

Directive 18-X:

**Strengthening Partnerships with State Departments of Education and School Districts  
to Increase Student Environmental Literacy**

The future well-being of North America's largest and most productive estuary, the Chesapeake Bay, its thousands of tributaries, and its 64,000 square miles of watershed will soon rest in the hands of its youth. We acknowledge our duty to impart to these young people—almost three million strong in kindergarten through 12th grade—a sense of individual responsibility and our hope that they develop the skills to form a personal ethic regarding the natural world.

As we approach 20 years since the signing of the first Education Directive, we recognize that States, local school districts, and partners have made tremendous progress in establishing curriculum, policies, and model programs that advance environmental literacy. In order to meet the Environmental Literacy goal and outcomes of the 2014 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement, our focus must now shift to using this success as a foundation for encouraging and supporting systemic implementation within the 405 school districts that fall within the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Embedding student Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences and related environmental literacy efforts into the local curriculum and operating practices of a school district helps to ensure that every student in that district has equitable access to this powerful approach to teaching and learning.

Because State Departments of Education are charged with setting expectations, encouraging innovation, and overseeing accountability for school districts and schools, their leadership is essential for creating the broad change envisioned by the Environmental Literacy Goal, and they must be formally recognized and integrated into the Chesapeake Bay Program.

THEREFORE, WE COMMIT to the following actions for those jurisdictions that have indicated support for the Environmental Literacy goal and outcomes:

***Formally Convening Leaders from State Departments of Education:*** We direct that every two years the Principals' Staff Committee will convene an Education Summit with State Superintendents of Education to discuss progress towards meeting the Environmental Literacy goal and outcomes. These meetings should also include leadership from state natural resource agencies, U.S. Department of Education, NOAA, U.S. EPA, national and regional nonprofit organizations, institutions of higher education, local education agencies, Chesapeake Bay Commission, and the Chesapeake Bay Program Education Workgroup.

***Providing Assistance to School Districts:*** We encourage State Departments of Education and other partners to support school districts in implementing policies and programs that advance environmental literacy, including providing recognition, technical assistance, and financial support to the extent possible.

***Maintaining State Working Groups:*** We commit to convening interagency state working groups focused on environmental literacy implementation that is led or co-led by the State Department of Education. Each group will work to further jurisdictional policies and programs and to champion the Environmental Literacy goal and outcomes of the Watershed Agreement. Each interagency education group will provide recommendations to the state about advancing environmental literacy and will report on progress and problems to its Department of Education, beginning in 2019. The interagency group in each jurisdiction should include as members at least:

- Representatives of the state education, environment, agriculture, and natural resource agencies,
- Representatives from local school districts,
- Representatives of state and local nonprofit organizations involved in environmental or informal education,
- The Chair or their designate from the Chesapeake Bay Program Education Workgroup, and
- Representatives of higher education and the private sector focused on improving pre-service teacher preparation, providing training for in-service teachers, ensuring adequate career pathways, and/or improving sustainability efforts on campuses.

***Monitoring and Reporting Progress:*** We encourage State Departments of Education to work with the Chesapeake Bay Program to collect standardized data and information from local school districts related to implementing the Environmental Literacy outcomes of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement. State and school district level information will be available to state managers to help direct resources towards high priorities. Collated state and regional information will be submitted to the Management Board as part of the biennial Strategy Review System and used to update metrics for Chesapeake Progress.

*Date*

CHESAPEAKE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL