

# Wildlife Champions Classroom Teacher Survey Spring 2024 Results & Recommendations for Program Sustainability



BEEZ KNEEZ CREATIVE



This report was produced by Beez Kneez Creative for Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium, July 2024.

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Additional thanks to all participating students, classroom teachers, instructional coaches, and administrators at Arlington Elementary School and Lister Elementary School.

## Background & Purpose

As described on the Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium (PDZA) website, Wildlife Champions is a long term community partnership between PDZA, Metro Parks Tacoma, and two elementary schools in the Tacoma Public School District. Wildlife Champions students learn and practice empathy for wildlife, while becoming stewards of their school, local park, and neighborhood. Teachers and PDZA educators collaboratively build hands-on lessons and outdoor experiences for K-5 students using inquiry-based science concepts.

The sustainability goal of Wildlife Champions (WC) has always been to be a gradual release model in which PDZA staff consistently support the affiliated school and its staff in the curriculum but at different levels each year. In the first years of instruction, support is acute and comprehensive, as two PDZA staff members are embedded in the school; PDZA staff take the lead on teaching the curriculum in class and take students on eight park visits per year. In the third year, PDZA staff move toward a teach-and-assist model in which teachers take the lead in the curriculum and PDZA staff become the assistants, decreasing park visits to six times a year. In the continuing years, one PDZA staff member helps facilitate the WC program by working with teachers as a curriculum coach/mentor, assisting with hands-on lessons as needed, and facilitating four park visits. This scaffolded approach ultimately supports teachers in taking ownership of the curricula and enhances the long-term sustainability of the program.

In addition to assessing student outcomes, past evaluation of Wildlife Champions has invited input from the classroom teachers and school administrators. Ongoing feedback from these partners is necessary for PDZA to work toward a sustainable program that can run independently of direct support or funding. As such, surveying the participating teachers from Arlington and Lister Elementary Schools during the 2023-2024 school year built on previous insights from this audience.

The specific evaluation goals of this teacher survey were to:

- Understand what sorts of training and resources the schools require in order to sustain Wildlife Champions in future years;
- Describe the necessary components for successful relationships between zoos and schools, which can be shared with the AZA community to assist with empathy-focused education programs and other zoo-school partnerships.

## Methods

A survey consisting of eight close-ended and 10 open-ended questions was designed around the following topics:

- Interacting with PDZA
- Partnerships
- Sustaining Wildlife Champions

The survey was administered online using Survey Monkey and remained open for four weeks between mid-April and mid-May 2024. See Appendix A for the full survey.

Respondents spent an average of 14 minutes completing the survey. Responses were confidential. After submitting their responses, participants were given the option to provide an email address in a separate form (to remain anonymous) to receive a \$25 Amazon gift card as a token of appreciation for completing the survey.

## Participants

Responses were received from 29 teachers, including 17 from Arlington Elementary and 12 from Lister Elementary (see Table 1).

**Table 1.** Participants by school and grade level. Note that several respondents taught in more than one grade level, so the total number shown exceeds the total number of participating individuals.

Grade Level	Number of Teachers who Participated (Arlington)	Number of Teachers who Participated (Lister)
Kindergarten	5	3
1st	4	2
2nd	4	4
3rd	3	2
4th	5	2
5th	4	3

Respondents to the survey included teachers with varying years of experience with the Wildlife Champions program (see Table 2). Over 1/3rd of Arlington teachers have been participating since the program’s inception; however, new teachers have joined almost every subsequent year. At Lister Elementary, almost all of the teachers participating in the survey were completing their second year with Wildlife Champions.

**Table 2.** Number of teachers at each school with certain years of Wildlife Champions experience.

	Years of Experience with Wildlife Champions						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Number of Arlington Teachers	2	2	0	4	1	2	6
Number of Lister Teachers	1	11	-	-	-	-	-

## How would you describe your relationship with the Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium staff? (n = 28)

All survey participants provided positive responses to this question, indicating that their relationship with PDZA staff is beneficial, productive and effective. Examples of representative comments are provided below.

From Arlington teachers with five years or more experience with Wildlife Champions:

*“I would describe my relationship as professional, friendly and open. I am able to have direct communication with them, offer feedback and opinions and have open discussions with them. I would say that our relationship has evolved over the years and grown to a mutual respect and admiration for what each of us has to do.”*

*“I have always had positive interactions with the staff. I have loved teaming with staff to write lessons, to adapt and change things as we move forward, and now to give any ELL/ML support that I can to this program.”*

From Arlington teachers with three years or less experience with Wildlife Champions:

*“A wonderful partnership that brings children enriching experiences that are grade level aligned with the report card standards for Science.”*

*“The PDZA staff have been amazing partners and educators. I feel fortunate to work with them.”*

From Lister teachers:

*“I think the zoo staff has been great to work with. They listen and understand the needs of our school, our classrooms, and teaching requirements from the district.”*

*“It is a good relationship. We plan and communicate relatively well and work together to make things as smooth as we can on our and on their end.”*

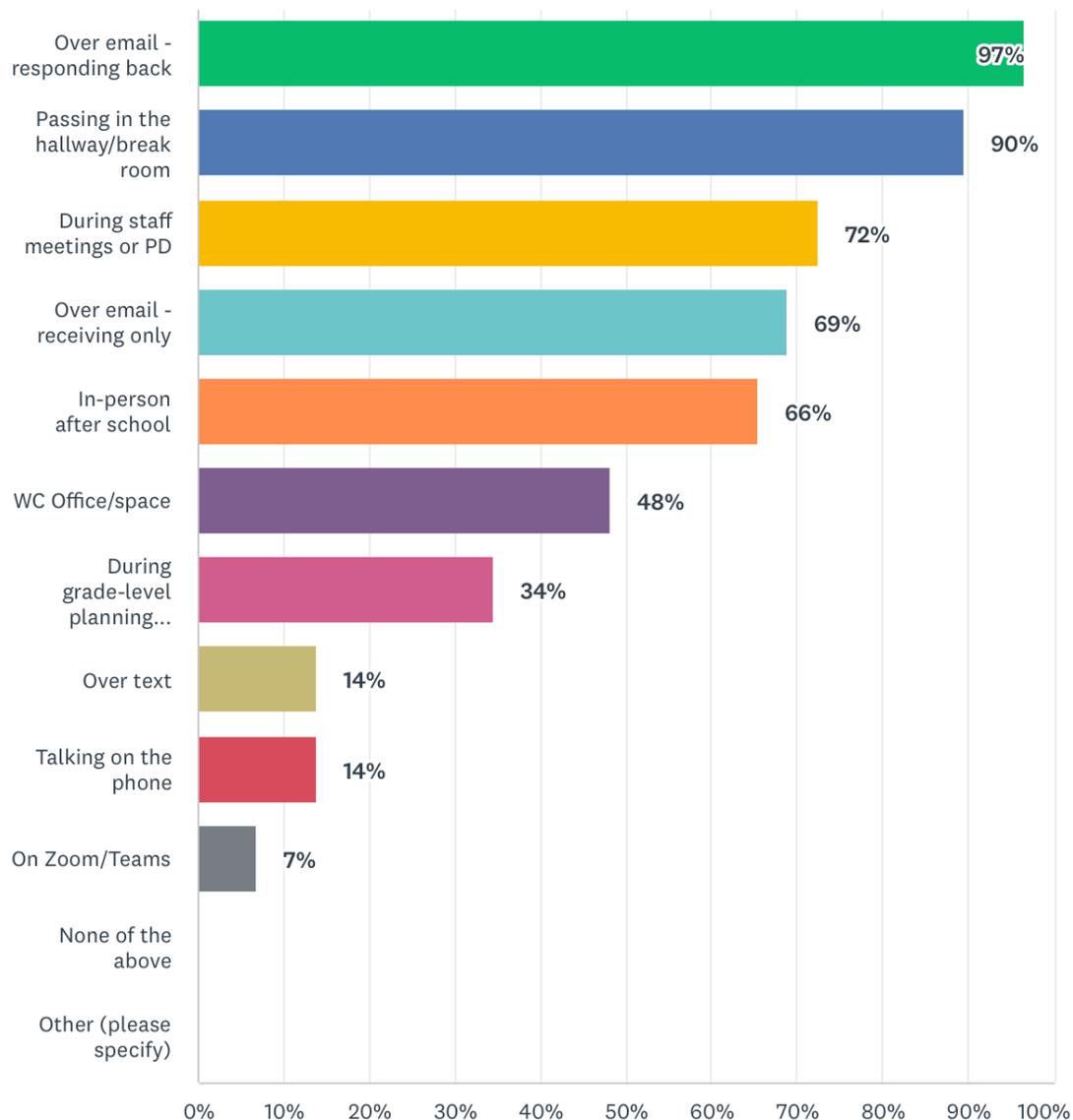
**Based on these and other responses, it is clear that the relationship PDZA staff have fostered with classroom teachers is highly valued.** (See Appendix B for a full set of responses to this question.)

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## In what ways do you interact with PDZA staff outside of their time in your classroom? (n = 29)

There was no difference in how teachers from Arlington answered this question compared to teachers from Lister. The most common interaction for both groups was “responding to email,” with 97% combined selecting this option. A fair amount of communication also occurred while passing in the hallways/break room (90%), during staff meetings or professional development sessions (72%), receiving emails (69%), and in person after school (66%). Less than 50% of communications were reported to occur in the Wildlife Champions office, during grade-level planning meetings, over text, on the phone, or on Zoom/Teams. Participants could choose all options that applied to them.



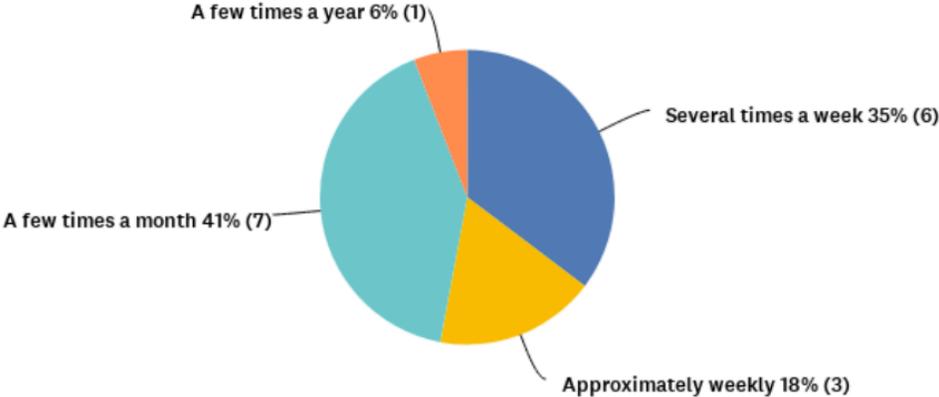


**Based on this input, Wildlife Champions instructors should continue using email as a primary communication tool. They can also expect to have frequent unplanned interactions outside of the classroom, which seem to feed into the strong relationship they have built with teachers (see previous item). Staff meetings present excellent opportunities for information sharing. If there is a desire for more communication to occur through any of the under-utilized channels, then PDZA staff should explicitly encourage these methods and tailor content accordingly.**

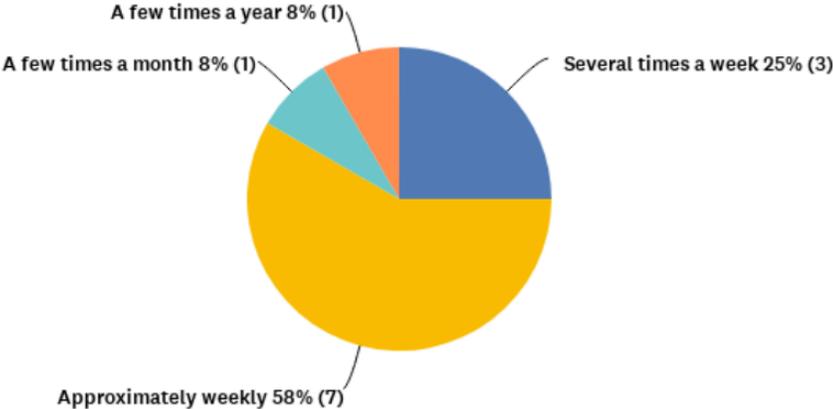
# How frequently do you connect with PDZA staff outside of their time in your classroom? (n = 29)

Responses to this question varied between schools, with Lister teachers reporting a higher frequency of connecting with PDZA staff outside of the classroom than did Arlington teachers. The most common response from Arlington teachers was “a few times a month” (41%), while the most common response from Lister teachers was “approximately weekly” (58%).

## Arlington Elementary



## Lister Elementary



The difference in frequency of interactions can be attributed to the length of time Wildlife Champions has been conducted in each school and how the program is structured accordingly at each site. With Arlington Elementary's multi-year partnership, more components of the program are managed by school staff, requiring less frequent interactions with PDZA staff. Lister Elementary was only in its second year of the partnership; therefore, PDZA staff were more present and directly engaged with those teachers.

**These findings, coupled with the previous two items, indicate that a successful transfer of leadership is indeed possible as PDZA transitions program management over to the school. If a new school is added to the program in the future, PDZA staff should expect to spend significantly more time again connecting with school staff in the early years of the partnership.**



We value the partnership we have with TPS and we are always looking for ways to improve this relationship. During your time at TPS, are there other partners that your school has historically collaborated with that helped to support a curriculum or program? What kind of strategies have worked well with this partner?

Examples of partnerships were mentioned by nine teachers from Arlington and two teachers from Lister (see full list in Appendix C). Effective strategies described along with these examples included:

- Frequent email communications
- After-school coordination
- Supply of provisions (materials for activities, snacks, buses etc.)
- Community member involvement
- Standards overlap
- Small group work
- Co-teaching and curriculum support

**Given these examples, PDZA should remain focused on partnership strategies that involve co-creation, clear communications, and community engagement. Providing materials that directly support students' needs and coordination that facilitates student learning are both recognized by the schools as strengths their partners can bring.**

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## What obstacles did you face when working with this partner?

Fewer than half of survey respondents listed any obstacles faced when working with a school partner. Obstacles that were mentioned by teachers from both schools included:

- Scheduling conflicts
- Lack of student interest/focus
- Inconsistent volunteers
- Distraction from core content
- Lack of time
- Insufficient explanation of expectations
- Lack of primary point of contact

Comments that specifically referred to obstacles with Wildlife Champions related almost entirely to the lack of time available to devote to the science curriculum.

*“I wish I could give more time to teaching science with WC but my district gives me too many other stuff to do.”*

*“I just wish we had more time devoted to science! We always run over our allotted time but that is just because my class gets into the lessons!”*

One teacher listed “walking to the park in the rain” as an obstacle.

**PDZA can continue to acknowledge the competing responsibilities that classroom teachers face and work closely with the instructional coaches in each school on ways to integrate Wildlife Champions lessons into each grade level curriculum. While it is not always possible to ameliorate every obstacle, simply recognizing openly that these tensions may exist is a good way to foster strong partnerships.**



## Which of these are barriers to sustaining the Wildlife Champions classroom programming (curriculum/lessons facilitated on school grounds) independently from PDZA staff and/or funding support? Could you elaborate or explain ‘the why’ behind the two most significant barriers?

Given a list of potential barriers, teachers at both schools noted certain factors as challenges to sustaining the Wildlife Champions classroom programming independently from support or funding through PDZA. The degree to which certain items were considered barriers varied between schools (see Tables 3 & 4) .

Taking the combined ratings of “moderate” barrier and “significant” barrier for each item showed that top two greatest barriers to sustaining the program independently at Arlington Elementary were:

1. Testing (71%)
2. Math & Reading Interventions (64%)

Using the same combination of “moderate” and “significant” barriers, the top two greatest barriers to sustaining the program independently at Lister Elementary were:

1. Time needed to teach WC lessons (75%)
2. Pressure to teach TPS Science curriculum vs. Wildlife Champions curriculum (50%)



## Arlington Elementary

Table 3. Degree to which various factors present as barriers to sustaining the program independently at Arlington Elementary School.

	NOT AT ALL A BARRIER	SLIGHT BARRIER	MODERATE BARRIER	SIGNIFICANT BARRIER	NOT SURE
Math/Reading interventions	18%	12%	<b>35%</b>	29%	6%
Time needed to teach Wildlife Champions Lessons	12%	29%	<b>35%</b>	24%	0%
Staffing support	<b>35%</b>	29%	12%	24%	0%
Animal and science expertise	<b>24%</b>	41%	18%	18%	0%
Pressure to teach TPS Science curriculum vs. Wildlife Champions curriculum	18%	29%	<b>35%</b>	18%	0%
Testing	6%	18%	<b>53%</b>	18%	6%
Funding for materials	<b>35%</b>	29%	12%	12%	12%
Material prep	18%	<b>41%</b>	29%	12%	0%
Complex experiments	25%	13%	<b>44%</b>	13%	6%
Gathering materials/supplies	<b>35%</b>	24%	29%	12%	0%
Knowledge about/comfort with using empathy best practices in engaging students with nature	<b>59%</b>	29%	12%	0%	0%

### Lister Elementary

Table 4. Degree to which various factors present as barriers to sustaining the program independently at Lister Elementary School.

	NOT AT ALL A BARRIER	SLIGHT BARRIER	MODERATE BARRIER	SIGNIFICANT BARRIER	NOT SURE
Time needed to teach Wildlife Champions Lessons	17%	8%	25%	<b>50%</b>	0%
Pressure to teach TPS Science curriculum vs. Wildlife Champions curriculum	25%	25%	8%	<b>42%</b>	0%
Material prep	25%	<b>33%</b>	8%	25%	8%
Math/Reading interventions	<b>42%</b>	25%	8%	25%	0%
Testing	<b>50%</b>	17%	8%	25%	0%
Funding for materials	<b>33%</b>	17%	25%	8%	17%
Gathering materials/supplies	<b>42%</b>	33%	17%	8%	0%
Staffing support	<b>42%</b>	33%	17%	8%	0%
Animal and science expertise	<b>67%</b>	25%	8%	0%	0%
Knowledge about/comfort with using empathy best practices in engaging students with nature	<b>83%</b>	8%	8%	0%	0%
Complex experiments	25%	<b>58%</b>	17%	0%	0%

Respondents elaborated on their most significant barriers, providing more insight into how and why these factors present challenges. For example:

*“The pressure to stay on track with our curriculum and be rigorous along with a strict schedule makes it hard to fit the lessons in sometimes.” (Arlington)*

*“Without funding to provide materials needed for the curriculum, it would be difficult to do them. The staff also bring such rich knowledge of animals and all things related to science that I simply don't have. It certainly enriches the lessons that they participate in.”* (Arlington)

*“Finding the time in my daily schedule for Wildlife Champions lessons and then still needing to cover all of the district curriculum is next to impossible. Even if the lessons are aligned to our science standards, there is still an entire trimester where the district does not have us teaching science standards.”* (Lister)

*“Wildlife Champion lessons were added to teachers' plates and nothing was taken off to accommodate the new load. Teachers are held accountable for teaching the standards during evaluations, not from teaching WLC lessons.”* (Lister)

*“...the district has changed the schedule for 5th grade so that we are only teaching Social Studies and Science separately in different trimesters. Because WC is required as an ongoing monthly program, that has caused us to have to change the schedule and affects our grading on report cards for the year.”* (Lister)

A full list of responses is available in Appendix D.

**Overcoming the main barriers is necessary to ensure that the Wildlife Champions curriculum and lessons will be carried forward following the future transition from PDZA leadership to each school's independent facilitation of these program components. School administrators at Arlington Elementary must put Wildlife Champions on par with other priorities in order to compete with mandatory testing and the high value placed on math and reading interventions. To address concerns regarding expenses related to copying, PDZA could make more of the curriculum pieces digitally accessible.**

**At Lister Elementary it may be necessary to adjust the length of some lessons to fit within the shorter classroom periods and limited time dedicated to science, which alternates with social studies as a subject. PDZA staff can assist in this effort by firming up the Wildlife Champions lessons and providing “bite-sized” versions of activities that can be completed during available time blocks. Teachers also need to resolve the competition between the Wildlife Champions curriculum and the standard TPS science curriculum, perhaps by working to align the two sets of requirements more closely.**

At both schools, when administrators recognize Wildlife Champions as an essential student experience, then teachers feel more supported in their efforts to create time for this program. In addition to the usual metrics used to evaluate teachers, administrators could offer recognition to teachers for work that goes beyond the district standards. Looking for efficiencies in organizing materials will decrease the time teachers spend obtaining, storing, and retrieving supplies necessary for Wildlife Champions experiments and activities. Classroom volunteers and student aides can also be tasked with collecting and restocking.



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If PDZA did not continue to support the Wildlife Champions program, which parts of the curriculum do you think your school would maintain on its own? (Check all that apply.) What makes you think that?

Respondents at both Arlington and Lister indicated that the easiest component of the program to maintain on their own would be the **science content presentations** (Arlington - 59%; Lister - 58%). Rationales for this belief are primarily related to strong alignment between the Wildlife Champions curriculum and the state and district science standards. For example:

*“The science content meets the standards from the state and district.”*

*“We have all the lessons and material so it would make sense to work through that curriculum to hit all the science standards.”*

*“Lister has a science curriculum that supports priority standards needed for report cards, so I could see teachers using that.”*

Another perspective on why the school would maintain the science content presentations pertained to the level of student engagement:

*“I know the science content is a lot more engaging than what I have seen and heard coming from other buildings/district directed.”*

Teachers at both schools had somewhat lower expectations that **classroom-based empathy activities** would be maintained (Arlington - 35%; Lister - 42%). Rationales for this belief noted that empathy is already part of the strongly emphasized SEL curriculum at both schools. For example:

*“SEL is a big part of what we do every day and empathy is a component of SEL.”*

*“I think we want to continue to build a culture filled with empathy and having lessons already prepped for us makes it a lot easier to keep up with things.”*



**Park visits** were least likely considered to be continued independently (Arlington - 0%; Lister - 25%). Explanations highlighted the need for more supervision when taking students off-site. For example:

*“I think the park walks are like field trips to teachers and it is a lot of work taking a full class outside.”*

*“Volunteers are hard to find on a consistent basis.”*

*“...we do not have enough staff to help with park visits and I have a hard time walking over to the park.”*

Other grounds for eliminating park visits related to lack of confidence in teachers’ ability to teach in an environmental education format:

*“I don’t know if I would be comfortable with doing the teaching out in the park.”*

*“It is just so difficult to plan something like park weeks and an empathy curriculum without a dedicated staff member to plan, prep, and plug the idea of an activity.”*

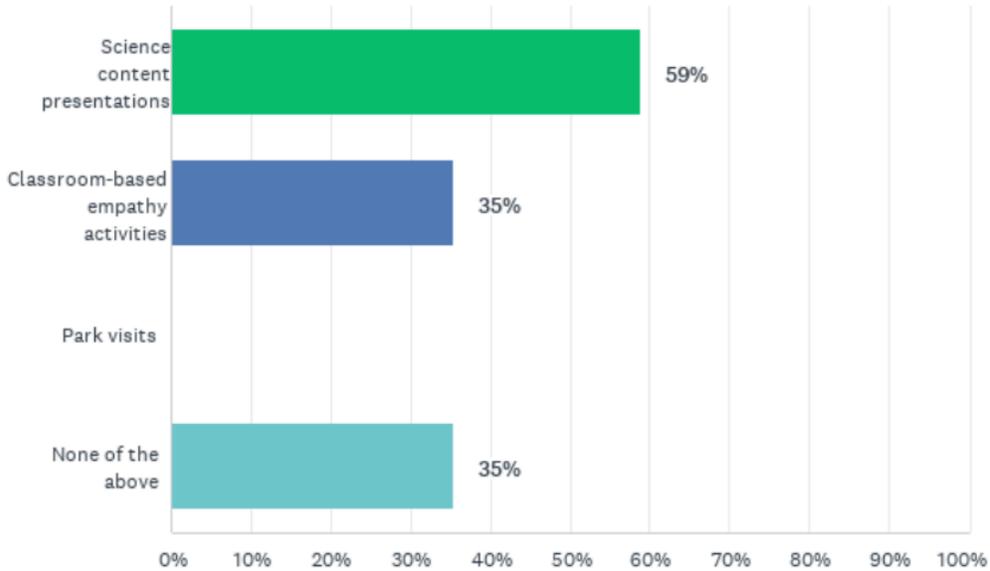
At Arlington, 35% of respondents felt none of the Wildlife Champions program components could be maintained without the support of PDZA. Comments explaining this belief included:

*“I doubt the school or district would provide the staff needed to do any of the above...it would be all on the teachers to do all three by themselves.”*

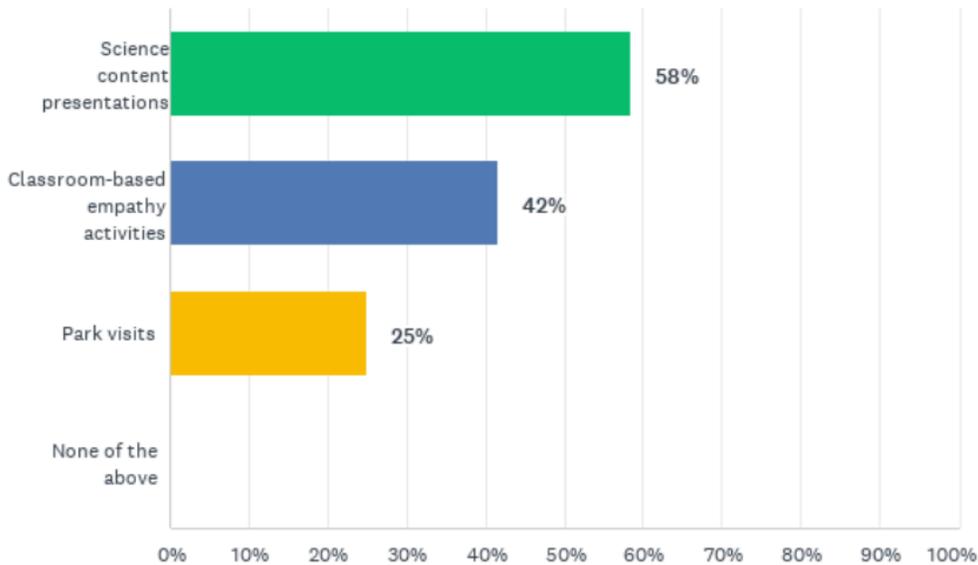
*“Lack of effort and/or guidance; also feel pressure to follow TPS science curriculum.”*



**Arlington (n = 17)**



**Lister (n = 12)**



On the positive side, teachers' justifications for believing the school would continue to support certain aspects of the Wildlife Champions program included:

*“Wildlife Champions helps us teach science in a more accessible way by providing materials as well as content to access science and also address SEL needs for our students.”*

*“The monthly park visits are enjoyable. I like being able to go out with my class and do the activities.”*

*“My students really enjoyed this and engaged heavily in the hands-on lessons and learning that this partnership brought.”*

One respondent recognized the value that PDZA staff bring, in terms of leading the three distinct components of the program:

*“...PDZA staff are experts at conducting science content presentations from an inquiry perspective, leading classroom-based empathy activities, and park visits.”*

**Knowing how unsure teachers feel about continuing the Wildlife Champions program independently, PDZA can work with school administrators to communicate more clearly the value behind this empathy-based curriculum and to identify ways for the schools to embrace Wildlife Champions as a core component of student learning.**

**PDZA staff can utilize the time remaining while they are actively supporting the schools to examine more closely what types of skills and content knowledge they can impart to facilitate a smooth transition. A decision may be made to focus only on certain grade levels that are best able to carry Wildlife Champions forward.**



## What support would you want or need to teach the Wildlife Champions curriculum successfully AND independently?

This open-ended question offered several examples, all of which were utilized in responses:

- Training(s) on science/empathy concepts
- Training in outdoor education strategies
- Support staff for hands-on experiments
- Support staff with park lessons
- Office hours or monthly meetings with PDZA staff
- Monthly Zoom PD

The desire for different types of support varied somewhat based on the teacher's length of experience with Wildlife Champions. Across the board, teachers expressed the greatest need for support with hands-on experiments. Those with only one or two years of experience also desired support with park lessons and training on science/empathy concepts. Those with four or more years of experience prioritized the need for training in outdoor education strategies. This latter group was also more interested in monthly professional development.

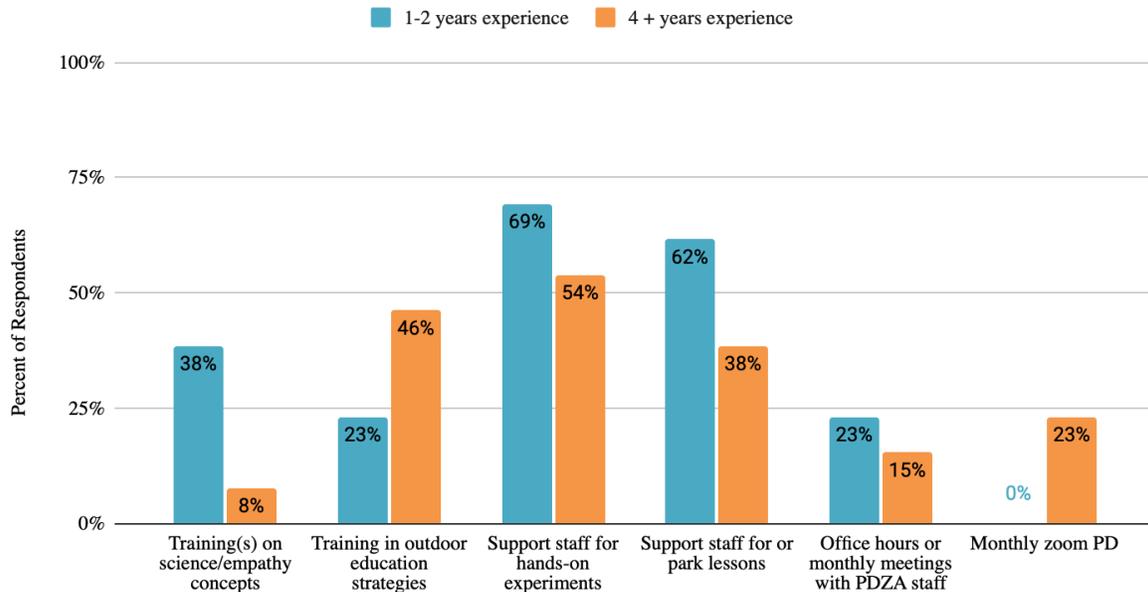
Related to training on empathy concepts, one person suggested it would be helpful to have an empathy concepts refresher at the beginning of each school year.

Another person noted that they would prefer monthly professional development conducted in person, rather than on Zoom.

Respondents provided additional ideas such as:

- Gathering/prepping materials (mentioned three times)
- Ideas for activities for park visits
- More time to teach science (or a reduced Mystery Science and InquirED curriculum)
- More time to plan out the lessons and incorporate them into our curriculum map
- More engaging PowerPoints for lower grades

What support would you want or need to teach the Wildlife Champions curriculum successfully & independently? (n = 26)



Based on these results, PDZA should aim to increase the number of trained volunteers available to support classroom teachers with hands-on experiments and park lessons. Schools can recruit volunteer corps of parents or utilize upper-level students to assist classroom teachers working with younger grades. PDZA may want to consider offering training to these audiences in conjunction with teacher workshops in order to increase the level and quality of support available.

PDZA staff could provide an introductory training focused on science/empathy concepts for newer program teachers and an advanced training on outdoor education strategies for veteran program teachers.

When allocating time to providing feedback and support to teachers, PDZA staff should prioritize in-person office hours for newer program teachers and utilize Zoom to connect with veteran program teachers on a regular basis.

## How comfortable are you teaching the Park Lessons to your students?

On a scale of 1-10, with 1 as least comfortable at teaching the park lessons independently and 10 as most comfortable, teachers from both schools averaged 5.5. Teachers with two or more years of experience all gave this item a rating of 5 or 6. The three teachers with only a single year of experience all chose 9.

**This finding suggests a case of “the more you know, the more you know you don’t know.” Perhaps veteran program teachers reported feeling less comfortable because they had experienced difficulties when teaching the park lessons, while teachers new to the program were not yet aware of the variety of challenges that can exist. To address the known challenges, PDZA can incorporate troubleshooting into their training on the park lessons.**

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# What would increase your comfort level? (or that of your colleagues?)

Teachers from both schools cited three main things that would increase their comfort levels:

- More training/practice - (9)
- Additional staff - (7)
- Additional time - (5)

## Examples of comments related to more training/practice

*“Just a list refreshing my memory of what activities we have done in the park.”*

*“I think going over what will be done at the park ahead of time and maybe running through the activity before it is delivered to the students.”*

*“Knowing the park well and knowing the repertoire of what to teach while visiting. For instance, Liz led our group on a visit to see what previous year kids had done to plant native plants and was able to speak about how they were growing and what the land was like 300 years ago.”*

## Examples of comments related to additional staff

*“At the very least, we need another trained person so that the class can be split into 2 groups. Parents can help with chaperoning, but without being able to split the class, even if I am comfortable with teaching the content, there is only one of me!”*

*“Knowing we would have materials and volunteers to teach and engage in the lessons. It's hard to be the only adult responsible for each child, medical concerns, wandering or running off, and lugging a cart full of materials for park day activities.”*

*“Support from other adults who are comfortable with the lessons and comfortable with managing students....I cannot imagine taking my students to the park by myself.”*

Examples of comments related to additional time

*“Actual time to plan out the lesson with my grade level partners and be able to plan when it will be taught and having the ability to do that without the constant barriers.”*

*“Time to prep the learning zones in the park.”*

*“More prep time to organize and prepare for activities.”*

**Given the strong desire for more training and practice with park lessons in particular, PDZA should design professional development modules for the partner schools. These trainings might include in-person components delivered during a regularly scheduled teacher training as well as video-based components that are available asynchronously.**

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## Is there any specific skill or knowledge base you've observed in the PDZA educators that you would like to develop yourself?

Six teachers did not list any specific skill or knowledge base. Teachers from both schools noted they would like to develop more knowledge about animals and plants as well as inquiry-based learning skills. (See Table 5 for full list.)

Table 5. Skills and knowledge teachers would like to develop themselves.

	Arlington	Lister
Animal content knowledge	4	1
Science (general)	3	
Biology	2	
Outdoor education strategies	2	
Empathy	2	
Plants	1	2
Weather	1	
Rocks	1	
Inquiry-based learning	1	2
Cultural relevance		1

**In light of this list, PDZA should incorporate content about animals, plants, general science, and biology into teacher trainings. Skills-based topics should include outdoor education strategies and inquiry-based learning.**

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# Conversely, are there any skills or knowledge that you and your TPS colleagues have that you would like to see the PDZA staff develop?

Eight teachers did not list any specific skill or knowledge base. Teachers from both schools noted classroom management skills, multilingual learner strategies, and time management skills. (See Table 6 for full list.)

Table 6. Skills and knowledge teachers would like PDZA staff to develop.

	Arlington	Lister
Classroom management skills	2	2
Multilingual learner strategies	1	2
Time management skills/punctuality	1	1
Curriculum alignment	1	1
Teaching styles		1

*“Keep on developing classroom management skills and waiting until students are quiet to continue. PDZA staff continue to get better and better as they work with our students. They are awesome!”*

*“The students love them, and they want to be loved by the students and have science be a fun subject. Unfortunately, that can lead to classroom management difficulties.”*

*“Possibly more training on how to hold students accountable for their actions, maintain expectations, and manage behaviors.”*

*“Honoring the TPS priority standards and aligning with the Year at a Glance document. It has been much better this year!! Keep it up.”*

**Based on this feedback, PDZA staff should feel empowered to increase their expectations for student behavior and to enforce classroom rules. They should build extra time into their schedules to account for normal delays and interruptions that impede a tight timeline. They should also seek additional training around multilingual learner strategies.**

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## Additional comments

*“The Zoo staff has done amazing work at Arlington. Kudos to Liz, Stacy, Jacob for leading us and their willingness to help with experiments and Park learning visits. I have enjoyed working with all of you! Thank you!”*

*“You have all done an amazing job!”*

*“I think the PDZA staff are very competent. They seem like they have a good handle on trauma informed practices. They are my heroes!”*

*“I believe PDZA staff are amazing at what they do and have adapted to our curricular needs seamlessly.”*

*“I love the links to Mystery Science lessons! Doubly good teaching materials when I can pair up Wildlife Champions and Mystery Science.”*

*“I enjoyed working with the zoo staff and hope that this partnership is able to continue.”*

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## Appendices

A. Teacher Survey Form

B. Full set of responses to: *How would you describe your relationship with the Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium staff?*

C. Full set of responses to: *During your time at TPS, are there other partners that your school has historically collaborated with that helped to support a curriculum or program?*

D. Full set of responses to: *Could you elaborate or explain ‘the why’ behind the two most significant barriers?*



## PDZA Wildlife Champions School Survey Spring 2024

### IMPORTANT INSTRUCTIONS

**Thank you for participating in this feedback survey! After you submit your responses, you will be asked to enter your email address to receive a \$25 Amazon gift card.**

**PLEASE READ: The sustainability goal of Wildlife Champions has always been to be a gradual release model in which PDZA staff consistently support the affiliated school and its staff in the curriculum but at different levels each year.**

**In the first years of instruction, support is acute and comprehensive, as two PDZA staff members are embedded in the school; PDZA staff take the lead on teaching the curriculum in class and take students on 8 park visits per year.**

**In the third year, PDZA staff move toward a teach-and-assist model in which teachers take the lead in the curriculum and PDZA staff become the assistants, decreasing park visits to 6 times a year.**

**In the continuing years, one PDZA staff member helps facilitate the WC program by working with teachers as a curriculum coach/mentor, assisting with hands-on lessons as needed, and facilitating 4 park visits. This scaffolded approach ultimately supports teachers in taking ownership of the curricula and enhances the long-term sustainability of the program.**

**Your responses to this survey will help PDZA design the best possible transition.**



Introduction

\* 1. Where do you work?

\* 2. Which grade(s) do you teach/support? (check all that apply)

Kindergarten

1st

2nd

3rd

4th

5th

\* 3. How long have you (your class) participated in the Wildlife Champions program?

Total school years (including this one) =

1 (this is my first year of involvement)

2

3

4

5

6

7

I can't remember!



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4. How would you describe your relationship with the Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium staff during that time?

\* 5. In what ways do you interact with PDZA staff outside of their time in your classroom?  
(check all that apply)

- Over email - receiving only
- Over email - responding back
- Over text
- Talking on the phone
- On Zoom/Teams
- Passing in the hallway/break room
- WC Office/space
- During staff meetings or PD
- During grade-level planning meetings
- In-person after school
- None of the above
- Other (please specify)

\* 6. How frequently do you connect with PDZA staff outside of their time in your classroom?

- Daily
- Several times a week
- Approximately weekly
- A few times a month
- A few times a year



Partnerships

7. We value the partnership we have with TPS and we are always looking for ways to improve this relationship. During your time at TPS, are there other partners that your school has historically collaborated with that helped to support a curriculum or program?

8. What kind of strategies have worked well with this partner?

9. What obstacles did you face when working with this partner?



\* 10. Which of these are barriers to sustaining the Wildlife Champions classroom programming (curriculum/lessons facilitated on school grounds) independently from PDZA staff and/or funding support?

	Not at all a barrier	Slight barrier	Moderate barrier	Significant barrier	Not sure
Time teaching needed to teach Wildlife Champions Lessons	<input type="radio"/>				
Funding for materials	<input type="radio"/>				
Animal and science expertise	<input type="radio"/>				
Knowledge about/comfort with using empathy best practices in engaging students with nature	<input type="radio"/>				
Pressure to teach TPS Science curriculum vs. Wildlife Champions curriculum	<input type="radio"/>				
Interventions	<input type="radio"/>				
Testing	<input type="radio"/>				
Complex experiments	<input type="radio"/>				
Gathering materials/supplies	<input type="radio"/>				
Material prep	<input type="radio"/>				
Staffing support	<input type="radio"/>				

Other (please provide)

\* 11. Could you elaborate or explain 'the why' behind the two most significant barriers?

\* 12. If PDZA did not continue to support the Wildlife Champions program, which parts of the curriculum do you think your school would maintain on its own? (Check all that apply.)

- Science content presentations
- Classroom-based empathy activities
- Park visits
- None of the above

13. What makes you think that?

\* 14. What support would you want or need to teach the Wildlife Champions curriculum successfully AND independently?

Some examples:

- Training(s) on science/empathy concepts
- Training in outdoor education strategies
- Support staff for hands-on experiments or park lessons
- Office hours or monthly meetings with PDZA staff
- Monthly zoom PD

\* 15. How comfortable are you teaching the Park Lessons to your students?

Not at all comfortable Ready to go!

16. What would increase your comfort level? (or that of your colleagues?)

17. Is there any specific skill or knowledge base you've observed in the PDZA educators that you would like to develop yourself?

18. Conversely, are there any skills or knowledge that you and your TPS colleges have that you would like to see the PDZA staff develop?

## Q4 How would you describe your relationship with the Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium staff during that time?

Answered: 28 Skipped: 1

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	It's decent. They are helpful and great support with the program.	5/14/2024 8:37 AM
2	I have enjoyed working with them. They have been professional.	5/13/2024 4:27 PM
3	Wonderful! They have been very fun and easy to work with!	5/13/2024 2:16 PM
4	It is a great relationship. They are very supportive of the program and happy to help in whatever way they can.	5/7/2024 4:52 PM
5	I would describe my relationship as professional, friendly and open. I am able to have direct communication with them, offer feedback and opinions and have open discussions with them. I would say that our relationship has evolved over the years and grown to a mutual respect and admiration for what each of us has to do.	5/7/2024 9:43 AM
6	I have always had positive interactions with the staff. I have loved teaming with staff to write lessons, to adapt and change things as we move forward, and now to give any ELL/ML support that I can to this program.	5/6/2024 12:04 PM
7	Very kind and helpful staff. Good relationships.	5/5/2024 2:42 PM
8	They are always friendly and knowledgeable about the science lessons. I appreciate all the help especially when moving grade levels.	5/1/2024 4:06 PM
9	The relationship has been very positive! There has been amazing communication and support!	5/1/2024 12:18 PM
10	I have found the PDZA staff to be friendly, helpful and easy to work with.	5/1/2024 8:52 AM
11	I have thoroughly enjoyed my time partnering with PDZA, I have positive relationships with the staff.	5/1/2024 8:41 AM
12	My relationship with Point Defiance Zoo is a great relationship. I can depend on them for help, answers to my questions and concerns with our science lessons. I enjoy wildlife champions.	4/30/2024 9:02 PM
13	A wonderful partnership that brings children enriching experiences that are grade level aligned with the report card standards for Science.	4/30/2024 8:12 PM
14	The PDZA staff have been amazing partners and educators. I feel fortunate to work with them.	4/30/2024 7:26 PM
15	Professional and enjoyable. I have learned so much from this collaboration and my students have surely benefited from it	4/30/2024 7:10 PM
16	Great, they are very helpful and interact well with students	4/30/2024 7:08 PM
17	Jacob and Liz are great. Anytime I need something they are available and willing to help.	4/30/2024 7:08 PM
18	Staff were attentive and well informed. Staff worked their best with me to collaborate and to scaffold some of the planned work to better suit my students. The staff was knowledgeable and friendly, we all enjoyed Sam and Kendra a lot this year.	4/29/2024 2:51 PM
19	It is neutral.	4/24/2024 8:03 PM
20	Great! We work together to ensure that students are learning the content.	4/17/2024 1:55 PM
21	It is a good relationship. We plan and communicate relatively well and work together to make things as smooth as we can on our and on their end.	4/17/2024 10:05 AM
22	I think the zoo staff has been great to work with. They listen and understand the needs of our school, our classrooms, and teaching requirements from the district.	4/17/2024 9:44 AM
23	Good working relationship. Mutual respect.	4/17/2024 9:07 AM

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24	I have had nothing but a wonderful experience with the PDZA staff! Always supportive, always communicative and always easy to work with.	4/17/2024 8:43 AM
25	Having PDZA staff take lead and support when necessary.	4/17/2024 8:30 AM
26	Respectful, cordial, helpful, supportive	4/17/2024 8:26 AM
27	Amazing. I love collaborating with the staff. Especially Ms Kendra.	4/17/2024 7:55 AM
28	They are very friendly and we interact frequently.	4/17/2024 7:54 AM

**Q7 We value the partnership we have with TPS and we are always looking for ways to improve this relationship. During your time at TPS, are there other partners that your school has historically collaborated with that helped to support a curriculum or program?**

Answered: 28 Skipped: 1

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	NA	5/14/2024 8:38 AM
2	Several High School ELA classes	5/13/2024 4:29 PM
3	Beyond the Bell Communities in Schools	5/13/2024 2:19 PM
4	Not that I am aware of.	5/7/2024 4:53 PM
5	There have been, but not at this level of engagement or success.	5/7/2024 10:13 AM
6	Mi Centro and Asian Pacific Cultural Center	5/6/2024 12:43 PM
7	N/A	5/5/2024 2:42 PM
8	Master Builders Association from years ago. They brought in all the partners that are needed to construct a house.	5/1/2024 4:10 PM
9	Metroparks is an ongoing partnership with have with our after school programs.	5/1/2024 12:19 PM
10	Tahoma High School and doing some group projects with some of their students and 3rd/4th graders	5/1/2024 8:56 AM
11	Not that I know of	5/1/2024 8:41 AM
12	Science I have been at Arlington we have only collaborated with wildlife champions.	4/30/2024 9:09 PM
13	Read2Me (at McCarver), Junior Achievement (McCarver)	4/30/2024 8:17 PM
14	Yes. Foss Seaport Waterway Pierce Conservation District, Tacoma Art Museum, Natural History Museum, LeMay Car Museum	4/30/2024 7:29 PM
15	We collaborate with communities in schools for our after school programs	4/30/2024 7:12 PM
16	I'm not sure	4/30/2024 7:09 PM
17	Not that I can think of	4/30/2024 7:08 PM
18	I am unsure of this, this is my first year working for TPS.	4/29/2024 2:53 PM
19	There are mentoring programs that have partnered with Lister's intermediary grades to support SEL.	4/24/2024 8:04 PM
20	No	4/17/2024 1:56 PM
21	Not that I know of.	4/17/2024 10:06 AM
22	I have not had any other partners during my 20 years with TPS that have supported a curriculum in this way or needed to be in my classroom as part of their program.	4/17/2024 9:46 AM
23	No	4/17/2024 9:07 AM
24	No, not that I can think of.	4/17/2024 8:44 AM
25	TPS funded field trips in the fall, completely coordinated by district staff	4/17/2024 8:32 AM
26	Not during my time in TPS	4/17/2024 8:26 AM

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27	None	4/17/2024 7:57 AM
28	NA	4/17/2024 7:57 AM

## Q11 Could you elaborate or explain 'the why' behind the two most significant barriers?

Answered: 29 Skipped: 0

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	The focus on math, new curriculum of reading/writing, and the newer Social Studies curriculum made it difficult to keep up with the science lessons. This I believe will be better next year due to familiarity with the other 2 curriculums.	5/14/2024 8:41 AM
2	Time and help needs to be planned and provided ahead to teach the science classes and especially the ones with experiments.	5/13/2024 4:35 PM
3	Having the supplies ready for use has been a huge help. I don't think staff will have the time or resources to restock the materials and supplies. Having an extra person in the room to help teach and facilitate really helps to make sure the lessons and experiments get done.	5/13/2024 2:32 PM
4	Without funding to provide materials needed for the curriculum, it would be difficult to do them. The staff also bring such rich knowledge of animals and all things related to science that I simply don't have. It certainly enriches the lessons that they participate in.	5/7/2024 5:03 PM
5	Time is not given to teach the lessons with fidelity or to plan with coworkers on how to best teach the lesson. Support from the district. They say they support us, but it is not shown in our PD or in the curriculum map with cross-academic lessons.	5/7/2024 10:21 AM
6	I am going to touch on the Math/Reading interventions and the testing. As a ML/ELL teacher, I pull students out during the intervention times. It is hard for me to rearrange scheduling because those are the times I am told to get students... it is also a struggle because often time in the classroom the science lessons just run long. No fault of anyone specifically. It just sometimes takes more time in real life than on paper. I do not want my ML students to miss out, but when you add in testing scheduling and the TPS district curriculum (which is where we need to get our STEM hours for recertification). Time sometimes just gets the best of all of.	5/6/2024 1:22 PM
7	Classrooms need the math / reading interventions and they can take up science time. The complex experiments can be very time consuming and need info beforehand.	5/5/2024 2:45 PM
8	My schedule is full with learning and the time for an hour lesson is limited with interventions in the middle of the afternoon. I have limited time and therefore a hard time to get materials from the shed as well.	5/1/2024 4:30 PM
9	The pressure to stay on track with our curriculum and be rigorous along with a strict schedule makes it hard to fit the lessons in sometimes. Some concepts take longer to explain in Wildlife Champions than others.	5/1/2024 12:23 PM
10	Complex experiments are better for the students but require additional adults to work with the students individually or in small groups to make it the best experience for all. Gathering materials and lesson prep for experiments does require more prep time than most other teaching (but I believe it's very beneficial for students).	5/1/2024 9:12 AM
11	The intervention system has really messed up a lot of my subjects, and its unfortunately started to eat into my Science and Social Studies times - it has just gotten shorter and seemed to be pushed aside by the district. The lesson plans are just a bit long and unclear at times, especially when discussing heavy scientific terms it would be helpful to revamp some of the lesson plans to support my understanding of important concepts and clarify activities and timing.	5/1/2024 8:47 AM
12	The most significant barrier is Time to teach science. Its hard to fit it in with whole and small group math and reading instructional minutes being 90 mins a day	4/30/2024 9:21 PM
13	My Science block is near the end of our school day, which makes it a fun activity for my students to look forward to after we get our Reading & Math core instruction & interventions done. Some days we struggle to get through those core lessons making us miss out on the	4/30/2024 8:37 PM

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plan for our Science lessons. Testing can also interfere with our Science lessons, but it makes us want to work toward the goal of our fun Science lessons.

14	When it comes to testing for SBA I think Mystery Science curriculum prepares fifth graders in a more comprehensive way. I think the lessons are more age appropriate and more well received for fifth graders.	4/30/2024 7:40 PM
15	The barrier is created for the excess of curriculum materials given by the district. In my opinion WLC is better at teaching science to my students also more interactive and accesible	4/30/2024 7:16 PM
16	Since I teach fourth grade, I have several students who are below grade level average. The focus in the classroom is really reading in math.	4/30/2024 7:15 PM
17	Having time in the day is often difficult to find which goes along with intervention because there are blocks in the day where we cannot teach whole class due to these groups which takes away more time from Wildlife Champions.	4/30/2024 7:12 PM
18	I teach in special education and have a few students that instructing during cross grade level whole group can be a challenge. There were limited times where the material was not lending itself well to scaffolding, everyone always did the best they could and 95% of the time the vast majority of my students were engaged.	4/29/2024 2:59 PM
19	Gathering, and Prepping materials are significant barriers to sustaining WC because we do not have planning time to accommodate an additional curriculum outside of TPS curriculum.	4/24/2024 8:18 PM
20	District is facing severe budget crunches and monies for materials may or may not be there from year to year. Also, most copies have to come from building budget eventually which may affect all WC materials and prep. Volunteers are hard to find, especially when things do not go perfectly, and all ESPs have designated positions or assignments within the school day, which is why I chose staffing support as a barrier as well.	4/17/2024 2:38 PM
21	Most of our lessons align because of the way that we wrote the curriculum but not all of them. In addition, the district has changes the schedule for 5th grade so that we are only teaching Social Studies and Science separately in different Trimesters. Because WC is required as an ongoing monthly program that has caused us to have to change the schedule and effects our grading on report cards for the year.	4/17/2024 10:12 AM
22	Finding the time in my daily schedule for Wildlife Champions lessons and then still needing to cover all of district curriculum is next to impossible. Even if the lessons are aligned to our science standards, there is still an entire trimester where the district does not have us teaching science standards. Then we are trying to figure out how to have the time to teach the Social Studies standards that are required and have an additional hour per week for Wildlife Champions. I could see how in primary grades this may not be as big of an issue, but with state testing for intermediate grades, the time and standards are major issues.	4/17/2024 10:08 AM
23	Given a 30 minute period 4x a week to cover TPS mandated curriculum. This time is rotating between science and social studies.	4/17/2024 9:12 AM
24	School district dictates the allotted amount of time. This is out of our hands.	4/17/2024 8:50 AM
25	Wildlife Champion lessons were added to teacher's plates and nothing was taken off to accommodate the new load. Teachers are held accountable for teaching the standards during evaluations, not from teaching WLC lessons.	4/17/2024 8:42 AM
26	Instructional time is the biggest barrier any teacher has in education. At the elementary level, there is so much for students to learn each year and sometimes the gaps we have to fill prior to instruction of grade level material take a significant amount of time.	4/17/2024 8:34 AM
27	Student and nature, our kids aren't out in nature a lot, they are home on their video games.	4/17/2024 8:15 AM
28	The wildlife champions lessons do not always align to the standards on the report cards	4/17/2024 8:02 AM
29	Funding is always tight in public education.	4/17/2024 8:01 AM