

2016 TEEA Winner Education: San Antonio Water System

Lynne Christopher, Education Coordinator

The San Antonio Water System is vested in education. We believe that the students that we're working with today are the decision makers of tomorrow. IMPACT is a high school program that is designed to allow high school students to become involved in designing and facilitating water related projects.

Alicia Mein-Johnson, Teacher

So all one hundred and twenty of my students actually participate in this program and they all come together to make our project actually work.

Carmen Zayasbazan, Student

Well this is my first year on the IMPACT team. I didn't realize how interested a lot of my peers were in the same things that I was, and it's kind of inspiring being able to bounce ideas off of people who think similarly to me.

Alicia Mein-Johnson, Teacher

I can sit back and be more of a coach or a facilitator because they are so full of passion for what they're doing.

Lynne Christopher, Education Coordinator

Over the years we've developed a number of different partnerships with local businesses and educators that help us with IMPACT. One being a company here in town called VentureLab.

Nick Honegger, Community Partner, VentureLab

We take students that are working on projects or have ideas and show them how to add entrepreneurship into it. We took that mindset and applied it to SAWS's existing program and said alright, we're going to take a special set of students that really want to go beyond their project and actually make it into a business and show them all the steps how to do that, so, from brainstorming, to ideation, to actually prototyping it, and then pitching it to a separate set of investors at the end of the event.

Alicia Mein-Johnson, Teacher

If my students can learn to be a water conservationist at seventeen, then they are going to have a lasting impact on our community.

Nick Honegger, Community Partner, VentureLab

I hear everyone say when they come in, and all the teachers will say, oh if only I had this when I was their age, or if only we had this opportunity, so I think I'm super fortunate in that VentureLab and SAWS get to provide that opportunity. The students really get to see the difference they can make at such a young age.