

## 2014-2015 Educational Grant Application

<b>Submission Date</b>	2014-03-18 12:19:44
<b>Name of Grant</b>	Ecoliteracy Project at Connemara Nature Conservancy
<b>Primary Contact</b>	Jennifer Chapates
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<b>Additional Teachers/Staff who are applying for or will be working with this grant:</b>	All Norton teachers will be using the transportation provided by this grant.
<b>Campus</b>	Norton Elementary School
<b>Curriculum Area</b>	Science
<b>Other Curriculum</b>	Math, Language Arts
<b>Grade Level(s)</b>	K-6
<b>Students Impacted</b>	600
<b>Approver Name</b>	Julie DeLeon
<b>Approver E-mail</b>	julie_deleon@allenisd.org
<b>Project Purpose</b>	<p>The purpose of this project is to increase all students' understanding of Science using Connemara Nature Conservancy as our classroom. During our 4 annual field trips to Connemara, students will hone their Science processing skills by observing organisms in their natural habitat, recording measurements using scientific tools, collecting, recording, and analyzing data collected in the field, making predictions, and making comparisons between different organisms, areas of the meadow, and landforms. Students will take information they collect back to the classroom and will extend their learning to Math, Writing, and/or Reading. Students will also gain a sense of the community in which they live which will increase their desire to take care of the environment throughout their lives. Students will improve in making connections between their classroom learning and real-world application. Often, students do not connect information when the learning setting changes. As a result of this project, teachers will see students apply classroom learning more reliably throughout their content areas.</p>
<b>Project Description</b>	<p>All of students at Norton in grades K-6 will take 4 field trips to Connemara during the school year, 2 trips per semester. Each classroom teacher will design the lesson around a TEK specific to their curriculum at that time in the pacing calendar. The activity may be learning about Life Science, such as collecting organisms from the pond to draw, observe, and compare or creating sound maps by listening</p>

to animals and man-made noises to infer what the land would have been like before people populated the area. Physical Science activities may include testing the quality of the water in the pond or collecting samples of rocks to test their physical properties. An Earth Science activity may be doing a scavenger hunt for signs of weathering, erosion, and deposition, observing moon phases, or talking about forces that shaped the creek area.

Students will benefit because all of these activities will be carried out using the scientific skills that they will use throughout their education and possibly their careers. As a nation, the amount of time we spend outdoors is decreasing at a time when we need to change our environmental practices the most. The students at Norton consider their trips to Connemara a high point of their school year and will have a greater appreciation of this area because of their understanding of this unique resource.

### **Allen ISD Goals/TEKS**

1. AISD has a goal of expanding learning beyond the classroom. This project supports this to a T.
2. Students will gain a sense of community due their sense of ownership of this Conservancy.
3. Students are actively engaged when they learn outdoors because it is out of the ordinary routine.

### **Measurements**

The effectiveness of this project will ultimately be measured on AISD's EOC Science tests and the 5th Grade STAAR test. On a smaller scale, teachers of students should see improved grades in all subject areas when they use the information that students collected at Connemara in other content areas. Long term, the students from Norton should score better on standardized testing throughout their education because they will be highly engaged in Science because of their experiences at Connemara.

### **Teaching Methods**

Teachers will facilitate student inquiry, encourage student collaboration, and pose higher-order questions to students to encourage greater understanding and application of knowledge gained as a result of outdoor study. Students will record observations and measurements in their journals for extended learning back at the classroom. They will also use technology to record videos, take pictures, and analyze data collected in the field. We can touch on all aspects of STEM in education using our outdoor classroom.

### **Timeline for Project**

The project will include 2 field trips in the first semester (October and November) and 2 in the 2nd semester (March and May). Specific dates will be set at the beginning of the 2014-2015 school year with the permission of the Meadow Manager at Connemara.

### **Curriculum/System Support**

The Science curriculum requires a minimum of 50% of our class time to be spent doing investigations either in the classroom or outdoors. It is difficult to accomplish this requirement inside schools or outside on manicured and maintained school grounds. With this project, Norton students will have a great opportunity to learn about their world in the field where it is a more natural setting. Students will greatly expand their learning beyond the classroom, be actively engaged, and gain a sense of community while doing activities that interest them.

<b>Additional Comments</b>	This is a continuation of a program begun before I joined Norton. When we have been unable to receive the grant, we have had to limit our visits due to increasing transportation costs.
<b>Instructional Supplies or Resources</b>	N/A
<b>Supplies Budget</b>	0
<b>Technology</b>	N/A
<b>Technology Budget</b>	0
<b>Staff Training / Staff Development</b>	N/A
<b>Training Budget</b>	0
<b>Transportation/Field Trip</b>	The daily cost of a bus is \$180. We request 4 trips this year.
<b>Transportation Budget</b>	\$720
<b>Other</b>	N/A
<b>Other Budget</b>	0
<b>Total Budget</b>	\$720
<b>Additional Funds</b>	N/A