



September 9, 2014

Dr. Kirk Havens, Chair  
CBP Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee  
645 Contees Wharf Road  
P.O. Box 28  
Edgewater, Maryland 21037

Dear Dr. Havens:

The Management Board sincerely thanks the Chesapeake Bay Program's Scientific and Advisory Committee (STAC) for their support in developing the July 2013 workshop report entitled: "Research-Based Best Practices for Environmental Education." This report includes key recommendations for advancing environmental literacy grounded on evidence-based research, and validates earlier work to establish the Meaningful Watershed Educational Experience as a best practice in environmental education that leads to increased stewardship in students. It also highlights the challenging and extremely important nature of developing legitimate indicators and metrics for environmental literacy in students.

We agree with the Committee's specific recommendations regarding educational best practices in the area of students, educators, and Green Schools. These recommendations, along with other conclusions from the STAC sponsored workshop, are providing the framework for a new environmental literacy goal and related outcomes of the Chesapeake Bay Program, and the development of an updated definition of the Meaningful Watershed Educational Experience that will form the cornerstone for environmental education policy in the region.

#### Response to Direct STAC Recommendations

##### Recommended Best Practices for Students

We fully agree with the suggestions made by researchers and participants regarding recommended best practices for students. Research presented at the workshop confirmed essential elements of the Meaningful Watershed Educational Experience (MWEE) that the Program has promoted since 2000, such as the importance of issues or place-based learning programs rooted in investigating real-world environmental problems. While we are pleased these original MWEE tenants remain rooted in current research, there was general agreement among workshop participants that the research highlighted

additional practices that should be added to an updated MWEE definition. The recommendations for students are included in an updated draft of the MWEE definition that is currently being drafted by Education Workgroup leadership and will be finalized in fall, 2014.

Recommended Best Practices for Educators

The STAC workshop highlighted the need for a detailed set of best practices for educators that focus on both the set of skills educators should have to advance environmental literacy in students, and the essential components of professional development that will lead to these skills. The two recommendations specifically highlighted in the STAC workshop report letter address each of these areas. While the Program has led the way in advancing student stewardship through the MWEE, educators are clearly central to this experience. The updated MWEE definition includes language that stresses the importance of teachers in delivering student MWEEs, and specifies “Active Teacher Support” as an essential practice to support the MWEE.

Recommended Best Practices for Green Schools

The specific STAC recommendations for Green Schools are consistent with the Program’s vision for advancing student environmental literacy. The Workgroup organized a session at the 2013 Environmental Literacy Summit (December 1-2) that focused on greater coordination across the many Green school programs operating in the Chesapeake region. A result of this Summit was the formation of the Mid Atlantic Sustainable Schools Team, a sub-group of the Education Workgroup. This team is meeting October 1-2, 2014 in Shepherdstown, West Virginia to discuss the development of a management strategy for the Sustainable School outcome of the new Chesapeake Bay Agreement. The adoption of a set of best practices noted by STAC will be addressed at this workshop, as well as other best practices pertaining to the management of these individual programs.

Please extend our thanks to STAC for its support of this workshop and the subsequent recommendations. We appreciate the role of STAC in serving as an independent review body in improving our overall management of the Chesapeake Bay restoration effort.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Nicholas A. DiPasquale". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Nicholas A. DiPasquale, Chair  
Management Board

cc: Management Board  
Goal Implementation Team Chairs