

PTO Enhancement Grant Request

Please use this form to provide details regarding your request for PTO Enhancement Grant funds. A PTO Enhancement Grant should:

- (1) enhance existing programs and facilities at AAS
- (2) be consistent with AAS goals and philosophy
- (3) be practical and feasible
- (4) not cover items included in the school budget

Applicant / Project Leader

Name: Amber Taylor

Email: amber.taylor@aas.ru

Please indicate if you are a student, parent, or faculty/staff member:

Faculty / Staff

Project / Item Description

Please provide details about the project you are proposing.

Description

Outline your project as precisely as possible. How will it enhance existing programs and facilities? How is it consistent with the AAS Mission statement?

I would like to invite Caroline Carr - Outdoor Learning Consultant - to support our Elementary School teachers with some ideas as to how they can better use the nearby forest as a learning resource. Ms. Carr is an expert at embedding outdoor learning into school curriculum, as well as inspiring teachers to educate beyond the classroom environment, raising the standards of teaching and learning. AAS strives to personalize learning, as well as foster a love of learning. By allowing children to explore the forest nearby, students will be exposed to endless learning experiences!

Target Community

Who in the AAS community will benefit from your project? I.e., whole community, middle school students, high school faculty, one particular class, etc. Please be as specific as possible.

Caroline Carr is a consultant for Elementary School educators who would then support the entire elementary student population.

Choices

Explain why and how you chose the particulars of your project, i.e., brand, supplier, speaker or workshop, etc.

For the past six years of my time here at AAS, I have been taking children out into the forest every week. My first four years we were only going in the spring and fall, but the last three years we have been going every week through all the changing seasons. The time spent in the woods have become some of the most valuable hours in our school week.

Watching children in the woods is a practice of seeing inquiry at its finest! Some students were nervous at first, not sure if it was OK to get dirty, hesitant at brushing up against a low hanging branch. Within a month, all children were negotiating uneven surfaces, exploring and discovering mini-beasts in the dirt beneath them, role playing and building dens, and connecting to the natural world around them in an authentic way. These times, for me as a teacher, I feel like I see children at their finest and most raw.

This got me thinking that more children here at AAS need to connect with the natural world around them. Children are connecting online and virtually with endless information, but could that be distracting them from connecting to the natural world around them? Many articles suggest that if children don't develop a connection with nature, they will never feel a sense of responsibility towards the environment.

Growing up in an urban location such as Moscow, many children could be feeling alienated from the natural world. Parents struggle to find the time to take their children to the woods. I feel it is our responsibility to expose children to the eight-member beaver family living in their lodge only 50m away, to allow children to build structures in the woods, to observe the changing of the seasons, to scoop up pond water and study it under a microscope, to develop a deep connection with nature - all the while enriching the delivery of our curriculum in an authentic way, especially science.

A few months ago I sent an email out to three professors at Sheffield University, educators at Forest School training facilities in both Denmark and the UK. It was recommended to me to write to Caroline Carr. She replied with a very detailed and comprehensive description of the support she can offer to our elementary educators here at AAS. See her response [here](#). I would suggest that she come for an entire week, through which she could take each grade level into the woods for a day to discuss and model ways that the forest could support inquiry, as well as standards and learning outcomes.

How will your project positively impact the AAS community?

Studies by researchers throughout the world suggest physical activity and exposure to nature are important to good health, report positive impacts upon mental health and wellbeing associated with natural environments, and can reduce sadness and negative emotions. What a gift we can give the children and educators of our community!

Budget

Projected Total Costs

Outline exactly what is included in this estimate. Include your source of information. Cost of items that will be purchased should be checked with AAS Purchasing - Ilya Fateev (ilya.fateev@aas.ru).

Caroline Carr - £400 (approx. \$580 USD)

Extra Educator - £250 (approx. \$360 USD)

Resource Pack for school to keep, (maths equipment, outdoor learning books, outdoor learning cards pack) - £250 (approx. \$360 USD)

Travel and accommodation expenses from the UK - £200 (approx. \$290 USD) per person for flights, school accommodation provided at \$50 USD per night, \$300 USD for the six nights (approx. £200).

Total for one week of consultancy with extra educator: £4100 (approx. \$6000 USD)

Will this item be purchased locally, in the US or other?

Caroline is based in the UK

Timing

Proposed Start Date and Duration

ie, October 20xx for a 4 day workshop OR available for use from August 20xx.

With regards to visa and what the school suggests, these consultants could possibly come this spring or next autumn.

Estimate Set Up or Lead Time

Dependent on visa and school scheduling.

Measuring Success

Success Criteria

Is it possible to measure the end result of your project? If so, how?

We would be able to measure the effectiveness of this support if we can see students and teachers experiencing the natural world around them through the school day.

Your "Elevator Pitch"

How would you sell your proposal to the PTO Membership?

Please write a brief (max 150 word) description of your project. This will be published in the AAS newsletters and other places to inform the AAS community about your proposal, prior to the voting on proposals.

I would like to invite Caroline Carr - Outdoor Learning Consultant - to support our Elementary School teachers with some ideas as to how they can better use the nearby forest as a learning resource. Ms. Carr is an expert at embedding outdoor learning into school curriculum, as well as inspiring teachers to educate beyond the classroom environment, raising the standards of teaching and learning. Watching children in the woods is a practice of seeing inquiry at its finest! Contact with the outdoors is often limited for many children in modern society, and the vital experience of using the outdoors and being comfortable in nature is being lost. Children need to connect to nature. This opportunity would support and inspire AAS educators to engage in outdoor educating, motivate students, and bring learning to life!

