

Environmental Literacy in Maryland

Why environmental literacy?

The well-being of the Chesapeake Bay watershed will soon rest in the hands of its youngest citizens: 2.7 million students in kindergarten through twelfth grade. Establishing strong environmental education programs now provides a vital foundation for these future stewards.

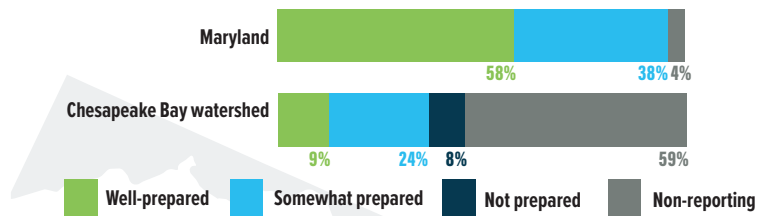
Along with Delaware, Virginia, Pennsylvania and Washington, D.C., Maryland has committed to helping its students graduate with the knowledge and skills needed to act responsibly to protect and restore their local watersheds. They will do this through:

- **Environmental Literacy Planning:** Developing a comprehensive and systemic approach to environmental literacy for students that includes policies, practices and voluntary metrics.
- **Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences (MWEEs):** Continually increasing students' understanding of the watershed through participation in teacher-supported Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences and rigorous, inquiry-based instruction.
- **Sustainable Schools:** Continually increasing the number of schools that reduce the impact of their buildings and grounds on the environment and human health.

The portion of Maryland that lies within the Chesapeake Bay watershed is home to 24 school districts serving 898,000 students. In 2017, 23 of Maryland's school districts responded to the Chesapeake Bay Program's survey to measure environmental literacy preparedness and MWEE availability in public schools.

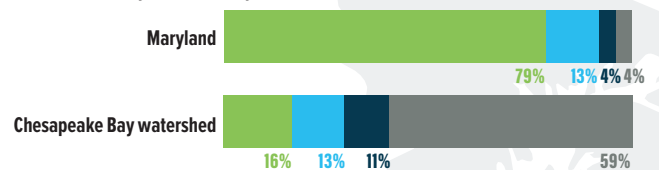
How does Maryland compare to the Chesapeake Bay watershed?

Environmental Literacy Planning: School districts' self-identified preparedness to put environmental literacy programs in place

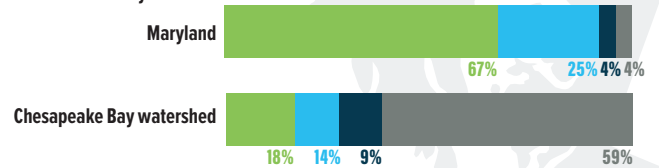


Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences (MWEEs): School districts that reported providing MWEEs to their students

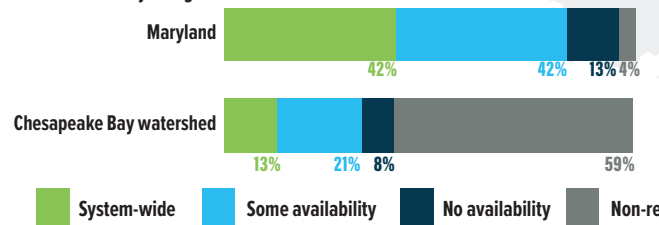
MWEE Availability in Elementary Schools



MWEE Availability in Middle Schools



MWEE Availability in High Schools



Sustainable Schools: Schools that are recognized as sustainable by U.S. Green Ribbon Schools, Eco-Schools USA, Maryland Green Schools, Pennsylvania Pathways to Green Schools or Virginia Naturally Schools



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School snapshot

Broadneck High School was designated as an Environmental Literacy Signature Program school in 2010, designed to connect classroom instruction with real-world situations and workforce-relevant skills.

Broadneck utilizes business partners to support instruction through a variety of activities including curriculum development (environmental literacy overlays), mentorship on capstone projects, guest speaking opportunities and field experiences. Though opportunities exist for students to enroll in a specific environmental literacy course, all students are afforded the opportunity to engage in environmental literacy curricular topics through Signature Overlays, a means of refocusing existing content so that it can be taught through the lens of environmental literacy.

A Maryland Green School, Broadneck is also a 2016 U.S. Department of Education (USED) Green Ribbon Honoree. The larger county system, Anne Arundel County Public Schools, received the 2016 USDE Green Ribbon District Award. Broadneck's sustainable practices are an integral part of their overall environmental literacy and community commitment.

Educator resources

Bay Backpack is a free, online resource that supports hands-on environmental learning and provides educators with information on funding opportunities, field studies, curriculum guides and lesson plans.

Bay Backpack is also home to *An Educator's Guide to the Meaningful Watershed Educational Experience*. Through MWEEs, students of all ages begin to develop a stewardship ethic that will support a lifelong relationship with the environment.

Learn more at baybackpack.com.



Environmental literacy in action: Students check oyster shells for spat, or juvenile oysters, during a workshop on Gunston School's Molly Dock that was part of the school's Earth Day celebration on April 22, 2015. In 2015, Gunston was certified as a Green School by the Maryland Association of Environmental and Outdoor Education.