

Environmental Literacy

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Environmental Literacy

Students who are environmentally literate possess the knowledge, intellectual skills, attitudes, experience, and motivation to make and act upon responsible environmental decisions as individuals and members of their communities.

Partnership for Children in Nature, April 2009

Environmental Education Vision

- Every student graduate from high school environmentally literate
- Environmental literacy in Maryland includes both in-school and unstructured experiences for varied audiences
- Driven by:
 - Chesapeake Bay 2000 Agreement
 - Stewardship and community engagement
 - Provide meaningful Bay or stream outdoor experience for every school student in the watershed before graduation from high school
 - Experiences are investigative or project oriented
 - Code of Maryland Regulation 13A.04.17
 - Comprehensive multidisciplinary program of environmental education in every school system
 - Aligned with the Maryland Environmental Literacy Curriculum
 - Maryland Partnership for Children in Nature



Partners

- Maryland Partnership for Children in Nature
 - Formed through the Governor's Executive Order for Children in Nature (01.01.2008.06)
 - Leads are the Maryland State Department of Education and the Maryland Department of Natural Resources
 - *Multiple partners involved in planning and implementation*
 - Supported by:
 - Maryland No Child Left Inside Coalition
 - Chesapeake Bay Foundation
 - Chesapeake Bay Trust
 - Maryland Association for Environmental & Outdoor Education
 - *Green Schools and Schoolyard Habitat Programs*
 - *Environmental Education Certification Program*



Partnership Plan

- Develop and implement a plan to provide youth with structured and unstructured opportunities for play, outdoor recreation and scientific study
- Initiatives:
 - **Connecting communities and families to nature**
 - *Greening initiative to create nature play spaces within communities*
 - *Creation of trails to connect communities, parks and schools*
 - **Reaching out to underserved communities that have the least access to nature**
 - *Providing opportunities for at-risk youth to serve in the Conservation Job Corps in State parks and other public lands*
 - **Strengthening students' connection to nature during the school day**

LEA Implications

- PK-12 Program requirement, [COMAR 13A.04.17](#)
 - Eight Environmental Literacy Standards
 - Multidisciplinary
 - Infused with current curricular offerings
- High School Graduation Requirement, COMAR 13A.03.02
 - For students entering high school in 2011-2012
 - Complete a locally designed program of environmental literacy as set forth in COMAR 13A.04.17 that is approved by the State Superintendent of Schools
 - LEA Program certification process in place (next report due 2015)

Support for School Systems

- Environmental Literacy Standards infused within Maryland curricula
(<http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/programs/environment/tk>)
- Common Qualities of Effective Environmental Literacy Programs
(http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/NR/rdonlyres/EC79EC27-40BF-4017-894B-63A12A89A3D1/30766/CQEEEP__102011_.pdf)
- Environmental education briefings
- Environmental Literacy Summit and Regional Workshops
- Math-Science Partnership grants focused on environmental literacy



Environmental Literacy Summit

- Participants
 - Teams of educators from each LEA
 - Up to five people: teachers (ES, MS, HS) and one or two curriculum supervisors
- Outcomes
 - A working PK-12 Environmental Literacy plan for each LEA
 - A strategy for implementing the plan
- Format
 - Conference style: general sessions, concurrent breakouts, field experiences
 - Invited presenters include formal and non-formal educators (PK-20)
- Location and Dates
 - Rocky Gap Resort and nearby State and National Parks
 - August 5 – 9, 2012
 - <http://boe.allconet.org/spage.php?PageID=565>



Maryland Green Schools

Maryland Association for Environmental and Outdoor Education (MAEOE) oversees the school certification program

- Advocates a holistic integrated approach to learning that incorporates local environmental issue investigation and teacher professional development with environmental best practice methods and community stewardship
- 400+ (~20%) schools certified in Maryland
- All public and private schools in Maryland are eligible to apply

Supporting Programs

- Chesapeake Bay Trust
 - Environmental Literacy grants
 - Mini-grant program
- Student Service Learning
 - Environmental action projects
- NOAA B-WET Program
 - Maryland's Eastern Shore Initiative
 - *Focus on nine school systems*
 - *Funding for fulltime EE Specialist*
 - *Provide Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences (MWEEs) for students and teacher professional development*
- Correlation to America's Great Outdoors Initiative
- Governor O'Malley's Stream Restoration Challenge

Contact information

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Websites

- MSDE and E-Literacy:
www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/programs/environment
- Children In Nature: www.dnr.state.md.us/cin
- NCLI: www.cbf.org (follow No Child Left Inside link)