

Chesapeake Bay Program Education Directive (17-X)
(Update to: Education Directive 98-1)

The future well-being of North America's largest and most productive estuary, the Chesapeake Bay, its thousands of tributaries, and its 64,000 square miles of watershed will soon rest in the hands of its youth. These citizens, three and a half million strong in pre-kindergarten through 12th grade, and the millions enrolled in our community colleges, colleges and universities are tomorrow's leaders. They also will be the stewards of the watershed's precious resources including its fish, crabs and oysters, forests, streams, and wetlands.

As the Chesapeake Bay Program partnership, we acknowledge our responsibility to ensure that these future caretakers graduate with the knowledge and skills to act responsibly to protect and restore their local watershed. We acknowledge our duty to impart to these young people a sense of individual responsibility and our hope that they develop the skills to form a personal ethic regarding the natural world. Further, we acknowledge that the Chesapeake Bay, its rivers, and its watershed provide an authentic, locally-relevant source of environmental information and data that should continue to be used to help advance student academic learning and problem-solving abilities across the entire school curriculum.

The Environmental Literacy goal and outcomes of the 2014 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement establish the broad expectations for this shared work. Since this directive was initially set in place in 1998, States, local school districts, and partners have made tremendous progress in establishing curriculum, policies, and model programs that advance environmental literacy. Nevertheless, even with good policies and programs in place, we recognize that there is a need to continue to more fully embed environmental education into formal educational efforts. As the Bay Program, we want to forge this connection by creating stronger links between partners at all levels, connecting state and local education agencies with funding opportunities for environmental literacy experiences and activities, and encouraging the continued development of policies and programs that advance environmental literacy at the state and local level.

Finally, we recognize that while the educational community's tradition of independence is strongly held, partnerships are important to get the job done.

Therefore to further our commitments, the Chesapeake Bay Executive Council will:

- Encourage the State Departments of Education in each jurisdiction -- Maryland, Virginia, Pennsylvania, Delaware, New York, and West Virginia and the District of Columbia -- to become or remain active partners in the Bay Program.
- Maintain the Education Workgroup under the Citizen Stewardship Goal Implementation Team, which should include environmental education professionals from federal, state, and local governments, university, and nonprofit organizations. This should include representatives from state department of education and natural resource agencies who participate in the jurisdictional interagency education groups as defined below.

- In 2017 and every two years thereafter, convene an Environmental Literacy Leadership Summit to bring together the Superintendents of Education in each jurisdiction to discuss progress towards meeting the Environmental Literacy goal and outcomes of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement. Summits should also include leadership of state natural resource agencies, the U.S. Department of Education, NOAA, U.S. EPA, local education agency leaders, nonprofit organizations, institutions of higher education, and representatives from the Education Workgroup. The outcomes of the Education Summit will be reported to the Executive Council at its annual meeting.

Jurisdictions committed to the Environmental Literacy Goal and Outcomes of the 2014 Watershed Agreement will initiate or maintain their efforts to:

- Maintain active participation on the Chesapeake Bay Program Education Workgroup.
- Provide actions to be included in the biennial workplans for the Environmental Literacy outcomes under the Watershed Agreement.
- Support an interagency group in each jurisdiction focused on environmental literacy implementation that is led or co-led by the state department of education. Each group will work to further jurisdictional policies and programs and to champion the Environmental Literacy goal and outcomes of the Watershed Agreement. Each interagency education group will provide recommendations to the state about advancing environmental literacy and will report on its progress and problems to its Department of Education, beginning in 2017. The interagency group in each jurisdiction should include as members at least:
 - The Chair or staff from the Chesapeake Bay Program Education Workgroup
 - Representatives of the state education, environment, agriculture, and natural resource agencies
 - Representatives from local school districts
 - Representatives of state and local nonprofit organizations involved in environmental or informal education
 - Representatives of higher education in each state.
- Encourage the Department of Education for each jurisdiction that has signed onto the Environmental Literacy goal to participate in the following activities:
 - Encourage and support school districts in implementing policies and programs that advance environmental literacy, including providing recognition, technical assistance, and financial support to the extent possible.
 - Work with the Chesapeake Bay Program to collect data and information from local school districts and others about progress towards implementing the Environmental Literacy outcomes of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement.
 - Participate in preparation and review of the materials submitted to the Management Board focused on progress towards meeting the Environmental Literacy outcomes of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement as part of the biennial Strategy Review System. Ensure senior staff representation at the review session.

- Alert members of the Principal Staffing Committee if issues arise that are of concern to their Executive Council member.
- Invite and encourage institutions of higher education to become involved in the environmental literacy efforts of the Chesapeake Bay Program to work towards improving pre-service teacher preparation in environmental education, providing training for in-service teachers, ensuring adequate career pathways in environment-based careers, and improving sustainability efforts on college campuses.