

Gone, ...I mean, Learn...with the Wind!

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Well, this was an interesting year to plan a unit on studying the wind. Our community experienced a hurricane that kept us out of school for a week, and then we lost another week due to the threat of an additional hurricane. The rest of the year, our school responded to the slow, creeping threat of a lava flow less than two miles from our school's doorstep. We've recovered from all three natural disasters, and still managed to incorporate significant elements of the planned wind unit into our studies this year.

The students were very excited to be able to design and implement their own experiments with some of the materials we purchased with the Chevron grant money. It felt so good to be able to support the students' ideas and experiment proposals instead of having to tell them, "I'm sorry, we don't have the equipment for that." We surpassed our goal of 90% completion rate for every outcome listed in the original proposal, hitting rates of 95% for most outcomes.



Using probes and beakers and all that cool science-y stuff!

Implementing our wind unit of study began this year, and we will go much deeper into the topic next year. Our middle school students benefit from the presence of a team of student leaders, High School students who come back and work with us on specific projects. Our student leaders guided the middle school students in putting together some of the wind kits we purchased, and we took those wind turbines with us on our archeology campouts. We laid the groundwork for long-term data collection, and we expect to complete this during our campouts in the upcoming school year.



Student Leader teaching middle school students to use GPS unit during archeology campout

The materials we were able to purchase with the Chevron grant, and more importantly the confidence and self-worth the students experienced from working with scientific equipment, are building blocks for strong curriculum in the future. I am now able to devote significant learning hours on real-world scientific research and inquiry-based learning.

