



We are seeking your feedback! The Colorado Environmental Education Plan, first adopted by the Colorado State Board of Education in 2012, is being revised and updated to meet Colorado's current needs and contexts. The revision process began in fall 2019 with a community wide survey and several focus groups. The Colorado Department of Education, Colorado Parks and Wildlife, and the Colorado Alliance for Environmental Education have incorporated the initial feedback into a new revised plan. Below you will find an executive summary of the revised plan and a summary of opportunities to provide your feedback. To read a full Draft Colorado Environmental Education Plan, visit [www.caee.org/eePlanRevision](http://www.caee.org/eePlanRevision).

## Executive Summary

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**Meaningful environmental and outdoor learning experiences bring us together to learn about our world, including how to best care for and sustain it for future generations.** Colorado's environment, economy, and communities depend on informed citizens who can make decisions about air and water quality; the health of farms, ranches, forests and wildlife; how to meet energy and other resource needs; how to create and sustain healthy communities; and how to provide opportunities for people to enjoy the state's natural beauty while protecting it for future generations.

The Colorado Environmental Education Plan outlines strategies for building a sustainable infrastructure to nurture a range of skills and interests and help realize every student's potential to care for the people, places, and planet we all depend on.

Colorado's Environmental Education Plan was first adopted by the Colorado State Board of Education in 2012 because of the Colorado Kids Outdoors Grant Program Legislation, HB10-1131, signed into law in May 2010.

Developing and implementing a statewide environmental education plan depends on the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) and Department of Natural Resources (DNR) leveraging an extensive circuitry of learning sites and partners to ensure that the knowledge and skills students gain, can be in one place and can easily flow to new contexts, powering further exploration and boosting ongoing learning.

Just as a root system supplies nourishment to a plant to help it flourish, the Colorado Environmental Education Plan supports implementation of the Colorado Academic Standards while developing students' environmental knowledge and skills and encouraging students to spend more time outside. The strategies outlined in this plan support teachers by encouraging the integration of high-quality environmental education opportunities and use of the outdoors in ways that are relevant, connected, and meaningful for their students.

## The Colorado Environmental Education Plan Articulates Four Main Goals:

- 1) Strengthen collaboration across the state among key stakeholders such as state agencies, formal and informal educators, business and industry partners, school districts, community organizations, and communities.**
  - a) Convene statewide EE conferences, regional meetings, and participate in associated conferences to build awareness, share best practices, and engage diverse stakeholders in action planning of culturally relevant EE;
  - b) Support schools and districts in developing an EE implementation plan;
  - c) Utilize common measurements/tools to evaluate regional impact and support coherence and collaborative planning;
  - d) Develop a strategy for funding environmental literacy across the state;
  - e) Create formal and informal pathways to transform 'random acts of environmental literacy' to opportunities for *all* young people to pursue and deepen their environmental interest and knowledge over time.
  
- 2) Provide professional development that increases high-quality, culturally-relevant learning experiences for students and develops a greater understanding of complex ecosystems.**
  - a) Develop an understanding of professional development opportunities available statewide;
  - b) Increase formal (in-service and pre-service) and informal educators' content knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, and instructional skills through:
    - i) Interdisciplinary, place-based and research-based instructional strategies;
    - ii) Innovative technologies as an integral element of environmental education;
    - iii) Best practices that underpin environmental education principles; and
    - iv) Culturally relevant and responsive teaching practices and program design.
  - c) Provide professional development opportunities for pre-service and in-service educators around place-based learning focusing on leveraging local knowledge, local practices, and indigenous ways of knowing central to environmental and outdoor learning experiences.
  
- 3) Improve statewide access to environmental education experiences for *all* students.**
  - a) Reduce barriers to opportunities and funding for teachers to provide environmental learning experiences for students;
  - b) Increase awareness within communities and among *all* families and caregivers for the need and benefits of outdoor experiences to:
    - i) Develop lifelong health, wellness, and civic-minded behaviors.
    - ii) Develop environmental stewardship skills such as the responsible use and protection of the natural environment through conservation and sustainable practices.
  - c) Improve access to equitable and culturally relevant EE learning experiences aligned to the Colorado Academic Standards.

**4) Create formal and informal pathways to explore career opportunities in the environmental field and understand how environmental literacy can inform a career in any field.**

- a) Identify barriers and develop strategies to support young people from under-represented populations in pursuing careers in environmental and natural resource fields;
- b) Identify existing P-20 pathways in environmental fields associated with Colorado's Career and Technical Education Plan and opportunities for collaboration and expansion;
- c) Educate career-influencers about the range of opportunities available and how to help youth navigate pathways and access resources;
- d) Increase awareness of career pathways in environmental fields across a variety of learning experiences;
- e) Create a work-based learning toolkit to support partner organizations in connecting with students and schools;
- f) Develop guidelines to support a local environmental literacy diploma endorsement.

## Share your Feedback

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We want to ensure that your voice and needs are included in the plan. There are several ways that you can share your feedback and ideas.

1. Complete the statewide survey available at [www.caee.org/eePlanRevision](http://www.caee.org/eePlanRevision).
2. Attend a feedback webinar on February 23<sup>rd</sup> from 11am-Noon, March 2<sup>nd</sup> from 5:00-6:00pm, or March 11<sup>th</sup> from 1:00-2:00pm.
3. Contact Katie Navin at [director@caee.org](mailto:director@caee.org) or 303-273-9527 ext. 1 to share feedback directly.

Feedback will be collected through March 31, 2021. We hope to launch the new Colorado Environmental Education Plan in summer 2021.