



# Bay Program Education Workgroup Meeting

**Quarter 3**  
July 7, 2025

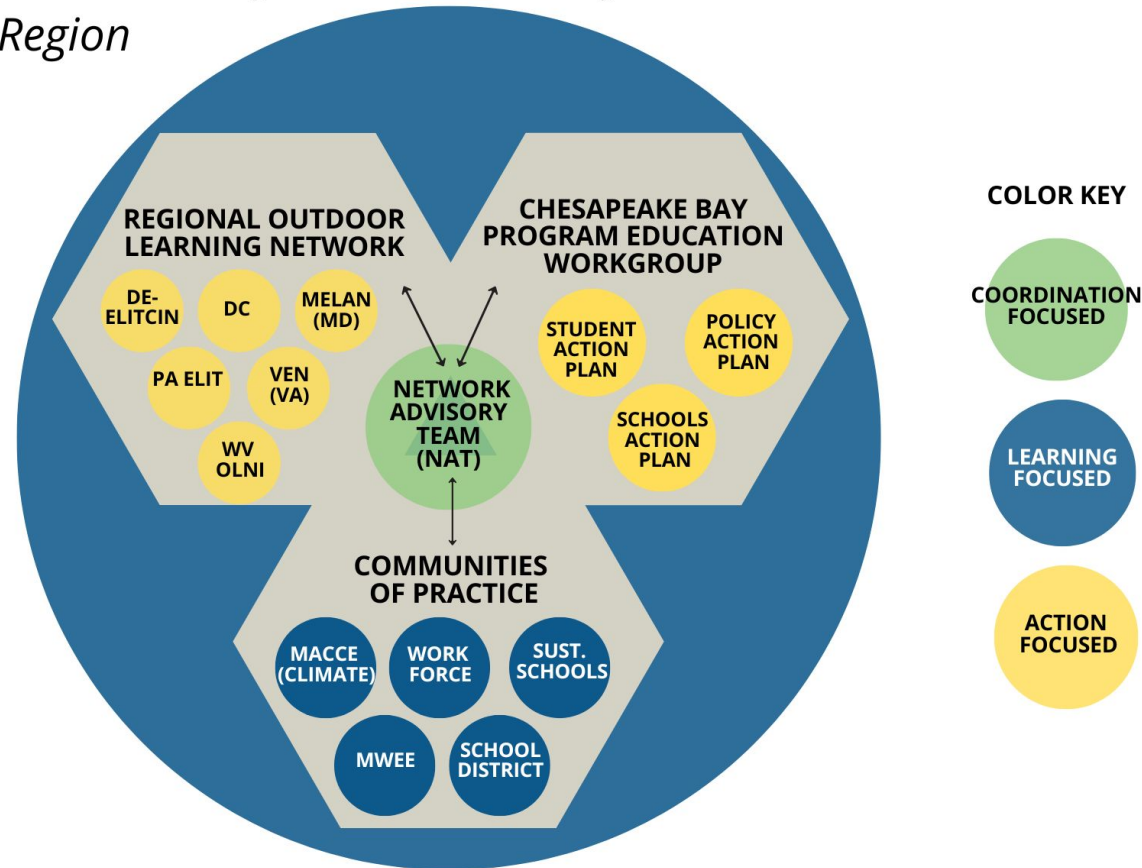
# Agenda

- ▶ **Welcome & Connections**
  - ▷ GIT5 Chair/Coordinators Update
  - ▷ Education Workgroup Co-Chair Consensus
  - ▷ State/Regional Updates
- ▶ **Environmental Literacy Plans Project**
- ▶ **Environmental Literacy Outcomes and Targets**
  - ▷ Context setting & Breakouts
- ▶ **Virtual EL Forum & EL Summit**

# Environmental Literacy Network Ecosystem

## *Mid-Atlantic Region*

DRAFT  
June 2025



This diagram represents a simplified, high-level system map of overlapping environmental literacy networks operating across the region. The Environmental Literacy Network Advisory Team (NAT) convenes quarterly to share, learn from each other, think strategically, and plan regional convenings. The colors represent the primary function of each element (as represented by the Color Key), realizing that in network life there is always a possibility for action to emerge when people come together from across sectors to share and learn together. The ROLN state networks support coordination, learning and action at the state level.

# **State/Regional Updates & Announcements**

# Environmental Literacy Plans (ELPs) Project

*Welcome Anna Atticks!*

# Introduction to ELP Project

- ▶ Assess Mid-Atlantic ELPs
- ▶ Identify ELPs (drafts and active)
- ▶ Identify criteria to gauge best practices
- ▶ Develop resource to guide future ELP development and implementation
- ▶ Criteria development:
  - ▷ Planning Phase
  - ▷ Implementation Phase
  - ▷ Revision Phase

# Planning Phase Criteria

1. Is there an established core team?
2. Is there representation from a variety of environmental literacy and sustainability leaders from inside the district as well as within the community?
3. Is there evidence of substantial conversations about sustainable funding for the experiences included in the ELP?
4. Is there connectivity between the ELP and other school district plans or initiatives (e.g. strategic plans or green schools)? Between other community plans (e.g. climate action plans or comprehensive plans)?

# Implementation Phase Criteria

1. Are there ongoing professional learning opportunities for staff?
2. Are there local, school-based systems for ensuring teachers are supported?
3. Does the ELP provide clear areas for engagement of non-teaching staff (facilities/administrative staff)?
4. Has the ELP facilitated the development or enhancement of community partnerships?
5. Are student experiences scaffolded appropriately, increasing student environmental literacy over time?



# Revision Phase Criteria

1. Is there an established measure of success for the ELP?
2. Is there a clear way of documenting the completion of aspects of the ELP on an annual basis?
3. What is the frequency of review and revision for the ELP?

# Thank you!

*Let's Discuss*

Contact me: [anna.atticks@noaa.gov](mailto:anna.atticks@noaa.gov)

# Environmental Literacy Outcomes

*Public comment period opens for 60  
days starting July 1st, 2025.*

# Beyond 2025

Agreement serves as a roadmap for the states, local governments, and federal agencies working to protect the Chesapeake Bay and its wildlife.

When the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement was signed in 2014, many of its goals and outcomes had a target deadline of December 2025.

Revised with necessary amendments to effectively implement the agreement and streamlining the partnerships structure and process.



2 0 1 4

As amended, October 5, 2022

# Process

- ▶ Summer 2024: Listening Sessions focused on priorities
- ▶ December 2024: GIT 5 Outcome Assessment Survey
- ▶ January 8, 2025: NAT Feedback
- ▶ January 2025: State Meetings
- ▶ January 27, 2025: Workgroup Meeting to finalize recommendations
- ▶ February 2025: Outreach to State Agency Leadership
- ▶ March 13, 2025: Report out to Mgmt Board
- ▶ March 27, 2025: Mgmt Board finalizes recommendations
- ▶ April 2025: Finalize %s for measurable targets in outcomes
- ▶ May 2025: Mgmt Board & PSC approved revised outcomes for public comment

# Revised Outcomes

**Student Experiences Outcome:** Continually increase the number of students who participate in inquiry-based environmental literacy instruction working towards at least one Meaningful Watershed Educational Experience in each elementary, middle, and high school.

- Target: By 2040, state targets are reached that result in 75% of public school students being enrolled in a school district that offers a MWEE for all students.

**School District Planning Outcome:** Continually increase the number of school districts that have policies and practices in place that support environmental education and sustainable schools.

- Target: By 2040, all jurisdictions reach their target for the number of school districts that are well prepared to deliver a comprehensive and systemic approach to environmental literacy.

# Student Experiences Outcome

**Student Experiences Outcome:** Continually increase the number of students who participate in inquiry-based environmental literacy instruction working towards at least one Meaningful Watershed Educational Experience in each elementary, middle, and high school.

- Target: By 2040, state targets are reached that result in 75% of public school students being enrolled in a school district that offers a MWEE for all students.
- **Emphasized inquiry-based instruction.** The updated language better conveys that inquiry-based instruction is a valuable part of our environmental education ecosystem in addition to MWEEs.
- **Emphasized at least one MWEE.** The updated Outcome continues to emphasize that striving for multiple MWEEs is important, while placing the emphasis on ensuring that every school district has at least one MWEE built into their instructional program
- **We renamed it!** To differentiate it from formal “student outcomes” that typically refer to learning objectives in formal education.
- **Set a numeric target for the watershed.** The new target is based on data from the Environmental Literacy Indicator Tool (ELIT), which is sent to all school districts in the region. Each participating state set a numeric target, which combined, created our goal of 75% of students.

# Numeric Target: Student Experiences

Management Strategy (or other document) language:

- By 2040, 97% of public school students in Maryland will be enrolled in a school district that offers a MWEE for all students.
- By 2040, 85% of public school students in Virginia will be enrolled in a school district that offers a MWEE for all students.
- By 2040, 60% of public school students in Pennsylvania will be enrolled in a school district that offers a MWEE for all students.
- By 2040, 65% of public school students in the District of Columbia will be enrolled in a school district that offers a MWEE for all students.
- By 2040, 50% of public school students in the West Virginia portion of the Chesapeake Bay watershed\* will be enrolled in a school district that offers a MWEE for all students.

\*This metric represents only the eight school districts in West Virginia that fall within the Chesapeake Bay Watershed.



# School District Planning Outcome

**School District Planning Outcome:** Continually increase the number of school districts that have policies and practices in place that support environmental education and sustainable schools.

- Target: By 2040, all jurisdictions reach their target for the number of school districts that are well prepared to deliver a comprehensive and systemic approach to environmental literacy.
- **Emphasized planning at the school district level.** The revised language better acknowledges the local-control nature of education.
- **Added sustainable schools.** The implementation of school sustainability policies and green certifications demonstrates a school district's commitment to integrating environmental literacy while providing spaces for outdoor learning and meaningful examples of local environmental action.
- **We renamed it!** Previously called the “Environmental Literacy Planning,” its new name “School District Planning” emphasizes school districts as the key unit of change of the Education Workgroup’s efforts.
- **Set numeric jurisdictional targets.** Through the Environmental Literacy Indicator Tool (ELIT) school districts will indicate their capacity to deliver a comprehensive and systemic approach to environmental education. This information will be used to create a preparedness score for each district of “well prepared,” “somewhat prepared,” or “unprepared.”

# Numeric Target: School District Planning

Management Strategy (or other internal document) language:

- By 2040, 86% of school districts in Maryland are well prepared to deliver a comprehensive and systemic approach to environmental literacy.
- By 2040, 32% of school districts in Virginia are well prepared to deliver a comprehensive and systemic approach to environmental literacy.
- By 2040, 50% of school districts in Pennsylvania are well prepared to deliver a comprehensive and systemic approach to environmental literacy.
- By 2040, 24% of school districts in the District of Columbia are well prepared to deliver a comprehensive and systemic approach to environmental literacy.
- By 2040, 50% of school districts in the West Virginia portion of the Chesapeake Bay watershed\* are well prepared to deliver a comprehensive and systemic approach to environmental literacy.

\*This metric represents only the eight school districts in West Virginia that fall within the Chesapeake Bay Watershed.

# Public Feedback

Provide public feedback by emailing  
[comments@chesapeakebay.net](mailto:comments@chesapeakebay.net).

Feedback received during this period will be posted and reviewed by a team of subject matter experts within the partnership. The next version of the *Watershed Agreement* will be presented to the Management Board in Oct 2025.

**THANKS FOR SHARING YOUR SUPPORT!**



# Tracking the Outcomes

*What do we want to be able to say about student experiences and district planning through our EL data? And how do we get there?*

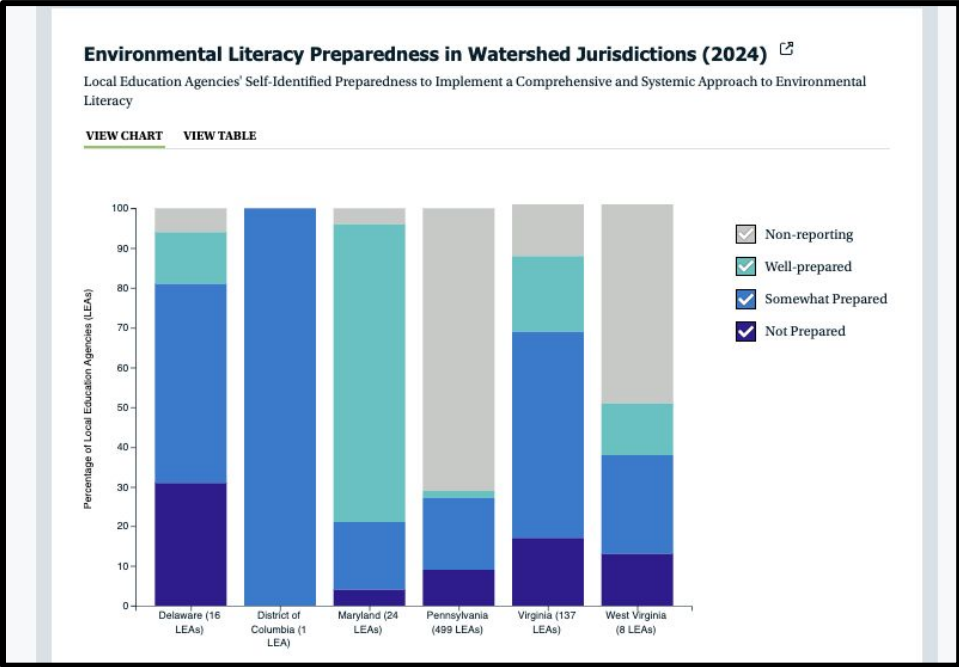
# What's in ELIT

## *Environmental Literacy Planning*

- *Is there an established **program leader** for EE in the district?*
- *Is EE **infused into appropriate disciplinary areas** within the curriculum?*
- *Is there **regular communication** among staff responsible for EE curriculum and implementation?*
- *Is there a support system for **high quality PD** related to EE?*
- *Is there a **documented plan** for MWEEs?*
- *Are there established **community partnerships** to support EE?*

# How It's Presented on Chesapeake Progress

## Environmental Literacy Planning



## Environmental Literacy Planning

RECENT PROGRESS  
INCREASE

OUTLOOK  
ON COURSE

Each participating Bay jurisdiction should develop a comprehensive and systemic approach to environmental literacy for all students in the region that includes policies, practices and voluntary metrics that support the environmental literacy Goals and Outcomes of this Agreement.

### Progress

#### Recent Progress: Increase

In 2024, 302 local education agencies (LEAs)—44% of the total—were represented in the Chesapeake Bay Program's Environmental Literacy Indicator Tool (ELIT), which measures the degree of environmental literacy preparedness among school districts across the watershed:

- 19% of respondents self-identified as "well-prepared" to put a comprehensive and systemic approach to environmental literacy in place.
- 57% of respondents self-identified as "somewhat prepared" to put a comprehensive and systemic approach to environmental literacy in place.
- 25% of respondents self-identified as "not prepared" to put a comprehensive and systemic approach to environmental literacy in place.

The survey was distributed to all LEAs within five jurisdictions (Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maryland, Pennsylvania and Virginia), but in West Virginia, it was only distributed to the eight LEAs in the watershed.

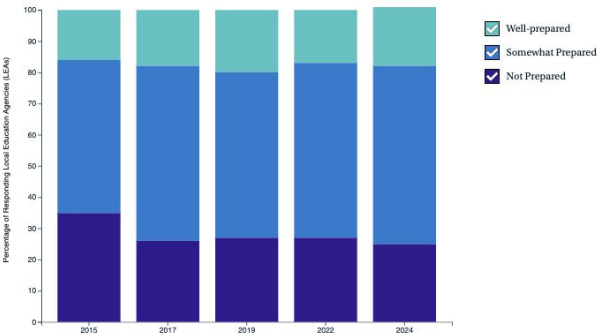
#### Outlook: On Course

The 2024 ELIT shows that the majority of LEAs are somewhat prepared to implement high-quality environmental education and the proportion of well-prepared LEAs has increased 2% from the previous survey. While about 56% of the total local education agencies did not report to the ELIT, those districts that did report represent 74% of public elementary, middle and high school students that live in the region. When looking only at data from districts that responded in both 2022 and 2024, there is a stronger indication of increased preparedness. There, the proportion of well-prepared districts increased by 6 percentage points and the number of unprepared districts fell by the same amount. These positive trends suggest that this outcome is on course.

### Environmental Literacy Preparedness in the Region (2015-2024)

Responding Local Education Agencies' Self-Identified Preparedness to Implement a Comprehensive and Systemic Approach to Environmental Literacy

[VIEW CHART](#) [VIEW TABLE](#)

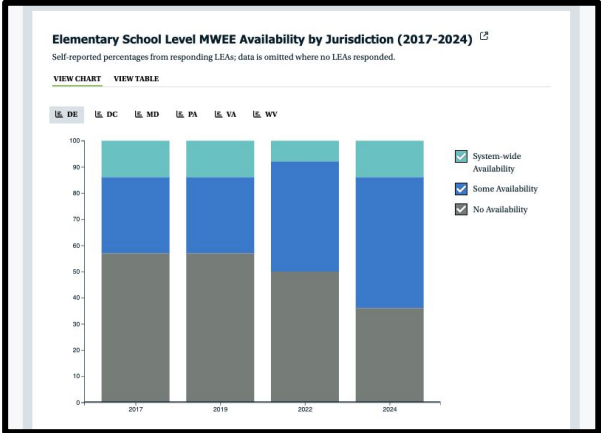
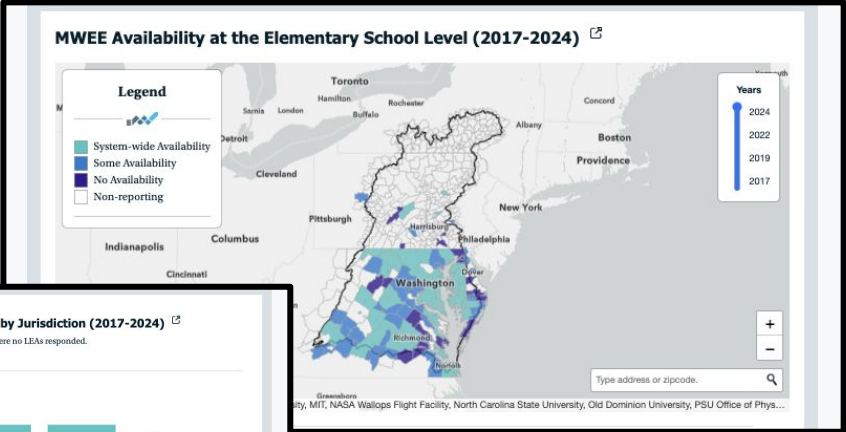


# What's in ELIT

## *MWEEs in each grade band (ES, MS, HS)*

- *Presence of MWEE in each grade (K-8 + high school courses) and to what degree is it systemic (system-wide MWEE; some schools or classes participate in MWEE; no evidence of MWEE)*
- *If system-wide: describe the program (grade, partnerships, description of unit)*
- *What other EE programs exist (e.g. field trips, sustainable schools, service learning). Describe the program (grade, partnerships, description of unit)*

# How It's Presented on Chesapeake Progress MWEs



## Student RECENT PROGRESS INCREASE OUTLOOK ON COURSE

Continuously increase students' age-appropriate understanding of the watershed through participation in teacher-supported meaningful watershed educational experiences and rigorous, inquiry-based instruction, with a target of at least one meaningful watershed educational experience in elementary, middle and high school depending on available resources.

### Progress

#### Recent Progress: Increase

In 2024, 302 local education agencies (LEAs)—44% of the total, representing 74% of the total K-12 student body population—were represented in the Chesapeake Bay Program's Fifth Environmental Literacy Indicator Tool (ELIT). This Chesapeake Bay Program survey, which also measures the degree of environmental literacy preparedness, provides new data on the extent of Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences (MWEEs) among schools:

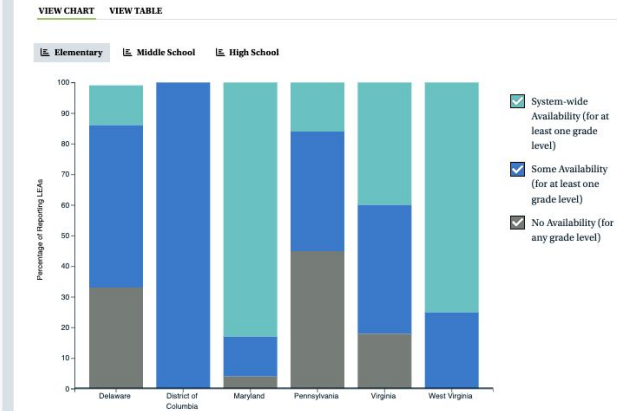
- Elementary School Level:** 31% of reporting LEAs provide system-wide MWEEs to at least one grade level, 39% provide some MWEEs to at least one grade level and 30% have no MWEEs available.
- Middle School Level:** 33% provide system-wide MWEEs to at least one grade level, 41% provide some MWEEs and 26% have no MWEEs available.
- High School Level:** 30% provide system-wide MWEEs in at least one required course, 44% provide some MWEEs in at least one required course and 26% have no MWEEs available.

The survey was distributed to all LEAs within five jurisdictions (Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maryland, Pennsylvania and Virginia), but in West Virginia, it was only distributed to the eight LEAs in the watershed. At all grade levels, the trend in 2024 reflects an increase in system-wide availability of MWEEs and a decrease in districts with no availability, rebounding after the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

#### Outlook: On Course

The Student Outcome is on course. The trend in the data from 2022 to 2024 shows an increase in the availability of MWEEs in elementary, middle and high schools throughout the region. When looking at the data from districts that reported in both 2022 and 2024, system-wide MWEE availability increased 9.6% at the elementary level while districts with no MWEEs decreased 9.6%. At the middle school level, system-wide availability also increased 9.7%, while districts with no MWEEs dropped 8.2%. For high school students, the increase in system-wide MWEE availability was 12.6%, while no availability decreased 9.4%. These trends illustrate the continual growth in MWEE availability and engagement at all three grade levels described in this outcome.

### MWEE Availability by Jurisdiction (2024)





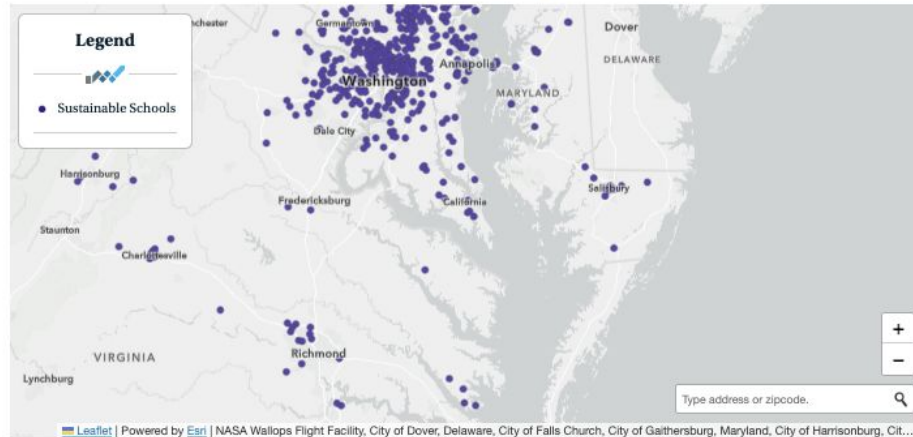
# What's in ELIT

## ***Continuous EE Improvement Efforts***

- *What are the strongest elements of your EE program? How do you know it's been effective?*
- *What are the greatest challenges related to establishing/implementing your EE programs?*
- *What are your highest priority needs for improving your EE programs? (check boxes for types of PD; curriculum writing; partnerships; technology; support from leadership; funding)*

# How It's Presented on Chesapeake Progress Sustainable Schools

Certified Sustainable Schools in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed (2021)



## Sustainable Schools

RECENT PROGRESS DECREASE

OUTLOOK ON COURSE

Continually increase the number of schools in the region that reduce the impact of their buildings and grounds on their local watershed, environment and human health through best practices, including student-led protection and restoration projects.

### Progress

#### Recent Progress: Decrease

In 2021, 14% of public and charter schools in the Chesapeake Bay watershed—597 schools in all—were certified sustainable. This marks a 6% decrease from the number of sustainable schools in the watershed in 2019. Experts believe the decrease is likely due to a decline in reporting during the COVID-19 pandemic. The decrease in the number of sustainable schools in the watershed all occurred in Maryland, which continued to run its certification program during the COVID-19 pandemic. Maryland sustainable schools in the watershed decreased 9% from 516 in 2019 to 470 in 2021. Although some new schools joined Maryland's program during this time, a larger number of schools dropped out by virtue of not submitting recertification paperwork. In the next reporting cycle, the Chesapeake Bay Program will be able to determine whether the 2019-2021 decrease is an artificial drop or indicative of a true decline in the number of sustainable schools.

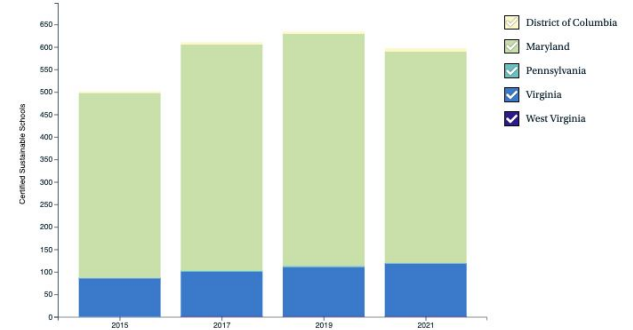
#### Outlook: On Course

The Sustainable Schools Outcome is on course. There is not a specific numerical target or threshold for this outcome, but the Chesapeake Bay Program anticipates an increase from the baseline. Over the long-term, the number of sustainable schools in the Chesapeake Bay watershed has increased 19% from 501 in 2015 to 597 in 2021. Therefore, the outlook for this outcome is on course.

Certified Sustainable Schools in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed (2015-2021)

Certified sustainable public and charter schools have been recognized by the following programs: U.S. Green Ribbon Schools, National Wildlife Federation Eco-Schools USA, Md. Green Schools, Pa. Pathways to Green Schools and Va. Naturally Schools.

[VIEW CHART](#) [VIEW TABLE](#)



Downloads:

[Data \(.xlsx\)](#)

[Methods \(.pdf\)](#)

[Screenshot \(.png\)](#)

# Big Question

*What do we want to be able to say about student experiences and district planning through our EL data?*

# Text too small? Zoom in with the tool on the bottom right :)

## How do I use this whiteboard?

Zoom in and out with the sliding bar at the bottom right of your screen.

Scroll up and down with your mouse or the thin grey scrolling bar to the right on your screen.

Scroll right to left with the thin grey scrolling bar above the margin at the bottom of the page (above Notes, Timer, and the Zoom function & only visible when Zoomed in).

Duplicate, drag, drop, resize, and reposition the sticky notes provided. Add more sticky notes by clicking one and choosing "duplicate" or by using "Elements" on the left side of the screen.

Drag, drop, or duplicate from the "Reactions Library" to respond to others.

**BIG PICTURE:** What story do we want to tell about how outdoor and/or inquiry-based environmental literacy instruction is improving education and/or stewardship actions (in the context of our two outcomes)?

EXAMPLE: I think that...  
• XYZ  
• XYZ

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### Questions in the context of each outcome/ subject:

#### Student Experiences Outcome

##### Outdoor Experiences Professional Development

1.How can data collected in ELIT help us tell the environmental education story?

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2.What are data or information that we are already collecting in different spaces (other than ELIT) that could us help tell this story?

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#### District Planning Outcome

##### Sustainable Schools District Planning

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### Answers to questions 1, 2, 3 that don't fit under each outcome or the four topic areas:

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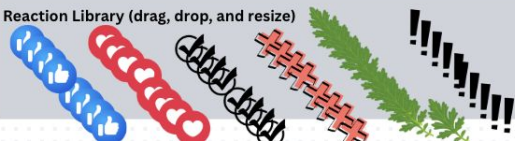
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### Reaction Library (drag, drop, and resize)



### Ideas, questions, or comments that don't particularly fit in any of the breakout topics:

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# Upcoming Events:

## 1. Virtual EL Forum

***Weaving Our Stories, Shaping Our Future:  
Advancing Environmental Literacy in the  
Mid-Atlantic through Policy and Practice***

**Date:** *Winter 2025*

**Audience:** *State networks, Communities of Practice, and Workgroups*

**Purpose:** *Create a shared space for learning, inspiration, and coordination across the Mid-Atlantic region that lifts up examples of success at the intersection of policy and practice—with the aim of creating and sharing inspirational state and regional stories and supporting the creation of tangible products to influence decision-makers and guide future work.*

# Upcoming Events:

## 2. EL Summit

**Date:** *Spring 2026*

**Audience:** *State, federal, and nonprofit leaders responsible for achieving the EL outcomes*

**Purpose:** *Provide a forum for dialogue, collaboration, and coordination among leaders about the future of systemic and sustainable environmental education in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. The 2026 Summit will focus on rolling out the new outcomes.*

# On Tap for October Meeting:

- ▶ Summit Prep
- ▶ Cont. discussion of outcome tracking
- ▶ Possibly work plan development update

\*\* Q4 meeting will be on Oct. 6th from 10-11:30am