



Maryland Outdoor Learning Partnership (OLP) Environmental and Climate Literacy Working Group Meeting Minutes

Date and Time: Thurs, Aug 7, 2025, 10:00 – 12:00

Attendees: Sarah Haines, Jemima Clark, Melanie Parker, Lee Derby, Jacquelyn Southerland, Zachary Carey, Stephanie Tuckfield, Dana McCauley, Karen Mullin, Anna Davis, Bart Merrick, Mark Scallion, Meg Boyd, Monica Wiedel-Lubinski, Joshua Emery, Coreen Weilminster

10:00 – 10:05 Welcome

Karen Mullin & Dana McCauley

- Update: Maryland UNITED Conference
 - o Potentially putting together an exhibit on Environmental Literacy for Administrators (Elementary and Secondary Principals)
 - o November 6-8th; Ashore in Ocean City

10:05 – 11:30 Recommendations Discussion

1. Update the State's Environmental Literacy Plan (ELP) and incorporate climate change education. [LINK](#) to template for recommendations for EL Plan

Feedback:

- Evaluated the components of the existing plans- what is the strength of that plan?
 - Utilize data from the E. Lit tool to inform school systems
 - Look at how OLP is structured with each of the agencies and reporting
 - More of an action then a recommendation but the recommendation would be to allow us to take the action
 - Update to include the beyond 2025 language
 - Update and expand the plan to incorporate environmental and climate literacy
 - Being intentional about timeline so its not forgotten after 10-15 years at a time
2. Promote local Safe and Healthy School Networks to foster robust community environmental literacy through the Community Schools Program.
<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/d4qu09bdhxocwq6o7fwuu/2025-OLP-Recommendation-and-Actions-Template.docx?rlkey=pzpgtdxfhulsiblby5gx9lrep&st=i5t0x72a&dl=0>
 - a. A way to create hyper-local networks for environmental literacy
 - b. Leveraging community schools to utilize opportunity for environmental literacy during and outside of school day
 - c. Health and community resources to increase environmental literacy
 - d. A few models of what it looks like

Feedback:

- Community schools have access to funds, but they do need the technical expertise (PD, community connections, how to engage more people)
- Applying for grants is burdensome
- Some schools do have funds but there may be such great need that they do need the funds
- Can this also be inclusive of Title I schools; building the communities and providing resources to underserved communities
- Clearly define funding vs resources
- Menu of program options needed (some during school/some out of school) then also the opportunities for grant funding
- There is a community liaison in the school is there to coordinate but adding small grant management can be tough to manage.
- Are there examples of community schools coordinators that can be highlighted?
- No bandwidth for grant programs- does the school apply or manage a grant? Or can a partner manage the grant?
- Could the recommendation be to include some direct guidance FROM the community schools/ comm school leadership as to what the needs are, and how comm partners can obtain funding through the Blueprint funds for these wraparound programs
- Broaden it to more of a network development for E. Lit in community schools- connecting surrounding partners to connect with schools (ie: dept of health)
- Create a menu of how this work align with already existing state priority? What are the criteria to enhance community engagement.
- Community schools can have agency based on what the communities need; not a top down approach; alot of different structures on how they engage with the students and families.
- Sounds like a unique mechanism to elevate schools as “resilience hubs” within communities
- Interested to know if there are any questions on environmental learning etc.
 - The community school specialist works with a committee to draft the priorities for the survey
 - There are example but there is not one survey across the board
- There are schools that are taking a leadership role in the community school model so could they elevate the needs/structures/resources?
 - Schools may not know what opportunities exist
- Could MSDE share the possible resource-
- Derek Anderson- MSDE point of contact; Zachary will reach out
 - Reach out with a question regarding data from the applications
 - Data – how many community schools have included e. lit or sustainably
 - Would provide a further data point
- This is more than information (menu) but developing the skills and approach to be an environmental literacy and resiliency hub
- Adding the resiliency hubs aligns well with the title “safe and healthy networks”

Action: explore more about what exist, data and networks then build into a recommendation next year

Resources:

- MSDE Site: <https://marylandpublicschools.org/about/Pages/DSFSS/Community-Schools/Index.aspx>
- They are called “community schools” defined by MSDE and MD Blueprint, not community-based schools. The community schools criteria is different from Title I.
- <https://www.aacps.org/page/community-schools>
- <https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/community-engagement/community-schools/>

3. Incorporate environmental and climate literacy into pre-service teacher training.

Summary of the 4 recommendations

1. Praxis/cert pathways
2. Methods/course integration strategies
3. Internship - 10 of 180 hours
4. MHEC ELit Specialist

- Reached out to Dr. Kent and did not get any new clarity on the questions
- Leaning towards adding 10 hours of EE to “student teaching” internship- how do you use the non-school based locations for hours so they can learn some methodology from informal settings

Feedback:

- To what extent do we want to see it? Is this only for pre-service. What about existing teachers need for PD. How do they teach if they don't know themselves
 - Discussions have happened regarding pre-service vs existing teachers
- MHEC said most institutions can change their programming themselves- there is not a requirement for what goes into an “elementary teacher” program- if changes are extensive then MHEC will review otherwise its university to university based.
- Teachers at the secondary level are certified in state at a low rate; Elementary teachers are largely certified in the state (Towson).
- Could the recommendation be around the University system of Maryland since there is already a connection to the Chancellor?
 - Flag COMAR for E. Lit and the Blueprint Frameworks for Higher Education (Pillar 2 path 2) (subtask 2.2.2) Pillar 2 objective 2, Task 2- 2.2.2 a.4, b.2- b.4, b.8 pgs 71-73 of the 2023 version, Task 3- requires a portfolio-based assessment; 2.2. Task 4, 2.2.4 (D)
- Have had decent luck with HEEL; people don't know what they don't know
- We can't require E. Lit in internships but can we recommend it as an option; same for the implementing it into methods class?
- Recommending a requirement works differently than how universities are structured
- Recommend development of internship programming that incorporates E. Lit
- Can universities that have elementary ed have the option for a course (elective) as part of the degree prep program.

Next step: Write as a recommendation- Teacher professional pre-service programs work with local school systems to ensure that pre-service teachers have the opportunity to participate in and teach in outdoor learning during their internship. Include the option for an elective on outdoor learning in course work.

Resources:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1jQOB7pgdkBvxcSyXRvGrWEfppfjO3RQ6/view>

Next step:

Refine recommendation over the next three weeks. DNR send out a revised copy of everything on the 28th Then meet on the 4th of Sept (10-11am). Then meeting on the Sept 4 (10-12pm)

11:50 – 12:00 Public Comment

None

Meeting Closed at 12:00pm