

Public Abstract

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Department:Curriculum & Instruction

Degree:PhD

Title:A comparison of Grant-Funded Outdoor Classrooms in Rural and Nonrural Missouri Schools

This study compared outdoor classrooms in rural and nonrural elementary schools in Missouri. Data was collected from applications for state funded grants awarded from 2004-2006 to elementary schools. The funds were awarded to each school to develop or enhance outdoor classrooms on or adjacent to school property. A sample of the schools that had received funding to develop an outdoor classroom were visited and photographed during the summer and fall of 2008 to determine how the grant funds were used to implement the outdoor classroom as well as how the original plan had developed over time. Education consultants from the granting agency were surveyed about the outdoor classrooms that they assisted in developing. Findings from this study showed no significant differences in features present in rural and nonrural outdoor classrooms; however, it was found that rural schools experienced greater difficulties in maintaining their outdoor facilities over time. These findings will assist in developing policies for using public funds to construct successful outdoor classrooms for use by elementary school teachers and students.