**Mid-Atlantic Environmental Literacy Workgroup Meeting**

**Minutes**

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**Fish Shack, 410 Severn Avenue, Annapolis, MD**

**November 14, 2014**

**Purpose:** *To inform development of collaborative management strategies to advance Environmental Literacy goal and outcomes.*

**November 14**

**10:00** **WELCOME & REVIEW AGENDA**

***Kevin Schabow, NOAA Chesapeake Bay Office gave an Overview of current efforts of the Environmental Workgroup activities since the last workgroup meeting focusing on the signing of the new watershed agreement and the ongoing management strategy development. He then gave a brief overview of the agenda.***

* **New Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement- Since the last meeting all watershed jurisdictions committed to the Goal of Environmental Literacy with new agreement signed in June. PA, WV, MD, VA, DC, DE signed on to the outcomes, indicating they will be contributing to work in the Management Strategy.**
  + Goal teams have one year to develop a Management Strategy on how we will work towards these goals as a partnership, how they will be monitored and changed. Management Strategies include a 2-year work plan, and will be implemented using adaptive management, which allows for thoughtful revisions.
  + Management Strategies will capture what work is currently underway, what gaps exist, and what needs to be done to get to achieve the outcomes. The Education Workgroup will assess these needs by thinking of what work could be done collectively to achieve these outcomes, and then what needs to happen in each jurisdiction to accomplish that work.
  + Management Strategy implementation will engage everyone from jurisdictions, including local governments/local education agencies, non-profits, private partners, and jurisdictions that have not signed on to the extent that they would like to be engaged.
  + The agreement and commitments from the governors provides leverage to promote ELIT work in the states.
  + Important dates for the development of Management Strategies include: December 15 – Draft strategies due, March 10 – Drafts released for public review, April 20- Final strategies reviewed by Management Board

**10:15 MWEE UPDATE**

***Shannon walked the Workgroup through the new definition of the MWEE***

**•** A research retreat was held two-years ago with experts in the field of education research in order to incorporate new research into the MWEE definition

* + Action projects, student led inquiry, local context, and student reflection throughout MWEE process were gaps identified by the retreat that have been incorporated into the new definition

**•** The MWEE supports the Student Outcome

**•** Theteacher supported section was removed because the workgroup believed that focus of this document should be the students

• The new definition includes 4 essential MWEE elements- issue investigation, outdoor field experience, action project, synthesis and conclusion

Comments

• Group agreed that since the MWEE definition as is, is a policy document, a potential MS action could be to develop a communications document for more diverse audiences i.e. environmental educators, and teachers

• Group also agreed that another potential MS action is to develop a document that outlines the cross-walk between MWEE’s and NGSS / other standards

**10:45 ENVIRONMENTAL LITERACY INDICATOR TOOL (ELIT)**

***Shannon walked through the tool, referencing that she, Gary, and Jamie had presented it to 20 of the 24 Maryland LEAs earlier in the week and had received some feedback to improve survey implementation in Maryland.***

* ELIT tracking tool serves as the voluntary metrics described in the Environmental Literacy Planning outcome to track progress towards the Environmental Literacy
* ELIT tracking tool can also be modified to include state specific questions, Maryland has already included their own questions for their required tracking efforts
* The tool was Beta tested in 10 LEAs across the jurisdictions and their comments were integrated into the final product
* 14-15 school year will serve as the baseline.
* The Final report on the LEA comments are available online <http://www.chesapeakebay.net/S=0/calendar/event/21540/>

Comments

* Laura and others suggested that we ask what their practices are even if they are not a part of a certification programs, but stay away from estimations, would be subjective, but may be good to be able to target schools that are close to a certification level to bring them up to speed to become a sustainable school, helping to reach the outcome of “continually increase” the number of sustainable schools
* Tom also asked if there could be percentages added to the student MWEE section. It was pointed out that while the group would like to be able to collect this data and earlier iterations of the tool included this distinction, the pilot resulted in these being taken out with LEAs reporting that that level of detail was hard to gather from schools and they were uncomfortable providing estimates.
* Tom Ackerman suggested that the middle column on the student MWEE data in ELIT be changed to reference “class or school” rather than “students” as this is how student MWEEs are delivered. This change was made.

Question: For each grade level please indicate student participation in a MWEE for the 2014-2015 school year

* Headers: Students in this grade participated in a system wide MWEE

Evidence of some schools or classes in this grade participated in a MWEE

No evidence of student s at this level participating in a MWEE

* Group suggested that we call out Environmental Science and AP Environmental as high school level courses that may be completing the MWEE and have a “other” option to fill in other courses

**11:30 SUSTAINABLE SCHOOLS OUTCOME**

***Kevin Schabow introduced the sustainable schools outcome and the reference the current work being conducted by the sustainable schools team.***

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 sustainable schools team has decided to define Sustainable Schools as schools that are working in at least two of the three Green Ribbon Schools pillar areas, but must doing work in the third pillar to provide environmental education
* In October we held a Sustainable Schools meeting, which called together appointed members from sustainable schools community in all jurisdictions. This group then drafted some actions that could be used in the Management Strategy
* Discussion: What actions should the Education Workgroup take (e.g. funding, guidance documents, convening meetings, outreach to decision makers) to promote and support implementation of sustainable schools?
* Actions-
  + Develop coordinated efforts between different entities that oversee the different silos of sustainable schools – regional, state, and local levels – create/support a forum at the state level
    - Develop coordinated communication campaigns
  + Development of a summary of state laws/guidance document
    - Create a policy/regulation guidance book along with best management practices
    - Prioritize sustainable schools guidance with in LEAs and develop a way to pass this guidance information down to the school building level
    - Award mini grants at the local level to create student programming around sustainable schools guidance
    - Provide portable MWEEs to do with schools around best practices (example: kits to measure particulates due to idling)
    - Increase coordination in Sustainable schools- increase and diversify participation in the sustainable schools group
      * Identifying the crosswalk between STEM, MWEEs, and Sustainable Schools
      * Bring further awareness to EPA regulations, and put forth model schools for sustainable schools
  + From these actions we derived Management Approaches – Overarching categories to group action items into for the development of the two-year work plan component of the Management strategy
    - Communicate/Outreach on Tools, Programs, and Certification Programs (targeted at LEA and school building level)
    - Increase Coordination (State and Regional Level)
    - Incentivize/Support local implementation

**12:00 LUNCH**

**1:00 STUDENT OUTCOME**

***Shannon Sprague gave an overview of the Student outcome and reviewed regional and state management strategy actions derived at the Leadership retreat***

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.

Discussion: What actions should the Education Workgroup take (e.g. funding, guidance documents, outreach to decision makers) to promote and support implementation of teacher supported MWEEs?

* Actions-
  + Integrating MWEE with NGSS / C3, NGSS, develop models on how they can be cross walked in the curriculum
    - Develop models of activities that bring STEM together with MWEE in the technology and real world application, maybe NOAA data, schools could connect with local industries to use their data or technology
  + Develop multiple MWEE explanation documents for difference audiences
  + Implement Professional Development to train teachers in MWEEs implementation
    - Pre-service
    - In service
    - Non-formals
  + From these actions we derived Management Approaches – Overarching categories to group action items into for the development of the two-year work plan component of the Management strategy
  + Communication/Supporting Materials for MWEE
  + Models
  + Crosswalk/Alignment

**1:45 ENVIRONMENTAL LITERACY PLANNING OUTCOME**

***Julie Walker introduced the Environmental literacy planning outcome and reviewed regional and state management strategy actions derived at the Leadership retreat***

* 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.
* Discussion: What actions should the Education Workgroup take (e.g. funding, convening meetings, outreach to decision makers) to promote and support state environmental literacy planning?
* Actions-
* Organize an Education Leadership meeting at the next Summit; maybe inviting Governors staff
* Make a presentation to the School Boards on the economic savings of Sustainable Schools
* Create a PowerPoint presentation and facilitate participation in key meetings; FAQs; Training session on how to deliver the PowerPoint
* Increase LEA communication, maybe set up a meeting, or have ELIT planning as a theme as the summit
* Engage superintendents of education, natural resource agencies, state school boards, Governors’ education contacts?
* From these actions we derived Management Approaches – Overarching categories to group action items into for the development of the two-year work plan component of the Management strategy
* Increase communication and support for Environmental Literacy
* Convene heads of education

Next Steps

* GIT Funds available to get LEAs to fill out ELIT, what do jurisdictions need to promote LEAs to fill out the ELIT
  + Funding goes to states- not necessarily a state entity- DOE or natural resources, could also be a non-profit
  + RFP- through CBT, being pulled together, and will be released soon
* Dec 15th – Drafts due to Management Board
* January- Drafts will be reviewed by workgroup
* Feb.2- meeting with the leadership group to get feedback on the final drafts

**2:30 WRAP UP AND NEXT STEPS**

**3:00 ADJOURN**