



“Every Classroom a Green Classroom”
Green Classroom Profile: Kirby School - Science -
Schoolwide Earth Day Festival


Teacher Leadership Institute for Sustainability 2023-2024

TEACHER LEADER BIO: Cristie Kirlin

My roles at Kirby are as a high school teacher of Biology, Marine Biology, Human Biology and Honors Advanced Biology (and next year Environmental Science), Science Department Chair, and Environmental Club facilitator. I have been at Kirby since 2009. My background is in Marine Biology and Biotechnology. I love sharing my passion for the natural world with my students and am fortunate to be able to take them on outings around Monterey Bay, where they can experience firsthand the diversity and beauty that surrounds us.



BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Class(es)	# of student impacted by this project: 142 Grade level(s): 6-12 Content area(s) of focus for this project: Reducing environmental impacts Student quote:	
School Site	Georgiana Bruce Kirby School	
School Demographics	Grades served: 6-12 # students: 142 % English learners: 5% % qualifying for free and reduced price meals: 3.5%	
District	Private	
District Demographics	N/A	

General Vision/Mission of School and/or district	Kirby empowers students to shape their futures with confidence. Students in our diverse community learn to think critically, develop their creativity, and achieve with thoughtfulness and respect.
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1) ORIGINAL GOALS AND INTENTIONS

What originally drew you to this program?

I wanted to immerse myself in a community of like-minded individuals, to draw inspiration and make connections that would support an expansion of our sustainability efforts throughout the school.

Share your vision for your Green Classroom. How has this program affected this vision?

My Green Classroom vision is really a Green School vision. My intention was to help facilitate activities that increase awareness of how each individual can take action in their own lives. This program has helped me envision different ways that I can help bring sustainability opportunities to our school, both within the classroom, through the environmental club that I advise and through the planning and implementation of our Earth Day festival. Seeing how other teachers have implemented their projects and meeting community partners has made the project ideas seem less daunting.

2) KNOWLEDGE AND SKILL BUILDING

A critical part of this program is building knowledge and skills related to Sustainable Schools. Examples include: Environmental Literacy & Sustainability Frameworks; Environmental Identity; Building student engagement through Campus, Curriculum, Community and Culture efforts; Continuum of Environmental Literacy Integration. **Where are you experiencing the most growth in your knowledge and skills related to being a teacher leader for sustainability?**

The focus of this project was to build student engagement and increase our environmental identity. One aspect of the project was to assess how we were doing as far as disposing of food waste correctly. This was possible by connecting with community partners that were able to do a waste audit. With the results of the audit, I am able to share with our school the progress we are making since beginning to divert food waste last year as well as the systems we are implementing to make proper food waste easier to achieve.

3) ACTION - COMMUNITY IMPACT PROJECT OVERVIEW

Provide a brief summary of the purpose of your project and overall goals.

Summary of Project Purpose and Goals for student learning:

The purpose of this project is to engage the whole school community in a day of education and hands-on activities to inspire increased sustainability both at school and at home.

Option to insert image here

How does this project connect to your Green Classroom vision and the broader mission and vision of the school/district?

This project gave student leaders the opportunity to share tangible ideas for increasing sustainability by leading workshops that they designed, based on their own interests and activities. It helps everyone in the community (students and staff) to be empowered to make choices to work toward this goal.

What specific learning intention(s) did you share with your students?

The remainder of the community is attending the workshops with the intention of learning from their peers how they can participate in the sustainability efforts they chose to learn about/engage in.

How did this project serve your pre-existing instructional goals?

This project provided the pathway to schoolwide engagement, which was the original intention.

4) ACTION - IMPLEMENTATION STORY

Describe how implementation of your community impact project went. *If your project has not finished yet, describe how the start has gone, and how you anticipate it completing.*

General story of implementation:

This project actually began last year when I lobbied our administration to change the programming for Earth Day. In the past, we have had an extended lunch where we'd invite guests from outside the school as well as interested members of the Kirby community to set up informational booths and activities. Our environmental club was always responsible for facilitating the day, which was a huge undertaking and we had low levels of engagement from the students who were most interested in socializing and eating lunch. I requested that we change the event to a whole day and that we get all community members involved. The compromise was that we were allowed a whole day for Earth Day programming, but only the students and faculty that were interested would need to do the work of facilitating the day. It turned out to be a successful event, which led to a much higher level of student participation this year. Last year we had 8 students lead workshops and this year we have 23 student leaders.

Challenges and obstacles and how you overcame them:

The main challenge was to impress upon the administration the real need for this work and the value that it would bring to our community. I overcame this challenge by being persistent and willing to take on a large share of the work with a handful of other interested faculty.

Successes and what contributed to success:

The success was in being able to get enough students and faculty involved that we were able to pull off the full day of programming. What contributed most to the success was that we were providing passionate students a venue to share their interests, and the fact that it was student-led gave the other students more of a buy-in than having it be adult-led.

Next Steps for this project:

At this time, there is talk of going back to the original setup of an extended lunch in order to gain back more contact time for teachers, which is incredibly disheartening. I'm hoping that the success of this year's Earth Day will change the mind of the admin. I will be lobbying to keep the current all day event.

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<i>*Optional: Insert picture here*</i>	<i>*Optional: Insert picture here*</i>

5) ACTION - METRICS AND OUTCOMES

- **Overall Assessment:** How would you characterize the success of your project?
- **Ecological Benefit:** If possible, how were you able to measure the ecological benefit (reduced GHG emissions, reduced waste, increased biodiversity, etc.) and what were the outcomes?
- **Community & Culture Benefit:** If possible, how were you able to measure impacts on classroom culture and community (for example, students' sense of connection to nature, stewardship) and what were the outcomes?
- **Student and Staff Learning:** *Reflect on evidence of student learning from this project, and how this project shifted your classroom to further integrate environmental literacy.*

Overall assessment: The project final outcome will be taking place on Friday 4/19, when we celebrate Earth Day. I will be better able to address these questions a few weeks afterwards, once I'm able to survey the community on their experience.

For the three sections below, include how you tried to measure impacts and what evidence of outcomes you found.

Ecological Benefit:

Community & Culture Benefit:

Educational Benefit:

Impact on Students' Sense of Connection to the Environment (results of Children's Environmental Attitude Survey and any other evidence of impact):

6) REFLECTION AND COMMITMENTS

What is your enduring understanding about teaching for a sustainable future? And what are your commitments for next year and beyond for this important work?

Reflection: I continue to recognize the value of bringing sustainability to our community and feel passionate about advocating for a whole-community approach.

Commitments: As I mentioned above, I will be strenuously advocating for our full day of programming, as well as continuing to highlight the actions we can take through our environmental club programming. I also plan on flipping the order of units that I teach in 9th grade Biology so that we start with Ecology and Sustainability rather than end with it. That way we can keep it as a lens through which other material is taught.