

Mariana is 25. She lives in Longmont, CO. Mariana teaches 7th and 8th-grade humanities at a public charter school. On the weekends she loves spending time outdoors. Mariana is a bit tired of teaching at her current school. She is looking for ways to bridge her passion and her profession.

Mariana stumbles upon an article mentioning Teton Science Schools. “Teton” — she love the outdoors. “Science” — hmmm, not so much into that. “Schools” — education is what she does! With some quick Google research, Mariana lands on the first words on our website:

*“Teton Science Schools (TSS) inspires curiosity, engagement and leadership through transformative place-based education. For nearly 15,000 learners per year, our place-based approach increases engagement, learning and community impact. TSS programs include classroom education, field education and educator development.”*

Sounds interesting though she’s not quite sure what “place-based education” is, though it sounds effective. Instead....imagine these as the first words greeting her when she lands on our website:

***“Every day, we learn through the world around us. When we dig into the soil and discover the story of an ecosystem. When we open up to the people and the communities whose stories are part of our own. When we journey beyond our comfort zone and gain a new understanding of ourselves — and of our world.***

***These are the experiences that teach us most because they reach us most deeply. And these are the experiences at the heart of Teton Science Schools for more than 50 years.***

***Learning is in our nature. In the classroom, in the community, and in the wild, Teton Science Schools creates authentic educational experiences for 15,000 learners and leaders every year — the kind of experiences that bring you closer to the people and places all around you, deepen your understanding, and give you clarity and courage to make change in your world.”***

Bam! That *brand anthem* hits home. While Mariana may still be left with many questions, she feels it in her bones. Upon learning more, she thinks about...

- A Masters degree with TSS.
- Bringing her students to TSS.
- TSS professional development at her school.
- Really...she wants to work here!

As TSS educators, we know what place-based education (PBE) means, what good PBE looks like in practice, and why it is better for students. Teton Science Schools is defined by and built around PBE. That works well for an internal audience. It may work well for professionals in the field. How many times have you been asked by a prospective or current summer camp or independent school parent, “what is place-based education?” For most external audiences, the term is conceptual and abstract.

The three-paragraph *brand anthem* is not something we expect people to memorize. While we will use the specific language on our website, we don’t expect people to adopt the exact language. Instead, we want individuals (faculty, parents, TSS champions) to adopt the concepts, ideas, and feelings from the brand anthem that they weave into their own words to communicate TSS and our impact.

An *animating idea* captures the essence of what we do in language that is personal and experiential. It is a simple, memorable concept, that captures place-based education. It is language faculty, parents, and community members can use to describe our impact and what we do.

***Experience your world. Understand your world. Change your world for the better.***

In three short sentences, an outside audience feels what place-based education is and can do. You'll notice a common theme throughout all of our branding content is a focus on our external audience. As I explained last week, the *TSS Framework* is still our internal foundation to guide and structure our work. It is designed for educators and TSS employees. The *TSS mission* remains our organizational foundation. It is a governing statement that directs TSS direction and decision making.