

# School District Partnerships for Equitable Nature-Based Learning and Environmental Literacy

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# School District Partnerships for Environmental Literacy

- Bridging formal and informal education
- Primary strategy within ChangeScale's School Partnership Initiative
- School Districts Involved
  - Alameda Unified School District
  - Pajaro Valley Unified School District
  - Petaluma City Schools
  - Campbell Union School District
  - San Francisco Unified School District
  - Evergreen School District

Aligned,  
ongoing  
teacher  
professional  
learning

Vision for  
environmental  
literacy and  
nature-based  
learning

Mapping K-12  
curriculum and  
standards to  
environmental  
learning  
experiences.

A steady diet  
of cohesive  
environmental  
learning  
experiences

Partnering with non-formal  
environmental education providers  
and community-based organizations

**School  
District  
Partnership**

# Case Study: AUSD School District Partnership

- Conducted by Matt, 2017-18
- Based on
  - research on formal-informal collaboration across CA
  - knowledge of the ChangeScale model
  - close examination of the AUSD process and history
- Led to theory on how to initiate and develop these partnerships
- Evidence from AUSD

# Vision for Environmental Literacy

Desired state of student learning experiences and outcomes

Equity- all schools, all students



# Supportive Context

“In 2015, a California state task force convened by State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson issued a groundbreaking *"A Blueprint for Environmental Literacy."* The 48-page report called for the development of curriculum and learning experiences to help all California public school children understand the environmental challenges currently facing our state, nation, and planet. These challenges inspire our work!"

- Superintendent Sean McPhetridge, AUSD

# Supportive Context

## District Initiatives

- Sustainability
- Science education
- Citizenship
- Project-based learning
- Student health
- Youth development, social-emotional



# Shared Leadership in District

Administration: District and Site

Teachers: Special Roles

Parents: Advocacy and Support

# Reflection

With your local school district, what initiatives might be considered supportive context?

Who might be leaders among the district and school staff?

Write down your ideas.

Discuss with person next to you.

# Network of Community Partners

“The AUSD district partnership for environmental literacy is leading the way in Alameda County. Being invited to be at the district table like this is unique. We are networking and building stronger relationships with other community partners. It helps morale, showing how we're not alone.”

- District community partner

Independent Providers to Community Partners

Structure: Convenings and Training

# Integration with District Curriculum and Professional Learning

“Environmental literacy experiences should be in service of the Next Generation Science Standards, Common Core Standards, English Language Development and other core academic goals.”

- District meeting with community partners

Teacher Institutes and Ongoing Support

Existing Curriculum and Materials

# Backbone Support

“We have learned from colleagues in other places and been supported with structure and knowledge about environmental education. We have learned best practices with how to get systems to change. ChangeScale is an amazing thought partner. Through meeting quarterly with ChangeScale, options for equity and access for environmental literacy have opened up.”

- Terri Elkin, AUSD

**Backbone Support staff:** planning support, leadership meetings, workshops with community partners, cross-district convenings, set up and coordination of teacher professional learning

# Reflection

In your community, what organizations might serve as community partners?

Who might provide backbone support?

Write down your ideas.

Discuss with person next to you.

# Challenges

Equity

Logistics and Transportation

Communication

Teacher Overload



- ❑ Location: City of Alameda that encompasses and island next to Oakland in the San Francisco Bay Area
- ❑ District grades span: TK-12, Pre-school programs
- ❑ Enrollment: 11, 201
- ❑ Unduplicated Pupil Count: 36.5%
- ❑ Ethnicity : White- 29.5%; Asian- 26.4%; Hispanic/Latino- 17.0%; Two or More Races- 10%; African American- 8.3%; Filipino- 7.0%; Pacific Islander- .8%
- ❑ Graduates with UC/CSU Required Courses: 57.3%
- ❑ Island community



# AUSD Vision for Environmental Literacy

- Every student in Alameda will feel connected to the outdoors through regular and consistent field trips, access to service learning experiences, and integrated classroom and field-based experiences.
- Through scientific inquiry, critical thinking, and environmental literacy, students will graduate prepared to solve the world's environmental problems.
- In order to achieve our vision, AUSD develops systemic, long-term partnerships with providers that are going to help us connect students to the outdoors while also implementing our adopted standards.

# Supportive Context: Prior District Initiatives

- Green Schools Challenge: school-based ownership of sustainability
- NOAA Ocean Guardian Grants: student environmental action projects
- BaySci: increase capacity for high-quality science instruction



Lawrence Hall of Science, Exploratorium,  
and Bay Area districts and teachers working  
together to advance science education

**BaySci**  
A Partnership for Bay Area Science Education

- Launched: 2012
- Initial goal: strengthen quality and quantity of (elementary school) science education
- NGSS Adoption (2015): TK-12 science education
  - Environmental Principles and Concepts (EP&Cs)
- CA Blueprint for Environmental Literacy (2015)

# Backbone Support



THE LAWRENCE  
HALL OF SCIENCE  
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY

ChangeScale®



Ten Strands  
Connecting Education, Environment and Community

# ChangeScale Backbone Support

- Network with districts
- Landscape Analysis
- Articulate environmental education field trips
- Environmental Literacy Provider Network
- AUSD Themes – Watershed, Bay & Ocean Science, and Biodiversity



# Network of Community Partners



Kids for the Bay

Residential Outdoor  
Education Schools

# Network of Community Partners

## Gathering of Partners

- Meetings to discuss AUSD needs
- Articulation of grade level appropriateness and capacity

## Training with Partners

- NGSS alignment when needed
- Next - move to CA History-Social Science Framework alignment

# Shared Leadership in District

- Superintendent
- Teaching and Learning Staff
- Site Administrators
- Teachers
- Students and families



# Integration with District Curriculum

NGSS: CA adopted standards

FOSS: AUSD Adopted Curriculum K-8

History-Social Science Framework: newest addition to integrated curriculum

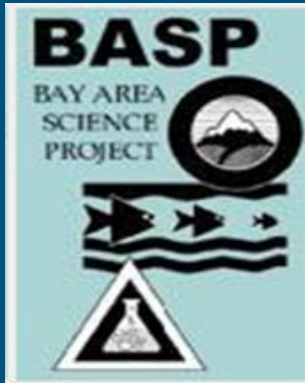
Gr	Env Lit Topic	Field Trip	FOSS	EEI	IBD Lit	H-SS
4	Ecosystems and Human Impact	Davis St. Transfer Station	<u>Environments</u>	Cultivating California (H/SS, 4), Witnessing the Gold Rush (H/SS, 4); [Life and Death with Decomposers (4) is a good fit for Davis Street Transfer Station, but it is a better fit for the 5th grade topics]	Being the Sad, Cautionary Tale of the Orange Roughy	Geography & environment influence on cultural developments; Human impact on the environment
5	Systems and Human Activities	Residential Outdoor Science School	<u>Living Systems</u>	Plants: The Ultimate Energy Resource (4); The Flow of Energy of Energy through Ecosystems (4); Life and Death with Decomposers (4)	Whales & Wolves	Effect of ecosystems including geography, water, and climate on Native Americans and settlers; Regional resources affect on economy, politics, and social organization

# Integration with Professional Learning

Beetles: Provider training



Bay Area Science Project: Teacher training



# Environmental Literacy Summer Institute

Supported by Ten Strands and Bay Area Science Project

- Week long training in Environmental Principles and Concepts and best practices for taking students outdoors
- Integration with NGSS and other school subjects



# School Gardens & Green Schoolyards of America

- School Gardens at most sites
- Green Schoolyards of America Institute: schoolyards that promote mental health, play and exploration spaces, outdoor education opportunities, and use green infrastructure.



# Challenges Being Addressed

Equity

Logistics and Transportation- field trip forms, walkable nature

Communication

Teacher Overload

# Reflection

How does the experience of AUSD relate to your work with school districts?

What are the takeaways for your own work?

What questions do you have?

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