



Education Workgroup Meeting, Quarter 3

SLIDES

Monday, July 7, 2025

10:00 am - 11:30 pm Virtual meeting via [Zoom Link](#)

Or dial in by phone: +1 646 931 3860

Meeting ID: 829 2491 4650

Passcode: 871059

Summary - Action Items and Decisions:

Announcement: Julie Lawson and Julia Wakeling, DOEE, have become the Co-Chairs of the Fostering Chesapeake Stewardship GIT (GIT5) that Education Workgroup is a part of. Emily Heller, EPA, is the new GIT5 Coordinator.

Decision: Olivia Wisner, MDNR, will become the Education Workgroup Co-Chair alongside Shannon Sprague, NOAA.

Action Item: Respond to [this form](#) by EOB Friday, July 18th and contact Anna if you have any additional resources, questions, etc. - Anna Atticks, anna.atticks@noaa.gov

Action Item: Interested parties and members of the public are invited to **provide feedback on the draft revised [Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement](#) between July 1 and September 1, 2025, by emailing comments@chesapeakebay.net**. More information can be found on the [Planning for 2025 and Beyond](#) page and in the [FAQ](#).

Action Item: Share resources that already exist that help to tell your state's environmental literacy story **by Tues, August 12**. Data, websites, pdfs of reports, etc – anything that you have that could be useful to tell the story around:

- What have we achieved over time (successes)? + some challenges
- Where are we going (future perspective/ visioning)?

Please drop links or files in this folder [Storytelling Resources](#) -- there are subfolders for each state.

Attendance: Shannon S, Olivia W, Elise T, Meredith L, Anna A, Bart M, Krysta H, Julie L, Ellen P, Angel B, Laura C, Frank R, Stephanie B, Betsy U, Trena F, Samantha C, Michelle N, Vince M, Lori S, Coreen W, Anna D, Candace L-F, Grace M, Tom A, Jen P, Karen M, Emily S, Courtney H, Lindsey W, Stephanie T

MINUTES

10:00 Welcome, Connections, Announcements

Shannon Sprague announced new Bay Program leadership updates:

- Emily Heller, EPA – Coordinator, Fostering Chesapeake Stewardship Goal Implementation Team (GIT5)

- Julie Lawson, DOEE – Co-Chair, GIT5
- Julia Wakeling, DOEE – Co-Chair, GIT5

Shannon sought Education Workgroup (EWG) concurrence on EWG Co-Chair nominee, Olivia Wisner, MDNR; no opposition was raised against Olivia becoming Co-Chair.

State and Regional Capacity Building Updates –

State / Jurisdiction	State or Regional Capacity Building Update
Regional	MANEE (Mid-Atlantic Affiliates) is collaborating with Compass Education to write a CBT mini-grant proposal to provide a Mid-Atlantic climate and environmental education workshop “Systems thinking as the foundational competency for sustainable learning outcomes.”
VA	VEN is organizing a 2-day leadership retreat (1st week in August) to identify strategies for meeting our objectives and identifying outcomes for our network capacity building project funded by the CB Trust. We also will identify strategies to strengthen goals that are complementary and aligned with our NOAA B-WET capacity building project.
PA	The PA ELit Network continues to work across four initiatives - expanding and strengthening six regional hubs, implementing MWEEs and integrating the PA STEELS standards, rebooting the PA Pathways to Green Schools program, and strategically implementing our communications plan. The PA ELit Network Steering Committee meets monthly, with additional meetings for regional hub leads and working groups as needed. Lastly, we will be holding two Statewide Cross-sector Partner meetings in 2025, on July 10 and October 17.
NY	NY State Ed convened a committee to help determine teacher milestones for Climate Ed & Enviro Ed (kept interchanging terms) with no new learning standards and with no clear agenda (those on the committee still have no clue what the 2 meetings did besides allow State Ed officials to talk at us of what they thought of. NAAEE Guidelines, NJ Climate Standards, MD standards, WA standards were used as “guides” (Betsy)
DC	DCEEC received a CBT ROLN grant and they will begin the network weaving work.
MD	<p>Planning is underway for the 2026 MAEOE Conference, Parker McMullen Bushman will feature as keynote Towson, Maryland, from February 19-22, 2026. The theme is Rooted in Nature: Using the Outdoors to Empower Action and Understanding.</p> <p>2000 students and teachers attend the Maryland Green Schools Youth Summit on May 29. 54 new schools, 693 total MdGS.</p> <p>MAEOE received CBT funding to allow Network work to continue!!</p>
DE	DE group held 2 MWEE workshops- 1-day workshop in May; 3-day

	workshop in June. DAEE currently regrouping once new Board elections occur. Delaware State Parks hoping to join Stroud and Red Clay School District in fall for their mini-MWEE programs.
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10:10 Environmental Literacy Plans Project

NCBO's summer intern, Anna Atticks, described her work to assess district environmental literacy plans in the Mid-Atlantic this summer.

Goals of the project:

- Identify ELPs (drafts and active) across the Mid-Atlantic
- Identify criteria to gauge best practices
- Develop a resource to guide future ELP development and implementation

Criteria development

- Planning Phase Criteria:
 - Is there an established core team?
 - Is there representation from a variety of environmental literacy and sustainability leaders from inside the district as well as within the community?
 - Is there evidence of substantial conversations about sustainable funding for the experiences included in the ELP?
 - 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:
 - Are there ongoing professional learning opportunities for staff?
 - Are there local, school-based systems for ensuring teachers are supported?
 - Does the ELP provide clear areas for engagement of non-teaching staff (facilities/administrative staff)?
 - Has the ELP facilitated the development or enhancement of community partnerships?
 - Are student experiences scaffolded appropriately, increasing student environmental literacy over time?
- Revision Phase Criteria
 - Is there an established measure of success for the ELP?
 - Is there a clear way of documenting the completion of aspects of the ELP on an annual basis?
 - What is the frequency of review and revision for the ELP?

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- Anna Atticks, anna.atticks@noaa.gov

Discussion:

Vince M - I'll have SJ (EarthForce) reach out to Anna about ELPs.

Olivia W - Is the final product of your project Anna a polished list of these criteria for use by school districts? Or some kind of final report?

- Anna - The goal is to create a publicly available list of the ELPs collected as well as a report out on the criteria/ what makes an ELP effective.

Lindsey W - I'm assuming that since this is the CBP Workgroup this is specific to the Ches Bay?

- Elise - Anna is looking mostly at ELPs in the region but there are some resources that she is looking at that come from other areas of the country. Do you have any suggestions about plans or resources she should look at?

Karen M - Does it make sense for Planning/Revision to be one criteria and Implementation to be the other? So only 2 cyclical, constant criteria to make it appear more simple.

- Anna - I agree, that may also encourage districts that are trying to develop a new ELP to keep the document as a living document open to revision if that's incorporated into the planning process.

Laura C - The work/report can support other districts to participate.

10:20 Environmental Literacy Outcomes

Olivia Wisner reviewed the updated Student Experiences Outcome, District Planning Outcome, and their associated targets. For a more comprehensive summary of the Beyond 2025 revision process, new Outcomes, and Targets (including % targets per state) see [slides 12-19](#). A brief summary is included below:

Updated Environmental Literacy Outcomes Summary:

As a Workgroup, we updated the Outcomes under the Environmental Literacy Goal through a deliberate process that included listening sessions, the GIT 5 Outcome Assessment Survey, state meetings, review of our Environmental Literacy Indicator Tool (ELIT) Survey data, and outreach to state agency leadership. All of the incredible feedback collected helped inform our updated 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.

What we did to update this Outcome:

- **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.
- **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.
- **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.

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.

What we did to update this Outcome:

- **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 provides spaces for outdoor learning and meaningful examples of local environmental action.
- **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.”
- **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.

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10:30 Tracking the Outcomes

The group began to discuss how to add to and revise our performance monitoring. Elise summarized the aspects of the Environmental Literacy Indicator Tool survey that collect data that informs how we talk about EL across the region. She showed how this story is visualized on ChesapeakeProgress. See [slides 20-26](#).

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

- 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)?

Discussion:

Laura - Jemima and I have talked about how we are not telling everything effectively, we’re not showing the whole picture.

Karen Mullin - I think we need to know the **why** of where it works (and works well).

Candace L-F - Additional stories: how student ELIt/MWEE experiences improve science knowledge, understanding, and skills; improvement in student test scores; this would resonate with school division admin and state DOE

- Laura C - And Partnerships and collaboration

Angel B - Like being able to measure and report on collaborative efforts towards environmental literacy of partners in the networks - not necessarily reported on by one district at a time if it is a broader effort

Laura C - Some of this might come through Gen-thrive as well.

Elise - We've heard that people want to know about what's going on besides MWEEs. But what about those experiences do we want to know/hear?

- Shannon - There's weaving that happens from those earlier experiences up to full MWEEs. And I am really interested in being able to tell the story of how districts navigate and grow those programs over time.

Laura C - One of the things that we're going to be looking at this year is the impact that principal/teacher turnover has on the continuity of knowledge around EL and Green Schools, because when the leader leaves there is a large gap left behind. We want to understand how we can help schools/districts through those transitions so that important work is not lost.

Olivia - I've wondered if outdoor school experiences are reflected in our current data. I would qualify that as an "inquiry based" environmental literacy instruction

Coreen - Do students feel like they are prepared for their future -- green workforce, making decisions that are good for people and the planet, climate adaptation? Also, do School systems feel like this ELit legacy has prepared their students better for the future and how so?

Vince - I think we need to document (if we can) the kind of authentic learning experiences young people have. I don't know how you measure that, but it feels like school districts are asking about that issue a lot more now.

Breakouts: The group reviewed the Environmental Literacy Indicator Tool (ELIT) survey in breakouts to determine:

- (1) How can data collected in ELIT help us tell the environmental education story?
- (2) What other data or information are we collecting in different spaces that could help tell this story?
- (3) What information do we not have?

The full breakout responses are available in the [Canva Whiteboard](#) or this [Canva Summary Google Sheet](#). A few responses are included below:

1. How can data collected in ELIT help us tell the environmental education story?
 - Find a teacher or school that has a great story and then follow up with the district - what was in place to let that happen? ELIT data can help us identify and interpret these success stories.
 - Models for replication by other districts

2. What other data or information are we collecting in different spaces that could help tell this story?

Outdoor Experiences

- Virginia Naturally
- CBT progress reports & grant applications
- Maryland Green Schools, NWF EcoSchools
- Student attendance
- DC School Health Profile
- DC course collection data project
- Student data - state test results
- MAEOE student college scholarship applications
- Add outdoor experiences to ELIT

Professional development

- Millersville data on PD
- Teacher retention
- PA status and needs survey (SAS network)

Sustainable Schools

- Landcover data on school grounds
- MD Green Schools - levels of participation based on yrs in program.
- Earlier certification levels of EcoSchools program
- USGBC has the database of all LEED certified buildings, which can be filtered for schools
- DC School Health Profile has info on sustainability metrics (green cleaning, recycling)
- Some cities/states might have energy benchmarking or stormwater reduction stats that are publicly available for schools

District Planning

- Environmental components of district strategic plans?
- Green School Alliance might have data to source?

3. What information do we not have?
 - Progress/stories from districts that didn't respond to ELIT
 - Charter schools
 - Teacher interviews - for example, do they feel that pre-service elit efforts would make the difference we believe it would? Do they find ELPs supportive/effective?
 - Student interviews

- Project, Wet, Wild, and Learning tree - can we get annual info on who is doing what?
 - \$\$\$ saved by implementing sustainable school actions
 - Barriers to developing an environmental literacy plan
 - How does participating in EE during K-12 experience influence career decisions?
 - Do we have strong definition for inquiry based education?
 - Whether US-GRS will continue. If not, is there another recognition that might emerge that has a common standard of achievement? Not necessarily EcoSchools
 - Improved collection of the partners that LEAs are working with. Already included in the ELIT survey but want more detail.
 - Which NGSS standards are being achieved through EE?
 - Affiliate EE Cert program numbers
4. Other
- Could we REPACKAGE the ELit data to be useful to the LEAs that fill it out?

11:10 Upcoming Events: Virtual EL Forum & EL Summit

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.

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.


Discussion:

- For the Virtual EL Forum, there will be a strong focus on creating and sharing inspirational state and regional stories. We will aim to create tangible products/ stories that can be shared with the EL Summit's audience a few months later.
- The Watershed Agreement will be signed in December, so the EL Summit will likely happen between January and March 2026.

- Laura C - To me this is really exciting. We need to make sure people can hear/see what "we" are doing and the impact on educators and students!!

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11:30 Adjourn – The meeting adjourned with members sharing gratitudes.