

Teacher Leaders

Our Teacher Leaders bring years of classroom experience and a passion for data-driven, place-based science education. They serve as mentors and guides for our educator network, sharing effective approaches and helping to refine the strategies we use in Project CREDIBLE.

David Krebs

Science Teacher, West High School (Knoxville)

With a background in ecological fieldwork and a decade of experience in public education, David Krebs is committed to activating students as engaged participants in the world around them. He encourages students to conduct original research and share their findings through public speaking and publishing, helping them develop both scientific thinking and communication skills.

Krebs's ultimate goal is to foster future land stewards and science-minded individuals—students who ask bold questions, pursue deep inquiry, and think critically about the natural world. Through curiosity and exploration, he guides young learners toward a lifelong connection to science and the environment.

Outside the classroom, David enjoys walking, learning new things, and meeting new people. As a grant team member, he brings a passion for inquiry-driven learning, environmental stewardship, and student empowerment to the work.

Kathryn Hensley

Teacher, West High School

Originally from Muskegon, Michigan, Kathryn Hensley has called Knoxville home for half her life. She teaches in the International Baccalaureate program at West High School, where she specializes in Environmental Systems and Societies, a course that explores the connections between human and natural systems, from soil and water to the atmosphere. Her students venture into real-world topics such as eutrophication, agriculture and cattle production, and climate change.

Hensley's love for the outdoors began in childhood, as she explored her family's 11-acre homestead in Michigan. Her father taught her to observe, ask questions, and seek answers—an approach she brings to her classroom. She holds a degree in ecology and evolutionary biology from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, where she studied under Taylor Feild, a professor who inspired her by always responding to her answers with more questions. Most often, “Why?” She strives to encourage her students to question and wonder, as both her father and professor did for her.

At West High School, Hensley currently collaborates with Ijams Nature Center on the first annual data collection for the IB Collaborative Science Project, a capstone experience for her 11th-grade students.

Jennifer Sauer

Grade 6–8 Teacher, South Doyle Middle School

Jennifer Sauer teaches science enrichment for grades 6 through 8 at South Doyle Middle School, where she leads weekly outdoor explorations that turn nature into a living laboratory. She also sponsors the school's Japanese and Environmental clubs, helping students connect culture, science, and stewardship.

She holds a bachelor's degree in elementary education from the University of Memphis and a master's degree in science education from Georgia State University. A passionate advocate for outdoor learning, Sauer is an active member of the Knoxville Outdoor Learning Coalition, which supports teachers in taking students beyond the classroom.

Sauer regularly secures grants to enhance outdoor science education at her school. Currently, she is guiding her sixth-grade students to use iNaturalist data to study native and invasive species on campus.