

K-12 Implementation

Integrating Environment and Sustainability across the K-12 Educational Enterprise

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Environmental and sustainability education is an essential element of K-12 curriculum that should be infused and integrated across all disciplines.

Policy

1. K-12 policy must include education in environmental sustainability as a core priority. Resources must be allocated for research and implementation in sustainable practices and ideas. State and Federal government should include standards for and appropriate assessment of sustainability criteria and environmental comprehension.

Learning Outcomes/Strategies

2. Sustainability education should foster the development of problem-solving skills, higher order thinking, and inquiry, using experiential methods that focus on the local environment and community, and link to global issues.
3. Schools should model sustainability through their facilities, school culture, personal relationships, and community involvement.
4. Schools should integrate subjects across disciplines and facilitate student understanding and application of systems thinking (the interactions between human and natural systems).
5. Schools should provide opportunities for students to explore and develop their own values about these issues.

Professional Development

6. Pre-service and in-service teacher training should emphasize inquiry-based learning and integrated systems-based thinking, leading to problem-solving in teaching and learning.
7. Career teachers need frequent opportunities to continue their education through participation in high quality professional development with colleagues across disciplines and grade levels.
8. Teachers need time and support to collaborate with their colleagues to develop interdisciplinary projects addressing sustainability.

Partnerships

9. Schools should form strategic partnerships with non-formal education organizations, such as nature-centers, zoos, museums, and parks.
10. Partnerships should connect students with their environment and their community, promote community service in environmental stewardship, and engage students in long-term environmental projects.