

Governor Martin O'Malley's

# Maryland Partnership for Children in Nature

John R. Griffin, Chair

Secretary, Maryland Department of Natural Resources

Bernard J. Sadusky, Chair

Interim State Superintendent of Schools, Maryland State Department of Education

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July 28, 2011  
10 a.m.-12 p.m.

Maryland State Department of Education, Conference Room 6 (8<sup>th</sup> Floor)  
200 W. Baltimore St., Baltimore, MD 21201

## Meeting Agenda with Minutes

*Minutes taken and submitted by Cindy Etgen, Maryland Department of Natural Resources*

### 10:00 Welcome / Introductions/ Overview

Secretary John Griffin, DNR and Mary Cary, Assistant State Superintendent for Instruction, MSDE

Mary Cary thanked everyone present for all of their hard work in helping get the Environmental Literacy Graduation requirement passed and for being present at the meetings. She also noted because of all of the wonderful stakeholders involved we are going to be able to drive the regulation off of the shelf and right into the classroom.

Mary then enthusiastically introduced Dr. Bernard (Bernie) J. Sadusky, Interim State Superintendent of Schools as a "wild-eyed environmentalist that is very supportive of what we are doing." Dr. Sadusky has been a science teacher, an outdoor educator, and the Queen Anne's County Superintendent of Schools. Dr. Sadusky gave us some wonderful anecdotes of his experiences with environmental education on the Eastern Shore from the '70's while emphasizing his personal commitment to support the Partnership's efforts.

Mary updated us on the Gifted and Talented Summer Centers that are happening this summer all over the state; emphasizing that these 11 Centers were possible because of private funders. Some of the Centers include: The Center for Ecosystems at Horn Point Environmental Center; The Center for Conservation Research at Harford Glen Environmental Education Center; and The Center for Solar and Wind Power at Frostburg State University.

Mary then announced that MSDE, through Mary Thurlow (Division of Instruction), has applied to USDE to be one of the leaders in the development of the National Science Standards. It is important that Maryland be involved in this to see that environmental standards are woven throughout the science standards. Maryland is currently a lead in the Math, English, and Social Studies National Standards.

John Griffin then gave a presentation to recognize Mark Herzog, co-chair with Dr. Kevin Maxwell of the Partnership's Environmental Literacy Group, a driving force behind the Partnership and moving the graduation requirement forward. Mark retired from Harford County Public Schools on July 1<sup>st</sup> after a long and distinguished career as a science teacher, Assistant Science Supervisor, and Director of Harford Glen Environmental Education Center. Mark has taken a position at Towson University and plans to continue being involved with the Partnership. Mark can be reached at [rherzog@towson.edu](mailto:rherzog@towson.edu).

John also mentioned that Jeff Horan, Director of Watershed Services (DNR), is leaving his position to take a position with US Fish and Wildlife Service in Hadley, Massachusetts. Jeff has been involved with the Partnership since the beginning, has supervised staff coordinating the effort for DNR, and has remained an active supporter. He will be missed but we wish him well.

*[continued...]*

## 10:15 Children in Nature Initiatives – Updates and Discussion:

Before Gary (Hedges) began his update Mary wanted to update and clarify on Race to the Top Funds:

Science is the umbrella where most of the environmental work will be seated. This summer, Educator Effectiveness Academies, organized by MSDE and funded through Maryland's Race To The Top Grant, were held at 11 high schools across the state between June 27 and August 3, 2011. Over 6,000 educators—four-member teams including an administrator, STEM teacher, mathematics teacher, and an English language arts (ELA) teacher from each school in the state—attended the three-day academies. They received professional development centered on the Common Core State Standards for mathematics and ELA as well as STEM instructional strategies. Each team will provide professional development to staff members at their respective schools during the upcoming academic year, and participate in two follow-up days of professional development sponsored by MSDE.

STEM was a theme throughout Maryland's Race to the Top application. Governor O'Malley's Task Force made recommendations and those are available on line at: [http://marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/programs/race\\_to\\_the\\_top/](http://marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/programs/race_to_the_top/). Mary encourages everyone to look at those recommendations. The STEM discussion truly is multi-disciplinary and does include environmental literacy and environmental education. The hard work is now, and we do not want the regulation to sit on the shelf. Mary encouraged people to stay involved, and for those that were new to the group to get involved.

Mary noted that there have been some questions on whether there was STEM money available to support environmental literacy. Everything is committed monetarily, with the budget being spelled out in the application. MSDE gets 50% of the money, and the LEA's get 50% of the money. However, the impact for environmental education is embedded in the process.

Once the new science standards are in place, then we will dig down into the essential skills, and the E-Lit standards will be part of that. The National Research Council released the Conceptual Framework for Science Education Standards in July, 2011. From the Framework, Achieve will develop the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) through a collaborative effort with state education agencies. The standards are expected to be released in late 2012. MSDE staff will align our curriculum with the three components of the NGSS: Core concepts, cross-cutting issues, and science and engineering practices. The alignment of the Environmental literacy standards will be part of that process and they are expected to have strong connections to all three components.

## 10:15 – 10:50 Environmental Literacy implementation and support for school systems

*Gary Hedges, MSDE and Jamie Baxter, Chesapeake Bay Trust (CBT)*

**PROGRESS REPORT:** Overview of guidance materials and process underway to support E-Lit programs in schools and for EE providers. Discussion of opportunities for Partnership input.

The Standards and Practices Workgroup reviewed the environmental literacy standards and indicator statements for connections to the existing curricula in science, social studies, health, CTE, fine arts, mathematics and English language arts. The workgroup back-mapped through four grade bands—PK-2, 3-5, 6-8, and 9-12—to identify language within the existing curricula that would build students' understanding of environmental literacy standards.

The workgroup wrote the Common Qualities of Effective Environmental Literacy Programs to make recommendations that would guide the implementation of programs within each school system. In addition, the group worked with the Every Student-Every Year (ESEY) group to identify resources and suggest strategies to promote the use of outdoor experiences to improve environmental literacy among students, PK-12. The ESEY recommendations were incorporated into the Common Qualities document.

The workgroup also developed the draft version of a COMAR certification document that could be used by school systems to identify where opportunities exist for students to address the environmental literacy standards. In addition, the workgroup produced a planning document to guide school systems in identifying gaps and opportunities in their programs, as well as in their professional development program for teachers and administrators.

*[continued...]*

Gary (Document – DRAFT Environmental Literacy Program FOR DISCUSSION ONLY)

This is the draft certification document that the workgroup developed. Since the draft was first sent out for comment from within the group, they took the burdensome parts out of the document, wanting the Local Education Agencies (LEA's) to use the document as a planning tool. The document is based on COMAR regulation and is broken down into sections so that systems could see where their schools fit into the COMAR requirements. It is important for the survey to look familiar to the school systems.

Jamie: (Document – Common Qualities of Effective Environmental Literacy Programs for Local Education Agencies – DRAFT 7/25/11) – This document was produced to complement the Environmental Literacy Program document that Gary introduced. The guide is intended to provide local school systems and their partners with additional information and resources to aid in the development and implementation of high quality environmental literacy programs as required by COMAR. The document includes the common qualities of effective programs for: Program Development and Curriculum Infusion; Environmental Education Instruction and Methodology; Professional Development and School Support System; and Tracking and Assessment. It also gives examples of emerging Models of Environmental Literacy Programs in Maryland Schools.

**NEXT STEPS/ DISCUSSION:** Implementation of E-Lit programs in schools; Partnership's role:

- Communicating E-Lit requirements to LEAs – How will MSDE be communicating with superintendents/LEAs about the graduation requirement?
- MSDE oversight of LEA E-Lit programs – What is process for ensuring that school systems are meeting requirements, timeline for reporting, how will results be shared?
- Race to the Top Funding – How might this support E-Lit programs, what is the possibility of integrating E-Lit with STEM initiative?

Discussion and Questions:

Britt: How is all of this going to be rolled out; and how can the Partnership help with that?

Mary Cary: Mary, Gary Hedges, and Dr. Sadusky have discussed a cross-disciplinary approach and because the Assistant Superintendents of all school districts report to them, the communication needs to begin there (Mary meets with the Asst. Superintendents monthly). Mary wants a multi-faceted communication, "a full court press" that will include the health, science, and social studies supervisors as well. Gary is planning a meeting for next week, and communication will be included in scheduled briefings and at a special session at the MAEOE Conference in February. Mary also commented that with Dr. Maxwell at the Superintendent's table, communication will be strong there as well.

How can the Partnership help? The needs assessment will show where there are gaps. The stakeholders from the Partnership and beyond can help the counties because the resource issue for the schools is a huge issue. At some point there needs to be a discussion between the Assistant Superintendents and some of the folks from the Partnership that are interested in the education side of this because this conversation is critical. Mary would like to have this as a "drill down" at one of the meetings. Don Baugh made the comment that the more public the county plans are, the better resource providers can help.

Jamie Baxter: At a separate time it would be beneficial to learn more about how this is unfolding in the school systems. Perhaps the Partnership could hold regional planning meetings to help LEA's engage environmental education resources provider's help. This is being considered as a part of the process to support school systems as they develop their plans.

Mary Rivkin: Wanted to make sure that the Green Schools did not get left out of the picture as natural leaders in this process. They are a huge resource to this process and to the schools out there that are not Green Schools. MAEOE and Green Schools needs to be intertwined in this whole process.

Steve Barry: The Instrument that Gary presented represents COMAR from top to bottom. Steve does not agree with Gary's comment that the environmental standards are strong enough [though since they are in COMAR they can't be changed at this point], but as long as we keep things like issue investigation and action oriented projects in, he can live with them. The [planning portion] is a survey; not part of the certification.

**ACTION ITEM:** Email any additional comments to Jamie and Gary by 8/5/11. → **This date has since changed to 8/12 and revised drafts will be sent to all for review, and an online form is to be used and submitted for comments.**

**10:50 – 11:10 Summary of Community and Public Lands Initiatives – Britt Slattery, MD DNR**

**PROGRESS REPORT:** Overview of accomplishments, actions and priorities.

**NEXT STEPS/ DISCUSSION:** Work plan development process, timeline, decision.

Britt: (Document – Maryland Partnership for Children in Nature Progress Summary – July 2011)

A lot of work has been done and is being done. Everyone should have an active role and there are many ways that people can participate and contribute. The four page document was condensed down to give an overview of the objectives and current initiatives as well as updated leads and contact information, and a brief indication of needs and some future steps for each.

Britt met with/ received feedback from each of the leads, looking at the original initiatives in the plan, where they are now, and where are we headed with each initiative. As a group we need to look at: Is this where we want to be? Are we reaching the goals with these actions? Is anything missing/ needed? The more overarching initiatives can be found on the back page, and we need to put more energy into progress on some of these, in particular the outreach component.

Britt proposed that between now (perhaps the end of August/beginning of September) and the October 24<sup>th</sup> meeting that the leads and others (all are welcome!) meet for an all day facilitated work session – a “Planning Rally” – to create a 1-3 year work plan.

John Griffin suggested any overarching theme of helping schools with the outdoor component; how to provide opportunities. Jackie Carrera reminded the group about the importance of not losing the family piece in all of the discussion about schools.

Steve Barry: The resource providers need to understand the education process; need to have a connection and understanding of the purpose of issue investigation. This could be done regionally, but it needs to be done at the staff level not the supervisory level (leadership level). The providers must understand the schools’ needs, requirements, and educational process.

Cathy Allen: when this is rolled out: Where is the marketing? Is this going to be rolled out to the general public? Parents? Urban Community? Britt explained the Additional Initiative: Outreach and Communication and the importance of increasing public awareness. She asked Cathy to join that group.

**11:10 The Partnership’s Structure/ Leadership – Catherine Shanks, MD DNR**

What is the most effective organization to support implementation? – discussion/ decision.

Cathie: (Document – Partnership for Children in Nature–Future Structure)

Cathie did a brief overview of the past structure of the Partnership and how it functioned. She then presented a suggested more streamlined structure for the way that the Partnership is currently functioning using a Memorandum of Understanding. The MOU would give some level of accountability among members of the Partnership and would be for a term of [suggested] five years with one five-year renewal at the option of members. The members would be responsible for implementing parts of the plans both major and minor. The Steering committee (MOU signatories) would design the work plan, set priorities for the year, and track progress. The Partnership would have oversight of the work plan.

Comments/Discussion:

Mary: Was the impetus behind this because the Executive Order did not speak to implementation? [Yes] Why was the choice made to use an MOU versus MOA because MOU suggest exchange of funds; MSDE would not be comfortable using an MOU. Cathie said that it could be an MOA instead.

Jackie: With the original plan (by appointment), it was individual participation versus organizational participation. Will the MOU/MOA eliminate individual participation?

Cathie: We would come up with a pledge system or adjunct agreement for individuals. We do not want to eliminate anyone from participating. This structure is intended to help make it more inclusive.

Laura Collard (MAEOE): In her work experience a group functioning as a Partnership would identify the priorities and the Steering Committee would work on priorities. Will there be a major showcase event each year?

Lori Arguelles (Alice Ferguson Foundation): How is this different from the original group?

Cathie: The structure of the group since finalizing the plan has been very fluid. We do not have a good handle on who we are working with and who is coming because they are interested and who is really involved.

Mary: The Partnership has met the goal of the original Executive Order (to develop the plan); we now want to form a group to take the next steps beyond the Executive Order.

Jamie: Because of the amount of individuals and organizations that contribute, an MOA will be effective in advancing the work and tracking incremental progress.

### **11:30 Federal Efforts and MD's Role – Shannon Sprague, NOAA Environmental Literacy Manager**

Shannon gave an abbreviated power point on Federal efforts to meet a portion of the Obama Executive Order on Chesapeake Bay, which calls for an Environmental Literacy [Education] Strategy. NOAA is the lead agency on this strategy and is coordinating with state efforts so that the Federal strategy will support states' initiatives. Therefore, NOAA is also coordinating with the North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE), which is coordinating with their affiliates (MAEOE is Maryland's affiliate) on state Environmental Literacy Plans. If anyone would like the text from that power point she is more than happy to share it. Shannon also talked about the Chesapeake Bay Program Education Summit being held November 2-3 in Chevy Chase. They will try to pull together the coordinators for Race to the Top, STEM, Green Ribbon Schools, and the Urban Waters Initiative as well as others to speak at the Summit. Please contact Shannon for more information or if you are interested in attending.

[Shannon.Sprague@noaa.gov](mailto:Shannon.Sprague@noaa.gov)

### **11:40 What's Next?**

#### **ACTION ITEMS:**

1. Comments on the DRAFT Documents – (1) Environmental Literacy Program (certification survey) and (2) Common Qualities of Effective Environmental Literacy Programs for Local Education Agencies – send to Gary Hedges and Jamie Baxter by **8/5/11** → **This date has since changed to 8/12 and revised drafts will be sent to all for review, and an online form is to be used and submitted for comments.**
2. Britt Slattery will send out a doodle poll to set a date for the late August/early September work session ("Planning Rally").
3. Components that align with the Green Schools requirements will be added to the Common Qualities document before it is finalized.
4. Any comments on the Partnership structure presented at the meeting should be sent to Britt no later than **8/15/11** [bslattery@dnr.state.md.us](mailto:bslattery@dnr.state.md.us). **Please title your message "CIN Structure Comments."**
5. A letter will be sent from the Partnership thanking Senator Mikulski for being an original sponsor of the NCLI bill.
  - **Future meetings:**
    - Partnership Planning Rally, TBA August or September
    - October 24 [NEW DATE], full Partnership quarterly, Brookside Gardens, Wheaton
  - **Announcements:**
    - No Child Left Inside Act reintroduction – *Don Baugh, CBF/ NCLI Coalition*
  - **Upcoming events:**
    - **TODAY July 28, 5-7 pm:** MDNCLI / CBT E-Lit Celebration, CBF Merrill Center, Annapolis
    - October 12-15, NAAEE Conference, Raleigh-Durham, NC
    - Nov 2-3, Chesapeake Bay Program Education Summit, Chevy Chase

**12:00** Adjourn meeting – **All are encouraged to continue discussions together over lunch off-site.**

***Thank you to MSDE for hosting us today***