

Newport News Public Schools

2022-2023 Meaningful Watershed Educational Experience

Located near the southernmost port on the Chesapeake Bay, educators and administrators participated in a unique experiential learning opportunity aboard the Baywatcher, a 40 ft. Jet drive field investigation boat. This initiative, led by the Chesapeake Bay Foundation's Hampton Roads program, provided training and field study to teachers aboard a floating classroom while navigating the local James and Warwick Rivers. This educator's field experience fostered a comprehensive understanding of the intricate connections between the land, the rivers, and the Bay and introduced teachers to the unique experiences, students would be participating in on their specific field trips. During these immersive sessions, participants engaged in a range of hands-on activities aimed at enhancing their knowledge of the Chesapeake Bay and the health of our local watershed. They explored the diverse rivers and tributaries, conducted hands-on sampling of aquatic life, and performed fundamental water quality tests. By examining the impacts of human activities on our local estuary, river ecosystem health, and system dynamics, teachers and administrators gained insight to better facilitate classroom instruction discussions activities and their upcoming trips with students.

During these immersive sessions, student participants engaged in a range of activities aimed at enhancing their knowledge of the Chesapeake Bay in April 2023. They explored the rivers and tributaries conducting hands-on sampling of aquatic life and performed fundamental water quality tests. By examining the impact of human activities on the local estuary, river ecosystem health, and system dynamics, students gained insights into the ecological implications of our actions while collecting real time data to support their understanding. Through experiential learning students actively discovered the correlation between their behaviors and the degradation of water quality. Moreover, they gained an understanding of the collective responsibility we all share in preserving the Chesapeake Bay. By empowering students with knowledge and practical solutions, this initiative encouraged them to actively contribute to the presentation and restoration of this vital ecosystem.

Students grasped a better understanding of their place in the local watershed and developed the importance of a call to action that would promote watershed literacy, conservation and awareness.

We are grateful for the support provided by the Department of Conservation and Recreation and the opportunity to implement this grant funded program. The progress achieved is a testament to the effectiveness of the initiative and we are committed to continuing the success of our program in the future.



