Jennifer Cross Oceanside High School LD 1817

I am a high school educator in Maine. I have seen first hand the impact of outdoor education on my students. For four years, we have partnered with the Hurricane Island Center for Science and Leadership to give Oceanside's STEM and Liberal Arts Academy students the opportunity to experience learning in an outdoor space - doing field research in intertidal zones, dissecting scallops right along the shoreline, sorting and recording scallop spat on the wharf, and even developing writing inspired by the rich Maine setting that surrounds us. We have had this opportunity because of the generosity of grants we have received from various organizations. This year we are incorporating art in our outdoor experience as well, as we allow the science we are doing to inform our creativity. We even have begun to deploy our own scallop spat bags - the placement of the bags is student decided and the retrieval and data assessment is done by students as well. Our outdoor educational experience has been transformational - creating engaged and informed students who appreciate far more the beauty of our home state and the unique opportunities that our outdoor landscape offers for learning. With what our state as to offer, I believe every student should have the opportunity to access learning outside of the four walls of their classroom.