

Place-Based Learning Project Planning Guide

Project Title: "Take A Hike" Project Leader(s): Kristy Gollakner

Grade Level(s) 6th-8th School Name: Gwinn Middle School School District: Gwinn Area Community Schools

Content Areas: Science Arts Math Technology Foreign Language Social Studies Environment Other

1. Project Objective(s):

While I will be doing additional projects that relate to my experiential science time in Africa, I want to write this planning guide, not as a project but as a guide for a new extra-curricular group that is greatly needed in my school and community to encourage our community to care for and explore the natural world in which we live.

Objective 1: Students and community members will discover healthy activities they can continue lifelong.

Objective 2: Students and community members will gain greater appreciation and respect for our natural world and its beauty.

Objective 3: Students and community members will increase their local flora and fauna identification skills.

Objective 4: Students and community members will develop a higher level of outdoor survival knowledge.

Objective 5: Students and community members will educate others about the natural beauty to be enjoyed in our area.

2. Project Description: Include in your description answers to the following questions: What is the scope of the project; that is, how many teachers, students, and community members do you expect to be involved? Who are your community partners and how are they involved in planning and implementation?

We live in an amazing area of our country—the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. My time spent in Africa has provided many lessons and project ideas to bring to my classroom. I have already infused some of the life lessons into my classroom at the start of this school year. However, my time spent doing experiential science in Tanzania has made me realize that I have failed in bringing my true passion to my students and community—hiking and backpacking.

Obviously the school day does not allow us to hike much farther than our local woods by our school. We discuss and do projects on local ecosystems. We do labs in our “outdoor classroom” in the woods and at a creek behind our school. I am always shocked at the number of local nature points of interest my students have never seen or heard of. Until my trip in Africa, I never recognize the need for me to create an extra-curricular activity for my students, their parents, and any other interested community members to learn about and explore our area’s natural beauty!



This year I will start small with this club, but will have it continue to grow in the future as I establish additional key adults to lead groups. This group will involve middle school students, grades 6-8, their parents, several teachers, and community members. My projected numbers right now are as follows: I teach 125 of our middle school's 250 children. I suspect our hiking club this year will involve 30-40 children. My goal is to have 1 parent per 4 students participating in each hike. Parents will also help with transportation. I have had three additional teachers already commit to helping to lead on adventures. I have been approached by several community members knowing of this club I am creating as well. As stated, this year I'd like to keep numbers within a manageable range since I am just now beginning this endeavor.

I am hoping to partner with area businesses for donations. I also plan on involving several key community members in planning and guiding hikes. We may have guest speakers at club meetings as well. Eventually, I will partner with our area Math and Science Center to potentially allow members of the club to do an overnight backpacking trip in the summer months after school is dismissed—but not in the first year of this club's creation.

3. Community Connection: How is the project connected to the unique identity of your place (e.g., culture, economy, infrastructure, natural resources)? What makes this a community development project? What specific community need will it address?

This club will focus upon our natural resources. My students are blessed to live in an area filled with natural wonders, but I am astounded how few of my students have had the opportunity to experience these places... all of which are an hour or less from their homes! I am also equally surprised how many adults have never been to these places. I feel that having my students develop such a connection to the outdoors will allow them to more deeply understand the need to take care of our planet. The same is true for their parents and our community members. These students will also become voices to speak for nature to spread the word to others and hopefully lead others and their own families on such adventures into our natural world. Club members will make videos to display the adventures to be had in our natural world and show others why we need to preserve these resources.

There are several community needs that will be addressed with this hiking club:

- 1) It is a healthy life lesson for our students, parents, and community to participate in physical activity outdoors.
- 2) Children today (and many of their parents) need to see WHY we need to take care of our natural resources rather than just being told we need to do so. They need to feel a connection to the planet before they are willing to make life changes to care for it.
- 3) We have snow on the ground in our community for nearly 8 months a year. Many children and adults see this as a reason to stay indoors (and play video games or watch TV) and not venture outside. My students need to see that the snow offers even more opportunity for amazing hikes and views.
- 4) Many in our community have the desire to hike in these areas, but they do not know how to get to the places or are afraid to go without having a leader to guide them so they do not get lost.

4. Essential Question: What is the essential question addressed by the work of the students and community partners?

Essential Question... Why do we need to care for natural environment in which we live?



5. Student Learning Outcomes and Standards:

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?	Assessment: How will you assess each student learning outcome?
1. Students and community members will discover healthy activities they can continue lifelong.	<p>K.OP.06.06 identify governmental, non-profit, and/or private areas used for outdoor pursuits.</p> <p>K.SB.06.0 use physical activity as a positive opportunity for social interaction in controlled settings.</p>	Observations & Discussion
2. Students and community members will gain greater appreciation and respect for our natural world and its beauty.	<p>S.RS.06.17 & S.RS.07.17 Describe the effect humans and other organisms have on the balance of the natural world.</p> <p>ESS3.C: Human Impacts on Earth Systems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Human activities have significantly altered the biosphere, sometimes damaging or destroying natural habitats and causing the extinction of other species. But changes to Earth’s environments can have different impacts (negative and positive) for different living things. (MS-ESS3-3) <input type="checkbox"/> Typically as human populations and per-capita consumption of natural resources increase, so do the negative impacts on Earth unless the activities and technologies involved are engineered otherwise. (MS-ESS3-3),(MS-ESS3-4) <p>K.OP.06.0 apply knowledge of selected elements of the seven principles of Leave No Trace (Teen version) in controlled settings.</p> <p>K.OP.06.07 distinguish between appropriate and inappropriate resource related behaviors in selected outdoor pursuits in controlled settings.</p>	Observations & Discussion
3. Students and community members will increase their local flora and fauna identification skills.	<p>L.EC.06.41 Describe how human beings are part of the ecosystem of the Earth and that human activity can purposefully, or accidentally, alter the balance in ecosystems.</p>	Observations & Discussion



<p>4. Students and community members will develop a higher level of outdoor survival knowledge.</p>	<p>S.RS.06.15 & S.RS.07.15 Demonstrate scientific concepts through various illustrations, performances, models, exhibits, and activities.</p> <p>M.OP.06.0 demonstrate ability to make minor repairs to equipment in selected outdoor pursuits in controlled settings.</p> <p>K.OP.06.0 identify selected elements of decision-making skills related to engaging in outdoor pursuits.</p>	<p>Observations & Discussion</p>
<p>5. Students and community members will educate others about the natural beauty to be enjoyed in our area.</p>	<p>S.IA.06.13 & S.IA.17.13 Communicate and defend findings of observations and investigations using evidence.</p> <p>S.RS.06.15 & S.RS.07.15 Demonstrate scientific concepts through various illustrations, performances, models, exhibits, and activities.</p> <p>WHST.6-8.1 Write arguments focused on discipline content. (MS-ESS3-4)</p>	<p>Student videos will be evaluated.</p>

6.. Literacy Acquisition:		
Goals: What specific literacy goals will the project address?	Strategies: What literacy strategies will the project employ?	Assessment: How will you assess literacy outcomes?
<p>WHST.6-8.1 Write arguments focused on discipline content. (MS-ESS3-4)</p>	<p>Students will effectively communicate through video documentary creation information about their hike destination on why we need to protect these areas.</p>	<p>Student videos will be evaluated by peer club members & club leader.</p>



7. What 21st Century Skills will students apply and assimilate through this project? How will students demonstrate these behaviors?	
Goals: What 21 st Century skills with students apply?	Assessment: How will you assess 21 st Century outcomes?
Students and community members involved in this group will be able to create a video with a meaningful visual and verbal message that will be posted via YouTube and our group’s website to share with the community. (And they can put it on Facebook too... you can’t get much more 21 st century than that!)	Student videos will be assessed. Videos should give a detailed overview of the hike taken and provide a supportive Earth message.
8. Technology: What technology tools will the project employ? How will that technology be used to enhance learning and improve on the community issue(s) the project is addressing?	
While hiking, students will use FlipCams to document what they see and experience. After each hike, all photos will be downloaded into a file for that hike’s featured destination. In the spring of the year, student teams will create videos to show others the amazing places they hike using Windows Live Movie Maker. These videos will then be posted and shared with the community to showcase the amazing natural resources outside our doors and motivate people to “take a hike.” In their videos students will also be given the challenge to communicate the need to care for our Earth that has made such beauty.	
9. Authenticity: How does this problem connect to the local community OR Where in the “ real world ” might one see the problem or question addressed by the project tackled by an adult at work or in the community? (Ex. Local fish and game scientists also study species in our local creek.)	
Every community is challenged with two major problems affecting our nation: 1) Sedentary life styles—too many people are not active in their daily lives and our nation’s health concerns reflect this. 2) Sustainability—too often we don’t think of the planet and how our daily lives and choices have negative impacts on it. We need children (and adults) to be connected to our natural environment so they CARE enough to make positive choices in life to help rather than hurt.	



10. Adult Connections:

10a. Do students have access to at least **one other adult** with expertise relevant to their project who can address questions, provide feedback, etc.?

Yes No Not Sure

10b. Does the project offer students the opportunity to develop a broader understanding of the relevant field of work through observing adults during at least one in-depth **work site visit**?

Yes No Not Sure

I haven't decided this yet. The club is only beginning... but, oh, the places it may go!

10c. Does at least one adult from outside the classroom help students develop a sense of the **real world standards** for the type of work arising from their project?

Yes No Not Sure

10d. What **roles** will adults outside of the classroom play in this project and how will students **connect** with these individuals? (Ex. Structural engineers will provide feedback to student teams on bridge design.)

Community members will join students during these hikes, help them gather photo documentation and add to the discussions and lessons learned on the trail. I have not yet lined up specific individuals, but I'd like to have guest speakers attend our club meetings to further educate the club on specific environmental, survival, and local outdoor recreation topics.

11. Active Exploration: Which of the following **methods and sources** of information are students expected to use in the project? (Check all that apply.)

- Interviewing
 - Observing, documenting, and/or surveying
 - Video or audio-taping
 - Gathering and reviewing published information
 - Searching on-line and electronic databases
 - Creating a symbolic representation (g/g/, model building, map making)
 - Discussion
 - Experimentation
 - Other
- Use of Maps and Mileage Charts



12. Additional Assessment Information:

12a. Which of the following methods of **self-assessment** of progress are students expected to use? (Check all that apply)

- Journals and work logs
- Conferences with teachers or adult mentors
- Conferences with peers
- Using a rubric or other assessment measure
- Reviewing their progress against a work plan they developed for the project
- Identifying areas where improvement has occurred and where it is needed

12b. Do students prepare a culminating exhibition, performance, or demonstration at the completion of their project that shows their ability to apply the knowledge and skills they have gained?

Yes No Not Sure

12c. What opportunities are students given to conduct individual, small group and whole class **reflections on their learning** and to offer suggestions for future class projects? [Ex: Small group reflection and whole-class debrief held the day after final exhibition.]

Students will present their videos to peers in school in the classroom setting as a celebration of the club's adventures for the year.

Students will also be given the opportunity to give a video presentation to community members on an evening in our school.

Please attach any lesson plans to this guide.

See included files on club details.

