is consistent throughout the experience<br>• Critical and creative ways of learning, thinking, and communicating are constantly encouraged and modeled | |
| **L5: Promotes Career Connected Learning\***<br><br>Experiences at outdoor school create an awareness for careers in and for nature\*. | • Learning experiences at outdoor school do not connect with careers<br>• Does not include high school learners as mentors/leaders to support outdoor school program and career preparation | • How learning connects to careers is clear | • Learners are provided opportunities to learn about and build skills for jobs taking place outside as well as jobs in natural resources and conservation<br>• Learners have some understanding of the pathway to several outdoor/nature careers<br>• Includes high school learners as mentors/leaders to support outdoor school program and career preparation | Career Connect WA<br><br>OSPI\* Career Technical Education (CTE)<br><br>Green Pathways Jobs<br><br>Resources from Pacific Education Institute (PEI) |

# The Instructional Practices (The How)

Teaching supports learner-centered learning. Lessons are experiential, investigative, and provide ample opportunities for collaboration* and reflection. Instructors meet learners where they are and respect learners' cultural, social, emotional, and academic needs. Lesson planning considers learning progression and is taught with equipment that is developmentally appropriate and in good working order. Instructors model expectations for behavior, questioning, failure, changing course, and reflection.

| COMPONENT | INDICATORS | | | RESOURCES |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | LESS LIKE/NOT EVIDENT | DEVELOPING TOWARDS | MORE LIKE | |
| **IP1: Learner-Centered Programming**<br><br>Planning for programming includes activities that allow learners to direct their own learning with guidance. Programming is differentiated, easily adaptable*, and based on progression. Importance is placed on learner products, use of learning tools, and the learning environment. Plans are based on learners' strengths, needs, and interests.<br><br>Instruction includes learning that occurs across multiple modes and senses (e.g., kinesthetic, linguistic/verbal, musical, touch, smell, visual). | • No opportunity for learner voice, choice, or agency<br><br>• Plans do not provide learner opportunities to connect to and/or share lived experiences, perspectives, and prior knowledge<br><br>• No consideration of learning progression<br><br>• Instructor plans to lecture. Inclusion of multimodal* learning is not evident<br><br>• No accommodations are considered | • Some opportunity for learner voice, choice, or agency<br><br>• Plans provide learner some opportunities to connect to and/or share lived experiences, perspectives, and prior knowledge<br><br>• There is learning progression through the lesson, but does not include connection to previous and future learning<br><br>• Requires only one mode but may allow for multiple modes (e.g., nature journaling activity limited to writing, but validates learners who choose to add drawings)<br><br>• Materials chosen occur primarily in one mode<br><br>• Instructor plans for learners with known challenges | • Allows ample opportunity for learner voice, choice, and agency<br><br>• Learning progression is present in lessons and evident in connection to previous and future learning<br><br>• Plans for multiple modes of learning<br><br>• Instructors plan to facilitate and guide learning rather than entirely direct teaching<br><br>• Learners have many opportunities to connect to and/or share lived experiences and pre-existing knowledge throughout the experience<br><br>• Instructors are equipped to adapt and facilitate accommodations<br><br>• Learners practice and demonstrate learning in multiple/varying ways and according to their individual strengths, needs, and interests<br><br>• Instructors know learners' needs and accommodations prior to outdoor school experience through meeting(s) with teachers/staff | |

# The Instructional Practices (The How) - *Continued*

| COMPONENT | INDICATORS | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | LESS LIKE/NOT EVIDENT | DEVELOPING TOWARDS | MORE LIKE | RESOURCES |
| **IP2: Instructor Interactions with Learners are Positive and Respectful**<br><br>Instructors demonstrate respect for and celebrate learners' identities, social/emotion/physical and cultural needs, both as individuals and groups. Instructors are aware of learners' developmental levels and provide thoughtful preparation and implementation of lessons. Instructors communicate in a way that is encouraging and positive. | • Instructors do not take developmental levels of learners into account when planning, delivering, and assessing instruction<br>• Demonstration or modeling of the desired skill or process is minimal or absent. Models are sometimes unclear to learners<br>• Inconsistently facilitates learners' use of current tools and materials, resulting in confusion and unsatisfactory outcomes<br>• Disregards learners' needs, attitudes, and abilities<br>• Talks down to, speaks negatively to, and/or ignores learners. Communication with learners is not generally considerate or respectful<br>• Instructor tells learners what to think and offers their own opinions | • Instructor creates minimal developmentally appropriate* instruction that considers social/emotional/physical needs of learners<br>• Provides demonstrations and modeling of the desired skill or process that are mostly clear to learners<br>• Facilitates use of current tools and materials to maximize learning<br>• Shows knowledge of learners' attitudes, abilities, and experiences as a group. Attends to the needs of individuals and groups<br>• Communication with learners is considerate and respectful<br>• Instructor encourages learners to form their own opinions, but at times, importance is placed on the instructor's opinion<br>• Individual support and safety plans are implemented to ensure each student's needs are accommodated | • Instructor creates and fosters developmentally appropriate instruction that considers and adapts to social/emotional/physical needs of learners, enabling each to remain engaged with instruction and their learning<br>• Demonstrations to learners are clear and precise with anticipation and preemptive action<br>• Consistently facilitates use of current tools and resources to maximize learning<br>• Shows knowledge of learners' attitudes, abilities, and experiences as individuals and as a group<br>• Communication with learners of all identities is considerate and positive, demonstrating genuine respect and celebration for individual learners and the group as a whole<br>• Instructors encourage learners to form their own opinions based on facts and experiences | [OSPI Social Emotional Learning (SEL)](#)<br><br>[Washington State CCDEI Standards](#) |

# The Instructional Practices (The How) - *Continued*

| COMPONENT | INDICATORS | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | LESS LIKE/NOT EVIDENT | DEVELOPING TOWARDS | MORE LIKE | RESOURCES |
| **IP3: Materials and Equipment are Context-Appropriate**<br><br>Materials and equipment support the learners' experiences. Materials are adaptable and appropriate for learners' developmental levels. | Materials/equipment:<br><br>• Are not articulated in the teaching materials<br>• Are exclusive and inaccessible<br>• Are not appropriate for the weather and/or terrain<br>• Are not appropriate to learners' developmental stages and prior experiences<br>• Are not taught, giving learners no time for practice prior to or during the lesson/unit | Materials/equipment:<br><br>• Are sometimes articulated in the teaching materials and are inclusive* and accessible* for some but not all learners<br>• Are appropriate for some weather and terrain<br>• Are appropriate to some learners' developmental stages and prior experiences<br>• Are somewhat or haphazardly taught, giving learners limited time for practice prior to or during the lesson/unit | Materials/equipment:<br><br>• Are clearly articulated in the teaching materials<br>• Are inclusive and accessible for equitable use by all learners<br>• Are appropriate for changing weather and terrain<br>• Are appropriate to learners' developmental stages and prior experience<br>• Are taught when necessary, giving learners ample time for practice and become proficient in use prior to or during the lesson | |
| **IP4: Experiences are Collaborative and Cooperative**<br><br>Learners collaborate toward shared goals in learning and living groups, which requires use of social/emotional competencies such as listening, empathy, conflict resolution, communication, and compromise. | • Learners work independently and in isolation with no opportunities to apply interpersonal skills<br>• No group agreement* is reached/discussed<br>• Discourages collaboration, cooperation, and/or communication<br>• Little discussion about roles needed to accomplish group tasks and how those roles might be distributed among the group members<br>• Group functions as individuals. They work in isolation, and they are not accountable to the group<br>• Conflict is not addressed and impedes progress | • Learners work together in groups, but with limited support/direction<br>• A group agreement is created with little discussion with learners<br>OR<br>• Groups are simply given a pre-written group agreement<br>• Includes some opportunities for collaboration and/or cooperation<br>• Some discussion about roles needed to accomplish the task and how those roles might be distributed among the group members<br>• Learners work together as a group but are not authentically accountable to one another<br>• Conflict is recognized but not always addressed and resolved | • Learners work in groups with ample support/direction<br>• A group agreement is created in collaboration with instructors and learners<br>• Experiences require collaboration, cooperation, and/or communication<br>• Experiences require learners to encourage, depend on, and be accountable to one another<br>• There are robust discussions about roles needed to accomplish the task and how those roles might be distributed among the group members<br>• Learners identify and appropriately respond to conflict | 21st Century Skills*<br><br>Social Emotional Learning (SEL) |

# The Instructional Practices (The How) - *Continued*

| COMPONENT | INDICATORS | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | LESS LIKE/NOT EVIDENT | DEVELOPING TOWARDS | MORE LIKE | RESOURCES |
| **IP5: Learning is Through Investigation**<br><br>In lessons, learners investigate a question related to an ecological, cultural, and/or political phenomena, through the collection of evidence and the communication of results. Involves elements of inquiry*.<br><br>***Full inquiry may not be possible during a typical outdoor school program time frame.*** | • No opportunities to investigate<br>OR<br>• Investigations and/or data collections are not connected to a question<br>• Investigation is directive and learners are passive | • Areas of investigation are limited and/or predetermined with limited opportunities for learners to use problem solving, decision making, creative, and critical thinking skills<br>• Data and data collection methods are mostly developmentally appropriate<br>• Few opportunities for learners to analyze, interpret, or communicate their findings, observations, or ideas | • With support, requires learners to participate in asking and subsequently answering their own questions using problem solving, decision-making, creative, and critical thinking skills<br>• Investigations are guided by question(s) that is/are testable with the data used and/or help further understand phenomena<br>• Data and data collection methods are developmentally appropriate<br>• Requires learners to analyze, interpret, and communicate their findings, observations, and ideas | Resources from Pacific Education Institute (PEI) |
| **IP6: Learning is Experiential**<br><br>Learning is infused with active, immersive experiences. Learners reflect on their process and are able to apply lessons more broadly in their lives. | • Learning is not enhanced by active learning or concrete experiences taking place outside the classroom<br>• Learning is teacher-directed<br>• Activities and learning are specific to outdoor school only | • Learners build skills that are used in multiple disciplines<br>• Experiences minimally allow for opportunities for learners to make decisions and be accountable for results<br>• Learners are provided minimal opportunities to connect activities to their lives | • Learners actively build skills that are used authentically in multiple disciplines<br>• Learning begins with an experience and includes challenge, observation, and reflection, as well as application to life<br>• Experiences are structured to require the learner to take initiative, make decisions, and be accountable for results | Association for Experimental Education |

# The Instructional Practices (The How) - *Continued*

| COMPONENT | INDICATORS | | | RESOURCES |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | LESS LIKE/NOT EVIDENT | DEVELOPING TOWARDS | MORE LIKE | |
| **IP7: Provides Time for Reflection**<br><br>Provides opportunities for learners to consider and evaluate new or shared learning experiences. May involve consideration of and connection to own learning preferences, values, outcomes, and further application of concepts and ideas. | • Learners have few or no opportunities to consider, evaluate, or connect to new or shared learning experiences<br>• Instructor, rather than learners, reflects on (presumed) learning<br>• Instructor tells learners what to think and offers own opinion | • Instructor includes some opportunities for learners to consider, evaluate, or connect to new or shared learning experiences, but may be limited in scope<br>• Reflection opportunities lack depth<br>• Questions/prompts are generic and/or limited in perspective and application<br>• Reflection opportunities limit social and self-awareness | • Includes regular opportunities for learners to consider, evaluate, or connect to new or shared learning experiences using various methods and modes<br>• Reflection opportunities produce meaningful connections and insights<br>• Questions/prompts are thought-provoking<br>• Reflection opportunities connect past learning to future application/exploration<br>• Reflection opportunities involve social and emotional dimensions, including self-awareness, social awareness, and responsible decision making | |

# Tips for Using the Program Survey and Action Plan Template

## Here are a few ideas to consider before embarking on this voyage:

1. There is no requirement the Program Survey and the Action Plan Template be used as presented here. Outdoor schools should feel free to copy and use the process as presented. Outdoor schools should also feel free to modify the process for what best meets their needs. While the content of each tool is important to include, how review teams approach this work may be individualized.

2. Take a team approach to this work. Not only do "Many hands make light work," but many voices provide an authentic and well-represented view. Assemble your review team with voices, experiences, and skills in mind. Consider age, gender, identity, outdoor school experience, background in education, race, and community involvement.

3. Don't look at this process as one that must be done all at one time. Choose a few areas of improvement and go from there. Strive to measure your progress as an inch wide and a mile deep, not a mile wide and an inch deep.

4. Set up processes for information gathering, meeting, and communicating. Determine a timeline, realizing it is not set in stone, but is there to keep the group on track and prevent the danger of progress dying down.

5. As the person heading up this work, check in with individuals frequently to monitor process and keep task responsibilities fresh in team members' minds.

6. Remain focused, but flexible. We all know the best plans don't always deliver. Recognize roadblocks, readjust, and keep moving forward.

7. Collect more than you think you'll need: meeting/conversation notes, survey results, quotations from anyone involved with your outdoor school, examples of excellent lessons. All of these can be used for evidence in the action plan process. It is better to have too many than too few.

8. Remember the purpose behind this process! Celebrate current strengths and positive changes, no matter how big or small. The work you do by completing this process builds up your program and creates unforgettable experiences for the learners who come your way.

# Using the Program Survey

## After you have assembled your review team (see page 18) and created a group agreement:

1. Make sure all group members understand the scope and purpose of the project. They should have a cursory understanding of the rubric, the Program Survey, and the Action Plan Template.

2. Plan to look at ALL aspects of outdoor school, not just direct instruction. Experiences happen everywhere at outdoor school, so include "in-between moments," traditions, daily living practices, songs, and campfire programs in your assessment. Come at this from a holistic view, where everything about your program is examined.

3. Have paper or on-line copies of established curriculum available for reference.

4. Have group members choose the components they will research. Use a common form to make sure information gathered is consistent. Access an example program survey form. Feel free to use it as is or modify to suit your group's needs.

5. Understand that more than one form may be filled out for a component, as there may be more than one issue concerning a component that needs to be addressed.

6. Emphasize that while gathering research, it is not time to design or offer solutions. That happens in the Action Plan. Try to keep this initial information based on current outdoor school practices.

7. Bring your review group back together and share out information. This is a time for group members to ask clarifying questions and make changes based on group feedback. At this time, you may choose to categorize components by:

   a. *Urgent* (must be addressed right away, especially if practice impacts learners in a negative way)
   b. *Important* (not urgent, but still needs attention soon)
   c. *Address Later* (important, but does not need immediate attention)
   d. *Accomplished* (current practice meets requirements of component/indicators)

8. From the assembled data, choose the components that represent your program's strengths. These do not have to be components from the "more like" designation. Discuss what to do in order to maintain these strengths. Is there anything that could be done to make these components stronger?

9. Choose the element(s) needing improvement to address first. To create this list, look at the components your group classified as "Urgent" first. In the first year of reflection, items from the "Urgent" list might be the only components addressed in the improvement cycle.

10. Prioritize other components, in order of first-to-address to last-to-address. Keep this list for future improvement cycles.

11. Prepare to take the first chosen components through the action plan process!

## Program Survey Example Form 1: Component S1

| Date: 9/10/23 | Component Number S1 |
|---|---|

**Component Text:** Respectfully Includes Indigenous Experiences and Relationships to Land and Waters

**Description of Outdoor School Activity Related to Component:** Some of the songs sung after meals in the dining hall are about Indigenous people/other cultures and are not respectful. Singing these song does not match the reverence we offer to Indigenous and other cultures' ways of knowing at outdoor school.

**Current Status (Circle)**

~~Not Evident/Less Like~~ (circled)          Developing Toward          More Like

**Evidence Supporting Current Status:** The song "Shining Waters" is sung in a cadence perceived to be "Indian talk." Traditionally, during the chorus of the song, some participants make whooping sounds, mimicking war cries. This is an example of cultural appropriation, disrespect for culture, and perpetuating stereotypes. Other songs, such as "We're Men From Nairobi," "Pick a Bale of Cotton"  and "Hambone," are examples of songs that perpetuate stereotypes and cultural appropriation from different cultures.

## Program Survey Example Form 2: Component L2

| Date 7/10/23 | Component Number L2 |
|---|---|

**Component Text**
Aligned with Standards
Activities are aligned to Washington State Learning Standards, including Next Generation Science Standards, Common Core Standards for English Language Arts and Mathematics, Environmental and Sustainability Education Standards, College, Career and Civics, Culturally Responsive Standards, Social Emotional Learning* Standards, Since Time Immemorial, and 21st  Century skills, mindsets, and behaviors for student success.

**Description of Outdoor School Activity Related to Component:** When curriculum was formalized 12 years ago, we enlisted the help of a local elementary school teacher, who assisted in making sure our lessons were aligned to the Washington State Learning Standards (formerly the Common Core science standards). Schools and districts seemed pleased when we told them of this alignment. Up until a few years ago, we were unaware of the other standards in our state. While we know our lessons contain SEL work, Native Ways of Knowing, and learning around sustainability, we are not formally aligned to those elements of learning. NGSS is a new concept for our outdoor school.

**Current Status (Circle)**

Not Evident/Less Like          Developing Toward (circled)          More Like

**Evidence Supporting Current Status:** Our marketing materials include a copy of our curriculum, complete with alignment to Washington State Learning Standards for Science. We do not have documentation for alignment with NGSS, SEL, STI, and Environmental and Sustainability standards.

# Action Plan Process

After gathering information using the Program Survey Tool, your review team determined areas in need of improvement. Remember, you are not expected to address every area of need at this moment. To give this process the attention required to make real and sustainable changes, choose two to four standards to address. You might choose even fewer standards if the changes needed are significant and/or more complicated than others.

The following four steps come from AWSP's Paradigm, as described above. This system is cyclical in nature and is designed to promote reflection as a means to improvement. For each standard you address, answer the questions in the four sections below. Two examples of the complete process are provided below. Access a blank Action Plan Template.

## Process for Each Step

### 1. Plan

    a. Which component from the rubric will you/your team be addressing?
    b. How is this area of improvement currently demonstrated at your outdoor school?
    c. What is the plan for change? What is the desired outcome?

### 2. Implement

    a. What steps will you take to make this change? Include estimated dates for a timeline and those responsible for designated tasks.
    b. What resources will staff need to implement this change?
    c. What data will you collect? How will data be collected?
    d. What artifacts will you collect?
    e. How and when will your team communicate progress?

### 3. Assess

    a. What does your quantitative data reveal?
    b. What does your qualitative data reveal?
    c. How did your implementation make a positive impact on your program?
    d. What evidence do you have to support that positive impact?

### 4. Reflect

    a. Were there any unexpected outcomes as a result of making improvements?
    b. What roadblocks did you face? How did you readjust and move on?
    c. What growth/change did you notice in your team?
    d. What growth/change did you notice in yourself?
    e. At the end of this process, do you see a reason to continue to make improvements in this area? What do you envision happening?

# Action Plan Template Example 1: Component S1

| Action Plan: Component S1 | |
|---|---|
| **Step One: Plan** | |
| a. Which component are you addressing? | S1: Respectfully Includes Indigenous Experiences and Relationships to Land and Waters |
| b. How is this area of improvement demonstrated at your outdoor school? | Four songs that have been part of our after-meal singing are disrespectful of Native American and other cultures. Songs do not show respect for cultural experiences, using stereotypes, sounds and actions that disrespect the history and culture of some of the people who work at and utilize our outdoor school. |
| c. What is the plan for change and the desired outcome? | The plan is to remove the songs from our repertoire and use this change to educate our staff/students on how some songs, even those that are beloved, cannot be included in our singing because they disrespect culture. The desired outcome is to replace these songs with songs from our local tribe, if there are songs they can share and teach. This will be a great opportunity to share the difference between cultural appropriation and cultural appreciation. |
| **Step Two: Implement** | |
| a. What steps will you take to make this change? (Include dates and names of people responsible) | 1. Consider each song that is a part of our program. Determine the songs that need to be eliminated (whole group, by end of 8/23)<br><br>2. Look at each identified song and determine what is disrespectful about it. This is to share with stakeholders when introducing these changes (outdoor school director and song leader, by end of 1/24)<br><br>3. Create presentation for staff, sharing the why and the how. Include instruction on how staff can share this information with students at outdoor school (outdoor school director, by end of 3/24)<br><br>4. Anticipate questions/concerns that may surface and responses to counter (outdoor school director, by end of 4/24)<br><br>5. Create a survey for staff to take after learning about the song changes<br><br>6. Share plan with group at 5/7/24 meeting<br><br>7. Contact local tribe and set up a meeting regarding songs that could replace the ones we'll remove |
| b. What resources will be needed to implement this change? | Time<br>Wisdom and insight from local tribal member |
| c. What data will you collect? How will data be collected? | Staff will complete an anonymous survey, asking their thoughts and concerns about the change. The survey will be distributed right after the meeting about coming changes. |
| d. What artifacts/proof will you collect? | At the end of the fall outdoor school season, staff will be surveyed again, asking how they felt the changes affected outdoor school culture. We'll use these responses to gauge staff thinking and feelings around the changes and the new songs that were added to our collection. |
| e. How and when will your team communicate progress? | Team will meet in December '23 and May '24. Periodic emails will go out, asking group members to add updates to the component work they've taken on. |

| Step Three: Assess | |
|---|---|
| a. What does your quantitative data reveal? | None gathered for this action plan |
| b. What does your qualitative data reveal? | Staff was receptive to making changes. Some staff members indicated the songs had always made them uncomfortable, but because they were part of tradition, staff members played along. This bothers outdoor school administration, as staff should feel comfortable taking a stand on issues of importance, tradition or not. Other staff members were vocal about disagreeing, saying, "They are just fun songs." They did not see why they should be removed. |
| c. How did implementation make a positive impact on your program? | A classroom teacher of color made a point to ask about the missing songs. When the change was explained, she thanked us. Knowing that she was aware and affected by the songs sung in the dining hall leads us to imply that other adults and children in our program were likely impacted by the content of these songs. Removing these songs did what we hoped it would: make our outdoor school a place where everyone and their cultures are respected. |
| d. What evidence do you have to prove positive impact? | Staff survey at the end of the season indicated staff had positive feelings around eliminating songs and adding new ones (shared by our local tribe). Staff were able to use ideas from staff training to teach students the differences between cultural appropriation and cultural appreciation. |

| Step Four: Reflect | |
|---|---|
| a. Were there any unexpected outcomes as a result of making improvements? | We did not expect the positive reaction to removing songs early on. While there was some initial push-back by a few staff, there were far fewer objections that anticipated. |
| b. What roadblocks/unexpected events occurred during this process? How did you readjust and move on? | Reaching out to our local tribe was not as easy as anticipated. While we did eventually connect and were given some songs and games we can add to our program, it made us realize how we need to continue to work on our relationship with the tribe. We've made a start by inviting the tribal education director to a week of spring outdoor school, to observe and help us establish ways in which we can make learning about Native American history and culture a stronger part of our program. |
| c. What growth/changes did you notice in your team? | There is a greater awareness of cultural respect in our staff. They pass this along to our learners through outdoor school lessons. |
| d. What growth/changes did you notice in yourself? | I am reminded to examine everything through the eyes of culture and respect. It is so easy to continue a practice just because we've always done it that way. Everything is up for examination. |
| e. Do you see the need to continue to make changes in this area? What do you see happening in the future? | Not in this area, but we will certainly be aware of new practices and songs introduced to our outdoor school students. Not related to songs, but staff feeling like they could not speak up about songs that offended them has led us to examine our staff culture and make plans for addressing this before our next session of outdoor school. |

# Action Plan Template Example 2: Component L2

| Action Plan: Component L2 | |
|---|---|
| **Step One: Plan** | |
| a. Which component are you addressing? | L2: Aligned with Standards<br>Activities are aligned to Washington State Learning Standards, including Next Generation Science Standards, Common Core Standards for English Language Arts and Mathematics, Environmental and Sustainability Education Standards, College, Career and Civics, Culturally Responsive Standards, Social Emotional Learning Standards, Since Time Immemorial, and 21st Century skills, mindsets, and behaviors for student success. |
| b. How is this area of improvement currently demonstrated at your outdoor school? | When curriculum was formalized 12 years ago, we enlisted the help of a local elementary school teacher, who assisted us in making sure out lessons were aligned with the Common Core Standards. Schools and districts seemed relieved when we told them of this alignment. Up until a few years ago, we were unaware of the other standards in our state. While we know our lessons contain SEL work, Native ways of knowing, and learning around sustainability, we are not formally aligned to those elements of learning. |
| c. What is the plan for change and the desired outcome? | We will hire a teacher consultant who will examine our program offerings and determine changes that will lead to better standards alignment. Consultant will design professional development for staff, creating a better understanding in using standards to improve current curriculum and to create new curriculum.<br><br>Desired outcome is a robust outdoor school curriculum, aligned with state standards and built to enrich and enhance learners' classroom studies. |
| **Step Two: Implement** | |
| a. What steps will you take to make this change? (Include dates and names of people responsible) | Contract with consultant and set timeline with them (10/15/23), director and consultant<br>Work with consultant to determine which lessons are aligned to standards and what changes need to be implemented for stronger alignment (11/3/23-1/30/24), consultant<br>Determine which lessons are not supporting standards and examine how to make changes for alignment OR determine if the lessons need to be removed from program (11/3/23-1/30/24), consultant<br>Director and consultant meet to go over findings and plan for professional development (2/2/24)<br>Development of professional development (2/2/24-2/27/24), consultant<br>Professional development presented to outdoor school staff at staff training (3/15/24) |
| b. What resources will be needed to implement this change? | Consultant, money to pay them for work and follow-up<br>Materials for staff training<br>Time for professional development during staff training |
| c. What data will you collect? How will data be collected? | Staff survey before professional development training to gauge standards current knowledge and a survey after training to assess change.<br>Upon implementation, survey to school staff targeting changes and their impact on learners' experiences. |
| d. What artifacts/proof will you collect? | Surveys from staff and school staff. |
| e. How and when will your team communicate progress? | Weekly email check-ins between the director and consultant<br>Consultant will attend a staff meeting mid-season to answer questions and assist with any curriculum problems that may arise. |

| Step Three: Assess | |
|---|---|
| a. What does your quantitative data reveal? | 10% of staff indicated confidence in utilizing standards-based learning prior to training. 85% indicated feeling confident in post-training survey. |
| b. What does your qualitative data reveal? | School staff provided anecdotal evidence that learners' interest in science topics (particularly environmental science) increased. Some reported capitalizing on that interest to create more outdoor learning opportunities on campuses and in nearby parks. School staff recognized the connections made between classroom learning and outdoor school experiences. Common language used by school staff and outdoor school staff made for clearer connections for learners. |
| c. How did implementation make a positive impact on your program? | Outdoor school staff and school staff feel there is a clearer focus and purpose to the work. One staff member told me the outdoor school lessons no longer feel like an activity or a form of entertainment. They said they feel what they are teaching is meaningful and giving kids the hands-on experiences they need for enduring understanding. |
| d. What evidence do you have to prove positive impact? | Staff evaluations, staff conversations, school staff survey results, school staff conversations. |
| Step Four: Reflect | |
| a. Were there any unexpected outcomes as a result of making improvements? | I did not anticipate the change in how outdoor school staff would work together. Having a common purpose and a common vocabulary brought everyone together and created a team focused on intentional teaching in a fun and meaningful way. |
| b. What roadblocks/ unexpected events occurred during this process? How did you readjust and move on? | Professional development with staff started off rough. Many did not see the need for making changes ("Kids love what we do! Why change it?"). Our consultant did an excellent job of pivoting and helping staff understand the importance of their role as instructors through the use of standards-based practices. When outdoor school staff saw the difference, there was a shift and from that point on, outstanding progress was made. |
| c. What growth/changes did you notice in your team? | See above! |
| d. What growth/changes did you notice in yourself? | I have a better understanding of having high expectations and then helping outdoor school staff rise to them. My confidence in their abilities as instructors increased through this process and I'm very proud of the program we offer. |
| e. Do you see the need to continue to make changes in this area? What do you see happening in the future? | I'd like to have our consultant in next year for a follow-up, particularly to look over new curriculum we are working to implement in our next season. It seems like this area will be a place of constant updating and improvement, albeit smaller changes than experienced initially. |

# Reach Out to Us!

Outdoor Schools Washington hopes you find this process enriching and helpful. Thank you for being on the path of constant improvement! As you progress through the steps, please contact us if you need clarification or have any questions. We are here to help and are happy to do so!

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# Glossary

**Accessible**-how educational institutions and policies ensure—or at least strive to ensure—that students have equal and equitable opportunities to take full advantage of their education (www.edglossary.org).

**Accommodations**-services or support related to a student's disability that help (them) to fully access the subject matter and accurately demonstrate such knowledge without fundamental alterations to the standard or expectation of the assignment (www.iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu).

**Accredit**-officially recognizing the meeting of essential requirements (www.dictionary.com).

**Adaptations**-making changes to instruction in order to allow students equal access to the curriculum and to give them the opportunity to process and demonstrate what has been taught (www.iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu).

**Attributes** (also referred to as **Outdoor School Assets**)-areas and features within an outdoor school, both natural and manufactured, that lend themselves as spaces for impactful and/or specific learning experiences.

**Career Connected Learning**-a series of skill-based programs that help young people connect directly to education, credentials, and career opportunities (www.careerconnect.org).

**Careers In and For Nature**-jobs where workers spend a large part of their workday doing tasks outside for the benefit of nature.

**Collaboration**-a learning approach that involves pupils working together on activities or learning tasks in a group small enough to ensure that everyone participates. Pupils in the group may work on separate tasks contributing to a common overall outcome, or work together on a shared task (www.educationendowmentfoundation.org).

**Community**-a feeling of connection with others, as a result of sharing common attitudes, interests, and goals Culturally Responsive-using students' customs, characteristics, experiences, and perspectives as tools for better (classroom) instruction. Students of color see themselves and their communities as belonging in academic spaces (www.edweek.org).

**Culture**-a way of life of a group of people—the behaviors, beliefs, values, and symbols that they accept, generally without thinking about them, and that are passed along by communication and imitation from one generation to the next (www.stanford.edu).

**Developmentally Appropriate**-methods that promote each child's optimal development and learning through a strengths-based, play-based approach to joyful, engaged learning (www.naeyc.org).

**Dominant Culture**-the cultural values, beliefs, and practices that are prevalent in a society and that are often associated with mainstream or dominant groups. Dominant culture is often characterized by its dominance over other cultures and its ability to shape and influence societal norms and expectations (www.the-ard.com).

**Ecosystem**-a system, or a group of interconnected elements, formed by the interaction of a community of organisms with their environment (www.dictionary.com).

**Emerging Outdoor Schools**-outdoor education outdoor schools in the beginning stages of design and development of environmental education curriculum.

**Established Outdoor Schools**-outdoor education outdoor schools currently in operation with an environmental education curriculum offering.

**Evidence**-gathered information to draw conclusions about where students are in their learning (www.teachermagazine.com).

**Exemplar**- someone or something that is considered to be so good that they should be copied or imitated (https://www.collinsdictionary.com/us/dictionary/english/exemplar).

**Green Procurement**-the purchasing of products and services with specific attributes such as energy or water efficiency, or use of biobased or recycled materials or nontoxic chemicals (www.epa.gov).

**Group Agreement**-a list of statements formed by the group that expresses what the group needs in order to feel safe, supported, and productive together (www.learningtogive.org).

**Identity**-the memories, experiences, relationships, and values that create one's sense of self (www.pyschologytoday.com).

**Immersive Learning**-being experiential and real, process-driven, trans-disciplinary, collaborative, participatory, and active, encouraging critical thinking and a renegotiation of power in relationships between participants (https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/j.1936-704x.2013.03139.x).

**Inclusive**-where all members of every school community are valued and supported to fully participate, learn, develop, and succeed within an inclusive school culture (www.vic.gov.au).

**Indigenous**-people or objects native to a certain region or environment (www.nationalgeographic.com).

**Informal Educators**-instructors who do not have formal training and teach lessons that are not structured nor aligned with standards (https://www.differencebetween.com/).

**Inquiry**-an investigative approach to teaching and learning where students are provided with opportunities to investigate a problem, search for possible solutions, make observations, ask questions, test out ideas, and think creatively and use their intuition (https://ssec.si.edu/stemvisions-blog/what-inquiry-based-science).

**Interdisciplinary**-involving two or more academic, scientific, or artistic disciplines (https://www.merriamwebster.com/dictionary/interdisciplinary).

**Learning Pathways**-the ways in which Washington students can develop their course plans and show their preparation for a meaningful first step after high school (www.k12.wa.us).

**Multimodal Learning**-teaching a concept through visual, auditory, reading, writing, and kinesthetic methods (www.elearningindustry.com).

**Nonformal Educators**-trained instructors who teach in places outside the traditional learning classroom. Lessons are well-planned and structured (https://www.differencebetween.com/).

**OSPI**-the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction in Washington State (www.k12.wa.us).

**Overnight Outdoor Educational Experiences**-(multi-day, overnight) education in, about, and for the out-of-doors (https://books.google.com/books?id=MYC9sFBZ9n-QC&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false).

**Outdoor School Staff**-director, naturalists, and/or instructors providing outdoor learning experiences for learners at outdoor school sites.

**Pedagogy**-the art and science of teaching, as a professional practice and as a field of academic study. It encompasses not only the practical application of teaching (https://www.ibe.unesco.org/en/glossary-curriculum-terminology/p/pedagogy).

**Phenomena**-observable events that occur in the universe and that we can use our science knowledge to explain or predict (www.nextgenscience.org).

**School Staff**-teachers, administrators, paraprofessionals, and other adults employed by the school who attend outdoor school with learners.

**Site**-physical location where overnight outdoor educational experiences takes place.

**Social Ecosystem**-all human activities that include economy, technology, politics, and culture and how they interact with the natural world (https://saras-institute.org/social-ecological-systems/).

**Social Emotional Learning (SEL)**-the process of developing the self-awareness, self-control, and interpersonal skills that are vital for school, work, and life success (www.cfchildren.org).

**Standard**-the knowledge and skills students should possess at critical points in their educational career (www.library.illinois.edu).

**STEM**-a common abbreviation for four closely connected areas of study: science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. The fields are often associated due to the similarities that they share both in theory and practice (www.snhu.edu).

**Stereotype**-an often unfair and untrue belief that many people have about all people or things with a particular characteristic (www.merriam-webster.com).

**Student Cohort**-a group of students who study the same program or course together in a shared learning experience (https://www.educate-me.co/blog/cohort-students) .

**Symbolism**-the practice of representing things by symbols, or of investing things with a symbolic meaning or character (www.dictionary.com).

**Transdisciplinary Learning**-undertaking real-world problems or explaining phenomena, students apply knowledge and skills from two or more disciplines to help shape the learning experience (www.smithsonianmag.com).

**21st Century Skills**-specific skills needed to fully participate in today's global community: Communication, Collaboration, Critical Thinking and Creativity. Students need to be able to share their thoughts, questions, ideas, and solutions (www.azed.gov).

**Outdoor Schools Washington**