

Hancock High School Project Summary: PEAK Class

Planning for the Lake Superior Stewardship Initiative (LSSI) in the summer and fall of 2007 inspired the creation of a new, interdisciplinary, two hour block class at Hancock High School. Approved as a two hour, two credit course by the Hancock School Board, the **“Partnering the Environment and Academics in the Keweenaw (PEAK)”** class is designed to allow juniors and seniors the opportunity to develop mentally, emotionally, physically, and academically through a hands-on experiential and place-based teaching methodology. Students participating in this class receive one credit of elective science and one credit of senior English, with a total of 360 contact hours annually focused on place-based education, service-learning, and stewardship projects. In partnership with community partners, this class uses real-world projects addressing community needs to complete required English and science high school content expectations. This course will also partner with Hancock Middle School, with some joint field projects in which PEAK high school students will mentor middle school students in field work. An integral component of this course will be the use of bicycles, skis and snowshoes to travel to project sites throughout the Hancock community, introducing students to recreation that promotes life-long health and fitness, while also promoting stewardship through reducing the consumption of fossil fuels and their associated impacts. Relying on bicycles, skis, and other human-powered transportation will also help to ensure the long-term sustainability of integrating field-based community projects into this course by eliminating the reliance on costly bussing. Tandem bicycles will be used to foster team-building and balance students’ biking skill and ability. The project team is utilizing funding and contributions from multiple sources to cover the costs of this course, including field equipment, minimal bussing to more distant field sites, and bikes, skis, and associated gear. LSSI funding is requested to purchase and build a wide selection of field gear so the class can continue into the future with minimal outside expenses.