



## CHESAPEAKE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

### DIRECTIVE 18-X:

## Increasing Student Environmental Literacy: Strengthening Partnerships with State Departments of Education and School Districts

The future well-being of North America's largest and most productive estuary, the Chesapeake Bay and its 64,000 square miles of watershed, will soon rest in the hands of its youth. We have a duty to impart to these young people—almost three million strong in kindergarten through 12th grade—a sense of individual responsibility and the skills to become stewards of the natural world.

It has been 20 years since the Chesapeake Executive Council adopted Directive 98-1 formally recognizing the importance of education to the partnership. The 2014 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement elevated the significance of environmental literacy, acknowledging that a committed youth will help to determine the ultimate success of our protection and restoration efforts.

#### **ENVIRONMENTAL LITERACY GOAL**

*Enable students in the region to graduate with the knowledge and skills to act responsibly to protect and restore their local watershed.*

States, local school districts, and partners have made tremendous progress in recent years in establishing curriculum, policies, and model programs that advance environmental literacy. Yet there is much more to be done. Our focus must now expand to direct and support the systemic implementation of environmental literacy teaching throughout the 405 school districts in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. We must support school districts in their efforts to provide students with Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences and embed environmental literacy curriculum and operating practices into their

programs to ensure that every student has equitable access to this powerful approach to teaching and learning.

Because State Departments of Education set expectations, encourage innovation, and oversee accountability for school districts and schools, their leadership is essential for creating this broad vision and we welcome their leaders as engaged participants in the Chesapeake Bay Program partnership.



**THEREFORE, WE COMMIT** to the following actions for those jurisdictions that have indicated support for the Environmental Literacy goal and outcomes:

- ❖ **Formally Convening Leaders to Steer a New Era of Regional Coordination:** Coordination among leadership is essential to achieve shared goals and develop effective solutions, and education leaders must be an integral part of this process. We direct that beginning in 2018 and every two years thereafter the Principals' Staff Committee convene high-level leaders from throughout the Bay Partnership to discuss progress towards meeting the Environmental Literacy goal and outcomes. These meetings will include State Superintendents of Education as well as leaders from state natural resource agencies, U.S. Department of

Education, NOAA, U.S. EPA, national and regional nonprofit organizations, institutions of higher education, local education agencies, Chesapeake Bay Commission, and the Chesapeake Bay Program Education Workgroup. The Management Board will be responsible for tracking the agreements and commitments generated by these meetings.

- ❖ ***Ensuring Communication Among State Agencies and Partner Organizations:*** We commit to regularly convening interagency state working groups focused on environmental literacy implementation, co-led by the State Department of Education and the appropriate state natural resource agency. These groups will work to further jurisdictional policies and programs, and to champion the Environmental Literacy goal and outcomes of the Watershed Agreement. Each group will produce a report for state cabinet members at least biennially that includes: (1) standardized data and information from the Environmental Literacy Indicator Tool about local school district progress towards the Environmental Literacy outcomes of the Watershed Agreement; and (2) recommendations to advance environmental literacy, including budget projections for cost-effective approaches to providing recognition, technical assistance, and financial support to local school districts. This information will be collated and submitted to the Principals' Staff Committee, and used by the Management Board for the biennial Strategy Review System and to update metrics for monitoring and reporting on Chesapeake Progress.
- ❖ ***Serving Every Student in the Watershed:*** It is imperative that States work to ensure that every student in every community has access to effective programs that use Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences and sustainable schools practices as a means to advance environmental literacy. Because school districts are responsible for defining curriculum and maintaining their real property and buildings, States must support district efforts to embed locally appropriate environmental practices, content, and learning opportunities into their required curriculum and operations. To this end, we direct the interagency state working groups to use available data and information to focus resources strategically and equitably across their jurisdiction to support school district level environmental literacy planning and implementation.

FOR THE STATE OF MARYLAND




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FOR THE COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA




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FOR THE COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA




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FOR THE STATE OF DELAWARE




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FOR THE STATE OF NEW YORK




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FOR THE STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA




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FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA



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FOR THE CHESAPEAKE BAY COMMISSION



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FOR THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA



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