

## **Fostering Bay Stewardship Values, Understanding and Action through Blended Indoor, Outdoor and Online Learning: A District-wide Case Study from Prince William County, Virginia**

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Prince William County, Virginia is a rapidly developing suburb of Washington DC. It is home to an ethnically and economically diverse population and the Virginia's second largest school district. The first two years of a new K-12/University partnership provided "Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences" to over 10,000 Middle and High School Students across Prince William County Schools. Their teachers were trained to deliver, in partnership with university students and faculty, MWEEs which include schoolyard stewardship projects, inquiry-driven outdoor field studies and computer-based analysis of environmental conditions Occoquan Bay sub-basin of the Chesapeake Bay. Impacts on students' watershed understanding, stewardship values and activities were assessed through pro forma and post-learning surveys. Semi-annual professional learning community meetings allowed teachers' to share and regularly improve their experience with lesson plans developed. Results support benefit to sustaining this sort of program beyond its current 3-year grant period, scaling up to include other jurisdictions, and adapting such methods to foster similar watershed stewardship in other bay and coastal sea basins.

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