

MINUTES

Education Workgroup Conference Call

Wednesday, January 23, 2013

12:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.



Workgroup Member Action Items

- Please identify your availability for future Education Workgroup meetings via the following doodle polls:
 - Summer Meeting/Conference Call: <http://doodle.com/uzkm9c22kfmm66fk>
 - Education Summit: <http://www.doodle.com/tdz865qxqabzdi39>
 - Availability of venues in Annapolis, MD and at the National Conservation Training Center in Shepherdstown, WV are being solicited for this in-person meeting.
- Education Workgroup members who are interested in participating in targeted conversations and/or action teams about each of the following topics are encouraged to contact the designated representative listed below:
 - MWEE metric revisions and the development of a MWEE Program Capacity Assessment Tool – Contact: [Shannon Sprague](#)
 - The build-out of the Bay Backpack teacher resource website – Contact: [Sarah Brzezinski](#)
 - Green School certification comparison & potential standardization – Contact: [Kevin Schabow](#)
- Nominations for a new Education Workgroup co-chair are currently being accepted and should be submitted to [Sarah Brzezinski](#), [Shannon Sprague](#), or [Kevin Schabow](#).

Meeting Purpose

This meeting was convened to seek approval of updates to the Education Workgroup goal, identify actions needed to finalize metric revision and to review updates to the "Best Practices in Environmental Literacy" document.

Revision of the Education Workgroup Goal Statement and Metric

Following-up on discussions that were initiated at the November workshop, Workgroup leadership convened two meetings with a small team of volunteers to discuss a new goal statement and associated metrics for the education work of the Bay Program. The resulting suggestions, available in the [Draft Scoring Criteria for LEA Environmental Literacy Portfolios](#) document, were discussed with Education Workgroup members.

Based on the consensus of its member, the Education Workgroup goal was formally amended to state:

"Every student in the region graduates environmentally literate having participated in meaningful watershed educational experiences in elementary, middle, and high school that were supported by teachers who have received professional development in environmental education and schools that are models of environmental sustainability."

This revised goal statement is in line with the *Mid Atlantic Elementary and Secondary Environmental Literacy Strategy* and current state efforts. It will also be used to revise the MWEE metric. In support of the metric revision, the Education Workgroup is developing a MWEE Program Capacity Assessment Tool that would be distributed annually to local education agencies (e.g. school systems). This tool will assess the comprehensiveness of a school system's environmental literacy program and their ability to implement the program. The results will be used to determine the whether the system has a program in place that supports sustained MWEE implementation.

Key discussion topics regarding the metric revision included:

- Reporting frequency –MWEE reporting has traditionally been conducted on an annual basis. One of the recommendations the Chesapeake Bay Program’s Citizen Advisory Committee submitted to the Chesapeake Executive Council was the establishment of two year milestones for achieving the environmental literacy for all students in the watershed. This discussion centered around how transitioning to a biennial reporting cycle could reduce the burden on LEAs and would be consistent with EPA water quality reporting. However, it was also pointed out that the end of each school year is a natural termination point for data collection, that annual reporting can help keep reporting methodologies fresh in the minds of participants, and that it helps to raise the profile of the status of environmental literacy in the mid-Atlantic region.
- Virginia representatives supported the idea that the survey should be distributed through the office of each state governor, as it would help clarify the purpose of data collection and will give it some teeth. However Pennsylvania representatives commented that reporting directly to Chesapeake Bay Program staff is more efficient. Pennsylvania representatives also expressed concerns about getting the metric revision endorsed by the Office of the Governor in light of the current economic climate.
- Charter Schools – In Delaware and the District of Columbia (and possibly other jurisdictions), charter schools each count as their own LEA. This would make the Education Workgroup’s assessment of LEA environmental literacy capacity an indirect comparison; it is easy for one charter school to score 100% because it is a single school, but it would be much more difficult for an LEA that represents a large number of schools. Collecting the information is not the issue here, but there will need to be some sort of standardization/reconciliation of data to address this issue.
- Green Schools – General agreement was reached that a subsequent, targeted conversation about the possible standardization of green school program strengths and certifications should take place.
- The need for additional data – The MWEE Program Capacity Assessment Tool is being designed for completion at the LEA level. Some workgroup members expressed the desire for local reporting at the individual school level, but acknowledged the difficulties of conducting such a detailed analysis on a multi-state scale. The development of a voluntary tool to collect additional details on the status of environmental education at a more local level was proposed to supplement the results collected through the MWEE Program Capacity Assessment Tool.

State Department of Education Science Coordinators from MD, DE, PA, and VA and Education Workgroup members from DC, DE, MD, PA, VA and WV have all bought into this overarching methodology and have given consent for the further development of the MWEE Program Capacity Assessment Tool. Once the questions included in the assessment tool are finalized a rubric will be developed to provide the necessary definitions and any additional clarification needed to facilitate survey completion and standard data collection methods. If workgroup members have any additional questions or comments regarding this effort, they should be directed to [Shannon Sprague](#) or [Sarah Brzezinski](#).

Update on the Development of the "Best Practices in Environmental Literacy" Document

During this session, an updated version of the "Best Practices in Environmental Literacy" document was presented to Education Workgroup members. The revised document incorporates feedback received during a comment period and is available here: [Draft best practices in environmental literacy November 2012](#)

The "Best Practices in Environmental Literacy" document is being developed by the workgroup in recognition and support of the need to update and expand the definition of the Meaningful Watershed Educational Experience to include a broader set of to guidelines targeting professional development and sustainable schools. This also aligns more closely with the Mid Atlantic Environmental Literacy Strategy and expands the workgroup's focus beyond watershed education. The work of top researches and evaluators in the field of

environmental education was used to identify the research-based best practices that have been called out within the document. There are many practical applications for use of the "Best Practices in Environmental Literacy" document including, but not limited to use by:

- Workgroup members to revise the definition of the "Meaningful Watershed Educational Experience" and develop associated indicators and metrics
- Grant program managers Inform funding priorities
- State representatives to advance and improve environmental literacy planning
- Environmental education professional development providers to strengthen their programs,
- Formal and informal educators to improve their ability to provide students with high quality environmental education

Questions or comments regarding this document can be directed to [Kevin Schabow](#) or [Sarah Brzezinski](#).

Highlights from Partner Efforts

Status of NOAA's FY13 B-WET Chesapeake Competition:

Review panels for FY13 B-WET applications were held in late February and mid-March. Applicants will be notified in early April whether or not their proposal was recommended for funding by the panel. Contact [Kevin Schabow](#) if you have any questions.

Virginia Business Plan:

Through VREUC, Virginia representatives have been looking at transforming their business plan into an environmental literacy plan. They have been examining what has been accomplished, what has not, and what needs to be enhanced. Participating parties are looking at bringing a proposal before general assembly next fall. VREUC members are also going to be a key part of the Virginia Association of Elementary School Principals conference in June.

MAEOE Conference Reminder:

The 2013 MAEOE conference will be held from February 7-10 in Ocean City, Maryland. Workgroup members were invited to register to attend this event.

Education Workgroup Leadership Change:

It is with great regret that Education Workgroup leadership announced that Ann Regn is stepping down from her role as workgroup co-chair, effective immediately. Ann has been instrumental in furthering environmental education initiatives in Virginia and throughout the watershed and her leadership will be missed. Ann hopes to remain active in the Education Workgroup as an at-large representative from Virginia.

Nominations for a new Education Workgroup co-chair are currently being accepted and should be submitted to [Sarah Brzezinski](#), [Shannon Sprague](#), or [Kevin Schabow](#). Self-nominations will be accepted.

Meeting Attendance

Unfortunately, due to higher than usual member participation and conference line caller number restrictions, some members of the Workgroup were not able to participate in the call. At least one workgroup member from each jurisdiction, except Pennsylvania, were able to actively participate. Workgroup leadership convened a subsequent conference call with members of the Pennsylvania delegation to ensure that representatives from all jurisdictions were able to provide input on agenda topics. These minutes reflect discussions that took place on both conference calls. Comments on associated documents and workgroup

decisions will still be accepted from members who were unable to attend the conference call as a result of capacity issues. Meeting attendance is included below.

Education Workgroup Conference Call Participants:

- Tom Ackerman
- Stephen Barry
- Jamie Baxter
- Sarah Brzezinski
- Libby Campbell
- Susan Cox
- Gary Hedges
- Grace Manubay
- Barbara McGuinness
- Sarah McGuire
- Tonyea Mead
- Bart Merrick
- Karen Mullin
- Elen Murphy
- Melanie Parker
- Ashley Peebles
- Chris Petrone
- Bill Portlock
- Frank Rodgers
- Kevin Schabow
- Britt Slattery
- Shannon Sprague
- Ariel Trahan
- Kacey Wetzel
- Barb Young

Pennsylvania Conference Call Participants:

- David Bauman
- Jamie Baxter
- Sarah Brzezinski
- Pat Buckley
- Jack Farster
- Ann Faulds
- Estelle Ruppert
- Kevin Schabow
- Shannon Sprague