

PLANNING TO GO OUTSIDE

Outdoor Field Experiences often require planning with multiple people. You may need to schedule with the field location, organize transportation, and prepare substitute teachers or support staff to help back in the classroom or on the field experience. Even if you stay on the school grounds, you still may need to get permission from the administration and schedule additional staffing to ensure all students are able to participate. With all this to consider, it is a good idea to start thinking about potential field experiences early.

When reviewing options for your **Outdoor Field Experiences**, consider what natural features, equipment, facilities, and/or programs would be needed for the location to be accessible for all your students to investigate the driving and supporting questions. Also consider how you, as the educator, would facilitate learning and, if you involve partner educators or support staff, think through how they would help or lead facilitation. Consider your learning objectives for the field experience. These could be skills focused (e.g., connected to quantitative analysis) or content focused (e.g., fostering a systems perspective). Then consider how one site might help you with those objectives more than another site.

Consider both off-site locations and the school grounds for outdoor learning. There are likely opportunities for **Outdoor Field Experiences** to occur on or near the school grounds — for example, at local parks, museums, or nearby fields or streams. Often off-site field experiences include fees for transportation and programs and may require securing permits and permissions. Including at least one outdoor field experience on school grounds can help ensure the MWEE persists if there are restrictions on leaving school property, scheduling conflicts, or limited transportation or programmatic funding. When planning a MWEE, it is important to consider sustainability from the beginning.

Your school may have a planned field trip that is already budgeted for that can be woven into the MWEE.

Outdoor Field Experiences are an important part of the MWEE. The Incorporating Outdoor Field Experiences planning tool can be used to evaluate potential sites for your **Outdoor Field Experiences**, including exploring how these sites can support the **Issue Definition** and **Environmental Action Projects** essential elements. For sustainability purposes, it is helpful to have at least one of these experiences occur on the school grounds.



Students at Nelson School in Michigan plant native plants to provide a rain garden at their school as part of their Great Lakes B-WET project. (Jessica Vander Ark)

“The MWEE framework is a great tool for helping educators to package really powerful, meaningful, and locally relevant learning experiences for their learners. After all, not all classrooms have four walls! #LearnOutside”

Tarrea Potter

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