

# Nature Based Education Institute

May 19, 2018

Sponsored by University of Maine at Farmington

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**Session Title:** Curriculum and the Outdoors - It's Natural

**Session K 2:00-3:15**

**Location:** Landing

## Presenter

- Courtney Schools (courtney.schools@tds.net)

## Who will benefit most from this session?

- Primary grade educators (Pk- Grade 3)

## Who else may benefit

- Early educators (B-5 age students)
- Early education directors/administrators

**Session Goal:** To help teachers become more flexible in getting students outside and interacting with nature while also still meeting district needs for curriculum and rigor.

## Session Learning Outcomes:

1. As a result of attending this presentation, teachers will gain an understanding of at least 2-3 ways they can incorporate more outdoor time with their students, while still incorporating academic rigor to align with district curriculum goals.
2. As a result of attending this presentation, teachers will gain an understanding of how important getting students outside in nature is.
3. As a result of attending this presentation, teachers will learn about research that confirms that being outdoors is important for students.

**Session Description:** This presentation will help educators find ways to connect their district curriculum to nature. It will allow teachers to find ways to get students outside and interacting with nature, while still being engaged in lessons that involve district learning goals and a high level of academic rigor. This presentation will show educators ways to follow district curriculum while still allowing students to have the opportunity to interact with the outdoors. This will be done by showing teachers specific activities that can be utilized during math, language arts, science, and social studies lessons. These activities will be a mixture of whole group, small group, independent, and partner work.

**How will participants engage in nature during your session?** Participants will have the opportunity to see ways that I have incorporated nature into my lessons and will have the opportunity to go outdoors and connect with other educators at their grade level to collaborate and come up with ways to incorporate more nature into their lessons while still aligning to curriculum lessons and goals. Participants will then come together outside with the presenter and have a debrief, getting a chance to share things learned and have the opportunity to have any final questions answered.

## Presenter Biography

Courtney Schools grew up in Aroostook county in the tiny town of Monticello, Maine. She grew up in the country, living on a dirt road surrounded by forests and farmland. Much of her childhood was spent outside, with the sun

setting as her main way of knowing it was time to go inside. With her dog Dakota faithfully by her side, Courtney grew up rolling down hills, searching for snakes and frogs, and getting muddy every chance she could. This is where she developed her absolute love and appreciation of the outdoors. After attending UMF and graduating in 2009, Courtney became a Kindergarten teacher for RSD #9 and teaches in New Sharon at Cape Cod Hill School. She currently co-teaches and works with 30 amazing 5 and 6 year olds. Courtney enjoys writing, singing, dancing, and finding new and exciting ways to spark creativity and imagination in her students.