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VIRTUAL SUMMER INSTITUTES

CELF SUMMER INSTITUTES RECAP + IMPACT
REPORT

JULY-AUGUST 2021

Virtual - Nationwide

2021 Virtual Summer Institutes

Reflecting on What Matters

Each summer, CELF hosts our annual Summer Institutes to provide an opportunity for educators and administrators to immerse themselves in a multi-day learning experience centered on sustainability, environmental literacy and best practices in place, project and problem-based learning methods. This year, the institutes took the form of three virtual professional development programs focused on education for sustainability and civic science.

The first two sessions focused on Education for Sustainability, introducing the Big Ideas of Sustainability framework and how educators can implement these core concepts into their classroom curricula and activities. The final session, Civic Science: Inquiry to Action, guided educators through three pathways to which the civic science framework could be applied: air quality, biodiversity and water. Teachers were able to walk away from the Institute with a planned project for implementing this academic year.

During the institutes, teachers were motivated and inspired by a curated line up of guest speakers, CELF-modeled lessons, and their fellow participants. As a professional learning community and often working in teams, teachers shared many strategies for empowering their students to create change, and their final projects reflected that collaborative spirit and inspiration.

Using interactive digital Padlets, teachers were able to create and participate in a Gallery Walk of projects that they had created using the Big Ideas of Sustainability and Inquiry to Action frameworks.

The following pages showcase project highlights from the 2021 Summer Institute cohorts.



Our teaching of [sustainability] is of the utmost importance to ensure that we are leaving behind a world that future generations will be able to enjoy.

Lindsay, New York educator

Sessions 1 & 2:

Education For Sustainability

Educator Project Highlights



Garbology Project

Lindsay, New York

Students will investigate what happens to trash in a landfill by creating a simulation of a landfill using recycled materials. They will observe the landfill for one week and note changes as they occur.

Big Ideas of Sustainability
in this project:

 ABILITY TO MAKE
A DIFFERENCE

 LONG-TERM EFFECTS

 LIMITS



Earth Day is Every Day

Lee, Texas

Students will participate in projects that focus on improving the school campus environment, taking responsibility for and action to promote awareness of the trash they find on campus.

Big Ideas of Sustainability
in this project:

 COMMUNITY

 INTERDEPENDENCE

 ABILITY TO MAKE
A DIFFERENCE



Alternative Energy Sources

Carrie, Texas

Focusing on alternative energy sources, students will learn the pros and cons of each source. This project will expand students' understanding of alternative energy and the environmental impact of each using the Big Ideas of Sustainability.

Big Ideas of Sustainability
in this project:

 SYSTEMS

 LONG-TERM EFFECTS

 LIMITS

Session 3:

Civic Science: Inquiry to Action

Educator Project Highlights

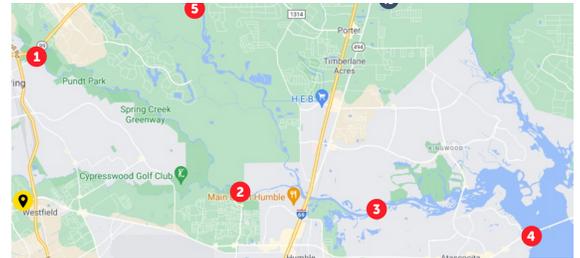
What's in Your Water?

Houston/Rio Grande Texas Teacher Team

The "What's in your Water?" project will lead middle school students through the collection of temperature and pH data. This information will be used to explain how biodiversity is affected by the pH and the water temperature. Students will use this information to further educate stakeholders.

They will also compare their findings to data collected by students at Rio Grande City High School, a partnership formed during the Summer Institute. Students at RGCHS will create maps, spreadsheets, and data graphs, as well as collect visual documentation to be added to a Google Slide Presentation. They will present this to other science classes on campus, the local School Board, and the City Council, as community awareness is the key to achieving their goals and getting the support they need for future endeavors to improve water quality and biodiversity.

Participant map associated with this project:

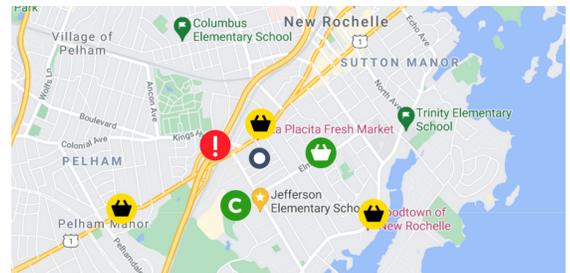


Healthy Food and Gardens

New Rochelle, New York Teacher Team

Students at Jefferson Elementary School will explore how they can produce healthy food options using sustainability as a guiding concept with tower and outdoor gardens for the Jefferson community.

Students will survey parents and children monthly about the food they eat and invite local farmers markets throughout the year to share food. Teachers will explore the potential for obtaining a tower garden for every grade-level and one for an after school program, and host parent nights for families to learn more about the work taking place at the school.



"I just want to make sure that students don't only think about themselves, but really look at the bigger picture, and realize that they're part of something great"

Aimee, New York educator



CELF in the Field

Houston-Galveston, Texas

On July 12th, participating teachers from all around the Houston area joined CELF Educators at Jesse Jones Park and Nature Center for an in-person CELF In The Field Event.

This was CELF's first event since 2019 where educators were able to safely meet in person and outdoors. CELF Educators led participants through a field training day in data collection and observation, as they gathered to perform water, air and soil quality tests, and learn from their peers and the Nature Center Staff. They even got up close and personal with some local wildlife!



“Thank you CELF for a wonderful experience on how to get our students excited for and engaged with environmental stewardship.”

Patty K., Houston teacher



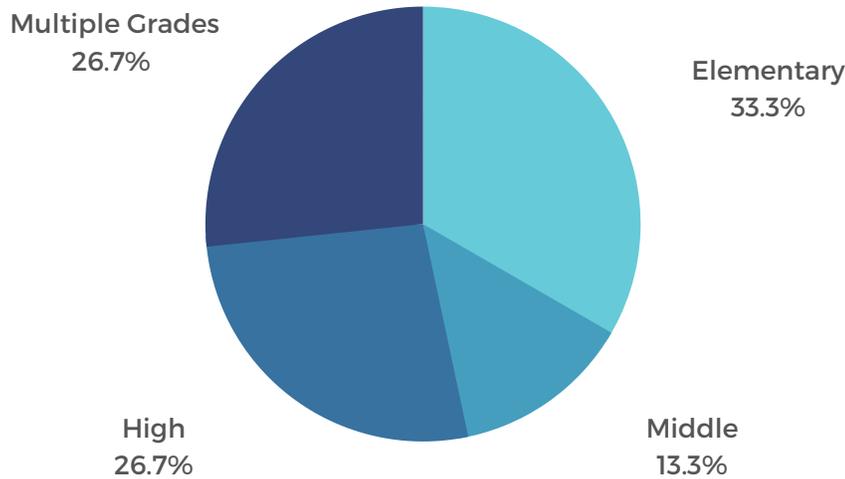
CELF was joined by teachers from five school districts in the Houston area, including:

- Aldine ISD
- Houston ISD
- Spring ISD
- Harmony Public Schools
- Katy ISD

Who attended the Summer Institutes?

Administrators, teachers and non-formal educators from all over the country joined us for the Education for Sustainability and Civic Science Summer Institutes. Check out these figures to learn about the diverse group of individuals that participated this year:

What grade levels do our 2021 Summer Institute teachers teach?*



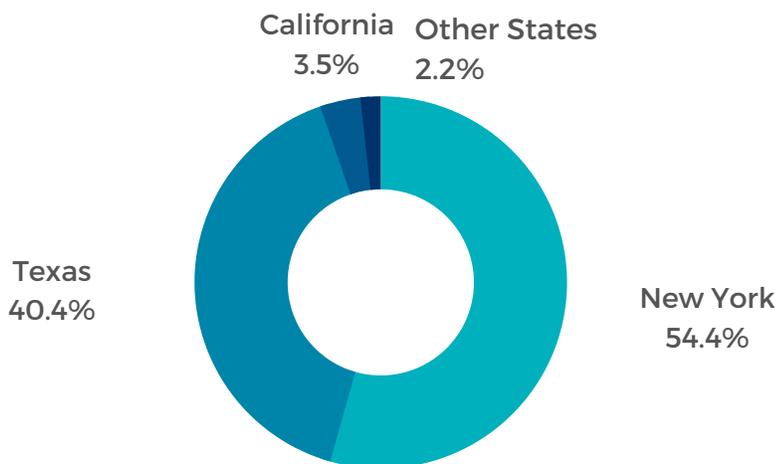
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Attendees, including teachers, administrators, and non-formal educators

4,774

students will interact with summer institute participants in the coming academic year.

Where did our 2021 Summer Institute participants join us from?



"My CELF Summer Institute cohorts were a diverse group from different regions and teaching areas. I learned about their different approaches to sustainability and enjoyed seeing them grow with me."

Carlton, Texas teacher and 2021 Summer Institute participant



of Summer Institute participants reported improvement in the Education for Sustainability teaching practice as a result of completing a CELF Summer Institute.

Guest Speakers and panelists included:

CHRIS DEMATTIA

Director of STEM (pre K-12)
Ossining Public Schools

JANICE BROWN

Owner, Garden Coach
Girl on the Grow, TX

BRIDGETTE MURRAY

Mid-Atlantic Regional Director of
Education for National Geographic
Society

TYLER KNOWLTON

Director of Communications
Plume Labs

KRIS TUCKER

Adjunct Faculty, Institute for
Humane Education, Galaxy Guide,
Ridge and Valley Charter School (NJ)

NICOLE GAERTNER

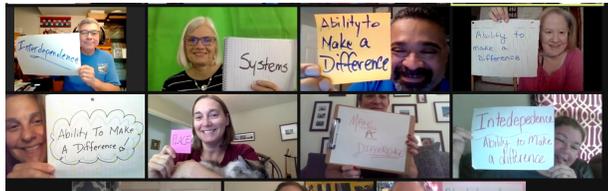
Education Specialist & Volunteer Coordinator
for the Mission-Aransas National Estuarine
Research Reserve, TX

CARRIE DARST

6th Grade Science Teacher,
Flour Bluff Intermediate School
Corpus Christi, TX

KATIE DOYLE

5th & 6th Grade Science Teacher
Flour Bluff School
Corpus Christi, TX



MEGAN ECKERT

Beacon Program Manager & Garden Educator
Land to Learn

Moving Forward In Education

The CELF team believes that inspiring teachers to empower students is the best way to create change for the next generation. This year's Institutes served as an educational tool for educators, but even more importantly, it gave teachers the space and time to reflect on a tumultuous year, and ignite hope in themselves and each other in order to empower their students.

Many thanks to our institutional Summer Institute Supporters:

