

Brittany O'Brian

My Career as an Earth Scientist

Being an Earth Science Teacher at Bay Shore Middle School is such a great career. Not only do I get to stay current with all the changes and discoveries made in this particular field of science, but also I get to share it with 400 enthusiastic 8th grade students!

After attending college and majoring in science, I realized that I wanted to be able to continue to learn and also decided that I had a calling to be a teacher. I went to graduate school to get my master's degree in education and was fortunate to be able to take the position of earth science teacher at the Bay Shore Middle School. Each year I spend my summers on a different research site. One year I went on a geology dig in Colorado and found over 500 different types of rock and stone. Another year I studied astrology in Washington State and researched stars in a newly found galaxy. This past summer, I visited the National Laboratory in Texas and worked with nuclear physicists that were splitting atoms.

Our school year is from early in September to the end of June. This can be a very long time. I break the course down over the year, starting with astronomy and end with geology. I start with astronomy, as it is "far out" and bring it back as close to home as possible by the end of the school year ending with the ground beneath our feet. Labs are done two days a week in an extra session. The kids enjoy working with each other and discovering new and exciting facts about the earth and stars. Sometimes they get a bit carried away and sometimes we have some accidents, but even when something "bad" happens, I am able to turn it into a learning experience. There are a lot of diversified students in the Bay Shore Middle School, from different economic and cultural backgrounds. Dealing with 13 and 14 year old kids also makes this a very challenging job sometimes.

I keep up on my studies during the year by attending graduate courses at a local college. This lets me learn about new developments in specific areas and continues to let me stay on top of my field. There are so many changes in our world, it is important to stay current.

I'm glad I decided to become an Earth Science teacher and be able to share all of the "elements" of our world with our future.