**2014 Mid-Atlantic Sustainable Schools Workshop**

**Minutes**

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**DAY 1 – “Painting the Local Picture”**

**Introductions: What do participants hope to gain from the meeting?**

*Attendees were asked to briefly mention what they wanted to accomplish over the two days. Responses varied, but regional collaboration and increasing the numbers of sustainable schools were reoccurring themes. Responses included:*

* Regional collaboration (3)
  + Determine how we can help one another and work together regionally
  + Collaborate, share ideas
  + How we can collaborate
* How to strengthen and increase the number of sustainable schools (2)
  + Ideas for how to get more schools involved in green schools programs
  + How to strengthen sustainable schools and learning
* Better understanding for what is going on at the state-level. Identify state-level needs so regional and national partners can provide resources and support.
* How to use this effort as model for other, future regional efforts – Center for Green Schools
* How to evaluate programs to identify weaknesses
* Learn about opportunities for K-12 teacher training – green schools training for teachers is important
* How to support/increase environmental literacy

**STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT & TIMELINE**

*Kevin Schabow, NOAA Chesapeake Bay Office, provided an overview of the Chesapeake Bay Program efforts to date under sustainable schools. The presentation is included in the attachments. Below are the highlights.*

* Chesapeake Bay Program (CBP) – NOAA is a part of the CBP a larger partnership of the state jurisdictions, federal agencies, and the Chesapeake Bay commission.
* The Bay agreement- signed in 2014, included an environmental literacy goal. Under that goal there are 3 outcomes including the sustainable schools outcome.
* What is a sustainable school? – largely based on the 3 pillars of U.S. Green Ribbon Schools
  + Buildings and grounds reduce environmental impact
  + Improves health and wellness
  + Provides environmental education to all students
* The next steps for the Bay program is to develop a management strategy for this outcome
  + This will specific state, federal, and non-profit actions that will address the outcome, as well as what we can do together
  + Drafts due in Feb, public comment March-April
* Huge opportunity to partner – collective impact (a model for large scale change) – it models different conditions that are necessary to achieve a greater collective goal.
  + We have a common agenda with the agreement, and green ribbon schools
  + Shared measurement- ELIT tracking tool
  + Communication- communication through the workgroup and sustainable schools
  + Funding- available funding to achieve goals
* The opportunity
  + We can facilitate
  + We can organize workshops
  + We can supply some funds
* Workshop structure
  + Hear from nat. level programs
  + Identify actions states and other could take
  + Discuss needs and areas where CBP could support jurisdictions
  + Explore

*A Q&A and general discussion session followed Kevin’s presentation. Here is a re-cap of that conversation:*

* General question’ how are management strategies designed? A: these are partnership level, and will have state specific components, but exactly what they look like in terms of layout is TBD
* Robin Sizemore noted that –there is no funding anticipated for these outcomes in West Virginia, but there could be funding for other CBP goal and outcomes
* Estelle Ruppert commended that there may be an opportunity to reach out to teaching colleges / universities to partner
* Shannon Sprague noted that while that is a good thought we have to make sure that their support would be at the k-12 level since this is the focus of the workgroup
* Robin Anglin asked what are other states doing when there entire state does not fit into the watershed.
* In response, Kevin Schabow commented that The Bay Program education workgroup is looking to support efforts regionally and state wide, promote sustainable schools throughout the mid-Atlantic. This is primarily because school division don’t follow watershed boundaries, so to be practical for state implementation sustainable school efforts need to work at a state-wide level.
* Robin Anglin noted that gif we could find a way to include sustainable schools objective into Next Generation Science Standard professional development this would make it more practical to implement and advance sustainable schools in West Virginia.

**National Level Sustainable Schools Programs Panel**

*Jamie Baxter of the Chesapeake Bay Trust facilitated a panel discussion with representatives from several national-level sustainable school programs. These included:*

* *Kim Martinez- National Wildlife Federation Eco Schools*
* *James McGirt-Project Learning Tree (PLT) Greenschools*
* *Jenny Wiedower -Center for Green Schools*
* *Andrea Falken-US Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools (GRS)*

*Each representative gave a brief opening statement about their program, followed by facilitated discussion. Note that in some areas specific responses from a particular panelist are captured. In other areas the comments were made during an option discussion and not attributed to one specific program or representative:*

* Eco-Schools: An important consideration for green schools programs is to create multiple pipelines for entry. For example, Eco Schools is tiered so that it engages schools where they are. The program creates a pipeline all the way to GRS.
* Project Learning Tree Green Schools:
  + Partnerships are important. State coordinators tap into local networks.
  + Program is student centered. Student anchored – must get students involved in leadership, students anchor PLT workshops/presentations.
  + Every investigation has a connection to home.
  + Trying to make green schools a point of entry into other PLT programs and into the EE realm.
* Center for Green Schools: Program builds on existing efforts and partnerships. Champions can be parents, students, educators, design team, community members, etc. Program considers all entry points for green school champions and how we can advance their work. Have K-12 networks that allow leaders to grow.
* U.S. Dept of Ed. Green Ribbon Schools: Engages states and federal agencies, not individual schools. Program aims to provide a coordinated definition to connect people/schools. Provides mechanism to get word out about practices and resources: communicate through social media, newsletter, and Green Strides best practices tour. Connections are facilitated through meetings. Green strides resources are being moved to a new, better organized website.

*How do you create interest in schools to participate in your program and, once they’re in the program, how do you keep them motivated?*

PLT Green Schools:

* Kansas model has a trifecta: PLT-Green Schools-Eco Schools. Benefits of multiple programs working together:
  + More options/program components may resonate with schools not currently involved.
  + Can apply to 3 levels of funding.
  + If schools complete 3 investigations in another program, it could take the place of a PLT investigation.
  + Collective use of resources to advance green schools in region.
* Need:
  + Succinct language about how to engage schools. Common language to get schools in the pipeline.

Center for Green Schools:

Have a number of networks to engage schools.

* + Network of school and district sustainability leaders.
  + Work with state legislators at state level.
  + Provide resources and technical expertise.
  + Share best practices.

Eco Schools:

* + Involve students. Have student audits.
  + Incorporate lessons into the curriculum: have thousands of lesson plans available by grade level and subject matter. Aligned to Next Gen science standards.
  + Looking at how a green school can serve as a context for teaching. Must use the building to teach kids, use real time data, problem solve and learn.

*In what ways does your program promote cross coordination between education, health, and facility efficiency in schools?*

PLT Greenschools

* + We need more data/studies such as the one that looked at the MD Green Schools program and showed a causal relationship between green schools programs and academic achievement.
  + Looking to this regional effort to help look at the connections between green schools programs and various outcomes (related to health, environment, academic achievement) to open more doors/get more schools involved.
  + University researchers: some are looking at patterns of sustainability leadership and how to cultivate. Difficult to analyze.
* Eco Schools:
  + Require a diverse team to be built from various areas including health, facilities, parents, etc.
  + Also look at who can reach out to the community and corporations for funding.
* USBGC Center for Green Schools: this is a good opportunity to work across region to better promote an integrated approach between health, facilities, and education. Good to create a regional model to share with others.
* GRS: there are good state models all over including: AL, CO, WA, FL, CA, MN, WI, KY, and NJ.
* Eco Schools:
  + Launching a new communication tool called Green STEM – using real data to teach.
  + EL is not an add-on. We need to create a way to engage kids in a meaningful way to solve real world problems. Need to integrate EL and sustainability practices into what teachers are already doing. Help them advance what they are doing with Next Gen and common core.

**General comments from panelist**

* Communication issue – frame sustainability/green school buildings as a logical way to teach STEM, social studies, literature.
* Efforts must be student driven: student leadership is key.
* Programs need to look at ways to document things teachers are already doing so as to not add on to their tasks/responsibilities.
* Tim Cole: Teachers/champions leave. Teachers must be paid additional money to develop sustainability curriculum. Rather than have a passionate teacher do this during the school year, introduce at curriculum level during the summer. Have programs conduct training to curriculum specialists so that it is introduced to all schools. Integration of doing projects as part of curriculum.
* Models for sustainability need to be at the LEA level in order to create lines of communication and common practices so that it’s easier to sustain. Need to have buy-in at the LEA level so schools aren’t spending so much time on the back end (e.g., garden gets mowed over, kids aren’t allowed to eat food out of school gardens – against school policy). WE need to bridge the gap from top to bottom.
* CO state research – identified conditions taking place at district level that helped them be successful (whole school sustainability framework). When there is a culture in place, we are more successful.
* Center for Green Schools resources – identified (at the national level) the actions and strategies that need to be in place to graduate “educating for sustainability”. What we can collectively do.
* GRS District sustainability awardees can also serve as model. Very interesting case studies. 2 big school districts in FL, WA.
* School sustainability programs must consider cultural competency - make sure all populations/cultures are included.

Take away: Efforts focused at the school district (LEA) level may have a greater impact than those focused at the individual school level.

**Results of Pre-Workshop Calls**

*Following lunch, Lorna Rosenberg, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Medessa Burian-University of Maryland Environmental Finance Center gave a presentation to discuss the results of the pre-workshop conference calls they held with representatives from each jurisdiction. The presentation with results is in the attachments.*

*Groups then broke out by jurisdiction to identify/refine a vision and explore how their jurisdiction or organization will implement the vision and contribute to the management strategy. Groups were asked to bin their actions under one of the three U.S. Green Ribbon School pillars if possible. Current gaps in efforts and resource/technical assistance/collaboration needs will be identified. Following this group work, jurisdictions reconvened for a report out.*

**Report Out Session:**

General Suggestions:

* Don’t use term “environmental health” – doesn’t speak to administrators
* Need better messaging/language.

Maryland

**Vision:** Stakeholders across agencies will work together to support policies, programs, training, and resources that create a safe, healthy environment for children to learn and live.

Pillar 1 and 3 are being well addressed. Pillar 2 needs more work – coordinating health programs is the greatest need.

Action Items:

* Specifically connect with the health side of things. Initiate discussions with the MD State School Health Council and look at Coordinated School Health Programs. Reduce/minimize duplication of efforts. Determine how priorities/goals of the MD State School Health Council may overlap with sustainable schools goals. Determine how we can all work together on overlapping goals.
* Advocate for a state level sustainability coordinator at MSDE. MSDE is the connector in almost all of what is happening in the state – most connected to children.
* Have the MD Partnership for Children in Nature lead coordination efforts across organizations to decrease duplication of efforts. Bring more players to the table.

Needs:

* Improved coordination.
* Funding to do priority work within education and health. Want to link achieving the CBP’s goal/outcomes with existing funding opportunities.

Pennsylvania

Vision: All schools in PA to be sustainable schools, where sustainable schools is the norm.

To do this, PA will work though the newly-forming PA Green and Healthy Schools Partnership (PA GHSP), a collaborative formed to promote healthy and high performing places of learning across the Commonwealth. This group has been coming together over the past year. The structure will include both an Executive Board and an Advisory Board. The collaborative already has five task forces working on action plans:

* Green schools programs (reviewing existing programs – is there one to adopt state wide)
* Research support
* Environmental impact
* Health and wellness
* Education

These task forces were formed out of a state-wide focus group held in October 2013 which brought together ~60 stakeholders from across the state. The group is collaborative and draws from many sectors including local, regional, state and federal partners.

Mission statement for the PA GHSP: The *PA Green & Healthy Schools Partnership is a collaborative effort formed to promote healthy and high performing places of learning across the Commonwealth.  Comprised of organizations and individuals focused on the health and efficiency of our public and private school buildings, as well as those who promote the curriculum that makes the vital sustainability connections in the classroom, this Partnership seeks to bring together a network of governmental agencies, non-profits and others who are committed to ensuring that all schools are healthy, environmentally friendly and cost efficient places of learning.*

EPA has provided capacity-building funding and has offered leadership training.

NOAA has funded some of the Education task force work.

Action steps:

* Continue developing and formalizing the PA Green and Healthy Schools Partnership.
* The Executive Leadership team will identify goals and action steps.
* The Advisory Committee will provide guidance and resources to the Partnership.
* The 5 Task Forces will identify goals and action steps in group meetings.
* The Partnership will approach EPA and EFC for facilitation and leadership training.
* The Partnership will approach NOAA for funding.

Needs:

* Technical assistance and information sharing:
  + Want research and support to be shared throughout the region.
  + Watershed is a natural boundary. State is a legislative boundary. Want to take the partnership to look up and out. Want to use the watershed and CBA as a learning opportunity. Expand what we are doing in the region to the rest of state.
  + Want to be able to say across state: if you want/need information on green schools, go to this group (i.e. Chesapeake Bay Program sustainable schools workgroup).

District of Columbia

Vision: Create a sustainable schools program that would use the Mayor’s Sustainable DC Plan as a guiding framework.

Sustainable DC plan divided into 7 areas – devise a program with more bite-sized portions (pieces aligned with other initiatives) for LEAs to do actions in schools. Framework was developed for EL plan. As part of the framework, we have sustainability initiatives. Use already developed language to create badges/pillars.

States that have gotten more schools involved have programs broken down into less intimidating pieces. Have different levels of success, so that schools can move on to the next level.

Action items:

* Create a “badge” program to incentivize LEAs using the Mayor’s Sustainable DC plan as a guiding framework as well as the newly developed environmental literacy framework.
* Identify agencies and potential champions (i.e. OSSE, DPR, DDOT, DDOE) to spearhead working groups for each pillar/badge (nature, food, water, etc.).
* Engage student population to help monitor and benchmark the badges and assess progress.
* Identify one school from each Ward to serve as a model school for others.

Virginia

Vision: A collaborative of interested governmental, non-profit, and other organizations which meet regularly focused on increasing the number of schools in the Commonwealth that reduce the impact of school buildings and grounds in their local and regional environment through the education, engagement and actions of students, staff and community.

The Virginia Naturally Program is an active school environmental awards program which may be expanded to include school facility efficiency and student/staff health and wellness and embrace a more step-by-step approach or a “collaborative green schools team” as referenced above, may develop a new/different program which builds school capacity for reducing impact and additionally awards schools of excellence

Action items:

* Establish a baseline for the number of schools that have 3rd party certifications (i.e. LEED, Green Globes, Energy Star, Eco-Schools, etc.)
* Pillar 1:
  + Determine how many school sites meet/exceed? the state code requirement for stormwater runoff.
  + Create a competition/awards program to encourage sustainable school activities.
  + Identify schools and school divisions that can serve as models/mentors for other schools.
* Pillar 2:
  + Establish a baseline of schools who…
    - practice IPM and sustainable cleaning practices
    - participate in No Child Left Inside
    - Farm to School
    - Utilize outdoor teaching gardens
* Pillar 3:
  + Identify and disseminate appropriate resources to increase awareness of the impact of environmental education through the VA office of Environmental Education/VA Naturally.
  + Statewide recognition of exemplary EE projects/programs (connect to awards/recognition in Pillars 1 and 2)
* *Medessa/Lorna: once baselines are established, what are the next steps?*

West Virginia

Vision: To develop a preK through post-secondary capacity building green schools program that provides the leadership, support, tools, and resources needed to foster a culture of sustainability within WV schools.

More engaged state leadership to support sustainable schools policies, programs, and resources.

Need : more engaged state, regional, and local leadership to support sustainable school policies, programs, and resources.

Foster culture of sustainability (create a desire to be a WV sustainable school) and providing assistance for schools to get there.

Action Items:

* Determine if current policies are being enforced. Are reporting processes already in place? Determine if there is anything that can be done about existing laws/policies not being enforced.
* Determine if available tools/programs are being used.
* Create MOU with Eco-Schools
* Engage PLT
* Create a newsletter to promote WV Sustainable Schools and sustainable schools issues to a broader audience. Determine how to best package and communicate school sustainability to the WV audience.
* Create school division awards: new schools vs. existing?
* Pillar 1:
  + Package and promote energy conservation through demonstrating cost savings
  + Engage DEP-REAP to increase school recycling?
  + Contact DOT about Safe Routes to School
* Pillar 2:
  + Identify players/who should be involved.
  + Engage school business officers.
  + Meeting with office of child nutrition.
  + Help Office of School Facilities promote IAQ Tools for Schools
  + Promote? Green cleaning through SBO??
  + Engage “Office of Healthy Schools” to…?
  + Engage WVSS to…?
* Pillar 3:
  + Approach PLT and Eco-Schools to gain easier access to lessons aligned with NextGen.
  + Create a directory of state environmental education resources. Brainstorm how to get schools on board and utilizing resources (e.g., conduct more teacher training, better communicate availability of resources).
  + Create a listserv to directly communicate with teachers and other school staff. Want facilities directors to see information about curriculum.

Needs:

* Funding
* Regional partners to serve as presenters – talk about IAQ or other topics of interest.
* Guidance on how to talk/communicate/engage leaders.

**DAY 2 – “Thinking Regionally”**

**Tools and Programs for Supporting Sustainable Schools**

*We explored the potential of several programs and initiatives that could support this effort regionally. This included presentations by:*

* *Lorna Rosenberg, EPA-Municipal Separate Storm Water System Program*
* *Laura Collard/Julie Dieguez/Karen Kelly Mullin-School Grounds for Learning*
* *Shannon Sprague, NOAA-Environmental Literacy Indicator Tool*
* *Cat Stylinksi-Mid Atlantic Sustainable Schools Field Scope*
* *Kim Martinez-Eco Schools USA Dashboard*

Kim Martinez-Eco Schools USA Dashboard

* Lesson plans, partners,
* Maps – to show density of ecoschool, gis mapping connects MD fieldscope and populates the ecoschools website
* Tiered level of awards – with different pathways
* Partnership with MAEOE to joint certification, avoids duplicate information
* You can add as many people as you want to a schools login page to populate data

Cat Stylinkski – UMD Center for Environmental Science, Mid-Atlantic Sustainable Schools Field Scope

* Tool can be used to report consolidate sustainable school efforts as well as promoting / sharing efforts, increases communication can help find partner, advisors
* Fieldscope is open to any school in the mid-Atlantic
* Fieldscope records school info, presence practices (yes/no) cumulative practices (current totals) Average practices, school awards/ grants, environmental edu practices
* Current work
  + Currently 26 schools entered initial data update every few years
  + webinars and call individual schools to help enter data –targeting green schools
* Website: sustainableschools.fieldscope.org
* Tools: map data, see exsisting data, graph data, enter your own data, and help
* You can make your own map and share it with others
* Can flag data for others to QC data

NOAA and MAEOE have been partners in effort. Purpose/uses:

1. Use to consolidate school efforts, repository of information
2. Promote and share efforts
3. Search for partners and advisors
4. Explore data set to understand extent and impact of sustainable schools

Upcoming webinar date: Dec 2, 4:30-5:25pm, contact: [cdoty@umces.edu](mailto:cdoty@umces.edu)

Shannon Sprague, NOAA-Environmental Literacy Indicator Tool (ELIT)

* What is ELIT? Indicator for the CBP watershed agreement , indicator is for environmental literacy planning, student, and sustainable schools outcome
* Feedback from pilot is being compiled- now data is recorded by grade band, and no longer asks about green ribbon schools
* Asks at the LEA level what their capacity is to achieve these goals
* ELIT will be used to track graduation requirements in MD. ELIT questions can be modified by state
* Today we’d like input on what schools need to have in place to meet the threshold criteria for “sustainable schools”
* Sustainable schools- will be a list of certification programs that will be included to be considered a sustainable school
* States can receive summary reports for the ELIT results in their states

Lorna Rosenberg, EPA-Municipal Separate Storm Water System Program

* Schools are a big contributor to the stormwater problem.
* School nutrient management plans should be in place for schools.
* Schools are located within municipalities with MS4 permits
* Some school districts have their own MS4 permits – 4 in VA.
* Schools sometimes hire a consultant to take care of this. EPA will instead do pollution prevention/provide compliance assistance. Want to engage and educate more. EPA will work with us and schools to do targeted trainings to school districts. Help them make connections with GI practices, etc.
* Towns will benefit from working with schools as towns are held responsible for fines.

Laura Collard/Julie Dieguez/Karen Kelly Mullin-School Grounds for Learning

* A new initiative funded by NOAA BWET
* Content- whole site planning, providing habitat for wildlife, improving WQ, supporting a healthy school environment, reducing environmental impact and cost
* Target audience- students, teachers, administers, facilities and maintenance
* Give information and training to develop school ground projects how to create lessons around them, and how to maintain sites.
* Multiple partners will be developing these resources – major collaboration makes it watershed applicable
* School grounds for learning online content
  + Mainly being housed on the Bay backpack website.
  + Resource and training website will be on the MAEOE website
  + Before, during, and Ongoing resources for involving students in different project levels
  + Basic structure is developed, but resources are being developed and built out by other collaborators
  + Attempting to be inclusive of the entire watershed, BMP are taken from multiple state and national certification programs, resources are being develop are from multiple stakeholders from varied regional backgrounds, case studies are from multiple states
  + Would like to extend the invitation to engage sustainable school partners / input
* Training
  + Collaboration between content and training
  + Trainings will include online resources, tutorials, face to face topic workshops
  + Audience- sustainable schools champions, school ground managers, admin. Facility planners, informal educators, classroom teachers.

*Following these presentations, the group was divided into four sections and rotated through facilitated break out areas focused on four topics:*

* *Sustainable School data collection visualizations (school-building level)*
* *Criteria for a sustainable schools in the ELIT*
* *Opportunities with the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) program*
* *Further discussion on School Grounds for Learning*

*Notes from those breakout sessions included:*

**Data Collection/Visualization:**

* Make sure schools get something out of data collection/tracking. Provide incentives.
* Have applications from certifications connected with tools.
* Need to streamline and reduce redundancy – create one database to use and pull from to decrease teacher/administrator burden.
* Need for schools to be able to showcase their data – have opportunity to plug into Facebook page and highlight what they are doing. See Eco-Schools dashboard as a model.

**Sustainable School Criteria for ELIT:**

* Identify programs associated with each Pillar.
* Lump what pillars each strategies fall under and being able to report on that. Ask does an LEA have a sustainability plan
* Questions have to be asked so that LEAs can answer, only ask questions that can be used to measure outcome?
* Goals: increase awareness and serve as a baseline / tracking tool for school system
* Have administrators download / view aggregate data onto fieldscope
* Does LEA have a comprehensive sustainability plan or policies in place that address components (environment, watershed, health?
  + Scale
    - Established
    - in development
    - Not established

**Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Opportunities:**

* In some cases school systems pay fees. Are there incentives in place for schools to help mitigate their fees?
* How can we use SWM facilities built on school grounds for learning?
* How could some of the EPA education and outreach dollars be used to support teacher PD and curriculum development to engage teachers and students in a more substantive way?
* Next steps: EPA R3 and Bay program will convene a small group of folks to nail down a way to do this regionally or at the state level. Create a management strategy for action – identify ways we can work together. Then provide findings/resources at the school level.

**School Grounds for Learning:**

* Build in metric for success
* Include videos
* Incorporate live Google chat – Earth Echo International has a format for schools. Ability to type in questions and get answers.

**Next Steps:**

* Leadership meeting on October 27-28 to look at sustainable schools outcome and EL activities.
* Full workgroup meeting scheduled for Nov 14 in Annapolis, 10-3pm to discuss management strategies.
* Draft management strategy due by Jan or Feb? Out for public review March 3-April 2. Final strategy due April 20.
* We will follow-up on the work that states want to do: what are you committed to doing, and how can the regional group support you?

Attendees were asked to provided their feedback about the workshop as a whole, general responses included:

* Made good connections and lots of “dot connecting”
* Presenting on Mid Atlantic efforts at the green schools national conference in Virginia Beach (March, 2015) is an opportunity for this group to reconvene
* Have a better understanding of programs that can make different connections
* Better educated in sustainable schools, excited about the regional collaboration
* Would like to increase audience even more, nurses, scientists, across the region. These workshops / trainings could be a good avenue for this