

Educational Enrichment Programs

Annual Report School Year 2022–23





Welcoming Students Back to The Mariners' Museum and Park

As students continued to adjust to the aftermath of the pandemic, our priority this school year was to provide meaningful in-person learning experiences that helped foster a sense of belonging.

The best way to experience our Museum and Park is in person, but during the pandemic, our Education team had to switch gears and rely on virtual programming. Last school year, as the world slowly transitioned out of the pandemic, only 30% of the students we served participated in an in-person educational enrichment program at their school or on our campus. This year, we were able to increase that number to 70%! From September through June, our team traveled to classrooms across Hampton Roads, and once again, our galleries and outdoor spaces were filled with joy and excitement as kids finally had the chance to go on a field trip.

Over the past three years, our team saw firsthand the fear and uncertainty that the pandemic brought to the world of education. It has never been more important to help students feel connected and valued. Our team is proud of everything we accomplished this year. We are committed to continue providing meaningful learning experiences that encourage students to explore their maritime connection and see themselves as part of the larger community of mariners.

Harriet Smith
Director of Education



“Please accept my deepest thank you. It was my first field trip since 1st grade and I wish we could’ve seen even more...”

Thank you, I appreciate your information and your time. I can’t thank you enough.”

*Fifth-grade student
Carver Intermediate School
Chesapeake, VA*

Mariners' Educational Enrichment Programs (EEPs)

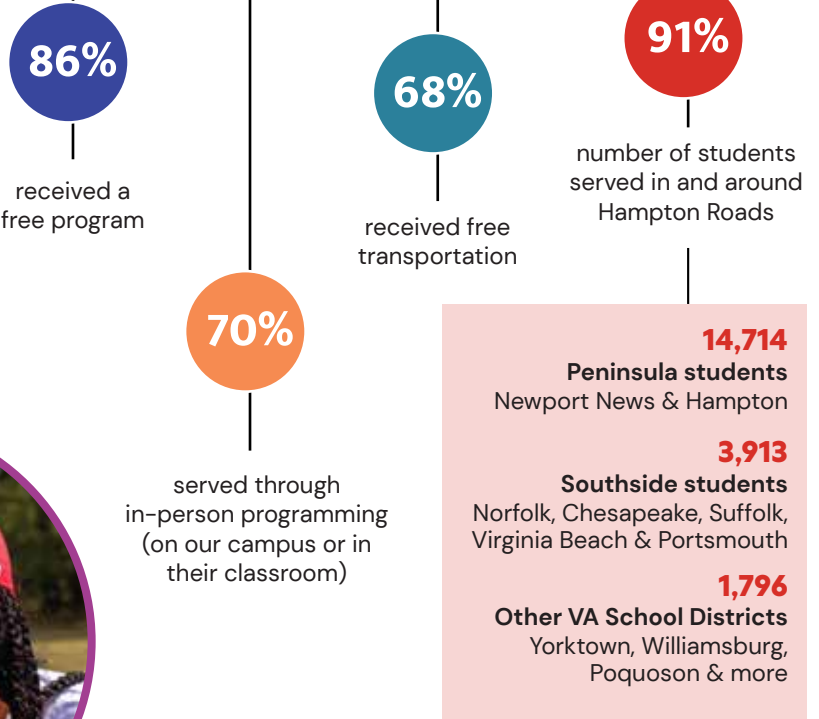
We aim to see students multiple times in their academic careers. Each year, we offer free programs for entire grade levels in local school districts, growing our capacity over time. For example, this year we provided a free program for every third, fifth, and ninth-grade student in Newport News. Many of the ninth graders still remember their field trip to the Museum as fifth graders four years ago.



2022-23 School Year by the Numbers

22,347

STUDENTS SERVED



Growth: Our Trajectory

Comparing 2018 - 2022 educational programs

	2018-19	2022-23
TOTAL SERVED	13,463	22,347
% of students - free program	31%	86%
Virtual	3,303	6,617
In the classroom	5,539	6,787
At the Museum	4,621	8,943
% of students - free transportation*	43%	68%



*This percentage is based on the total number of students who participated in a program at the Museum.

Meeting the Needs

At The Mariners', the school-age child is the most important segment of the community we serve and our EEPs reflect that commitment. To combat the ongoing challenge of low student achievement and high dropout rates, which were only exacerbated by the pandemic, studies show learning outcomes can improve when students participate in continuous, positive engagement over time. **We achieve this by:**



Encouraging a Sense of Belonging

*"Youth's **connection to their immediate community** plays an important role in reducing negative development outcomes...and increasing self-efficacy."*¹

Students are more likely to succeed and thrive when they feel connected to their community. Community organizations are uniquely positioned to offer engagement opportunities that help foster a sense of belonging among students.



Providing Out-of-the-classroom Experiences

Overall, engagement is essential to a **successful academic career**.

A supplemental SOL-based curriculum that utilizes creative and engaging hands-on, cognitive thinking, and fact-finding skills supports greater student engagement.²



Ensuring Equitable Access to Opportunities

Families have faced pervasive economic challenges; therefore, **providing access without barriers** is paramount to realizing our mission.

The data below provides a snapshot of the Newport News School District and solidifies our approach to ensure equitable access to all.

The Newport News Public Schools (NNPS) student population:

74.3%
MINORITY

53.8% | African-American
13.7% | Hispanic
6.8% | two or more races

91%
FREE LUNCH

Students who qualify for free or reduced lunch.

39%
TITLE 1 SCHOOLS

Percentage of NNPS designated as Title I schools.

¹ Lardier, D. T., Opara, I., Bergeson, C., Herrera, A., Garcia-Reid, P., & Reid, R. J., "A study of psychological sense of community as a mediator between supportive social systems, school belongingness, and outcome behaviors among urban high school students of color." Journal of Community Psychology, (2019) 47(5), 1131-1150. doi.org/10.1002/jcop.22182. PG. 1133

² Wang, Ming-Te and Jessica Degol, "Staying Engaged: Knowledge and Research Needs in Student Engagement." Child Development Perspectives, (Sept 2014): 137 - 143. ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4833401

A Strategy for Educational Success

The Mariners' approach to serving students is a cycle. Repeat that cycle, and you enrich the child.

Access

Remove barriers to access by delivering free EEPs and free transportation to students visiting the Museum or the Park. Thanks to generous contributions from individuals, corporations, private foundations, and government partners, each year, we have grown our capacity to provide free programming and transportation. With economic challenges mounting, this effort must be sustained.

Engage

Offer engaging experiences for students. Our programs, featuring place-based experiential learning, are delivered by an amazing team of educators who bring empathy, authenticity, and affirmation to every interaction with students.

Enrichment

Increased access and engaging out-of-the-classroom programming enriches a child's educational journey. When combined, they enhance the classroom curriculum and provide context for abstract ideas. Sustained engagement over the K-12 journey can broaden a student's worldview while helping them make connections across content areas, to their classmates, and to their community.

Evaluate

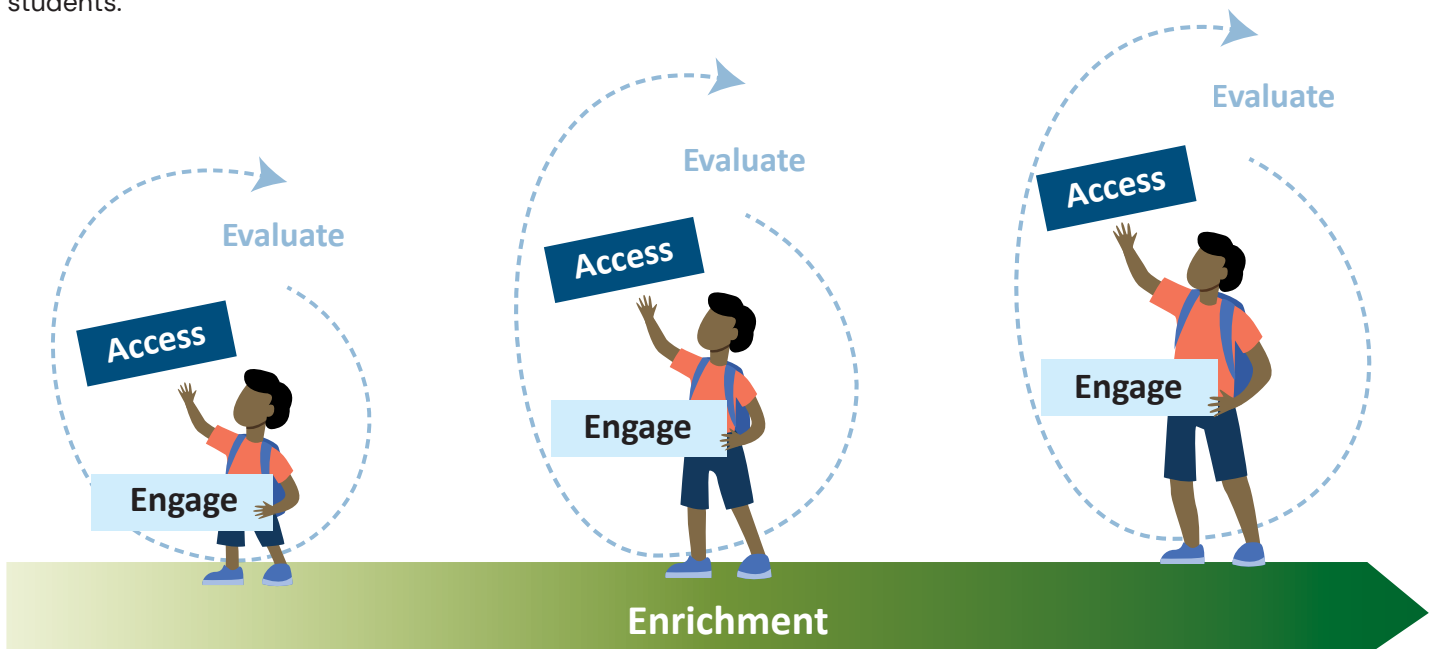
Evaluate our impact on students. Through partnerships with institutions such as ODU, we are testing evaluation tools that allow us to measure our impact and continually improve the experience for students.



Enrichment results in two central outcomes:

Improved learning outcomes
Expanded knowledge and increased self-confidence.

Positive sense of community
Students see themselves as part of the broader Mariners' community.





Impact - Case Study

Exploration Gallery

Galleries as Learning Spaces

"THIS HAS BEEN THE BEST DAY OF MY LIFE!"
*Third-grade student
Riverside Elementary*

Employing the principles of the Lean Startup – on an accelerated timeline and with minimal expense – our team designed a gallery to meet the needs of third-grade students throughout the region. We welcomed over 3,800 third-grade students this winter into this newly reimagined gallery. Carefully crafted activities help students begin a connection with The Mariners' while practicing important life skills such as critical thinking and communication.

Staying true to the Lean Startup, our team evaluated this latest iteration of the Exploration Gallery by collecting real-time feedback from students and teachers and implementing a formalized observation system.

As students participated in gallery activities, observers answered a questionnaire that assessed three central questions:

- **Are the students engaged?**
- **Do the students feel welcome in the gallery?**
- **Does the gallery help students find their maritime connection?**

Three months of observation data shows that most students were engaged, eager to participate, and displayed age-appropriate expressions of fun and enjoyment. Data also shows that as students played and learned in this new space, they made connections between the maritime topics covered in the gallery and their everyday lives.



Impact - Case Study

Onboarding Little Mariners

Early childhood education is critical in developing a child's social and cognitive skills. Scholarship also supports the premise that "early learning provides the foundation for lifelong learning and its benefits."³ Recognizing the importance of early childhood education we were interested in testing whether or not we can effectively serve these young students.

Over the past year, our team worked with the Peake Childhood Center team to design EEPs for three and four-year-olds that focused on foundational math, scientific concepts of prediction, and comparing and contrasting skills.

This partnership has allowed us to test three different programs, and engaged with more than 167 students from Peake Childhood Center.*

*Some of the students visited multiples times for different programs so this number includes repeat interactions.

³ Hahn RA, Barnett WS. "Early Childhood Education: Health, Equity, and Economics." Annu Rev Public Health. (2023) Apr 3;44:75-92. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/36332658/>. PG. 76



"The Mariners' Museum provides unique learning opportunities for our young children from Peake Childhood Center. Our preschool-aged children engage in activities in an authentic setting that support our math curriculum as well as other learning objectives while we prepare them for school."

*- Jennifer Parish,
Executive Director, Peake Childhood Center*

Impact - Case Study

Mariners' Environmental Co-op

Partnerships for Change

This school year represented year two of our NOAA Bay Watershed Education and Training (B-WET) grant, which formally established the Mariners' Environmental Co-op. Ninth-grade Newport News Public Schools students grow native eelgrass in their classrooms, plant the grass in Mariners' Lake as part of a restoration project, and lead an action project at school or in the community. Participating teachers received professional development and year-round technical assistance.



Measuring Our Impact

To evaluate our educational strategy, we partner with The Center for Educational Partnership at Old Dominion University (TCEP) to develop the standards for evaluation which will be implemented across all EEPs. During year two of B-WET, TCEP collected data through pre and post-concept maps and surveys of participating students and generated a year-end report. Findings from the report and anecdotal evidence collected by our Mariners' educators demonstrated that:

- Students have a better understanding of important educational concepts and local watershed pollution issues.⁴
- Students feel empowered to tackle environmental challenges.⁵
- Students feel their voice matters.⁶
- Students feel a stronger sense of belonging.

One teacher noted, "Students were able to make real world connections to concepts we talk about in [the] classroom. They were able to see how various factors of water quality and water health truly matter in the ecosystem."⁷

B-WET Program

B-WET allows students to be at the center of nature-based solutions in their community, empowering them to become environmental stewards.

Year 1 (2021-22)

- 543 students
- 7 teachers

Year 2 (2022-23)

- 1,987 students
- 43 teachers

"I learned that I like to help the environment. It helps me feel like I have a place for the earth and helping. It helps me so much to feel that."

- B-WET Student



On the Horizon

As we look to the 2023–24 school year and beyond, we are forging new pathways to support students in a meaningful way. Here is a snapshot of what our Mariners' team is embarking on:

Iterating & Adapting: Continuing to Apply Lean Principles

After the successes and lessons learned through the Exploration Gallery, the Education team will continue implementing the Lean Startup Strategy in our approach to serving students.

Continuing to Engage Students and Their Families

Each in-state student participating in an EEP receives a free one-year family membership to The Mariners' Museum and Park, allowing students to return with their families, share what they have learned, and experience parts of the Museum and Park they may not have visited on their field trip. During the 2022–23 school year, we saw a 130% year-over-year increase in the number of students that took advantage of the free membership.

Opening Mariners' Lake

The much anticipated reopening of Mariners' Lake is especially important for our students, using this natural resource in a way that reinforces and encourages environmental stewardship. In the coming school year, The Mariners' will be the sole provider for the environmental kayak experience for every sixth-grade student in Newport News. Students will study water quality, practice mindfulness in Mariners' Park, and learn what they can do to become stewards of this shared resource.

Growing our Team

In the fall of 2022, we welcomed two new team members to the Education Department, and this summer, we will add two additional educators. To support our growth strategy, we will build networks with local school districts, colleges, and universities to explore creating internships that allow us to grow our capacity to serve.



**"I had so much fun today!
I cannot wait to come back.
And when I'm older and have kids,
I want to take them here and bring
their kids here too!"**

*Ninth-grade student
Newport News Public Schools*

⁴ Garner Joanna K. "Evaluation of the Mariners' Cooperative B-WET Project, Yer 2: School Year 2022-23," The Center for Educational Partnerships at Old Dominion University, June 30, 2023.

⁵ Garner. "Evaluation of the Mariners' Cooperative B-WET Project, Yer 2: School Year 2022-23."

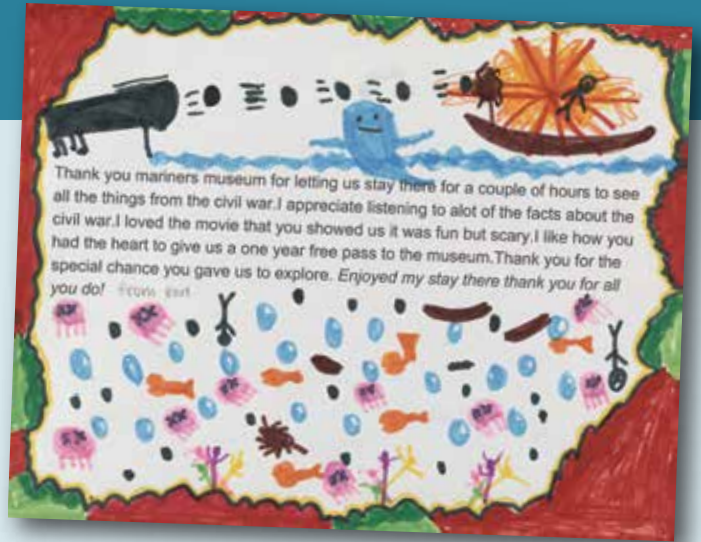
⁶ Garner. "Evaluation of the Mariners' Cooperative B-WET Project, Yer 2: School Year 2022-23."

⁷ Garner. "Evaluation of the Mariners' Cooperative B-WET Project, Yer 2: School Year 2022-23."

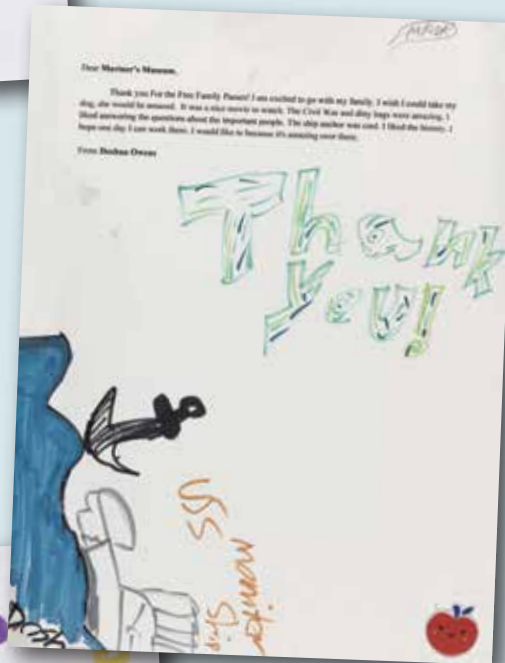
In Their Own Words



"My favorite about the visit is when we walked past where y'all clean the stuff and when you get to see what it is all about. The movie was awesome!"
- Jahmir



"I like how you had the heart to give us a one year free pass to the Museum. Thank you for the special chance you gave us to explore."
- Earl



"I liked the history. I hope one day I can work there. I would like to because it's amazing over there."
- Doshua



"I am truly honored to have my school included in this cool, school related museum! History can be a bit boring but you made it really cool."
- Sariyah



Thank You

As we continue to expand The Mariners' EEPs, we are working to ensure their long-term sustainability. In addition to individual gifts, memberships, and private, corporate, and government grants, the Mariners' team has established endowments that support the operating costs of the Education Department.

Over the past five years, we have proven our team is the most critical resource to meet the needs of our young people; it also represents our largest expense. A strong endowment ensures we attract and retain the exceptional team members needed to serve this important segment of our community – our children. It also allows us to be strategic in our decision making and program planning. At the end of the 2022-2023 school year, the total value of the Endowments for Educational Enrichment Programs, not including pledges, was \$1,115,647. These endowments are:

- The Mariners' Education Endowment
- The Henry and Sally Holzbach Fund
- The Petters Family Fund
- E. Robert and Gabrielle C. Denmead Fund
- The Randolph D. Rouse Fund



Our Mission

The Mariners' Museum and Park connects people to the world's waters, because through the waters – through our shared maritime heritage – we are connected to one another.



MarinersMuseum.org

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