



EDUCATIONAL IMPACT REPORT

2025–2026 SCHOOL YEAR

The school-age child is the largest, most important segment of the community we serve. Through our Educational Enrichment Programs (EEPs), we provide high-quality, engaging experiences for students preK through high school.





Cover: PreK students participating in Math at the Museum.

Above: Young learners participate in a program in the Bumblebee Learning Garden.

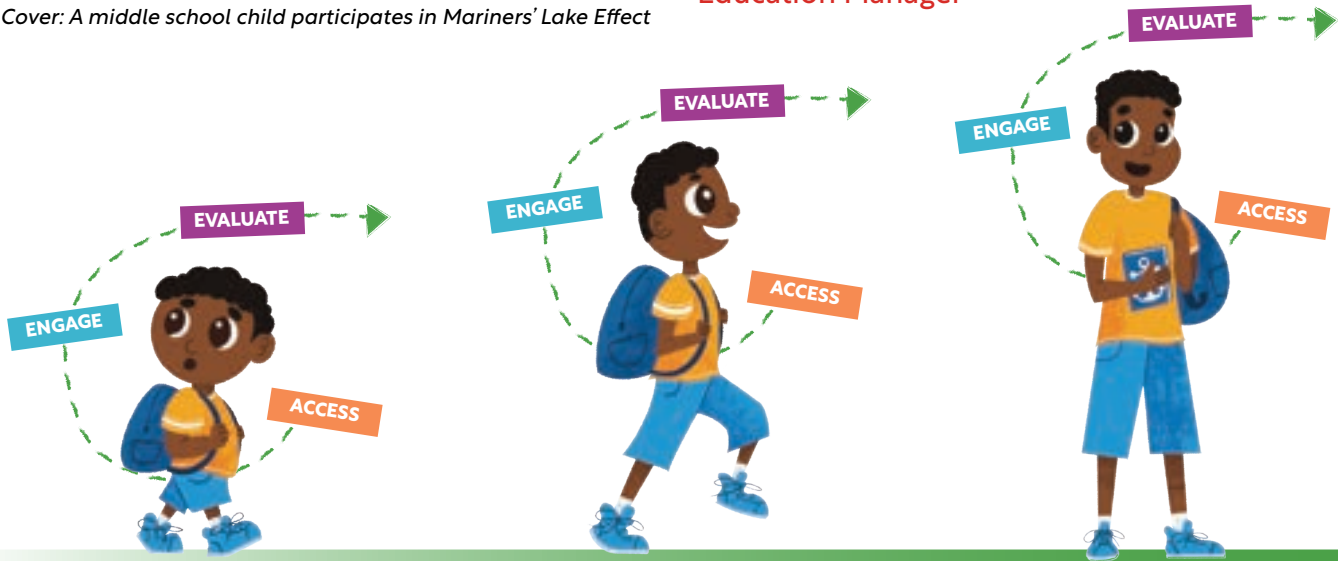
Back Cover: A middle school child participates in Mariners' Lake Effect

At The Mariners' Museum and Park (The Mariners'), our Education Team is committed to continually innovating and enhancing our Educational Enrichment Programs (EEPs). The 2025–2026 school year marked a period of amazing progress towards this goal. The team achieved a record number of student engagements, strengthened partnerships with school divisions, and continued to serve as a valued resource for our community. We expanded access to our programming and updated EEPs with a dynamic combination of gamification, experiential learning, and career exploration. These efforts reflect our commitment to investing in the next generation, unlocking their potential, and encouraging a sense of belonging.

You may remember me as the Early Childhood Program Manager, singing The Itsy Bitsy Spider in the Bumblebee Learning Garden. This year, I stepped into a new role as Education Manager, where I'll continue to support the growth of our early childhood programs while expanding my focus to provide value to external partners and lead new initiatives. As you explore this report, I am confident that our team's passion and expertise will shine through. I'm so proud of the work we're doing, and I know you will be too.

Amanda Abrill

Education Manager



MARINERS' EDUCATIONAL ENRICHMENT MODEL

True impact results from engaging students multiple times over their school careers

2025-2026 HIGHLIGHTS

30,893
Student Engagements

89%

Number of students served in and around Hampton Roads

77%

received a free program

81%

Served through in-person programming*

49%

received free transportation

*On campus or in the classroom

13,764

Lower Peninsula Students
Newport News and Hampton

8,794

Southside Students
Norfolk, Virginia Beach, Chesapeake, and Suffolk

6,785

Other VA School Districts
Yorktown, Williamsburg, Gloucester, and more

	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
TOTAL ENGAGEMENTS	26,437	29,377	30,893
% of students - free programs	80%	75%	77%
Virtual	5,788	4,782	5,847
In the classroom	8,462	8,640	9,197
At The Mariners'	12,187	15,955	15,849
% of students - free transportation*	51%	51%	49%

*This percentage is based on the total number of students who participated in a program of The Museum or in the Park.



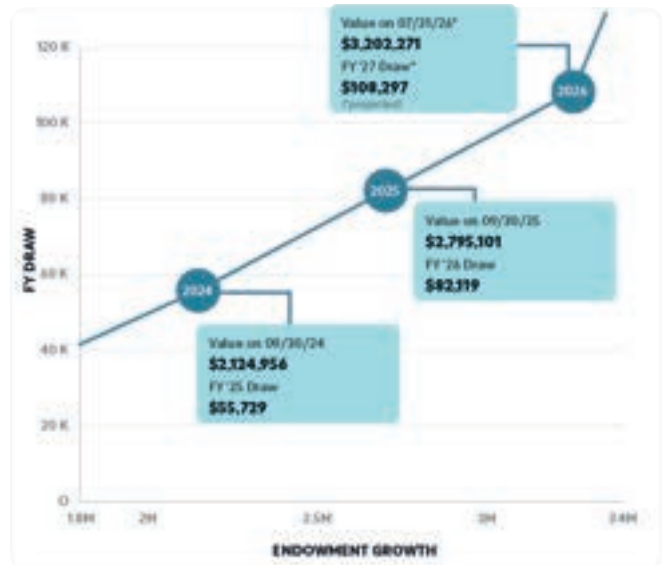
Scan the QR Code to hear from our educators and partners as they reflect on the moments, milestones, and accomplishments that made this year so special.

SUSTAINING IMPACT

Resourcing educational enrichment

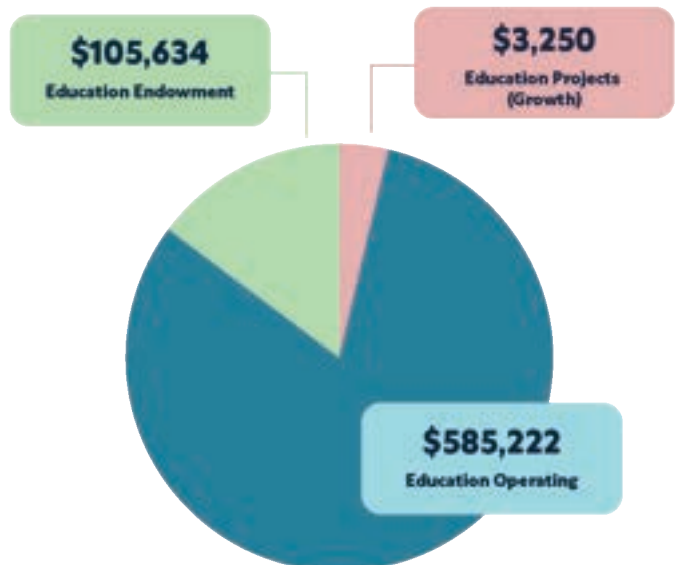
Sustaining the Education Department means creating lasting opportunities for discovery, learning, and exploration. Together, we can ensure educational experiences continue to inspire learners of all ages for years to come.

ENDOWMENT FUNDS



FUNDING RAISED

2025-2026 SCHOOL YEAR





PreK students participating in Math at the Museum.

SOUTHSIDE ENGAGEMENTS

5,893

2024-25

8,794

2025-26

EARLY CHILDHOOD ENGAGEMENTS*

1,101

2024-25

1,414

2025-26

*The Early Childhood school year reporting period was updated to span July 1, 2025, through June 30, 2026.



ACCESS

Lowering financial and logistical barriers

At The Mariners', we are committed to expanding access to students throughout the region. This year, we significantly broadened our impact by increasing student engagement across the Southside, including Norfolk, Chesapeake, Virginia Beach, and Suffolk.

We also strengthened our connection to our local community by expanding our early childhood programming, serving more early learning centers and engaging more young children than in previous years. These efforts reflect our ongoing commitment to making high-quality educational experiences accessible to learners of all ages.

Anna Lynn Thornsberry
Senior History Educator

ENGAGE

Experiences that enhance curriculum

Now in its fifth year, the Lake Stewards program connects students to Mariners' Lake through a Meaningful Watershed Educational Experience (MWEE). During the program, students plant native grasses along the shoreline, collect water quality data, and participate in an interactive fishing station that reinforces key watershed concepts.

To further strengthen student engagement, educators incorporated gamification into the Lake Stewards Fishing Station. Gamification is the process of adding game-like aspects, such as points or levels, to an educational activity to promote active involvement. This new iteration of Lake Stewards is a perfect example of how our team continues to innovate our programming in response to the ever-changing educational landscape. **Check out the QR Code in this edition to hear more about this effort.**

Haleigh Bird
Senior Science Educator



Students taking water quality data from Mariners' Lake



Above: High Schoolers planting eelgrass in Mariners' Lake.

Right: Children listening to a story read in the Bumblebee Learning Garden



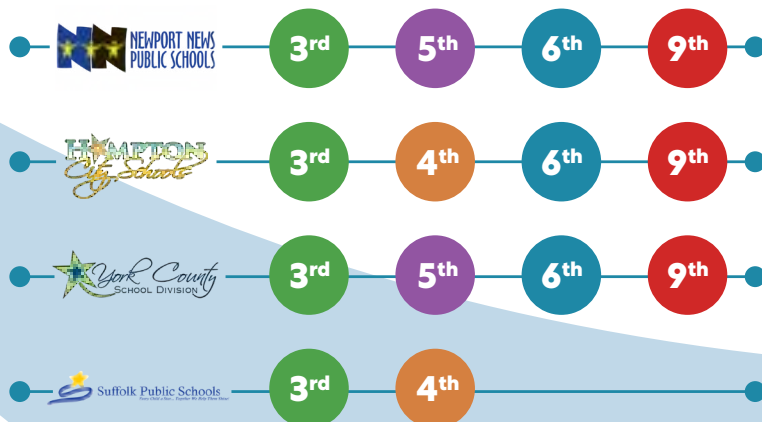
Our new accessible boat invites more students to engage directly with maritime history and exploration, helping ensure every learner can participate in meaningful, hands-on experiences.



ENRICHMENT PROGRESS

Engagements by school district and grade level

2025-26 Academic Year



A key part of our enrichment strategy is providing EEPs for entire grade levels across local school districts. This chart shows our progress.

Building on the success of Wonder Wednesdays, we expanded our public programming with the addition of Winter Wednesdays, providing families with engaging learning experiences year-round. Both programs are offered in English and Spanish, creating more opportunities for children and caregivers to learn, play, and explore together.



ENRICH

Developing lasting connections

At The Mariners', the school-age child represents the largest and most important segment of the community we serve. Through our EEPs, the Education Team is committed to providing meaningful learning experiences that enhance classroom instruction and encourage exploration. This year, we expanded, placing a greater emphasis on career exploration—a lifelong process that begins before they walk through our doors. Given our unique collections and enrichment model, The Mariners' is uniquely positioned to help every student envision new possibilities for their future.

Claudia Moncada-Wireman
Senior Science Educator

EVALUATE

Assessing impact

This year, we measured impact by the external partnerships that connected us with schools, community organizations, businesses, and cultural institutions, demonstrating the value of our dedication to students. Through collaborations with partners like York County School Division, we created meaningful learning opportunities, broadened access to our programs, and strengthened our role as a trusted community resource. **Look for the QR code in this edition to hear from one of our partners.**

Amanda Abrill
Education Manager



3rd graders on a maritime adventure in the Exploration: Mediterranean Gallery.



Middle school students act as Maritime Archaeologists in our "Shipwrecks" program.

24

COMMUNITY EVENTS
ATTENDED



Team members attending the York County STEM Challenge

This year, the Education team participated in more community events than ever before. By bringing hands-on activities and engaging educational experiences beyond the walls of The Mariners', we connected with thousands of children and families, expanded awareness of our programs, and inspired new audiences to explore all that we have to offer.



THANK YOU

to our Partners for making this school year a success

ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT

Allegra Hampton Roads FootPRINT Fund®

Bayport Credit Union

Dominion Energy

Ferguson

**Harry F. Wall Memorial Fund of the
Hampton Roads Community Foundation**

Langley for Families

Newport News Shipbuilding

The Blocker Foundation

Virginia Environmental Endowment

Virginia Natural Gas

Virginia Pilot Association

VuBay Foundation

ENRICHMENT PARTNERS

Christopher Newport University

Coastal Virginia Ecosystem

Extension Master Gardeners

Monitor National Marine Sanctuary

Newport News Public Library

Peake Childhood Center

Old Dominion University

Virginia Institute of Marine Science

**Virginia Master Naturalists Peninsula
Chapter**

HAMPTON ROADS SCHOOL DISTRICT PARTNERS

Chesapeake, Hampton, Newport News, Norfolk, Suffolk, Virginia Beach, and York County

For a full list of donors, visit: www.MarinersMuseum.org/give-and-join/world-of-champions/