



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
Department of Education

April 24, 2015

TO: Division Superintendents

FROM: Steven R. Staples, Superintendent of Public Instruction

SUBJECT: The Education Goal of the 2014 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement

In June 2014, Governor Terry McAuliffe signed the [Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement](#), a multijurisdictional compact that commits the Bay-region states to meet important consensus goals both in environmental sustainability and K-12 education. The **Education Goal** of the Agreement commits the Commonwealth to:

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

In meeting this goal, the Governor has committed Virginia's school divisions to:

- *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.*
- *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.*

In support of the Bay Agreement, Virginia state agencies and their science and environmental education partners have collaboratively planned a) two informational webinars and b) a state-wide, in-depth planning meeting on science and environmental literacy to assist school divisions in meeting the goal and outcomes defined above.

Webinars

The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) and the Virginia Resource-Use Education Council (VRUEC) will offer two informational webinars that will focus on the environmental goal and outcomes, the management strategy and associated plans, and a data collection tool for school divisions, the Environmental Literacy Indicator Tool (ELIT). These one-hour webinars for school division science and environmental education leaders will be held on May 6, 2015, at 10 a.m. and May 7, 2015, at 3 p.m. Registration for the webinars may be found at the [Science Instruction](#) Web page.

Virginia Science Education Leadership Association Meeting: Building Virginia's Capacity for Science and Environmental Literacy

The VDOE and VRUEC have partnered with the Virginia Science Education Leadership Association (VSELA) to provide a more in-depth opportunity for school division science and environmental education leaders to

consider how they will implement the Bay Agreement's education goal and outcomes. This important professional development and informational meeting will be conducted as a part of VSELA's spring meeting, May 28-29, 2015, at the Natural Bridge Park and Historic Hotel. Registration, meal, and lodging expenses for **one representative** from each public school division will be covered through a grant from the Chesapeake Bay Trust and VSELA's professional development fund.

School division leaders will actively learn about:

- current activities related to meaningful watershed educational experiences and school sustainability efforts;
- mechanisms for incorporating or enhancing their current activities;
- valuable educational resources, including grant opportunities; and
- the Environmental Literacy Indicator Tool and voluntary data-reporting.

The deadline for registration is May 15, 2015. More information about this event and a draft agenda may be found on the [VSELA Web site](#). This meeting is being partially funded with a grant from the Chesapeake Bay Trust.

Additional information regarding science and environmental literacy efforts will be shared in the coming weeks. For more information, please contact Eric M. Rhoades, director, Office of Science and Health Education, by e-mail at Eric.Rhoades@doe.virginia.gov or by telephone at (804) 786-2481.

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