

Place-Based Education Opportunities



Place-based education (PBE) immerses students in local heritage, cultures, landscapes, opportunities and experiences, using these as a foundation for the study of language arts, mathematics, social studies, science and other subjects across the curriculum. PBE emphasizes learning through participation in service projects for the local school and/or community.

Place-based Education Goals

Place-based education can “feed three birds with the same seed” as it addresses the integrated goals of:

1. **Student Achievement** – PBE boosts students’ engagement, academic achievement, and sense of personal efficacy as stewards of their local environment and community. It also can re-energize teachers.
2. **Community Social and Economic Vitality** – PBE forges strong ties between local social and environmental organizations and their constituencies in the schools and community, which helps to improve quality of life and economic vitality.
3. **Ecological Integrity** – Through project-based learning, students make tangible contributions to resolving local environmental issues and conserving local environmental quality. PBE is experimental learning that engages students in their own environments. It begins with: Where am I? What is the natural & social history of this place? How does it fit into the larger world? Learning takes students out of the classroom and into the community and natural environment. Students want to learn and apply their knowledge to solving real problems.

Place- Based Educational field-based learning trips allow teachers to explore educational resources within their local area. For example, teachers in the state of Washington have experienced the Westport Maritime Museum, Seattle Underground, McCord Air Force Base, Bremerton Naval Ship Yards, and UW Space Learning Center—important applied teaching connections for classroom activities in multiple subject areas. In California, tours were set up at Lawrence Livermore Laboratory, Yosemite National Park, Barnes & Nobles, and Vandenberg Air Force Base etc., for the expressed purpose of aiding classroom comprehension.

Participants will work an additional day of independent study and visit a business, museum or other facility of their choice in the community. Upon completion of their visit, they will need to answer the 10 questions below explaining what they learned and how they would implement it into their classroom curriculum.

1. What local topics, issues, or projects are likely to be meaningful for students and give them an opportunity to participate in learning activities that others will value?
2. What aspects of the required curriculum are related to this issue or project? List specific subtopics that students might explore, including those related to other subject areas.
3. What four or five overarching questions might guide your students' study?
4. What specific learning standards would this topic or project enable you to address?
5. How will you assess student learning? List possible strategies, including some culminating projects. Discuss how you will scaffold the learning that students need.
6. What community partners might you bring into the classroom to help teach this unit or to support activities outside of school?
7. What field studies, monitoring, or other inquiry, activities might students become involved within their neighborhood, community, or region?
8. What community needs might students address as part of this unit or project? What service learning opportunities does it afford? How might you publicize the contributions that students make?
9. How might students become involved in community governance activities related to this project? How could they participate in data gathering, reporting, or other forms of public participation, such as organizing meetings or planning community events?
10. What creative possibilities in the fields of art, music, dance, film, or theater relate to this project? What about vocational opportunities or internships?