

FOUNDING WHITEPAPER

Ocean Literacy Institute

Building an Ocean-Literate Generation

For donors, foundations, strategic partners, educators, corporate sponsors, scientists, and community leaders

Understand the Ocean. Understand Our World.

Executive Summary

About this document. This is the Institute’s founding whitepaper: the investment case for donors, foundations, and partners — what founding capital builds, how the financial model works, how impact is measured, the risks, and how the Institute is governed. How OLI teaches — the Ocean IQ framework, the Ocean Adventures with Mike book series, the Education Fellows Program, and the brand architecture — is set out in the companion Institute Whitepaper. The two are designed to be read together.

The ocean shapes weather and climate, produces a large share of the oxygen in our atmosphere, supports food systems on every continent, carries the great majority of the world’s goods, and provides livelihoods for hundreds of millions of people. Yet many young people grow up with surprisingly little understanding of how it works or how much their own lives depend on it.

The Ocean Literacy Institute (OLI) is being established to close that gap. We are building an educational ecosystem for young people ages 3 to 18 that makes the ocean understandable, relevant, and something they can act on. The ecosystem combines age-appropriate books, classroom curriculum, teacher resources, digital learning, experiential programs, real ocean stories, career exploration, student action projects, and a network of Education Fellows. It will be built in partnership with schools, scientists, universities, businesses, and ocean organizations.

The aim goes beyond teaching marine biology. OLI wants young people to see the ocean as a system of interconnected systems, and to understand where they sit within it. A student who completes an OLI program should know more about the ocean, and should also ask better questions. How does this system work? What depends on it? What happens when it is disrupted? How are human systems connected to it? What can I do?

That habit of asking is what we mean by ocean literacy. We call the educational framework that builds it Ocean IQ, and our goal is simple to state: raise the Ocean IQ of the next generation.

OLI will develop over three years, with capital deployed in stages against measurable milestones:

Year	Focus	Funding target
1	Prove the model	~\$150,000
2	Expand the model	~\$500,000
3	Scale the model	~\$1,000,000

These are preliminary funding and deployment targets. They are planning figures and should not be read as revenue forecasts.

We invite founding donors, foundations, educators, businesses, universities, scientists, ocean organizations, and community leaders to help build the platform.

1. The Challenge

Children learn about forests, weather, animals, recycling, energy, and climate. The ocean is usually taught as a separate environmental topic, when it is in fact one of the systems that connect all the others.

The gaps show up in small ways. A student may know what a shark is without knowing what it does within an ecosystem. A student may learn about coral without learning how a reef supports fisheries, tourism, and coastal communities. A student who sees seaweed piling up on a beach may not connect it to the tourism, infrastructure, economic, and public-health consequences of a major marine event. Ships cross oceans every day, and few students realize how much of ordinary life depends on them. And many students who love the ocean never learn that it could be a career.

Knowing facts about the ocean is different from understanding it. OLI is built around that difference.

2. The Premise

The ocean should be taught as a living, interconnected system, and not only as a catalog of species and habitats. Biology connects to food, food to communities, communities to economies, economies to infrastructure, infrastructure to technology, and all of it to human health, culture, risk, and resilience.

Once students see those connections, ocean lessons carry more weight. A lesson on coral reefs becomes a lesson in ecology, fisheries, tourism, economics, and community resilience. A lesson on sharks opens onto ecosystems, perception, fear, risk, and misinformation. A lesson on marine debris leads into consumption, manufacturing, shipping, waste systems, policy, and collective action.

The skill underneath all of this is systems thinking: understanding relationships instead of memorizing isolated facts.

3. The Institute and the Learning Pathway

OLI is an educational organization dedicated to increasing ocean understanding among young people. Its educational framework, Ocean IQ, serves four developmental stages.

- **Ages 3–6 — Discover:** Wonder, animals, exploration, and curiosity.
- **Ages 7–10 — Understand:** Habitats, species, simple systems, human connections, and stewardship.
- **Ages 11–14 — Connect:** Ecosystems, human interaction with the ocean, conservation, technology, ocean careers, and problem solving.
- **Ages 15–18 — Think & Act:** Systems thinking, infrastructure, economics, risk, resilience, technology, leadership, and real ocean challenges.

The themes stay consistent while the sophistication grows. A child might meet an idea at five and return to it at ten, fourteen, and seventeen, each time at greater depth. The goal is a pathway from early childhood through high school, and a single classroom visit would fall short of it.

4. The OLI Learning Model: Ocean IQ

OLI's educational framework is called Ocean IQ. It names both how we teach and the outcome we are working toward: a young person's capacity to understand ocean systems, see how they connect to human systems, think critically about change, and act on that understanding. Ocean IQ develops across four stages:

Discover → Understand → Connect → Think & Act

Five dimensions. At every stage, learning builds five connected capabilities:

Know. Build a foundation in ocean science, moving past facts toward mechanisms, relationships, and consequences.

Connect. Show students how ocean systems relate to one another and to their own lives through food, weather, transportation, jobs, health, technology, and community.

Think. Reason about cause and effect, evidence, risk, tradeoffs, and unintended consequences.

Explore. Discover the range of careers, technologies, and people connected to the ocean.

Act. Give students agency. Each student identifies something to investigate, change, build, communicate, or contribute.

Beyond the page. Wherever possible, learning moves into real experience: demonstrations, virtual experiences, scientist and professional visits, classroom projects, and appropriate field programs with aquariums, research organizations, and coastal partners. For older students, that includes honest guidance on how to start safely in ocean activities such as snorkeling, surfing, sailing, or scuba, and why preparation always comes first. Time in and around the water also has a documented effect on body and mind, lowering stress and restoring focus, and we want students to notice it for themselves.

We do not intend to frighten children about the future. We want them to develop informed agency: the understanding that problems can be investigated, systems can be understood, solutions can be designed, and individuals can contribute.

The full framework, including age-by-age competencies, learning outcomes, and the approach to assessment, is set out in the Institute's educational framework documents, which accompany the Institute Whitepaper.

5. Move Toward the Shark

One of OLI's flagship educational properties is *Move Toward the Shark*.

For many children, the word “shark” means danger. Films, news coverage, and dramatic encounters have reinforced that reaction for generations. That is also what makes sharks such a useful gateway. Through them, students can explore predator-prey relationships, marine ecosystems, adaptation and evolution, behavior, conservation, and scientific observation. They can also examine human perception, fear, risk, and decision-making.

The central principle is simple: understanding something changes how we respond to it.

Move Toward the Shark is a book, and it is also a platform for showing students how curiosity, knowledge, preparation, and direct experience can replace misconception. Every edition also carries a character lesson: courage that comes from preparation, not bravado. It is the flagship of the Institute's book series, Ocean Adventures with Mike, and will be developed for each of the four Ocean IQ stages, with books, classroom activities, video, educator resources, and experiential components scaled to each level.

The editions launch oldest-first: the 15–18 edition, *Lessons from the Deep*, is published first in Year 1, followed by the 11–14 and 7–10 editions later that year and the 3–6 edition early in Year 2. The 11–14 edition, whose manuscript is complete, will be the first piloted in classrooms, so pilot schools are likely to begin with middle-grade students.

6. Real Stories, Real Ocean

OLI has a distinctive source of material. Instead of relying only on textbook treatment, our content draws on decades of real ocean and adventure experience.

Founder Mike Hawkins is an author, keynote speaker, international adventure athlete, rescue diver, and systems thinker, and a former technology governance, risk, and compliance professional. He is the author of five technology books published by Prentice Hall. His work has taken him through multiple countries and environments, and his ocean experience includes diving with sharks, exploring underwater caves, working in strong currents, and spending time on reefs and in remote open water. In many of those situations, preparation, judgment, and environmental conditions mattered immediately.

Those experiences become entry points for learning. Each book opens with a logbook entry recording the location, water temperature, visibility, depth, and conditions, followed by the words “This really happened.” From there the pattern is consistent:

Story → Science → System → Lesson → Career → Action

The story earns attention. The science explains what happened. Systems thinking shows how the pieces relate. Reflection turns the experience into a lesson, about the ocean and about ourselves. A career spotlight shows who does this work, and action gives the student something to do with it. Lessons taught this way tend to be remembered.

7. The Educational Ecosystem

OLI is building an interconnected set of resources, not a single product.

Books. Age-specific titles in the Ocean Adventures with Mike series form the foundation. Potential subjects include sharks, coral reefs, ocean exploration, sargassum and marine vegetation, ocean technology, marine careers, diving, fisheries, coastal communities, ocean infrastructure, risk and resilience, and human relationships with the ocean.

Curriculum. Classroom-ready materials support each book: lesson plans, teacher guides, student workbooks, activities, discussion questions, experiments, projects, assessments, career exploration, and student action plans.

Digital learning. An online environment can bring together video, lessons, interviews, virtual experiences, curriculum, and student projects.

Media. Original underwater photography, video, interviews, diagrams, animation, and field footage can bring remote ocean environments into the classroom.

Experiences. Through qualified partners, programs can extend into aquariums, coastal sites, research facilities, museums, universities, and boats.

8. The Education Fellows Program

Good content needs capable people to deliver it. OLI's Education Fellows Program is designed to supply them.

Fellows could include active and retired educators, marine scientists, ocean professionals, divers, engineers, researchers, maritime professionals, university students, community educators, and other qualified people. Retired educators are a particularly promising group. They bring decades of classroom expertise and community relationships, and the program gives them a new way to keep serving young people.

Fellows play two complementary roles. Founding and Education Fellows, drawn from experienced educators, help build, review, and pilot the materials; the wider network carries programs into schools and communities. Student Fellows in high school and college help shape youth-facing content. The Fellowship's tiers are described in the Institute Whitepaper.

Every Fellow will receive OLI orientation, curriculum, materials, and training in program standards. Because Fellows will be working with children, the program will also include background screening and child-safety training before anyone enters a classroom. Over time, regional Fellows can become a distributed network connecting OLI with schools and communities.

That makes the model scalable. OLI develops centrally, and Fellows deliver locally.

9. Ocean Careers

Ocean literacy can also become workforce literacy. Students usually see only a narrow range of familiar professions, while the ocean economy is very broad. It includes marine biology, oceanography, engineering, robotics, artificial intelligence, remote sensing, diving, maritime transportation, naval architecture, aquaculture, fisheries, medicine, marine biotechnology, environmental science, data science, risk management, coastal engineering, hospitality and tourism, government, conservation, research, and entrepreneurship.

Working with the ocean does not require becoming a marine biologist. We want students to learn that early, while they are still deciding what is possible.

10. Systems Thinking

The systems approach reaches well beyond ocean science. Students learn to ask what the components are, how they are connected, what depends on what, and what happens when one part changes. They ask where the vulnerabilities are, what unintended consequences might follow, what information is missing, and what interventions might improve the system.

Those questions apply to the ocean. They apply just as well to businesses, communities, technology, infrastructure, healthcare, and economics, and to nearly every complex problem these students will meet as adults. OLI treats the ocean as a subject of study and also as a laboratory for learning how complex systems behave.

11. Standards, Quality, and Governance

Schools adopt programs they can trust and fit into existing requirements. OLI will build that credibility in from the start.

Standards alignment. OLI's curriculum will build on the Ocean Literacy Framework, the set of essential principles developed by educators and scientists including NOAA, and will be mapped to the Next Generation Science Standards and state standards where applicable. Books will be aligned with reading and language arts expectations at each grade band. Alignment follows the documented review process in the Institute's Curriculum & Standards Alignment Framework, and no curriculum will be described as standards-aligned until it has been reviewed and piloted.

Scientific review. Educational content will be reviewed by scientists and educators before release. We plan to establish a scientific and educational advisory board for this purpose.

Governance and accountability. During the validation period, the fiscal sponsor provides financial oversight, and an advisory board of educators and scientists guides the work. When OLI incorporates as its own nonprofit in Year 2, it will operate with a governing board, independent financial oversight, and public annual reporting on funds raised, funds deployed, and outcomes achieved.

Legal structure. For its first 6–12 months, OLI will operate as a fiscally sponsored project of an established 501(c)(3) organization, so gifts and grants are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law from the start. In Year 2, OLI will incorporate and seek its own tax-exempt status, and programs, funds, and intellectual property will transition from the sponsor under terms agreed at the outset. *[Insert fiscal sponsor name, and confirm sponsorship terms, before distribution.]*

12. Implementation Roadmap

OLI is designed to develop in stages.

Phase I — Establish. Build the organizational foundation: governance, structure, brand identity, intellectual-property strategy, website, advisory relationships, partnerships, fiscal sponsorship, and initial fundraising.

Phase II — Build. Develop the first educational products, beginning with the 15–18 and 11–14 editions of Move Toward the Shark, along with curriculum, teacher resources, classroom materials, and media.

Phase III — Prove. Run controlled school pilots. The purpose at this stage is learning. We will measure student engagement, educator response, learning outcomes, program cost, Fellow effectiveness, and operating requirements.

Phase IV — Expand. Successful programs move into additional schools, districts, communities, and regions, and the Education Fellows network grows alongside them.

Phase V — Scale. With demonstrated outcomes and a repeatable operating model, OLI can pursue larger institutional partnerships, digital distribution, national programs, and eventually international opportunities.

Phases I through III fall within Year 1, Phase IV corresponds to Year 2, and Phase V begins in Year 3. This is the same Prove, Expand, Scale sequence used throughout this document and in the Institute Whitepaper.

13. Preliminary Startup Capital

OLI is deliberately designed to avoid building a large fixed-cost organization before the educational model is proven. The preliminary Year 1 funding target is \$150,000, allocated as follows:

Use of Funds	Preliminary Allocation
Organizational foundation	\$18,000
Books and curriculum	\$54,000
School pilot and evaluation	\$20,000
Education Fellows and program delivery	\$16,000
Personnel and specialized contractors	\$16,000
Technology, communications, and travel	\$14,000
Contingency and working capital	\$12,000
Total	\$150,000

These are planning estimates and will change as products, partnerships, and pilots take shape. The organizational foundation line includes the fiscal sponsor's fee, and books and curriculum cover three published editions of *Move Toward the Shark*, the start of the fourth, and their teacher resources. A detailed line-item budget and quarterly plan are available in the Year 1 Budget and Work Plan. The guiding principle is to invest in proving impact before investing heavily in infrastructure.

14. Operating Cost Structure

As OLI grows, expenses fall into four areas.

Organizational infrastructure: legal, accounting, governance, insurance, technology, compliance, administration, communications, and fundraising.

Educational product development: writing, editing, illustration, curriculum development, scientific review, design, media, teacher resources, student materials, and digital content.

Program delivery: books, classroom materials, Education Fellows, school programs, travel, events, educator training, and experiential education.

People: program coordination, educational expertise, administration, development, communications, contractors, and eventually full-time staff.

OLI will start lean, relying on founder involvement, Education Fellows, contractors, partnerships, and limited staff. Fixed costs will grow only as demonstrated demand justifies them.

15. Revenue Model and Income Sources

OLI is a mission-driven organization with a diversified funding model. Philanthropic capital establishes the Institute, creates the educational intellectual property, funds the pilots, and provides programs to communities that could not otherwise afford them. Over time, we intend to develop earned-income streams that carry a growing share of operations. Revenue for its own sake is not the goal. The goal is financial resilience that supports lasting educational impact.

The long-term model combines philanthropy, grants, partnerships, and earned income.

Individual and major donors. Individuals can support general operations or designated initiatives such as books, schools, Fellows, underserved communities, curriculum, and experiential programs. Recurring donors can eventually provide a predictable base of support.

Foundations and grants. Relevant categories include education, STEM, ocean literacy, youth development, environmental education, workforce development, career readiness, experiential learning, teacher development, and community resilience.

Corporate partnerships. Corporate partners can sponsor specific, measurable initiatives: a student, a classroom, a school, an Education Fellow, a book series, an ocean careers program, or a regional OLI initiative. Natural alignment exists with maritime, technology, engineering, tourism, hospitality, insurance, biotechnology, logistics, and outdoor industries.

Book sales. The age-specific book portfolio can earn revenue while advancing the mission. Distribution channels include consumers, schools, libraries, museums, aquariums, educational distributors, online retailers, and sponsored school distribution.

Curriculum and educational products. Teacher guides, classroom kits, workbooks, curriculum packages, digital lessons, project kits, career materials, and systems-thinking modules can all generate earned income.

School and district programs. OLI can eventually offer per-classroom, per-school, per-student, annual, or district-wide programs and licenses, with philanthropic support subsidizing schools that cannot pay.

Digital education and licensing. School, district, institutional, or family access can provide recurring revenue, and a digital asset built once can reach a much larger audience.

Speaking, workshops, and events. OLI-associated presentations, workshops, conferences, and corporate programs can produce both revenue and awareness.

Why philanthropy comes first

OLI is not designed on the assumption that philanthropy will carry the organization indefinitely. In the early years, though, it does something nothing else can: it provides risk capital for educational innovation. Founding supporters make it possible to develop curriculum, programs, technology, partnerships, and delivery models before those assets can earn meaningful income.

Once created, the assets are reusable. A book can reach thousands of students, and a curriculum can be taught again and again. A video can be watched anywhere in the world, and a trained Fellow can reach hundreds or thousands of young people. A digital lesson can reach additional students at very low incremental cost. That leverage changes the financial model from *raise money, spend money, raise more money* to:

**Capital → Build → Prove → Distribute → Earn → Reinvest → Scale
Impact**

Philanthropy provides the catalyst, partnership provides reach, earned income provides resilience, and education provides the return.

16. Three-Year Funding and Income Projection

The table below is a preliminary planning scenario and not a forecast of committed revenue. Actual results will depend on fundraising, grants, school adoption, book sales, sponsorships, partnerships, and pilot outcomes.

Income Source	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Founding and major donors	\$65,000	\$125,000	\$200,000
Foundations and grants	\$35,000	\$150,000	\$300,000
Corporate sponsorships	\$20,000	\$100,000	\$200,000
Individual and recurring donations	\$10,000	\$30,000	\$75,000
Book sales	\$5,000	\$30,000	\$75,000
Curriculum and products	\$2,500	\$20,000	\$50,000
School and district programs	\$2,500	\$20,000	\$50,000
Digital and licensing	\$0	\$5,000	\$25,000
Speaking, events, and other	\$10,000	\$20,000	\$25,000
Total	\$150,000	\$500,000	\$1,000,000

The mix is expected to shift as OLI matures. Contributed and philanthropic income is roughly 87% of the total in Year 1, 81% in Year 2, and 78% in Year 3, with earned and program income making up the balance. Over the longer term, we want to grow earned and recurring income while preserving philanthropic funding for innovation, access, underserved communities, and expansion.

17. Three-Year Development Plan

Year 1 — Prove the model (\$150,000). Establish OLI as a fiscally sponsored project. Publish the first editions of Move Toward the Shark (15–18, 11–14, and 7–10) and initial curriculum. Recruit the first Education Fellows. Establish school partnerships and pilot the 11–14 curriculum. Measure results and set baseline cost and impact metrics.

Year 2 — Expand the model (\$500,000). Incorporate OLI as an independent nonprofit and transition from fiscal sponsorship. Publish the 3–6 edition. Increase the number of participating schools. Expand the book portfolio and curriculum. Grow the Fellows network. Develop corporate and institutional partnerships. Add digital content. Establish regional operating capability.

Year 3 — Scale the model (\$1,000,000). Expand geographically and broaden the educational offerings. Build institutional distribution and strengthen digital delivery. Add staff where the work justifies it. Establish regional programs and pursue larger school-system partnerships, working toward a repeatable national model.

18. Longer-Term Financial Direction

The first three years are about proving, refining, and expanding the model. Years four and five offer the chance for greater scale and financial resilience. One illustrative scenario looks like this:

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Funding/revenue	\$150K	\$500K	\$1.0M	\$1.75M	\$2.5M
Program/operating deployment	\$150K	\$500K	\$1.0M	\$1.60M	\$2.25M
Reserve/surplus	—	—	—	\$150K	\$250K

Years four and five are directional targets and are not forecasts. Growth should follow demonstrated demand and measurable educational impact, and OLI should not grow simply for the sake of growing.

19. Building Financial Resilience

A mature OLI should not depend too heavily on any single donor, grant, company, school system, or product. A diversified portfolio might eventually look something like this:

Source	Approximate share
Foundations and grants	25–35%
Major and individual giving	20–30%
Corporate partnerships	15–20%
Educational products and programs	15–25%
Digital, licensing, events, and other	5–15%

The exact mix will come from operating experience. The reasoning is straightforward. If a grant ends, programs continue. If product sales dip, school programs carry on. If a corporate sponsor shifts its priorities, the organization stays viable. Financial resilience supports educational resilience.

20. Measuring Impact

OLI should be accountable for outcomes, beyond the materials it produces and the money it raises. We will track five categories.

- **Reach:** students reached, schools and teachers participating, Fellows trained, communities served.
- **Learning:** growth across the five Ocean IQ dimensions, including changes in ocean knowledge, understanding of system relationships, correction of common misconceptions, and awareness of ocean careers.
- **Engagement:** books distributed, curriculum participation, student projects completed, digital engagement, educator retention.
- **Action:** student action plans, school and community ocean projects, career exploration, participation in experiential learning.
- **Financial and operational efficiency:** cost per student, classroom, school, and Fellow; students reached per Fellow; program delivery cost; earned-income percentage; donor retention; program renewal rates.

Learning outcomes will be measured through the Ocean IQ assessment approach: age-appropriate pre- and post-program measures across the five dimensions, developed with Education Fellows and educational evaluation advisors and refined during the Year 1 pilots. Ocean IQ will not be presented as a validated measure until pilot evidence supports it. We intend to report results publicly, including the

ones that fall short of expectations. Saying that education occurred is not enough. OLI needs to be able to show it.

21. Key Risks and How We Manage Them

Any early-stage organization carries risk, and donors should see ours plainly.

Risk	How we address it
Fundraising falls short of targets	Capital is deployed in stages against milestones. Scope scales to funds raised, and fixed costs are added only as demand justifies them.
Pilots show weaker learning outcomes than expected	Pilots are designed for learning. We will revise the materials before expanding and will report results honestly.
Slow school adoption	Materials are built for teachers first, aligned to standards, and easy to use. Early pilots are offered at low or no cost.
Dependence on the founder	The curriculum is documented, the Fellows network is built for regional delivery, and the advisory board and governance structure provide continuity.
Scientific inaccuracy	All content goes through scientific review before release.
Child safety	Fellows are screened and trained before working with students, and programs follow school and partner safeguarding policies.
Reliance on a single funding source	Income is deliberately diversified across the categories described in Section 19.
Transition from fiscal sponsorship	Sponsorship terms define ownership of funds and intellectual property from the start, so the move to independent nonprofit status in Year 2 is planned, not improvised.

22. Capital as a Force Multiplier

Donors should be able to see what their capital produced, beyond where it was spent. The illustrative sponsorship units below show how that could work:

Level	What it could support
\$50	Educational materials for students
\$500	A classroom experience
\$2,500	A school-level initiative
\$10,000	A multi-school or Education Fellow initiative
\$25,000	Development or deployment of a significant educational program
\$50,000+	A regional, curriculum, technology, or major partnership initiative

These amounts are illustrative and will be validated through pilot programs before they become formal sponsorship levels. The relationship we want to make transparent runs from capital to educational capacity, to students, to learning, and finally to action. They describe what individual program gifts can support once programs are running, and are separate from the founding commitment levels in the Founding Partnership Opportunities document.

23. Partnership Opportunities

OLI is looking for founding partners, and each type of partner contributes something different.

Philanthropic partners (individuals, family and charitable foundations, donor-advised funds) fund educational development, organizational capacity, innovation, and school access.

Educational partners (schools, districts, educators, universities) help develop, pilot, evaluate, and distribute programs.

Scientific partners (scientists, researchers, universities, aquariums, marine organizations) strengthen scientific accuracy and expose students to real research.

Corporate partners can sponsor schools, Fellows, educational materials, technology, career programs, and regional initiatives.

Media and technology partners help turn ocean science into compelling video, interactive learning, visualization, and storytelling.

Ocean partners (aquariums, research institutions, conservation and diving organizations, museums, maritime organizations, field operators) bring expertise and experiential opportunities.

24. A Different Kind of Return

OLI's principal return is educational and social. It shows up in students who understand something they did not understand before, in teachers who have better resources, and in children who discover careers they never knew existed. It shows up in young people who replace a misconception with knowledge and learn how interconnected systems work, and in communities that gain a greater awareness of the ocean. Eventually it shows up in adults who make decisions about oceans, businesses, infrastructure, technology, and resources with a deeper grasp of the systems involved.

Some investments produce financial capital. Education produces human capital. Ocean literacy can produce a generation better prepared to understand and steward one of humanity's most important systems.

25. The Founding Opportunity

OLI is at an unusual stage. It is early enough that founding partners can shape what it becomes. The books are being conceived, the curricula designed, and the Fellows model developed. School partnerships can still be established, scientific relationships formed, and measurement systems built correctly from the beginning.

This is an opportunity to help build the institution, beyond sponsoring an existing program. Founding support can underwrite a student, a classroom, a book, a school, an Education Fellow, a community, a curriculum, a digital experience, or a regional program. It can also fund the infrastructure that makes all of those possible.

26. The Long-Term Vision

Picture a child who meets an Ocean Literacy Institute book at five. At eight, that child joins an OLI classroom activity. At eleven, an Education Fellow brings an ocean scientist into the class. At fourteen, the student investigates a real ocean systems problem. At sixteen, they discover an ocean technology career, and at seventeen they complete a systems-thinking project on an actual ocean challenge.

At eighteen, that young person leaves school understanding something fundamental:

The ocean is not somewhere else.

It is connected to the air we breathe, the food we eat, the products we buy, the economy we participate in, the technology we build, the infrastructure we depend on, and the communities where we live. It is connected to the future we share.

That is the generation the Ocean Literacy Institute intends to help create.

Ocean Literacy Institute

Understand the Ocean. Understand Our World.

FOUNDING DEVELOPMENT TARGETS

Year 1: \$150,000 — Prove the Model

Year 2: \$500,000 — Expand the Model

Year 3: \$1,000,000 — Scale the Model

We invite donors, foundations, educators, scientists, universities, businesses, ocean organizations, and community leaders to help build the Ocean Literacy Institute. The opportunity goes beyond teaching children about the ocean. It is a chance to change how the next generation understands it.