



Jones, Stephanie

From: Laura Branby <lbranby@allegheny.edu>
Sent: Friday, June 4, 2021 1:18 PM
To: ED, State Board of Ed
Subject: [External] Proposed Amendments to 22 Pa. Code Chapter 4

ATTENTION: This email message is from an external sender. Do not open links or attachments from unknown sources. To report suspicious email, forward the message as an attachment to CWOPA_SPAM@pa.gov.

Hello,

Please add my comments to the pile of those who **oppose** the proposed changes to 22 Pa Code Chapter 4.

The national environmental education community celebrated the current standards when they were released. Other states looked to the Pennsylvania Environment & Ecology standards as something to emulate. The opportunity to focus on those standards in cross-curricular ways allows for teachers of many different subjects to address those standards. Students take the learning to heart when the subject comes alive and especially when a subject exits the math/science/english/social studies silos to become 'real' to them.

The advent of the current pandemic has made it even more clear that environmental learning is undeniably important to our education AND our emotional and physical health. We all experienced the relationship between ourselves and the natural/environmental world. This is the time to push for MORE robust environmental learning not to remove the prominence of that learning in our education standards.

Recently, we have seen environmental education facilities shuttered and students have lost the in-depth learning that immersion in a nature field trip/camp affords them. Our local school district students are profoundly impacted by the closure of McKeever Environmental Learning Center where the 5th grade students experienced the natural world for three days and two nights then had the opportunity to extend their learning through subsequent school years. That experience can't be replicated by a walk in the woods next to the school... although that, too, is important.

I have worked as an environmental educator in western PA for over 20 years. I watch the growth of students from 5th grade to 12th grade, through their college years, and into their careers. The lessons they learn through a robust environmental education experience stick with them! Those experiences make them a more aware citizen who is more involved in the health of the world around them... whatever job/career they choose.

Environmental education is much too important and relates to too many fields of study to place it as a small part of the science curriculum in Pennsylvania education standards.

Thank you,
Laura Branby

Laura Branby
Creek Connections
Allegheny College
<http://creekconnections.allegheny.edu>
laura.branby@allegheny.edu
724.822.3290 (cell)