

Governor Martin O'Malley's  
**Maryland Partnership for Children in Nature**

**John R. Griffin, Chair**  
**Secretary, Maryland Department of Natural Resources**

**Nancy S. Grasmick, Chair**  
**State Superintendent of Schools,**  
**Maryland State Department of Education**

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**October 30, 2008**  
**Arlington Echo Outdoor Education Center**

**I Welcome and Introductions**

- Steve Barry gave a welcome and overview of Arlington Echo
- Introductions
- Change in venue for next meeting – MDE for next meeting

**II National Environmental Literacy Measurement Project – LeeAnn Hutchison,**  
Division of Instruction, Environmental Education Specialist, MSDE

- Overview Project ([click here to view presentation](#))
- NELA is a multi-year research project in three phases.
  - Phase I (completed)
  - Measured level of environmental literacy 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade
  - 48 schools participated
  - Measured affective, participation, skills of students and teachers.
  - Phase II (currently under way)
  - Phase III will be implemented in a few years

**III. Other State Environmental Literacy Plans – Gary Heath, Maryland No Child Left Inside Coalition**

- We've seen NAAEE document on Developing a State Environmental Literacy Plan
- 20 States are in various stages of developing an EL plan
- Most are led by environmental agencies
- Content standards are very much a focus
- Some states are looking at HS graduation requirements
- All states are expanding PD and looking at measurement
- Expanding after-school programming (NJ)
- using 21<sup>st</sup> Century funding
- School construction & renovation efforts
- Many states looking at policy similar to our EE by-law
- NAAEE has an EL chat area

Dr. Grasmick asked: What are 3-4 things MD should be focused on?

1. LEED standards – interagency school construction commission
2. Policy \* our by-laws needs to be revised & improved  
\* every year a student has to have an outdoor experience
3. high school graduation requirement

Secretary Griffin – Create a sub-pot of POS money to create these natural play areas

#### **IV. Children's Health and the Environment** – Dr. Lynn Goldman, Johns Hopkins University

- Children are very vulnerable to environmental conditions
- It is our responsibility to ensure they have a safe environment
- NIH is researching 100,000 children, from conception, and looking at asthma, ADHD, cancer, heart disease, etc. long-term study over growth of child (21 years)
- What is it about the environment that influences health
  1. Built environment – inside, in front of screens
  2. Natural environment
  3. Social environment

What do we know?

1. Amount of time kids spend outdoors is shrinking
2. Epidemic of Obesity
  - >10-15% are morbidly obese
3. Being outdoors reduces stress
  - >Kids with ADHD perform better in school when they have outdoor experiences
  - > Over-diagnosis of ADHD in which those kids would be fine on a farm or being physically active outdoors.

Jeff Horan asked: Will the NIH survey help Maryland garner some data?

- Looking at Baltimore and Montgomery Counties

Allen Hance asked: Is outdoors positively correlated to obesity?

- negatively correlated to kids spending time indoors

Dr. Grasmick asked: Will you look at single-sex schools?

- boys need more unstructured time (physical activity)

## **V. Community & Public Lands Report – Jackie Carrera & Tracy Bowen**

- meet weekly
- focused on defining the major issues surrounding
- their sub-workgroups
- collecting baseline data via survey and looking at existing research
- Nov 7, 2008 all-day meeting at CBF
- Having experts from MSDE & others review the plan in early December
- Brief report on each of the Sub-committees

## **VI Environmental Literacy Report**

- Thanks to NCLI Coalition for offer of help in developing survey, which may be implemented later in the process
- MD Association of Science Supervisor's Conference
  - The Partnership work was presented
  - Work session to identify places in the assessment that would help look at existing EL knowledge
- Include health, geography assessment
- Looking at costs associated with implementation
- Defined Environmental Literacy
- Identified areas where there was lack of representation i.e.: higher ed and Ag community
- Looked at how to measure environmental literacy

Dr. Grasmick: They are working with colleges and universities to look at the student identifier and follow them through their college career.

Becky Beecroft: Add assessment of teacher prep programs

EE Coordinators and Supervisors sent a letter to Dr. Grasmick regarding Executive Order

- Steve Barry summarized the points of the letter

## **VI. Other**

- Sarah Bodor, the writer that was hired to write the report to the Governor introduced herself.
- Next meeting will be at MDE on November 26<sup>th</sup>.
- There will be a roundtable session at the [MAEOE](#) conference regarding the Partnership. If you are interested in participating, please contact Elena.