

Grant Year 2025-2026

OES Exhibits

Project 1 Title: Waves of Words

Leader(s): Kait Blehm

Students: 20 students, grades K-3 with various disabilities who receive speech-language therapy services

Cost: \$2,300

Timeline: September 2025—June 2026

Description: **Waves** of Words is an innovative speech-language therapy curriculum by OES speech language therapist, Kait Blehm, that uses Cape Cod's natural environment as the foundation for developing communication skills. The project consists of four seasonal units, each containing four lessons highlighting Cape Cod's unique plants, habitats, wildlife, and seasonal patterns. Students will take field trips to the Orleans herring run, Skaket Beach, and various trails such as Baker's Pond and Boland Pond. Each field trip will involve multisensory learning experiences and literacy components using children's books, art projects using local materials, themed language games, and guided outdoor experiences. Speech-language goals that will be targeted include but are not limited to: understanding others and expressing themselves effectively, producing fluent and accurate speech, participating in conversation and play. In addition, executive functioning skills such as self-control, memory, planning and organizing will be woven throughout all lessons. The curriculum naturally lends itself to creating a consistent integration of complex language concepts (e.g. temporal, spatial, directional, ordinal), which will further cement students' understanding of these concepts.

Project 2 Title: Biomimicry Challenge – Cape Cod Museum of Natural History

Leader(s): Amy Fish

Students: all 3rd grade

Cost: \$500

Timeline: September 2025—December 2025

Description: The CCMNH Coastal Explorer Outreach Program has two potential components: a visit aboard the Coastal Explorer Bus that comes to the school and an in-class STEM program. The Bus can accommodate groups of up to 10 students at a time, typically for about 20 minutes. The activities can be adjusted to be appropriate for students in grades K-8. CCMNH staff can work with more than one class during a day. Costs listed are typically for 2-3 classes depending on class size. Approximately \$500 for three hours

on site that includes some preplanning with the teachers involved. This activity is a game where students match something from nature with the innovation it inspired. The goal is to help students understand how nature is a pathway to science and invention. This activity provides an opportunity for students to experience a connection between Science, Engineering, and Technology. These topics are typically taught in isolation, but intersect regularly in STEM fields.

Project 3 Title: 2nd Grade Water Pollution and Conservation Project

Leader(s): Suzan Parisse and Keren Casto

Students: all 2nd grade

Cost: \$1,163.84

Timeline: September 2025—June 2026

Description: Last year's 2nd grade students found that the water in Boland Pond is not ideal for plant and animal life in and surrounding the pond. This year's students will be challenged to find a solution to the pollution issues plaguing Boland Pond. Students will collect a large sample of pond water to keep in an aquarium in the classroom, and will test natural materials to determine the best filtration system. They will study native water plants and their effects on polluted water and determine how to create healthier water quality in Boland Pond. The Marine Education Director from The Center for Coastal Studies will give a water quality lesson and students will participate in Horseshoe Crab Day at The Cape Cod Museum of Natural History. Students will share their findings on water quality and pollution mitigation with the public through additions to their website and weatherproof signage along the Boland Pond trail.

Project 4 Title: Ecosystem Investigations

Leader(s): Cirrus Farber and Allan Peterson

Students: all 5th grade

Cost: \$1,650

Timeline: September 2025—May 2026

Description: Students will learn about 3 separate ecosystems (forest, pond, and saltwater estuary), and learn to identify the producers, consumers, and decomposers present in each ecosystem. Additionally, students will learn about threats to each ecosystem, how human activity contributes to these threats, and how these threats can be reduced. Students will also investigate additional abiotic factors that affect ecosystems on Cape Cod.

Each visit would include an OCT hike with plant identification activities, animal identification/tracking activities, and decomposer evidence activities. During each hike, students would also take pictures and notes for use with a final project. Final project would be poetry, artwork, or informative paragraphs that could then be accessed via QR codes at each site.

Before each field trip, students will read about the type of ecosystem as well as the producers, consumers, and decomposers in that ecosystem. Additionally, they will read about different environmental threats to this ecosystem as well as ways to reduce these threats. During each field trip, students will carry clipboards to track evidence of each food chain. Plant identification and animal identification/tracking information will be included as a resource and students will also be utilizing iPad apps to help identify plants and animals while on site. While on site, students will also have time to sketch and write about their observations in their nature journals.

As a culminating activity, students will pick a favorite site and create a small project (informational paragraph about a specific animal or plant, art, or poem) that will be displayed during a project presentation to parents, OCT members, and the school community. Additionally, digital versions of each project will be attached to QR codes that the public can scan and access while visiting the informational kiosks at each site.