

DRAFT MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Student, Environmental Literacy Planning, Sustainable Schools

Estimated Percent Complete: 60%

OUTCOMES:

Student Outcome: Continually increase students' age-appropriate understanding of the watershed through participation in teacher-supported, meaningful watershed educational experiences and rigorous, inquiry-based instruction, with a target of at least one meaningful watershed educational experience in elementary, middle and high school depending on available resources.

Sustainable Schools Outcome: Continually increase the number of schools in the region that reduce the impact of their buildings and grounds on their local watershed, environment and human health through best practices, including student-led protection and restoration projects.

Environmental Literacy Planning Outcome: Each participating Bay jurisdiction should develop a comprehensive and systemic approach to environmental literacy for all students in the region that includes policies, practices and voluntary metrics that support the environmental literacy Goals and Outcomes of this Agreement.

FACTORS INFLUENCING

- **State-level advocacy for environmental literacy-** States often lack an organized base of support to advance important policy initiatives as well as high level agency support for environmental literacy
- **Support of Local Education Agencies-** Education priorities are largely determined at the local level and may not mirror state priorities. MWEEs and sustainable school practices are often not included in established accountability mechanisms between state and local education agencies.
- **Education Reform-** Efforts to support shifts in teaching required by education reforms (ex. STEM common core, NGSS) pose on-going challenges to systemic approaches to environmental education.
- **Funding to support student experiences and school projects-** Funding is limited for support for sustainable school initiatives, student projects, teacher professional development, and transportation.
- **Culture Disconnected from Nature-** Budget cuts and testing mandates can result in schools perpetuating the disconnect from nature by limiting recess, scaling back off-site field experiences, and restricting the use of school grounds for teaching.

Sustainable School Specific Factors Influencing

- **Decision making authority-** many facets of school sustainability rest with disparate departments and individuals within a school division or individual school. These different groups often not coordinated within a jurisdiction.
- **Underrepresented stakeholders-** architects, school nurses, building managers, and others are traditionally underrepresented in discussions about "Green" schools.

GAPS

- Several states conducted formal needs assessments to help guide the work on the State level
- The results of a 2014-2015 survey will help the states and Chesapeake Bay Program to better understand the current status of local environmental literacy efforts across the watershed, including the geographic distribution of MWEE and sustainable school implementation by local education agencies. This will inform the priorities of the Workgroup and revisions to the management strategy.

MANAGEMENT APPROACHES

Students

- Promote sustained professional development
- Promote, develop, and implement MWEEs with educators, local education agencies, school administrators, and third party providers
- Communicate information about educational resources and funding opportunities
- Support a network of environmental education providers, including PD opportunities, on research-based practices and scientific & environmental information
- Work with state and local education and natural resource agencies to ensure that rigorous science and environment-related content is effectively represented in the Standards of Learning and the Curriculum Frameworks, and that agency and provider educational-support materials are fully aligned with the intent of the standards
- Develop and promote student opportunities to pursue leadership & enrichment programs that support understanding of environmental issues and solutions
- Support programs that provide authentic experiences to support STEM, Next Generation Science Standards or other rigorous science standards, and related disciplines to improve career and college readiness

Sustainable Schools

- Promote and strengthen "sustainable school" certification and recognition programs consistent with high-quality, objective, and agreed-upon criteria such as the U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon School program
- Broaden stakeholder engagement to include focus on health and nutrition, indoor air quality, chemicals, pest management, and other issues that might adversely affect health at schools
- Promote, develop, and/or disseminate needs assessments, training, technical resources, and promotional materials for "sustainable school" stakeholders
- Identify and promote the use of best management practices at school sites

Environmental Literacy Planning

- Identify and advocate for the local and state resources necessary for all graduates to achieve science, citizenship, and environmental literacy
- Support the development and implementation of clearly-defined, attainable objectives necessary for all students to achieve science, citizenship, and environmental literacy by graduation
- Promote the implementation of the Environmental Literacy Indicator Tool (ELIT) and related data visualization tools to assess progress
- Disseminate information to state formal and informal education stakeholders on the policies, programs, and practices that promote science, citizenship, and environmental literacy
- Maintain an up-to-date suite of definitions and best practices documents
- Maintain the Chesapeake Bay Program Education Workgroup and related state workgroups to oversee implementation of the Environmental Literacy Management Strategy
- Ensure the implementation of Environmental Literacy outcomes include a focus on diverse and underserved students with an emphasis on career and college readiness and STEM