# ELIT 2024

This is a fillable version of all questions in the 2024 ELIT survey of school districts.  We recommend using this document to prepare your responses in advance, and then come back to the survey to enter the answers.

If your district has previously responded to past ELIT surveys (2022, 2019, and/or 2017), you can find your district's past responses here: https://www.chesapeakebay.net/who/publications-archive/education_workgroup

- Search for documents labeled "ELIT Response Summaries" and your state's abbreviation

- 2022 reports include responses from the 2022 ELIT

- 2019 reports included responses from the 2019 and 2017 ELIT

This can help you update and verify the accuracy of past responses, rather than starting from scratch.

If you have any difficulty finding your district's past responses or with answering the questions in the ELIT, email our evaluation support team for help at: ELIT@jsickler.net.

We're here to help!

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LEA-Type On behalf of which type of local education agency are you responding? (select one)

☐ Charter school(s)

☐ Public school district

☐ Private school

☐ Other - please describe _____

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This is a volunteer survey. The purpose of the Chesapeake Bay Program's Environmental Literacy Indicator Tool (ELIT) is to help local and state schools systems collect important information that will help advance the implementation of environmental education efforts in schools in the mid-Atlantic region.

This tool, the data collected, and related efforts supporting environmental education in the region are in direct support of the Environmental Literacy Goal and Outcomes of the new Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement (signed 6/19/14).

**Environmental Literacy Goal**: Enable every student in the region to graduate with the knowledge and skills to act responsibly to protect and restore their local watershed.

**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.

**Student Outcome:** Continually increase students' age-appropriate understanding of the watershed through participation in teacher-supported, meaningful watershed educational experiences (MWEE Definition) 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.

The underlying principles of the outcomes and the resulting elements of this tool are founded on research-based best practices in the field of environmental education. The results from these data collection efforts will provide valuable information to states and the Chesapeake Bay Program Education Workgroup about how best to support local efforts to create and implement comprehensive strategies to

support student environmental literacy. It will also be used by major funding partners, including the NOAA Bay Watershed Education and Training (B-WET) Program and the Chesapeake Bay Trust, to inform funding priorities and decisions. Therefore, accurate reports of both accomplishments and gaps are important.

Please complete the five sections of the Environmental Literacy Indicator Tool:
Section I:  Environmental Literacy Planning
Section II:  Student Participation in Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences (MWEEs)
Section III:  Environmental Education Improvement Efforts
Section IV:  Feedback on ELIT

If you have questions about this tool, please contact:
Shannon Sprague, Co-Chair
Chesapeake Bay Program Education Workgroup
NOAA Chesapeake Bay Office
shannon.sprague@noaa.gov
410.267.5664
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Please complete this contact information before you begin completing the ELIT survey.    Please select your state from the drop-down list below:

- [ ] Delaware
- [ ] District of Columbia
- [ ] Maryland
- [ ] Pennsylvania
- [ ] Virginia
- [ ] West Virginia


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Please select your school district or local education agency (LEA) from the dropdown list.

[DROP DOWN LIST WITH ALL PUBLIC LEAS IN YOUR STATE]

You selected Other for school district. Please specify the name of your school district:

_____

JobTitle What is your primary job title/responsibility?

(please select the title that most closely matches your job)

☐ District-level superintendent

☐ District-level assistant superintendent

☐ District-level director of curriculum/instruction/education

☐ District-level curriculum supervisor/coordinator

☐ District-level STEM supervisor/coordinator

☐ District-level business administrator

☐ School principal

☐ School assistant principal

☐ Classroom teacher

☐ Other, please describe: _____

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**Please remember that you are completing the ELIT on behalf of a school district, not just one school.**


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Does your LEA have a staff lead or team responsible for coordinating sustainable schools efforts?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ I don't know

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Section1: **Environmental Literacy Planning**

*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.*

State departments of education and local education agencies play an important role in establishing expectations and guidelines, and providing support for the development and implementation of environmental education programs within their schools. To ensure that every student in the region graduates with the knowledge and skills to act responsibly to protect and restore their local watershed as called for in the Chesapeake Watershed Agreement, environmental education should be embedded into the local curriculum and Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences (MWEE Definition) and should occur at least once during each level of instruction (elementary, middle, and high school).

In the development of plans and the delivery of programs, local education agencies can also benefit from partnerships with environmental education organizations, natural resource agencies, universities, businesses, and other organizations that have a wealth of applicable products and services as well as a cadre of scientific and professional experts that can complement the classroom teacher's strengths and heighten the impact of environmental instruction both in the classroom and in the field.

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Section 1-2 The following questions are intended to help assess the current capacity of your school division/local education agency (LEA) to implement a comprehensive and systemic approach to environmental education.

**Please review the following elements (a-f) and, using the scale below, make a determination about your LEA's capacity to address them.**

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a. An established program leader for environmental education (providing effective, sustained and system leadership). This need not be a full-time position.

☐ Not in Place

☐ Fully in Place: Program leader is in place to design, implement, and/or monitor EE program

Comments?

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b. Environmental education is infused into appropriate disciplinary areas within the curriculum.

☐ Not in Place

☐ Partially in Place: EE is represented in some LEA curricula (science, social studies, math, reading, etc.) or initiatives (STEM, Service Learning, etc.)

☐ Fully in Place: EE is fully embedded in the curriculum across all relevant PK-12 LEA curricula and initiatives

Comments?

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c. Regular communication among staff responsible for environmental education curriculum and program implementation

☐     Not in Place

☐     Partially in Place: Appropriate staff meet periodically and/or share information about environmental education curriculum and programs

☐     Fully in Place: Appropriate staff meet regularly to design, implement, and/or monitor environmental education curriculum and programming for students

Comments?

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d. A support system in place that enables teachers and administrators to engage in high quality professional development in content knowledge, instructional materials, and methodology related to environmental education

☐     Not in Place

☐     Partially in Place: PD in environmental education is offered periodically to teachers and/or administrators

☐     Fully in Place:  PD in environmental education is provided regularly for all relevant teachers and administrators

Comments?

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e. A documented plan to ensure opportunities for all students to engage in meaningful watershed educational experiences (MWEEs) at the elementary, middle and high school levels

☐ Not in Place

☐ Partially in Place: LEA has a plan to provide MWEEs in one or two grade bands (elementary, middle, and high)

☐ Fully in Place:  LEA has a plan to provide MWEEs at least once in each grade band (elementary, middle, and high)

Comments?

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f. Established community partnerships for delivery of environmental education, including implementation of MWEEs

☐ Not in Place

☐ Partially in Place: Partners are offering environmental education programs in schools, but these are not coordinated with the LEA

☐ Fully in Place:  Partners are working with LEA to coordinate delivery of environmental education programs in support of a LEA environmental education plan or priorities

Comments?

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Section 2: **Student Participation in Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences**

*Environmental Literacy 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.*

All four of these components are required for the experience to qualify as a Meaningful Watershed Educational Experience (MWEE) (for a more detailed definition, see MWEE Definition):

*Issue definition:*
Students identify an environmental question, problem, or issue and explore through background research and investigation.

*Outdoor field experiences:*
Students participate in one or more outdoor field experience sufficient to collect the data required for answering the research questions and informing student actions.

*Synthesis and conclusions:*
Students analyze and evaluate the results of their investigation of the issue and synthesize and communicate results and conclusions.

*Environmental Action projects:*
Students participate in an action project during which students take action to address environmental issues at the personal or societal level.

**On the following pages, please describe the participation of your school district's elementary, middle, and high school students in MWEEs in the 2023-2024 school year.**

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**Elementary School**
**For each grade level, please indicate student participation in MWEE programs during the 2023-2024 school year.**

*A complete MWEE program includes: 1) Issue Definition, 2) Outdoor Field Experience, 3) Synthesis and Conclusions, 4) Environmental Action Project (MWEE Definition)*

| | A system-wide MWEE is in place for students in this grade | Some schools or classes in this grade participate in MWEEs | No evidence that students in this grade participate in a MWEE |
|---|---|---|---|
| Kindergarten | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 1st grade | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 2nd grade | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 3rd grade | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 4th grade | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 5th grade | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

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*Display This Question:*
*If Elementary MWEE = A system-wide MWEE is in place for students in this grade*

Please describe the system-wide MWEE programs that are in place to reach all elementary school students (i.e., grade, description of unit, partnerships, etc.).

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We are interested in learning more about other environmental education programs that have the potential to be expanded into full, system-wide MWEEs. These may include existing field trips, sustainable school efforts, service learning programs, or MWEEs that are offered only to some students in the district.

Please describe any existing efforts that fit this description for elementary school students, including the grade level(s) reached, partners, and a short program description.

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**Middle School   For each grade level, please indicate student participation in MWEEs during the 2023-2024 school year.**
*A complete MWEE program includes: 1) Issue Definition, 2) Outdoor Field Experience, 3) Synthesis and Conclusions, 4) Environmental Action Project* (MWEE Definition)

|  | A system-wide MWEE is in place for students in this grade | Some schools or classes in this grade participate in MWEEs | No evidence that students in this grade participate in a MWEE |
|---|---|---|---|
| 6th grade | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 7th grade | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 8th grade | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

Please describe the system-wide MWEE programs that are in place to reach all middle school students (i.e., grade, description of unit, partnerships, etc.).

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MS-Sch-MWEE-Describe We are interested in learning more about other environmental education programs that have the potential to be expanded into full, system-wide MWEEs. These may include existing field trips, sustainable school efforts, service learning programs, or MWEEs that are offered only to some students in the district.

Please describe any existing efforts that fit this description for middle school students, including the grade level(s) reached, partners, and a short program description.

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**High School** **For each high school course, please indicate student participation in MWEEs during the 2023-2024 school year.**

*A complete MWEE program includes: 1) Issue Definition, 2) Outdoor Field Experience, 3) Synthesis and Conclusions, 4) Environmental Action Project* (MWEE Definition)

| | System-wide, a MWEE is included in this course | Some schools or classes include a MWEE in this course | No evidence that students in this course participate in a MWEE |
|---|:---:|:---:|:---:|
| Biology | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Chemistry | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Physics | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Earth Science or Environmental Science | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| History | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| U.S. Government / Civics | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Geography | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Economics | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Algebra I | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Geometry | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Algebra II | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Language Arts | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Literature | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Health and/or Physical Education | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Other Graduation Requirement Course (indicate course) | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

| | System-wide, a MWEE is included in this course | Some schools or classes include a MWEE in this course | No evidence that students in this course participate in a MWEE |
|---|---|---|---|
| Any AP Science course (indicate course) | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Any AP History course (indicate course) | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Any AP Math Course (indicate course) | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Any AP English course (indicate course) | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Other Elective course(s) (indicate course(s)) | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

Please indicate which of the following are required high school courses (i.e., every student must take the course in order to graduate).

- [ ] Biology
- [ ] Chemistry
- [ ] Physics
- [ ] Earth or Environmental Science
- [ ] History
- [ ] U.S. Government / Civics
- [ ] Geography
- [ ] Economics
- [ ] Algebra I
- [ ] Geometry
- [ ] Algebra II
- [ ] Language Arts
- [ ] Literature
- [ ] Health and/or Physical Education

Please describe the system-wide MWEE programs that are in place to reach all high school students (i.e., grade, description of unit, partnerships, etc.).

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We are interested in learning more about other environmental education programs that have the potential to be expanded into full, system-wide MWEEs. These may include existing field trips, sustainable school efforts, service learning programs, or MWEEs that are offered only to some students in the district.

Please describe any existing efforts that fit this description for high school students, including the grade level(s) reached, partners, and a short program description.

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**Section 3: Continuous Environmental Education Improvement Efforts**

What are the strongest elements of your environmental education program for students and/or teachers?
How do you know that this has been effective?

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What are the greatest challenges related to establishing/implementing your environmental education program?

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What are your highest priority needs for improving your environmental education programs? Please rate how much of a need each of the items below is for your LEA.

| | No need 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | High need 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Professional development (PD) / resources for facilitating student action | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| PD / resources for facilitating outdoor field experiences | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| PD / resources for using the schoolyard / community as an outdoor learning space | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| PD / resources for supporting student-centered issue investigations | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Interdisciplinary curriculum planning / writing and standards alignment | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Partnership with environmental education providers or other community resources | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Instructional technology use for indoor and outdoor investigations | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Support from Superintendent and / or Central Office departments | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Funding for transportation | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Funding for professional development | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Funding for programming and supplies | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Other (please describe) | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

Section 6**: Feedback on ELIT**

***NOTE: After you click "Next" on this screen, you will not be able to return to view any previous answers.**
**Do not move past this page until you are satisfied with all of your previous answers.***

On a scale from 1 to 10, how difficult or easy was it to provide the data for the ELIT survey overall?  (Where 1 means very difficult, and 10 means very easy)

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | |
| Very difficult | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Very easy |

Suggestions Do you have any suggestions for improving the design and/or functionality of the ELIT survey?

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## Questions for Delaware Districts

We are interested in whether school districts have explicitly included **global and/or locally relevant climate change topics** as requirements in their curriculum at any grade level(s) K-12. When we say climate change topics, we mean curriculum required to address topics similar to the following:

- Impacts of climate change (sea level rise, increasing temperatures, changes in species distribution, hazards/impacts on communities and people)

- Climate science (increasing levels of $CO_2$ in the atmosphere, Earth's energy balance)

- Policies and actions that support mitigation (reducing $CO_2$ emissions)

- Adaptation (actions of people and communities to live within changing conditions)

*Note: We know these topics may not be explicit foci in all districts' curriculum or ways of meeting your state's standards around Earth and Environmental Science. Current data is focused on state-level* policy *and* standards*, which may not be representative of districts' priorities. That is why we are interested in gathering this information.*

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In your district's curriculum, is teaching about specific climate change topics (see examples above) required at any grade level(s), K-12?

☐ Yes

☐ No or not currently

At which grade level(s) does the curriculum require instruction about climate change topics (see examples above)?

- [ ] Kindergarten
- [ ] 1
- [ ] 2
- [ ] 3
- [ ] 4
- [ ] 5
- [ ] 6
- [ ] 7
- [ ] 8
- [ ] 9
- [ ] 10
- [ ] 11
- [ ] 12

Does your district offer or provide professional development for teachers focused on supporting their ability to teach about climate change topics (see list above)?

- [ ] Yes, this type of PD is offered or sponsored by the district.

- [ ] Not at the district level; but we are aware of schools/systems in our district that do support such PD for their teachers.

- [ ] No, and we are not aware of whether or not this is happening at the individual school level.

- [ ] It's complicated. Please provide further context/detail:
  _____

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Which grade bands is PD about teaching climate change topics offered to?
(Check all that apply)

☐ Elementary school teachers

☐ Middle school teachers

☐ High school teachers

☐ Any/all grade level teachers

# Questions for Maryland Districts

Does your system maintain an environmental literacy plan?

☐ Yes

☐ Maybe / I'm not sure

☐ No

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*Display This Question:*

*If Does your system maintain an environmental literacy plan? = Yes*

How often do you update your environmental literacy plan?

☐ Every year

☐ Every 2-3 years

☐ Every 4-5 years

☐ More than 5 years

☐ We have no plans to update it

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*Display This Question:*

*If Does your system maintain an environmental literacy plan? = Yes*


Are you willing to share your environmental literacy plan?
If yes:

- If it's available online, please copy/paste the link in the space below

- If it's not available online, please enter the email for someone who could share it and the state will be in touch

If no: simply enter "no"

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Does your system have a sustainable schools plan?

☐ Yes

☐ Maybe / I'm not sure

☐ No

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Are you willing to share your sustainable schools plan?

If yes:

- If it's available online, please copy/paste the link in the space below

- If it's not available online, please enter the email for someone who could share it and the state will be in touch

If no: simply enter "no"

_____

Would your system be willing to develop a sustainable schools plan if assistance/guidance is provided?

☐ Definitely yes

☐ Probably yes

☐ Might or might not

☐ Probably not

☐ Definitely not

Please provide any additional information about environmental literacy, climate education, or school sustainability that you would like to share.

(Examples could include describing professional learning on sustainable schools or environmental literacy plans, etc.).

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What planning tool(s) is/are your LEA utilizing the PA ELI Planning template as a mechanism to integrate MWEE or Meaningful Environmental Literacy Experiences (MELE) inquiry practices into your LEA's culture and curriculum?
Select any that apply.

☐ MWEE Framework/ Environmental Literacy Model (ELM)

☐ PA Environmental Literacy Plan template for LEA's

☐ U.S. ED Green Ribbon School/Green Strides

☐ PLT Project Green Schools

☐ National Wildlife Federation EcoSchools

☐ Green Schools Alliance

☐ NGO organizations/consortiums (e.g. Women for a Healthy Environment or PA Green & Health Schools Partnership)

☐ PA Comprehensive Plan

☐ Other (please list): _____

☐ ⊗None

What professional development needs do you have? Rank from 1 to 10 with 1 being the most important.

_____ Watersheds and Wetlands

_____ Renewable and Nonrenewable Resources

_____ Environmental Health

_____ Agriculture and Society

_____ Integrated Pest Management

_____ Ecosystems and their Interactions

_____ Threatened, Endangered and Extinct Species

_____ Humans and the Environment

_____ Environmental Laws and Regulations

_____ Other (list)


What incentives are helpful for participation in professional development? Rank from 1 to 7 with 1 being the most important.

_____ Act 48 Credits

_____ Location of PD

_____ Stipends

_____ District wide support

_____ Reimbursement for substitutes

_____ Reimbursement for travel

_____ Funding support

_____ Other (list)

What do you feel should be the first actions taken by environmental education providers and/or school districts to better prioritize environmental literacy?

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What environmental education providers has your district worked with in the past 5 years (check all that apply)?

- ☐ Cacapon Institute
- ☐ Department of Agriculture
- ☐ Eastern Panhandle Conservation District
- ☐ Experience Learning
- ☐ NASA Globe
- ☐ Potomac Valley Audubon Society
- ☐ Trout Unlimited
- ☐ West Virginia University Extension
- ☐ Wind Dance Farm & Earth Education
- ☐ Other (please list): _____

What incentives are most helpful to encourage participation in professional development? Rank from 1 to 8 with 1 being most important.

_____ Act 48 Credits

_____ Location of PD

_____ Stipends

_____ District wide support

_____ Reimbursement for substitutes

_____ Reimbursement for travel

_____ Funding support

_____ Other (list) _____

Does your current professional development plan include teacher training focused on environmental concepts and/or outdoor learning experiences?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ I'm not sure

[Only ask if yes to Q1]

Does your current professional development include teacher training on environmental concepts and outdoor activities using a cross-curricular/interdisciplinary approach?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ I'm not sure

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**EVERYONE**

THANK YOU for completing this survey! Please click on the SUBMIT button below to complete the survey. After you submit the survey, you will see a summary of your entered responses. Click on the Adobe symbol to download a PDF and save a copy of your data.