Next Generation Stewards Quarterly Progress Meeting Summary
May 12, 2022

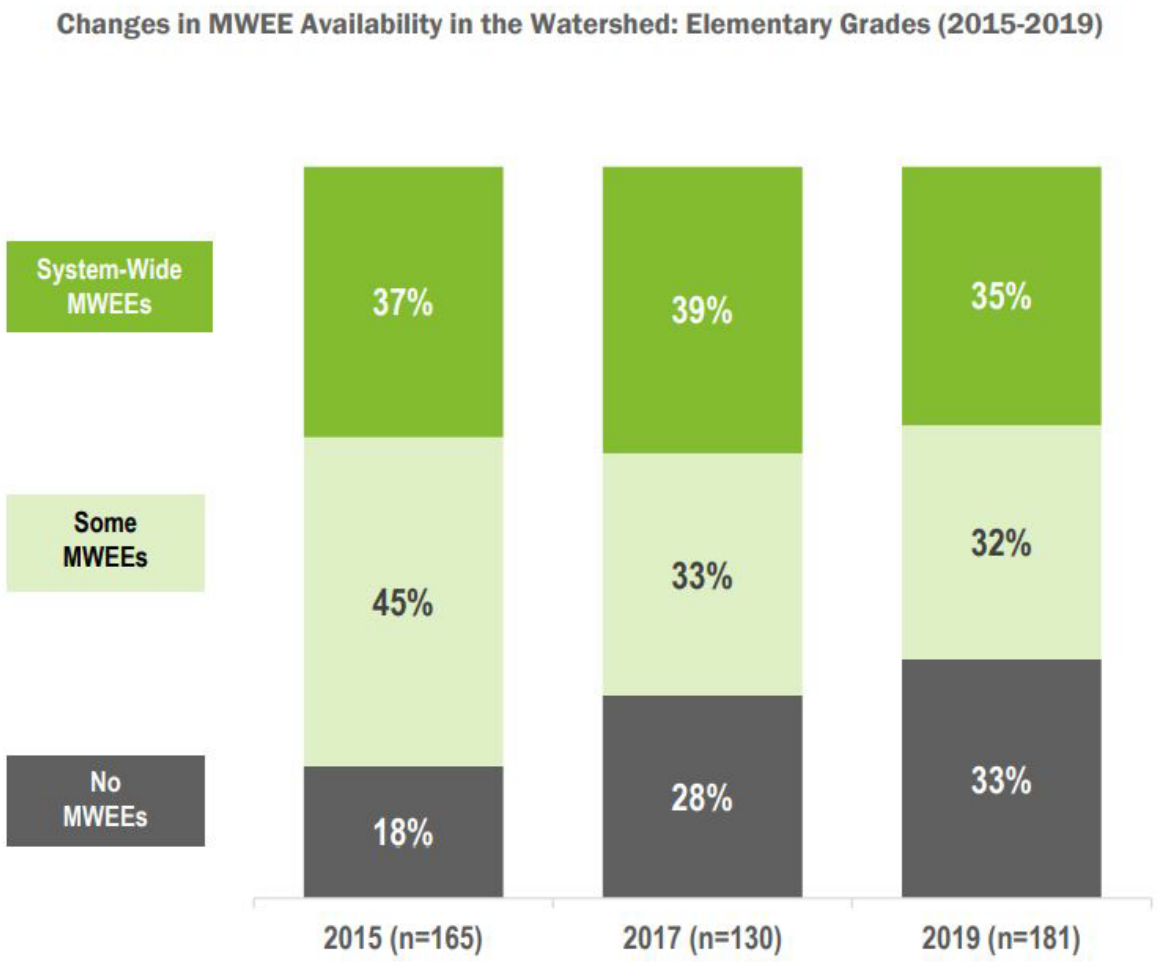
Student RECENT PROGRESS **NO CHANGE** | OUTLOOK **UNCERTAIN**

Chesapeake Progress Page: https://www.chesapeakeprogress.com/engaged-communities/student

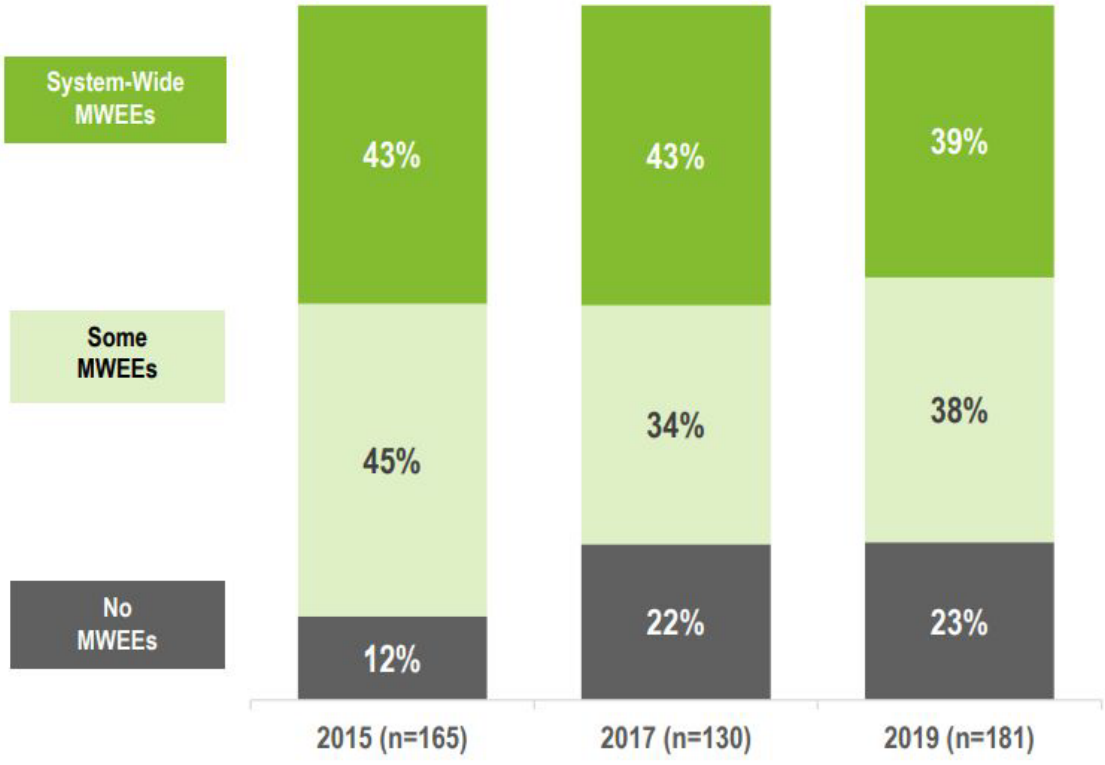
Goal: Environmental Literacy

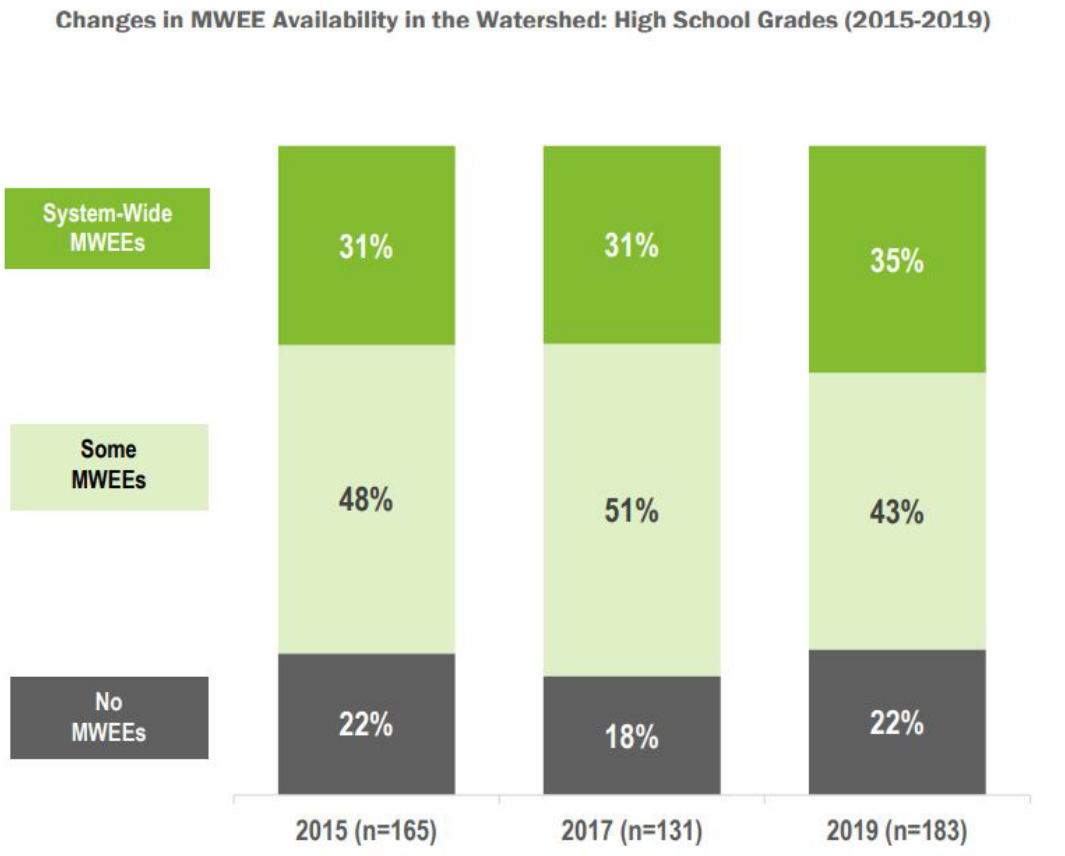
Outcome: Continually increase students' age-appropriate understanding of the watershed through participation in teacher-supported, meaningful watershed educational experiences and rigorous, inquiry-based instruction, with a target of at least one meaningful watershed educational experience in elementary,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

Progress:



Changes in MWEE Availability in the Watershed: Middle School Grades (2015-2019)





Success and Challenges:

- EPA Chesapeake Bay Office re-allocated funds for emergency grants to support non-profit environmental literacy providers.
    - Virtual adaptation of programs
    - Distribution of Grow-at-Home kits
    - Socially distanced outdoor events
    - Creation of new online resources
- What Worked:
    - Emergency grant funds for environmental literacy providers
    - Creative new tools/ being adaptable
    - Champions in the pre-service space
- What Didn't Work:
    - COVID-19:
    - Likely less full-fidelity MWEEs
    - Impeded efforts to connect with education leadership
    - Unclear how many districts were able to use COVID relief funds to support environmental education efforts

On the Horizon

- What is impacting our progress?
    - Virtual professional development.

- Lack of staff dedicated to coordinating field experiences, supporting student action, and developing partnerships
- Transportation cost barrier
- Connecting MWEEs and environmental education to other significant education priorities
- Focus on systemic, equitable, and sustainable as framing for MWEE implementation
- Increase focus on climate change education

We plan to:

- Leverage research demonstrating the health and safety benefits of outdoor learning
- Build on the Mid-Atlantic Environmental Education Network initiative within states and within Bay Program partnership
- Address the costs associated with systemic and sustainable programs (needed for district-level planning and professional development)
- Align with state and local education priorities (STEM, workforce, social-emotional learning, agriculture ed, etc.)
- Build a climate change education portfolio related to EL

Equitable and inclusive restoration

- Partners and funders using ELIT/ Equity Mapper used to identify priority geographies
- Increasing communication among funding entities to more equitably distribute existing funding
- The Outdoor Learning Network Initiative (OLNI) provides funding, grant management, and systemic partnership expertise to under resourced districts.

Awareness

- The pre-service teacher training programs need to incorporate environmental literacy
- Environmental Literacy needs to be better connected with CTE/STEM/Social and Emotional Learning /Ag Science – as an avenue to diversifying workforce
- Include environmental literacy funding opportunities as an allowable use for federal and state funds, including pandemic recovery funding.

Discussion

- In the spirit of networks, partnerships, and funding, are there existing state initiatives that could be supportive of the Student Outcome (MWEE)? Any remaining COVID funding to support this work?

Sustainable Schools

Chesapeake Progress Page: https://www.chesapeakeprogress.com/engaged-communities/sustainable-schools

Goal: Environmental Literacy

Sustainable Schools Outcome: 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:

Certified Sustainable Schools in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed (2015-2019)

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

Year	District of Columbia	Maryland	Pennsylvania	Virginia	West Virginia
2015	4	410	1	86	0
2017	5	503	2	99	1
2019	5	516	2	110	1

Success and Challenges

- **What Worked:**
  + Increased recognition of the benefits of outdoor learning
  + More conversations related to climate change as a result of being outdoors
- **What Didn't Work:**
  - School closures/ reopenings have halted or slowed student involvement in sustainable school activities
  - Sustainability projects seen as "extras"
  - Increase in disposable items (ex. lunch trays, water bottles, and facemasks)

Looking Back/On the Horizon

- Policy Impacts
  - MD: smaller grants have supported school composting projects
  - WV: reopened website to accept "Green Ribbon Schools" applications
  - PA: expanded recognition levels for schools and institutions (ex. DEIJ, agriculture education, curriculum integration, etc.
  - NAAEE issued "Guide to Advocating for Outdoor Classrooms in Coronavirus-Era School Reopening."
- Scientific Impacts:
  - Heightened attention on the health benefits associated with outdoor learning
- Fiscal Impacts:
  - New funding resources (ex. ESSER) used to improved school infrastructure *sometimes* used to facilitate outdoor learning

We plan to

- Administer ELIT Survey; Data Update to Chesapeake Progress
  - Watershed-wide, anticipate that the # of Sustainable Schools will be maintained/ slightly decreased due to COVID-19 challenges and program changes
- Return to sustainability projects
- Focus on connection between outdoor learning and social-emotional learning (SEL)
- Strategically engage additional resources coming from Biden Administration (ex. Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, various EOs, Action Plan for Building Better School Infrastructure)

Equitable and inclusive restoration

- Prioritize sustainable school efforts in all schools, with emphasis on schools in underserved communities
- Determine how to incorporate data related to health disparities and social determinants of health
- Promote sustainability projects, create healthier learning environments, make connections to env. literacy and green jobs…<u>while reducing costs and creating savings</u>
- Align with environmental justice and climate change priorities

Awareness

- Continue to look for opportunities to apply for and spend Bipartisan Infrastructure Law $$$ to create healthier schools.
    - Example: Schools with their own water systems can apply for EPA WIIN (the Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation) grants. Where are these schools?
    - Example: EPA's Clean School Bus Program ($5B over next 5 yrs)
- Assist with White House's "Action Plan for Building Better School Infrastructure" to upgrade public schools with modern, clean, energy efficient facilities and transportation
    - Under this Action Plan, the Department of Education is proposing a new Office of Infrastructure and Sustainability, as part of the President's FY2023 Budget - help make connections!
- Support new "No Child Left Inside Act," co-authored by MD Congressman Sarbanes, could provide $150M annually thru 2022

Discussion:

- Given the expected funding increase and potential for new legislation to improve school infrastructure and enhanced EE, how can we get ahead? What resources would be useful for you and the stakeholders with whom you work?

Environmental Literacy Planning

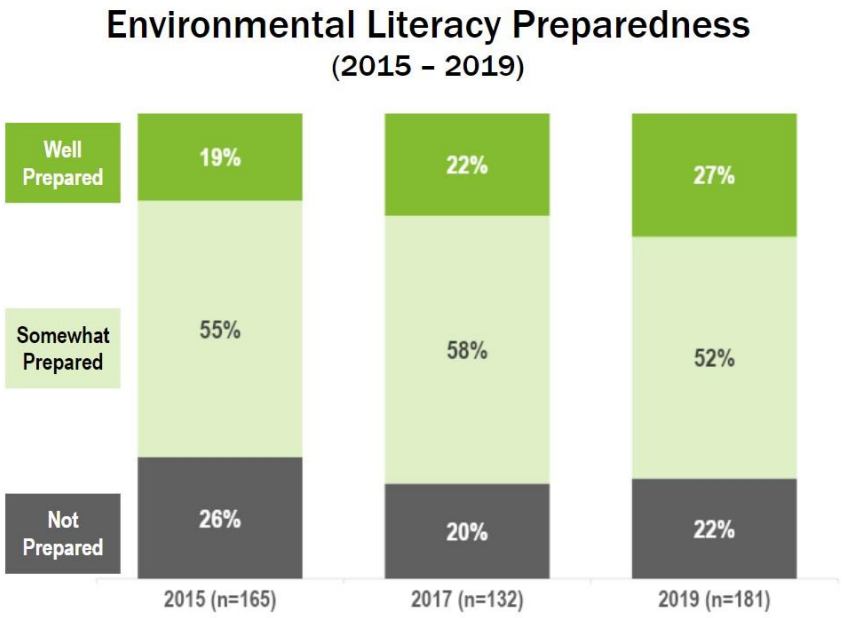
RECENT PROGRESS INCREASE | OUTLOOK ON COURSE

Chesapeake Progress Page: https://www.chesapeakeprogress.com/engaged-communities/environmental-literacy-planning

Goal: Environmental Literacy

Outcome: 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:



Successes and Challenges

- What Worked
  - Resources tailored to state priorities
  - Mid-Atlantic Environmental Education Network
  - Outdoor Learning Network Initiative
  - Leadership Summit
- What Didn't Work (yet!)
  - Figuring out sustainable funding model
  - Collecting and distributing examples

On the Horizon

- Funding
  - First round of NOAA B-WET grants focused on school district capacity building
  - Potential for large, short-term influx of funding to school districts
- Networks
  - Shift from establishing/learning to implementing State Networks in Mid-Atlantic Environmental Literacy Network

We plan to

- Provide technical assistance to strengthen and diversify environmental literacy networks
- Support state efforts to develop district-level environmental literacy plans
- Assess impact of COVID-19 through ELIT Survey
- Determine cost of MWEE implementation and work to fill the gap
- Continue Leadership Summits

Equitable and inclusive restoration

- Working with CBP data team to ensure up-to-date information on Diversity Dashboard
- Encouraging states and other funders to use that data to identify priority geographies
- Supporting Outdoor Learning Network Initiative (OLNI)
- Increasing state and regional Network Development

Awareness

- Critical gap at the Chesapeake Bay Program:
  - No Workgroup focused on youth who have graduated from high school but have yet to settle into career path (e.g. college students; first jobs; internships)
  - Creates gap for Workforce conversations

Discussion

- In your states or agencies, what efforts exist that are focused on creating a more diverse workforce in environmental fields?

Help Needed

Needed to achieve the Environmental Literacy Goal
Establish environment-focused pathways in both Career Technical Education (CTE) and STEM for each state to produce workforce ready graduates.
Actions to help partially address that need

1. Nominate staff from your agency and/or workgroup to participate in a conversation around diversifying the environmental workforce through youth programs (high school/first jobs/college), including exploring intentional pathways involving CTE/STEM. Send us names by May 26th.
2. Establishment of cross-GIT effort in Chesapeake Bay Program focused on Workforce pathways (Education Workgroup, Diversity Workgroup, STAC, others).

Needed to achieve the Environmental Literacy Goal

Sustainable funding to implement systemic environmental literacy programming in each school district.

Action to help partially address that need

Department of Education representatives/Management Board Members: We need to first understand the cost required to implement and sustain systemic MWEEs in your state, and how to collect this data. Potential options:

a. State departments of education distribute a funding survey with ELIT survey
b. Use technical contract to host interviews (example: buffers)
c. Other ideas?

Needed to achieve the Environmental Literacy Goal

Up-to-date data and information from every school district in the watershed on their efforts to create and sustain EL programming.

Action to help partially address that need

- Department of Education representatives: Send the Environmental Literacy Indicator Tool (ELIT) survey to district superintendents and content supervisors for each of the school districts in your states.
- Management Board Members: Encourage your education staff to reach out to school districts that they work with to support them with filling out the ELIT survey.

Needed to achieve the Environmental Literacy Goal

Maintain high level focus and coordination on Environmental Literacy Goal of state cabinet members and partners.

Action to help partially address that need

- It is Maryland's opportunity to host the 2023 Environmental Literacy Summit. PSC is the co-host of the event with Education Workgroup. Need agreement from Maryland PSC representative to co-host, and staff level contact(s) to begin planning in Fall.