

## ***Kids Healthy Outdoors Challenge (KHOC)***

### **2012–2013 School Year Pilot Project**

#### **EXHIBIT A**

#### **Student Response to KHOC: A Sampling of Results**

As part of the KHOC evaluation, teachers were asked to conduct short student pre/post surveys with their classes to determine whether student feelings about nature, or about outdoors activities, changed over the school year.

Sixteen (16) of 33 participating teachers conducted and returned the pre and post surveys. Results varied widely among classrooms and were difficult to interpret. Moreover, many teachers conducted pre- and post-tests just a few months apart, making it difficult to reliably measure any impact.

One key learning from the pilot is that EBRPD should develop *new processes to collect and analyze student feedback*, one that is easier for teachers and allows for simple, age-appropriate reporting.

However, there is information to be gleaned from student surveys, and we report a sampling of it here.

#### **1. Third grade students in the East Bay enjoy playing outdoors and visiting nature.**

The majority of surveys analyzed (80%+) show that third graders “like to play outdoors.” This was true at both pre- and post-test, without significant increases in how much children enjoyed playing outdoors.

Likewise, the majority of students (60%+) “like to visit nature” (e.g., “going to a park, the mountains, a stream or lake”). This was true at both pre- and post-test, although some classes showed large gains in how much they liked visiting nature from pre- to post-test, while others posted significant decreases.

Although it is difficult to interpret these data, we can conclude that third graders who participated in KHOC are being exposed to nature, and that the vast majority of them enjoy spending time in it.

#### **2. Third grade students in the East Bay are familiar with a variety of parks, from neighborhood to national parks.**

Students were asked to list “places they had visited in nature.”

Locally, responses included a very large number of EBRPD parks, such as: Temescal, Tilden Nature Area, Ardenwood (Historic Farm), Crab Cove, Lake Chabot, Coyote Hills, Roberts Park, MLK Shoreline, Briones, Big Break, Del Valle, Garin Park, Point Pinole, and Point Isabel.

City and local parks listed included: Lake Merritt, Point Richmond Marina, Golden Gate Park, Meek Park, Diamond Park, Booker T. Anderson Park and Castro Park.

Across the state, locations listed included Yosemite, Lake Tahoe, Muir Woods, Mount Diablo, Monterey Bay, Angel Island, Mammoth, and Clear Lake. Places some (but not many) students listed across the country included Hawaii, Yellowstone, Mt. Rushmore, and the Grand Canyon.

Interestingly, *across classes*, many students listed locations like Great America, the California Academy of Sciences, the zoo or a museum, or a water park as places they had visited in nature. This suggests that *the KHOC curriculum might include ideas and definitions to help students distinguish outdoors activities from “nature.”*

### **3. Students seem to have largely positive associations with nature.**

Students were asked to list words they associated with nature. Many focused on **things found in nature**, and some of the most popular words were:

- Trees
- Bugs/insects
- Birds/animals
- Grass
- Water

Many of the words were **feelings and thoughts generated by nature**, including:

- Beautiful
- Fun
- Happy
- Peaceful/quiet
- Awesome

Very few students used words like “scary” or “nervous,” although there were some such responses.

### **4. A sampling of open-ended student responses.**

In the post-survey, students were asked, “Where nearby in your community or neighborhood can you go to be in nature?”

Students in almost all classes were able to list nearby parks or places they could go. However, several students at Coronado Elementary in urban Richmond had comments similar to this one:

*“I don’t live near anyplace that looks like a place with animals and trees.”*

This contrasted sharply with responses from nearby Kensington Elementary (in Kensington, CA), where many students had comments like the following:

*“I can go down the hill to a forest nearby or I can go to a field near my neighborhood.”*

Students were also asked to describe “new things I learned about parks, nature or the environment this year.” They had many interesting things to say, including things they learned about **taking care of nature and the environment:**

- *Leave it where you found it.*
- *I learned not to litter.*
- *Don't throw trash because animals live there.*
- *People pick up trash in nature so nature doesn't die.*
- *In my community, I can be nature by helping animals survive.*

**How to be safe in nature...**

- *I learned that if you run down a steep hill you fall.<sup>1</sup>*
- *Don't touch poison ivy!*
- *Don't touch plants you don't know.*
- *I learned about ticks.*

**And things they learned about the natural world and tuning into the environment...**

- *Adaptation is a thing animals need to survive.*
- *I learned how to tell apart a raven and a crow.*
- *I learned that nature is not bad.*
- *Be curious what sounds you hear.*
- *I learned the park is fun...you do not have to stay in the house.*
- *I can go to the parks to find beautiful thing [sic] in nature.*
- *Nature is everywhere.*

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<sup>1</sup> This clearly happened, since many students in one class reported learning this!