



Maryland Outdoor Learning Partnership (OLP) Access to Nature Working Group Meeting Minutes

Date and Time: Mon, August 11, 2025, 2:00 – 3:00

Attendees

Chris Wheedleton (Working Group Co-Chair), Rick Garber (Working Group Co-Chair), Stephanie Tuckfield (OLP Co-Chair's Designee), Isabel Layton, Karen McDonald, Katrina Jones, Jo Anne Murray, Katie Dell, Kristen Komlosy

2:00 – 2:05 Welcome

Chris Wheedleton & Rick Garber

2:05 – 2:50 Recommendation Discussion

[ACCESS_DRAFT Recommendations](#)

Notes

- Concerns about recommendation 2. There have been multiple needs assessments and there are limits to the number of surveys that can be given.
- Preference for recommendation to develop a professional development plan with outdoor service providers in Maryland.
 - o This is a actionable item that could be coordinated through and partially funded by MAEOE. It would allow us to better understand the current implementations in each county as well as the challenges faced, directly from the mouths of service providers. It would also allow us to exchange best practices and further collaboration within and across the state at county and statewide levels.
- Saw a gap between the Outdoor for all and assessment- do direct contact with teachers- missing a voice at the table
 - o Advisory council? Make sure to include teacher voice
- Universal equitable access and understanding the gaps
 - o Do we add the teachers to recommendation 1?
- Recommendation 1 aligned with the MELAN work
- To achieve number 3 we need 1 & 2
 - o Need the data and a landscape assessment
- Could we add a fourth recommendation with a teacher need assessment and voice in the process? Work in MN is very teacher centric and they just passed Outdoor school for all.
- The idea for an advisory council is favorable (formal and non-formal)
- A funded advisory council would be important, to pay participants from different schools and cultural backgrounds.

- I'm wondering if a representative style system would work, for each school district sending 1-2 selected teachers, and EE centers, that come together to communicate and advise, as well as share resources.
- Form a statewide council of teachers representing diverse school districts, grade levels, and environmental education centers to advise on implementation, curriculum alignment, and resource needs.
- Language?
- ****Rationale****: Educators are closest to the realities of delivering outdoor learning. A formal advisory body will ensure recommendations are practical, equitable, and responsive to classroom needs. - ****Intended Impact****: Strengthen two-way communication between policymakers and practitioners, improve adoption of best practices, and enhance professional development opportunities.

Actions: Send out refined recommendations to the Working group with 2-3 prompts and will send out for one final read over before the Sept 11th meeting

2:50 – 3:00 Public Comment Period

Meeting Closed at 2:27 pm