

# SCIENCE ADVENTURE SCHOOL



UNIVERSITIES UNITED

SAS is an outdoor science school carefully designed to combat educational, health, economic, and social issues specific to WV. As an orientation program with a focus on experiential education, our program fosters a brighter future for our students and our state.

## PARTNERS



ADVENTURE WV



## WEBSITE



SCIENCE ADVENTURE SCHOOL.WVU.EDU

## WHAT IS SAS

- SAS is a 4-day, 3-night program that is offered at the beginning of 6th grade when students are meeting new classmates & teachers for the first time.
- Schools attend SAS with as many students as they'd like. Each school is divided into groups of fifteen students & one trusted adult (typically a teacher) from the school plus two SAS guides.
- All participants stay in tents, yurts, or cabins & forfeit cell phones upon arrival.
- Each group stays together throughout the week as they rotate through three content areas (below).
- A peak experience on the last day allows for groups to engage in one final challenge together to celebrate everything they've accomplished throughout the week!

## WHAT MAKES SAS UNIQUE

- SAS is the first program of its kind in the nation. The data-driven combination of orientation programs, outdoor & experiential education, & hands-on STEM lessons yields powerful results.
- It is top priority that SAS is accessible to all students.
- Our positive youth development lessons were designed specifically to address 6th grade & the issues students will encounter as they advance through life.
- STEM & environmental education lessons develop foundational science skills & encourage curiosity. This acts as a gateway to more engagement with academics.
- Each content area is integrated to employ different pedagogical techniques, adventure activities, & environments to explore.
- By having teachers be a part of each group, SAS develops the school community to insure students have support when facing difficult situations.

## HOW SAS WORKS

- On arrival day, we focus on cultivating positive & supportive team environments & start building strong bonds amongst students & between students & teachers. Even our games & activities are designed to reinforce group development & build confidence.
- Days two & three are instructional days. Students engage with innovative lessons that link STEM to adventure sports or environmental curriculum designed to inspire inquiry, curiosity, & wonder.
- In the evenings, students have fireside style discussions where they are guided through a daily reflection & dive deep into talking about important positive youth development topics.
- Experiences are processed to connect what we learn back to life at home & at school & to reflect on how special our home in WV really is.

## SAS CONTENT AREAS

### Positive Youth Development

Sense of Place Grit & Perseverance  
Positive Self-talk Handling Failure



### STEM Education

Cycling Archery  
Paddling Climbing  
Zip Lining

### Environmental Education

Wetlands Freshwater Ecosystems  
Forest Ecology Wildlife Soil Science



## IMPACTS SINCE 2019



14

Counties

43

Schools

285

Teachers

3,271

Students

106,308

Hours of Instruction

# SCIENCE ADVENTURE SCHOOL



West Virginia University

BRAD AND ALYS SMITH OUTDOOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COLLABORATIVE

## PROGRAM EVALUATION

Yearly evaluation shows that SAS is having a significant impact on students. Research in 2023 showed an increase in the following after the SAS experience.

- Interest in STEM
- Interest in STEM careers
- Grit and Perseverance
- Sense of Belonging to their school communities
- Social Confidence
- Desire to spend more time outside and be active

School personnel who attended SAS report higher classroom engagement and interest, and measurable impact on students needing additional support.

## ECONOMIC IMPACT ON WV

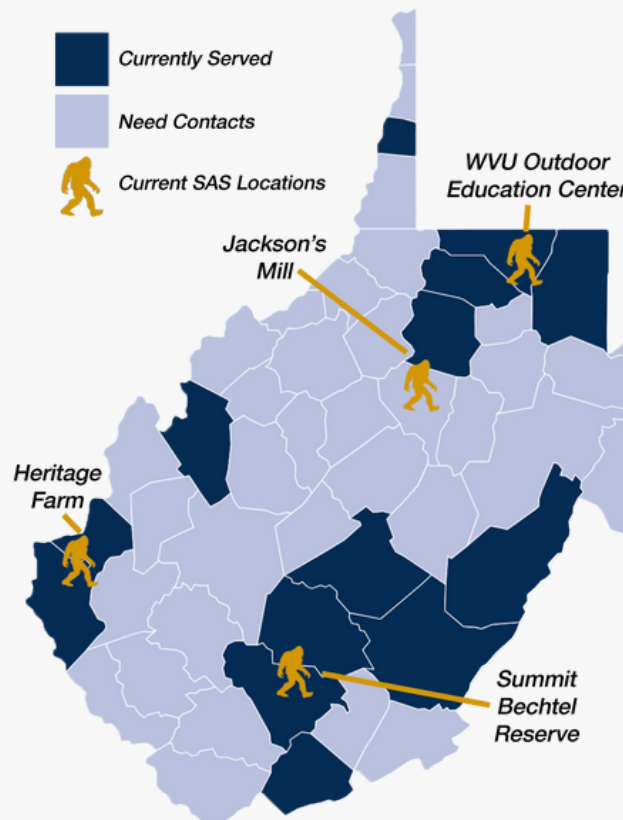
Another important outcome of SAS is the significant impact our program has on the state economy. The WVU Bureau of Business and Economic Research, one of WV's most reliable and rigorous sources for economic research and analysis, has reported our program's impacts which include:

In Fall 2024, SAS will serve 1500 students. Considering a conservative 5% increase in high school graduation and college-going rates, *JUST* this year's cohort will:

- Return \$3.5M to the state of WV annually (\$140M over 40 years)
- Create 12 jobs per year (223 over 40 years)
- Return \$35 to state economy per year for each \$1 invested in the program

Our goal is to serve every 6th grade student in WV annually (est. 19,500 kids per cohort). At scale, the career-long economic impact of one cohort will be over \$1.4 billion, 1500 jobs, and a \$127 return on \$1 investment.

\*Please reach out to us for the complete study



## OUR VISION:

- Serve every 6th grader in the state
- Provide multiple touchpoints throughout middle and high school
- Open more locations around the state to increase access

## SEE SAS IN ACTION



“Science Adventure School is important because it helps students grow and experience new things, engages students in hands-on activities, and gives students a chance to be responsible for themselves. It is a place where students learn by doing rather than learn by listening, so students are more engaged and successful. I hope that more students from the Mountain State have the opportunity to see themselves as leaders, as intelligent, and as capable of attaining their goals.” - 2023 Teacher Participant

## CONTACT

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