



INCREASING ACCESS TO IMPACTFUL ENVIRONMENT-BASED LEARNING FOR ALL OF CALIFORNIA'S K-12 STUDENTS

HOW DO WE GIVE YOUNG PEOPLE THE TOOLS THEY'LL NEED TO BE SUCCESSFUL?

- We believe people are connected to the places we live.
- We believe California's people value each other, our geographically and culturally diverse communities, and our environment, and act on that caring.
- We know that throughout California, community leaders and community-based organizations have the knowledge, experience and expertise that can translate into culturally-relevant hands-on education for our K-12 students.

As a community-based leader or organization, you're actively involved in bettering your community. You have unique and valuable expertise and deep knowledge of the communities you work in partnership with.

By functioning as a network of partners, CAELI works collaboratively and inclusively to support California's K-12 students by highlighting the interconnectedness of people and places through environmental literacy—educators, students, and community partners working together are identifying powerful new ways of working together, and creating positive change.

CAELI collaborates with community-based organizations and the K-12 public school system to incorporate environmental learning that is locally based and culturally relevant into the regular school day—both inside the classroom and out. By connecting schools with local organizations like yours who are actively involved in building thriving communities, we create opportunities that empower our young people and support them in fulfilling their potential to imagine—and realize—a better world.

Without your work, ours would not be possible. We're grateful to have you join us.

ENGAGING LESSONS FOR TODAY'S YOUTH

The California Environmental Literacy Initiative (CAELI) collaborates with state agencies, county offices of education, K-12 districts, and community-based partners to prepare California's students for the future while building their skills in highly engaging settings. When the environment is used as a context for teaching core subjects, learning is more exciting, effective, and culturally relevant; this cultivates students' understanding of issues that directly affect their lives. Together we can support academically successful, environmentally conscious youth leaders who are excited about learning, innovating, and working together to co-create solutions for our future.

CAELI SUPPORT TOOLS FOR SCHOOLS AND TEACHERS:

- Connection to resources and local experts in the community to engage students in environmental learning opportunities
- Resources for infusing environmental literacy into existing coursework in engaging ways
- Professional learning support from educators, curriculum experts, scientists, and environmental experts

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is environmental literacy?

Environmental literacy is the capacity to act individually and with others to support ecologically sound, economically prosperous, and equitable communities for present and future generations. Through lived experiences and education programs that include classroom-based lessons, experiential education, and outdoor learning, students will become environmentally literate, developing the knowledge, skills, and understanding of environmental principles to analyze environmental issues and make informed decisions. *(California Blueprint for Environmental Literacy)*

What is the California Environmental Literacy Initiative (CAELI)?

The California Environmental Literacy Initiative creates a system of support in California that empowers all students to have local, standards- and environment-based

experiences that enhance their learning in core subjects inside and outside of the classroom.

By bringing together existing resources, stakeholders, and expertise, CAELI creates collaborations, builds capacity, and transforms systems to increase their impact and sustainability. CAELI works to ensure that teachers have access to high-quality professional learning and instructional materials that address standards across core subjects and support English language learners. We support professional development opportunities and outdoor education resources so that teachers can provide students with engaging environment-based educational experiences inside and outside the classroom.

Why is K-12 environmental literacy important for your students?

Environmental literacy has the capacity to positively impact who students become and how they interact with their environment, their communities, and their world. It is a way to support all students in developing the knowledge, understanding, and opportunities that prepare them to meet challenges and fulfill their potential to imagine—and realize—a better world.

Environmental literacy is essential to the future of every student in California, and every student in California—inclusive of race, ethnicity, gender identity, ability, citizenship status, and socioeconomic status—deserves access to a high-quality K-12 education that includes learning through, about, and in their local environment.

Understanding our environment and human impact is crucial for our individual and collective wellbeing. Environmental literacy cultivates the skills students will need to deal with critical issues and supports their capacity for success in school, life, and career.

By focusing on environmental literacy, we prepare our youth to address environmental challenges like water and air pollution, increased fire risk, drought, and rising sea levels, so that they and future generations can thrive.

What do people say about the CAELI network?

“The people off-campus that make these opportunities possible are active, important partners who advocate within their own organizations to maintain and increase annual contributions and learning opportunities, helping our students achieve mastery of science standards and raising the environmental literacy of students and their

families. Developing this network is crucial, as these people and organizations are true community-based environmental advocates with a stake in educating the community. They ask for nothing in return other than to improve the community, and when engaging with partners remember to say ‘thank you’—student notes go a long way!”

Juanita Chan: Educator, Science Lead at Rialto USD

“The result is win-win: science education is strengthened and made more relevant to students through meaningful, local, environment-based learning, and at the same time environmental literacy is nurtured as teachers and students develop a sense of place that paves the way toward stewardship.”

Joey Scott: Teacher Programs Supervisor, Monterey Bay Aquarium

How can community organizations and leaders get involved?

1. **Visit** ca-eli.org for information and helpful tools and resources.
2. **Discuss** environmental literacy with your fellow community members using the talking points in this toolkit.
3. **Contact** CAELI: info@ca-eli.org