

CHAPTER 126A

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

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126A.01 ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION GOALS.

The environmental education program described in this chapter has these goals for the pupils and other citizens of this state:

- (1) to understand ecological systems;
- (2) to understand the cause and effect relationship between human attitudes and behavior and the environment;
- (3) to be able to analyze, develop, and use problem-solving skills to understand the decision-making process of individuals, institutions, and nations regarding environmental issues;
- (4) to be able to evaluate alternative responses to environmental issues before deciding on alternative courses of action;
- (5) to understand the potential complementary nature of multiple uses of the environment;
- (6) to provide experiences to assist citizens to increase their sensitivity and stewardship for the environment; and
- (7) to provide the information citizens need to make informed decisions about actions to take on environmental issues.

History: 1990 c 595 s 1

126A.02 OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION.

Subdivision 1. Director. The director of environmental education is appointed by the commissioner of education. The director may initiate, develop, implement, evaluate, and market informal environmental education programs; shall promote state government and private sector policy that is consistent with the environmental education programs established in section 126A.08; and may coordinate informal environmental education with the K-12 and post-secondary environmental education programs developed by the department of education and the state's post-secondary institutions.

Subd. 2. Board members. A 17-member board shall advise the director. The board is made up of the commissioners of the department of natural resources; the pollution control agency; the department of agriculture; the department of education; the director of the office of strategic and long-range planning; the chair of the board of water and soil resources; the executive director of the higher education coordinating board; the executive secretary of the board of teaching; the director of the extension service; and eight citizen members representing diverse interests appointed by the governor. The governor shall appoint one citizen member from each congressional district. The citizen members are subject to section 15.0575. Two of the citizen members appointed by the governor must be licensed teachers currently teaching in the K-12 system. The governor shall annually designate a member to serve as chair for the next year.

History: 1990 c 595 s 2; 1991 c 345 art 2 s 34,35

126A.03 STAFF.

The commissioner of education shall provide staff and consultant support for the office of environmental education. The support must be based on an annual budget and work program developed by the director and certified to the commissioner of education by the chair of the office's advisory board. The director may request staff support from any other agency of the executive branch as needed to execute the responsibilities of the director.

History: 1990 c 595 s 3; 1991 c 345 art 2 s 36

126A.04 POWERS AND DUTIES.

Subdivision 1. Planning. The director may develop a plan and establish a continuing planning process to achieve the goals for environmental education. The director may integrate the environmental education plans, strategies, and policies developed by the department of education and post-secondary institutions when developing their planning process and plan.

Subd. 2. Legislation. The director may review proposed legislation and funding requests relating to informal environmental education for consistency with the plan. The director shall also develop with the department of education and post-secondary institutions a process for coordinating the development of K-12 and post-secondary environmental education legislation and funding requests with the plan.

Subd. 3. Environmental education conference. The director may conduct an environmental education conference every other year to bring together the environmental education community to identify future issues, ascertain needs, and set priorities and goals. The results of the conference may be used in revising the plan.

Subd. 4. Advisory committees. The director shall establish advisory committees and a process to receive input from committees and others on K-12, post-secondary, and informal environmental education programs and needs, priority issues, and target audiences.

Subd. 5. Grants. The director may apply for, receive, and allocate grants and other money for environmental education.

History: 1990 c 595 s 4

126A.05 ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION COORDINATION PROCEDURES.

Subdivision 1. Communication. The director may establish and maintain methods of communication between environmental education producers, distributors, and consumers to encourage effective and timely programs.

Subd. 2. Technical assistance. The director may provide technical assistance to agencies and organizations for effective design and marketing of environmental education programs and for the writing of environmental education components in legislative proposals.

Subd. 3. Marketing and publicity. The director may provide marketing and publicity for environmental education programs of other agencies and organizations, within the priorities developed in the plan.

History: 1990 c 595 s 5

126A.06 ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION RESOURCE CENTERS.

Subdivision 1. Establishment. The director may establish environmental education resource centers throughout the state as needed. The environmental education resource centers shall serve as a source of information and programs for citizens, provide ongoing contact with the public for feedback to the director on regional environmental education issues and priorities, and serve as distribution centers for environmental education programs.

Subd. 2. Duties. The resource centers shall:

- (1) implement the programs and priorities of the office as defined in the plan;

- (2) convey regional program priorities to the director;
- (3) evaluate regional implementation of environmental education programs and report to the director on the evaluations;
- (4) provide regional liaison and coordination for organizations, agencies, and individuals providing environmental education programs on particular issues;
- (5) be a distribution and publicity center for agencies, environmental organizations, environmental learning center publications, programs, and services;
- (6) be a central source of information for citizens interested in issues that are the responsibility of many agencies, boards, task forces, and organizations;
- (7) provide technical assistance to local and state organizations and agencies on program design, promotion, and publicity to reach the chosen target audiences; and
- (8) assist the educational cooperative service units by collecting and distributing environmental education teaching materials, displays, computer programs, resource person lists, and audio-visual aids, and provide assistance with teacher training workshops and programs on request.

History: 1990 c 595 s 6

126A.07 RELATIONS WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION.

Subdivision 1. Cooperation and support. The director shall cooperate with and support the environmental education program developed by the state board of education and the department of education.

Subd. 2. List. The cooperation and support must include, but is not limited to, the items mentioned in the list in this subdivision.

(a) The director shall encourage all environmental education programs developed for pupils and other citizens to strive for achievement of the goals and the environmental learner outcomes developed by the department of education.

(b) The regional resource centers shall collect, house, promote, and circulate environmental education materials, displays, audio-visual aids, and computer materials for use by the educational cooperative service unit environmental education coordinators.

(c) The resource centers shall evaluate, promote, and distribute to educators materials produced by other agencies and organizations.

History: 1990 c 595 s 7

126A.08 PROGRAMS ESTABLISHED; IMPLEMENTED; IN-SERVICE.

(a) The department of education shall assist in establishing environmental education programs in all public elementary and secondary schools.

(b) The environmental education program must be interdisciplinary, integrated into the curriculum, and outcome-based.

(c) The program must be implemented through the department of education's learner outcome, assessment and feedback, and instructional processes.

(d) The department of education shall assist school districts, education districts, and other education organizations to develop environmental education policies that maximize the environmental education in-service teacher training in educational cooperative service unit regional offices.

History: 1990 c 595 s 8

126A.09 INTEGRATED CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT MODELS.

The department of education shall develop curriculum integration models for a learner outcome-based environmental education program. The models must include:

- (1) the specific environmental education and curriculum integration goals to be attained;
- (2) the various options to achieve the goals;

(3) a hierarchy of learner outcomes composed of state learner goals; integrated learner outcomes; program learner outcomes; and course, unit, and lesson learner outcomes;

(4) mechanisms to communicate the models;

(5) an objective process to evaluate the progress to establish and implement a model integrated environmental education curriculum;

(6) alternatives to evaluate pupils' environmental education progress at the classroom level; and

(7) methods to assess pupils' environmental learning.

History: 1990 c 595 s 9

126A.10 RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT SITES.

(a) Sites selected under Laws 1989, chapter 329, article 7, section 21, or other school district sites may be used to demonstrate how environmental education outcomes can be integrated into a comprehensive education curriculum.

(b) The department of education, in consultation with the director, shall assist the research and development sites to plan and implement integrated environmental education programs.

History: 1990 c 595 s 10

126A.11 IN-SERVICE TEACHER TRAINING.

The department of education is responsible for in-service teacher training in environmental education.

History: 1990 c 595 s 11

126A.12 REPORTING.

(a) Beginning June 30, 1992, the department of education shall submit a biennial report on its environmental education program to the legislature and the governor.

(b) The report must:

(1) describe the progress of environmental education learner outcome development and implementation in the public elementary and secondary schools;

(2) describe in-service involvement and assistance at the state and local level;

(3) evaluate the efforts of the research and development sites to implement integrated environmental learner outcome-based education; and

(4) contain an implementation plan to assist school districts in the establishment of an environmental education program in all public elementary and secondary schools.

History: 1990 c 595 s 12