

Chesapeake Bay Program Education Initiative (98-1)

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 youngest citizens. These citizens, three and a half million strong in pre-kindergarten through 12th grade, are tomorrow's leaders. They also will be the stewards of the Baywatershed's precious resources including its fish, crabs and oysters, forests and wetlands.

As the Chesapeake Bay Program partnership, we acknowledge our responsibility to ensure that these future caretakers graduate with the knowledge and skills to act responsibly to protect and restore their local watershed and the broader Chesapeake watershed ecosystem ~~receive the knowledge and understanding necessary for them to make informed and intelligent decisions relative to their own actions and the actions of others who affect the Bay system~~. We acknowledge our duty to impart to these young people a sense of individual responsibility and our hope that they develop the skills to form a personal ethic regarding the natural world. Further, we acknowledge that the Chesapeake Bay, its rivers and its watershed provide an authentic, locally-relevant source of environmental information and data that should be used to help advance student learning skills and problem-solving abilities across the entire school curriculum.

~~Today, throughout the Chesapeake region, the Departments of Education and the many outstanding private environmental organizations in the region offer excellent programs that connect education and the environment. Examples include rigorous watershed, water resource and Bay-related learning standards in educational systems; professional development opportunities for teachers; opportunities for students to participate in Bay and other field experiences that reinforce academic learning standards; the use of high quality classroom materials that address the science, history, economics and cultural significance of our common resources; and voluntary student, teacher and citizen involvement in aquatic stewardship projects. Private environmental organizations in the Bay region also offer nationally-recognized training programs and curriculum.~~

The Environmental Literacy goal and outcomes of the 2014 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement establish the broad expectations for this shared work. Since this directive was initially set in place in 1998, States, local school districts, and partners have made tremendous progress in establishing curriculum, policies, and model programs that advance environmental literacy. Nevertheless, even with good policies and programs in place, we ~~still~~ recognize that there is a need to continue to more fully ~~embed~~connect the environmental education into formal/mainstream educational efforts. As the Bay Program, we want to forge this connection by creating stronger links between partners at all levels, connecting state and local education agencies with federal funding opportunities for environmental literacy activities, and encouraging the continued development of policies and programs that advance environmental literacy at the state and local level. ~~educators, resource managers, educational administrators, environmental policy makers, the scientific research community, schools, school districts, statewide education agencies, state and federal natural resource and environmental protection agencies, the~~

~~jurisdictions and environmental organizations in the region. We also want to foster opportunities to use actual data from monitoring and research activities as the basis for classroom and field education in our region's schools.~~

Finally, we recognize that while the educational community's tradition of independence is strongly held, there is an increased need today to engage in new partnerships to get the job done.

Therefore to further our commitments, the Chesapeake Bay Program will:

- ~~Invite~~ Encourage the State Departments of Education in each jurisdiction- Maryland, Virginia, Pennsylvania, Delaware, New York, and West Virginia and the District of Columbia- to become more active partners in the Bay Program.
 - Each Department of Education is encouraged to send senior level representatives to biennial Management Board meetings focused on progress towards meeting the Environmental Literacy outcomes of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement and quarterly Principal Staffing Committee meetings to discuss items of concern to their Governor.
 - Each Department of Education is encouraged to summarize annually, for its Chesapeake Executive Council member, ongoing educational programs in pre- kindergarten through 12th grade that support Chesapeake Bay watershed restoration and protection efforts beginning in 2017~~1999~~, prior to the Executive Council meeting.
 - Each Department of Education is encouraged to increase the involvement of students in educational programs which support Chesapeake Bay watershed restoration and protection efforts. Existing youth groups and forums should be involved and new groups created when necessary.
- Support an existing or newly-created interagency education group in each jurisdiction. Each jurisdiction's group will work to further its own programs and to champion the efforts, goals and objectives of the Chesapeake Bay Program. Each interagency education group will report annually on its progress and problems to its Department of Education, beginning in 2017~~1999~~. Each Department of Education should include the interagency group's annual report in its own annual report to the Executive Council. The interagency group in each jurisdiction should include as members at least:
 - A representative of the Chesapeake Bay Program
 - Representatives of the education, environment, agriculture and natural resource agencies
 - Teachers
 - Representatives of private nonprofit organizations involved in environmental or informal education
 - A representative of higher education
 - ~~Each interagency education group will report annually on its progress and problems to its Department of Education, beginning in 2017~~~~1999~~. ~~Each Department of Education should include the interagency group's annual report in its own annual report to the Executive Council.~~

- Convene an Education Summit of the leadership from State Education Departments of Education in each jurisdiction ~~four interagency education groups in 2017-1999~~ and every two years thereafter. The outcomes of the Education Summit will be reported to the Executive Council at its annual meeting. Education Summits should ~~also~~ include the leadership of State natural resource and environmental agencies, the U.S. Department of Education, NOAA, local education agency leaders, members of the Interagency education group cited above, and address progress and metrics towards meeting the Environmental Literacy goal and outcomes of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement, including (1) student meaningful watershed educational experiences for students in elementary, middle, and high school, (2) sustainable schools, and (3) policy and metrics to support environmental literacy. the following:
 - ~~Encouraging Chesapeake Bay Program partners, nonprofit organizations, higher education institutions, informal educational institutions and others engaged in environmental education to work in cooperation with the departments of education in the Bay region.~~
 - ~~Improving science achievement by students as measured by formal assessments in each jurisdiction.~~
 - ~~Sharing information and resources that use the Bay and its watershed as a source of locally relevant environmental information and data in school curricula.~~
 - ~~Packaging and distributing clearly interpreted data and information on the Internet and through other methods for teachers and students to learn more about the health of the Bay watershed and the overall restoration and protection effort.~~
 - ~~Reviewing teacher certification requirements and standards for environmental education in each state and the District of Columbia to determine how they include Chesapeake Bay restoration themes such as habitat protection and restoration, pollution prevention, the concept of watersheds and the role of the individual in the restoration effort. If these themes are not addressed, the Education Summit should explore how they could be incorporated into certification requirements and standards.~~
 - ~~Involving students and teachers in on-the-ground restoration projects including Chesapeake Bay Program efforts such as riparian forest buffer restoration and volunteer water quality monitoring.~~
 - ~~Providing more professional development opportunities related to environmental education for teachers and other education professionals.~~
 - ~~Highlighting success stories and other information on pilot programs for schools that more fully connect the environment to existing educational efforts in order to improve student academic performance and increase student involvement in voluntary stewardship activities.~~
- Maintain the ~~Reorganize the Chesapeake Bay Program's Communications Subcommittee into the Communications and Education Subcommittee and charge the subcommittee with coordinating the commitments outlined in this directive. To ensure coordination, the subcommittee will create an~~ Education Workgroup under the Citizen Stewardship Goal Implementation Team, which ~~that~~ should include representatives from

each of the four interagency education groups ~~and other and relevant federal agency representatives as appropriate. The Communications and Education Subcommittee also will encourage the addition of education department~~ federal, state, and local officials, teachers, and students ~~and to other Bay Program committees~~ where appropriate.