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November 18, 2010

Portsmouth Public School 5th Grade Teachers:

Dear Teachers,

A NOAA-funded grant, (**Project SEARCH-Science Education Advancing Research of the Chesapeake Bay and its Habitats**), has enabled Old Dominion University to partner with Portsmouth Public Schools to provide urban students with Meaningful Watershed Experiences (MEWEs). Grant activities include providing materials, in class support, and professional development opportunities. As part of this on-going project a series of 5 posters has been created to challenge students' perceptions about environmental issues and environmental workers based on data collect from students earlier this year.

Each poster focuses on students' perceptions or misconceptions revealed in earlier data. The five posters will rotate through all fifth grade classes in Portsmouth. Each will include a writing prompt that could be completed by students in about ten minutes. You may choose to use the posters as a center or as a class-wide writing activity. The activities support writing across the curriculum and could be included in language arts, science, or social studies since they emphasize responsible citizen behaviors.

To make this activity meaningful, we ask that teachers engage students in a five-minute question session of each poster using the "Project SEARCH Poster Discussion Protocol". This written protocol will be used each time a new poster is discussed. Basically, we are asking you to help students notice who is in each poster and how they are working on behalf of the environment.

Once students have completed the writing prompt found on the "Project SEARCH Poster Worksheet", responses should be placed in a folder for pick up. Our project liaison, Carla Bell, will collect and distribute materials to the schools. She will also provide you with the two-week timeline for data collection. Again, the materials are designed to be included in your current practice and not to add to your workload. We think students will gain some valuable insights from examining and responding to these posters.



As a way to thank you for your support, once the five response sets are picked up from your class, the posters returned, and the teacher survey completed, you will be provided with a \$15 Target gift card for your efforts in this project. This gift card is for your personal use and does not require you to submit receipts. It is simply our way of saying we appreciate your help in expanding students' views of environmental issues and environmental workers.

Thank you,

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NOAA Project SEARCH - PI
http://www.odu.edu/~ddickers/grant_noaa_search.htm

