

Nationally recognized Sea Lab marine science program brings New Bedford students to the sea year round

With fall foliage reaching its peak, Sea Lab field trips to New Bedford's beaches and upper estuary are not just a summer memory. Students of New Bedford Public Schools continue to learn at the water's edge throughout the school year, thanks to the collaborative efforts of its Sea Lab program and the Buzzards Bay Coalition, facilitated through the NBPS Office of Strategic Initiatives & Partnerships, Jennifer Ferland, Executive Director.

Ms. Ferland notes, "Sea Lab educates NBPS students not only in the summer months, but throughout the academic year providing equitable educational opportunities to fourth and fifth grade students with multifaceted learning activities. Thanks to Sarah Jennings, Buzzards Bay Coalition Education Coordinator, who along with Sea Lab staff developed curricula for the field studies to New Bedford's East Beach and the Acushnet River Reserve site known as The Sawmill, a Buzzards Bay Coalition-owned public parkland."



New Bedford Public Schools photo.

Sea Lab is a nationally recognized marine science program of the New Bedford Public Schools, providing unique field studies and summer programming in the environmental and life sciences to students grades 3 through 9. Sea Lab operates Monday through Friday covering a wide range of science curricula. The Buzzards Bay Coalition is one of Sea Lab's many contributing collaborators.

Simone Bourgeois, Sea Lab Facilitator, notes the program's emphasis is on experiential learning, with science content classes complemented by field studies and hands-on activities, focusing on scientific inquiry and observation. "During the school year, Sea Lab offers ten lessons on a weekly basis. Sea Lab teachers expose students to 'Earth's Place in the Universe,' 'Earth Systems,' and 'Earth and Human Activity'. Our partners from the Community Boating Center of New Bedford demonstrate technology and engineering principles focused on the structure of boats and environmental studies. Students also work with scientists from the Naval Undersea Warfare Center (NUWC) to design and operate robots."

In addition, Sea Lab partners with Mystic Aquarium; it provides life science classes to all grade 5 NBPS students with a focus on "Structure and Processes, Environment, and

Habitats, Pyramid of Life and Food Chains.”

At New Bedford’s East Beach, Sea Lab teachers conduct field studies on water quality, marine identification and comparative analysis of plants and animals, as well as examination of beach formation to an aquatic environment. In spring 2022, NBPS students will head to Cuttyhunk Island for a continuation of their Sea Lab field studies.

Since 1968, Sea Lab has enriched NBPS students’ educational experiences in the fields of marine and aquatic sciences as they relate to physical science, earth science, life science, technology and engineering along with the responsibilities of becoming caretakers of the environment in which they live.