"I really appreciate everything that CRS does. I've benefited professionally, and by extension my hundreds of students have had better science instruction. I believe it's so important to give students a strong foundation and love for science!"

Elementary Science Specialist, Berkeley

Community Resources for Science

Empowering educators and scientists to engage young learners in wonder, exploration and discovery

"My curious kids felt seen!" - 1st Grade Teacher, Oakland

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Empowering Joyful Learning: 2025-26 Highlights

For almost 30 years, CRS has transformed science learning for East Bay students and teachers towards equity, opportunity, and success. In a year marked by staggering changes to the science landscape -- both with dangerous steps backward for the structures that safeguard our environment, research, and public health, to incalculable leaps forward in technology and AI – CRS has led responsive, innovative and collaborative initiatives for educators and brought thousands of students face-to-face with Bay Area scientists. This report highlights impacts of our work empowering educators to center science exploration connected to students' everyday lives into joyful learning.

Our impact goes beyond exposure to diverse role models, chances for hands-on projects, and gateways into STEM career paths. Foundational science skills are going to make the difference for our next generation—as they'll need to confidently demonstrate reason, show a healthy respect for data, adapt to roles alongside emergent technologies, and embrace sustainable living solutions on our planet.

"CRS helped me to take a big picture look at what I was doing in my class. I was able to see what I was missing and then provide more opportunities for my students." *- 4th Grade Teacher*

"My students were introduced to physics and the career field of physicists. Opportunities like this plant the seeds of interest in our earliest learners, and open amazing doors of possibilities for their future." *- 1st Grade Teacher*

17,750+ students
engaged in direct, in-class experiences with diverse STEM mentors & role models

2,200+ teachers
directly supported by CRS

Impacted science learning for over 55,000 TK-8 students across the East Bay

140+ schools
served across East Bay, including West Contra Costa, Berkeley, Oakland, San Leandro, and Hayward

1,500+ STEM professionals
placed in local classrooms

400+ teachers
grew through training & peer-coaching

As a result of CRS support, teachers indicated these impacts:

91%
Increased time spent on science learning

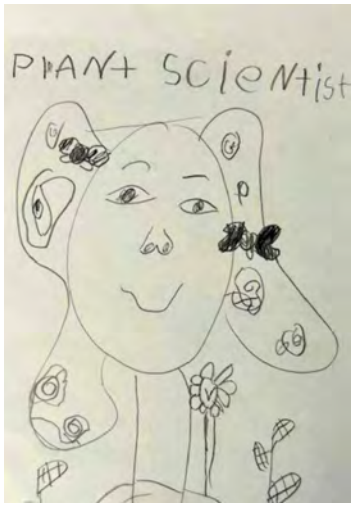
"Learning about the scientists' work inspired one of my students to say: "Whoa that is cool. I would like that job. I think I should start doing my homework."
– 1st–5th Science Specialist, Berkeley

91%
Added new science experiences

"After the summer PD, I saw more hands raised than usual, and I heard more than one student leave my class saying how fun and awesome chemistry is!"
– 4th/5th Grade Teacher, Berkeley

94%
Observed students connecting STEM to their own lives

"I have a student who speaks very little English, and science allows him to shine. When he was working on making a parachute, he was very engaged. When he tested out his project he had a big smile on his face. Very rewarding to watch him go through the process of learning something new and building something along with peers."
– Kindergarten Teacher, West Contra Costa



93%
Reported stronger student STEM identities

[After the paper-clip motors lesson with visiting BASIS engineers] "a group of my students want to build/engineer a fan for the STEM fair. They are obsessed with making motors that can be useful in everyday life!"
– 4th Grade Teacher, Oakland

82%
Intentionally used science to build core ELA & math skills

"One student who has been struggling academically was very proud that they were able to complete our science lesson and they felt successful during the activity."
– 4th Grade Teacher, Oakland

CRS Empowers Teachers to Lead Meaningful STEM Explorations

In 2025-2026, more than 400 educators demonstrated their dedication to improving their science teaching by participating in CRS professional learning workshops, weeklong Institutes, and year-long collaborative cohorts.

"I'm not afraid of teaching science anymore!"
– 2nd grade teacher, Hayward

"I love CRS! Before I started working with CRS, I barely opened up my science curriculum kit. Now I am teaching science every week and it's something that my students look forward to every week! My students also loved having a CRS scientist come to our classroom, and they still talk about it! I really appreciate all of the summer PD opportunities that CRS offers. I can really dig into planning and the curriculum during the summer!"
– 4th Grade Teacher, Oakland

CRS trained educators to deepen their own skill and comfort with science and engineering, enhance their understanding of standards and effective teaching strategies, and access curriculum and a wide range of amazing local STEM resources. We helped teachers move from intention to action, effectively building language and math skill development directly into high-interest hands-on science explorations. From new vocabulary to supporting arguments with evidence, from graphing to measurement and data evaluation, teachers discovered strategies to have early learners put their emerging skills into practice. CRS facilitated peer-coaching cohorts to share best practices and build camaraderie with other teachers, sustaining a critical professional learning community for the benefit of thousands of children.

"CRS professional development made me more excited for science and integrating science across my classroom, into math, language arts. It makes so much sense, is so engaging – I love it and my students do too! – *5th grade Elementary teacher, Berkeley*

"I loved having time to collaborate in small groups, talking with other teachers, and sharing ideas and experiences. I'm excited about the unit I planned for my students," – *3rd grade teacher, Oakland*

"As a result, I've incorporated math and language arts into my science lessons. My students have measured owl pellets, worms, and worm bin food as part of their science investigations. They love writing about their experiments and using new vocabulary." – *3-5th grade teacher, Richmond*

Connecting Teachers, Scientists & Community

Our organized communities of practice allow peer coaches to support their fellow educators in integrating science with math and English language arts.

"When students get excited about what they are learning, they have a greater desire to communicate what they are thinking through speaking and writing. I have a student who struggles academically, but was so inspired by our BASIS lesson that he filled up over half a page with what he had learned and what his thoughts were." *– 3rd Grade Teacher, West Contra Costa*

This year, our professional development sessions brought elementary educators together to deepen their practice, and to empower peer-to-peer mentoring. We provided space and time for teachers to shine a light on successes, to share tips and to confer with same-grade colleagues about how to overcome challenges.

Many of the workshops included a strong focus on integrating math and language arts within science-centered learning, while others focused on climate literacy explorations in schools and communities.

The goal of great science teaching is to build understanding while nurturing a sense of belonging for both teachers and students. Workshops provided time and resources for planning lessons, clarifying objectives, defining student expectations, and reflecting on how to deepen connections to students' daily lives, communities, and interests.

"My students are using more scientific vocabulary. They have a real reason to write words and sentences to go with their science experiments. They also had to measure how far things traveled, so it was not just a math book lesson."
–Kindergarten Teacher, West Contra Costa

"While students are in my science class, they don't realize they are also practicing ELA and math skills that all scientists need. We often have discussions so students can practice communicating and sharing information. I've seen great improvement in their vocabulary and language tests."

– Elementary Science Specialist, Milpitas

Nurturing Climate Literacy for all Bay Area Students

Growing a Generation of Stewards & Innovators

"Outdoor learning deepened my students' science observations and engagement through hands-on experiences in our school garden. By going outside weekly, students observed real-life examples of the seed life cycle and the ladybug life cycle, planted seeds, dug holes, watered plants, and cared for the garden over time. They harvested and made food from their own garden, which helped them see how plants grow and change and how living things meet their needs. Being outdoors increased curiosity, engagement, and meaningful discussions as students made connections between what they observed in the garden and what they're learning in the classroom."
– K teacher, West Contra Costa

Amidst the stunning reversals of policy happening on a larger social scale, CRS is working to ensure climate literacy doesn't disappear from Bay Area schools.

Teachers tell us that their young students already care about nature and climate. We provided hundreds of teachers with access to curriculum, classroom visits, field trips, and training that allows them to tap into their students' excitement and build a sense of agency.

"My students were eager to discover how their actions, voices and choices can make a difference in solving environmental challenges. It is our job to give them hope that there are things that they, and we all together, can do." – Elementary science specialist, Berkeley

Across the East Bay, CRS deployed scientist teams to lead STEM exploration festivals, engaging entire schools in learning about energy. Children worked with scientists from the community to build and test wind and solar energy devices, learn about battery storage, and build their own energy resilience kit to take home.

Teachers worked with scientists to design and implement student-led action projects related to climate change and environmental justice issues that impact low-income students, using data to measure local air and water quality, using digital tools to shed light on health impacts, and designing solutions to make their school-yards greener and safer in a warming climate.

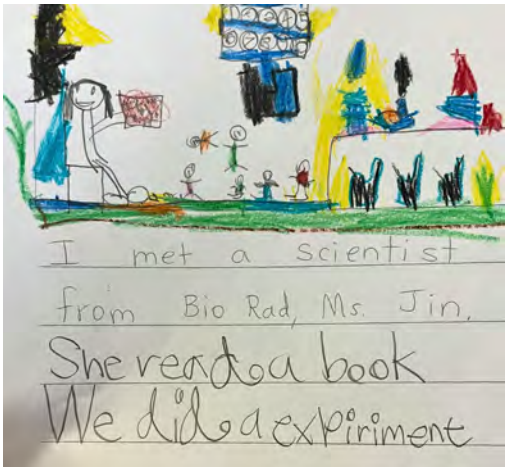
"The teachers at our school were inspired and energized by our climate science professional development with CRS. Teachers immediately started making connections to our community and underscoring the timeliness and relevance of the topics. They were particularly moved by discussing the lack of parks and open spaces in our community compared with other parts of our city. After brainstorming about engineering design challenges that address environmental justice issues, teachers decided on and embarked on projects with their classes before the end of the school year." – Elementary Science Specialist, Oakland

Scientists Bring Joyful Learning & Inspire Students

Over 1,500 well prepared scientists and engineers directly engaged more than 17,750 young learners leading elementary lessons in hundreds of classrooms, mentoring middle schoolers, and sharing interactive demos with students and families at festivals and special events.

"We had a visiting scientist come to our class four times over the month. She taught students about DNA and about animal adaptations. The students really enjoyed the opportunity to extract DNA from a strawberry. Some students even went home and did the same experiment using different fruits. Although DNA is a complex idea, they were able to get a general understanding of how all living things have DNA and that DNA gives us our characteristics. It is always gratifying to see that students are not daunted when presented with new ideas. They are eager to get more information and ask questions in order to make sense of the new information."

– 3rd Grade teacher, Richmond



Bay Area Scientists Inspiring Students

Fostering Belonging for Young Learners

Leading experiments, sharing stories about their own career paths, and representing the many ways science helps our local community stay powered, healthy, and innovative, CRS BASIS role models helped children see science as something meaningful to be a part of. More than 1,500 visiting scientists trained by CRS brought equipment into more than 500 classrooms to conduct chromatography experiments with pipettes, examine specimens in microscopes, test air quality, and launch rockets. These memorable experiences forged early touchpoints for students, building a genuine love of science.

Our lesson plans highlighted scientists-of-color and of women in STEM, upending stereotypes of who can be a scientist. The diverse, well-prepared STEM professionals from the community who volunteer with CRS to lead learning experiences in classrooms bring a message to children that "You belong in STEM, too!" They fostered belonging in science for all students.

A majority of visiting scientists from the community identify as women (54%) and people of color (65%).

From "Storybook Science" with the youngest learners, to full day festivals for entire schools, teams of UC Berkeley grad students and professionals from local companies led interactive STEM learning experiences aligned with life, physical, biological, and earth/space science, and engineering standards. They encouraged students to imagine how science and engineering will have a place in their own bright futures.

"Having three female scientists do the presentation was especially impactful for the girls in my class. After the presentation so many of my students said they're going to be scientists."
- 4th Grade Teacher, Berkeley

"I really enjoyed being a visiting scientist, it reminded me of the core values of science that sometimes we lose sight of day-to-day at work. It definitely brought joy for students – and for me!"
-UC Grad Student

STEM Mentoring for Middle School Success: Curiosity Driven Learning

"That was the best 90 minutes of my life! Better even than going on a Disney Cruise!"
So exclaimed one 7th grader, overjoyed at the success of a dramatic experiment involving launching items on the schoolyard using a calibrated catapult, enthusiastically exchanged high fives with their mentor and with fellow students.

These moments of joyful, self-directed learning, are repeated in various ways in 7th grade classrooms across the entire Berkely school district throughout the school year in our flagship middle school "Be a Scientist" program. More than 150 UC Berkeley science researchers and grad students provide in-class mentorship to small groups of students over a two month project in which every student designs and conducts their own authentic science investigation. Some students are sprouting seeds, examining mold growth, or testing consumer products, while others are using engineering principles to design launch vehicles, test solar cells, and measure wind energy. As they identify a question they are curious to learn more about, and then work with a UC scientist to develop an experiment to generate data that can help answer their question, students report they become more engaged, confident, and "strong in our own learning."

In Berkeley and across the East Bay, CRS middle school STEM mentoring and career awareness programs reached more than 2,000 students. Richmond and Oakland students took part in 8th grade "Reverse Science Fair" program in partnership with Lawrence Berkeley Lab. Other classes participated in climate research, health investigations and "green" STEM career fairs.

Students said:
Working with UC mentor helped show me how much science can be used in my every day life to solve problems and answer questions.

Doing my investigation with my mentor opened my mind to new ideas.

I can see what I might do in the future, and I can talk to older people about their experiences

2025-26 BASIS Lessons Explored 60+ Dynamic Topics

Acids & Bases: Kitchen Chemistry
Adapting to Survive: Predators & Prey
All About Vaccines
All About Volcanoes
Artificial Photosynthesis
BioEngineering:
  Design A Pill Coating
Clearing the Air: Carbon
Cardiovascular Conundrum
Cells & Microscopes
CheMystery Liquids
Chromatography &
  Medicine Development
Clean Oceans for Powerful Communities
Climate Change: School Gardens
Clouds, Clouds Everywhere
CSI: Chromatography
DNA Discovery
Electric Vehicles and Air Quality
Electricity, Magnetism & the Wall Socket
Electrochemistry: Fruit Battery Lab
Energy Resilience Explorations
Engineer Something for Outer Space!
Exploring States of Matter
Exploring Magnets
Eye See it: Understanding How Eyes See
Eyes are SPEC-tacular: Vision Science
Garden Science
Germs and Your Body
Great Mixing Mystery:
  Why Some Liquids Don't Get Along
Green Polymers
Indicating Electrolysis
It's Just A Phase!
Leaf Fossils & Climate Change

Let's Green Our Schools
Light Up
Lights! Colors! Vision!
Looking at the Stars
Materials and Structures
Microorganisms: Good or Bad?
Microscope Lab: Pond Scum!
Mission Nutrition
Oceans Are For Everyone!
Optimization & Minimization
Outbreak: Germs, Your Pet & You
Paper Clip Motor
Parts of the Brain
Pasta Polymers
Pixels: Vision in the Digital Age
Prehistoric Puzzle: Formation of fossils
Robots that Run
Science Ambassadors
Simple Circuits
STEM Career Explorations
Storytime with a Scientist: Rosie Revere, Engineer
Storytime with a Scientist: Ada Twist, Scientist
Storytime with a Scientist: How to Take a Walk
Storytime with a Scientist: Ideas
Space: Planets, Moons & Stars
Survival of the Fittest!

Turn it on and off: Making Electromagnets
Vet for a Day
Water Filtration
Watershed Hydrology
What Is Outer Space?
What is Renewable Energy?
What Makes Water Safe to Use?
What's the Matter with Gas?
When Chemicals Collide