



SAN MATEO
COUNTY
OFFICE OF
EDUCATION

Anne E. Campbell • County Superintendent of Schools

NEWS RELEASE

CONTACT: ALLIE JAARSMA

ajaarsma@smcoe.org
650.802.5559

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 27, 2016
No. 11

Leaders Launch Superintendents' Environmental Education Collaborative

REDWOOD CITY, CA – Unprecedented federal funding available through the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) to build school system-wide support for environmental education (EE) has spurred environmental leaders to launch a national Superintendents' Environmental Education Collaborative. The Collaborative will be co-chaired by Dr. Kevin Maxwell, chief executive officer of Prince George's County Public Schools in Maryland and Anne Campbell, superintendent of San Mateo County Schools in California. This effort is supported by Upstream Alliance, North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE) and Project Learning Tree.

"This is an historic opportunity to facilitate an ongoing conversation between superintendents and environmental partners and to leverage ESSA funding to help environmental literacy efforts," said Dr. Maxwell. "The Collaborative will seek to create robust, real-world learning experiences that bolster STEM learning, civic engagement, and prepare students for the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century workforce."

Congress is expected to appropriate funding in early 2017 for new EE opportunities in school districts nationwide. The Collaborative, using conference calls, meetings and webinars, will share information regarding ESSA grant opportunities, best practices for creating EE models and successful implementation stories.

"Hands-on environmental education is a proven way to deeply engage young students and inspire the next generation of environmental stewards," said Congressman John Sarbanes (D-Md.), who successfully worked to include a provision in last year's K-12 education bill that expanded grant-making opportunities for environmental education. "Thanks to efforts like the Collaborative, more school systems will take advantage of this opportunity and more students will learn outdoors and become better connected to our natural world."

"Environmental education provides important opportunities for students to become engaged in real world issues that transcend classroom walls. They can see the relevance of their classroom studies to the complex environmental issues confronting our planet, and they can acquire the skills they'll need to be creative problems solvers and powerful advocates," said Ms. Campbell.

"This is innovative and unprecedented—to have federal funding and cooperation among superintendents across the nation," said Don Baugh, president of Upstream Alliance and a pioneer in the environmental education movement.

"More than 30 states have completed environmental literacy plans, which establish a strong foundation to assist superintendents in leveraging partnerships and existing resources to create model programs," said Sarah Bodor, policy director for NAAEE.

"Curriculum and teacher professional development that has been tested and proven over many years already exists. That combined with an extensive professional network that offers local resources and on-the-ground support means school districts across the country can easily connect classrooms to their local environment to provide students with a well-rounded education," said Kathy McGlaufflin, national director of Project Learning Tree.

The Collaborative will participate in the annual School Superintendents Conference to be held next year on March 2–4 in New Orleans, La. They will host a session on environmental opportunities and an immersion expedition to investigate climate change issues by touring the beleaguered Ninth Ward and a swamp boat trip on the bayou as part of that conference.

For more information about the Collaborative, contact Erica Baugh at erica@upstreamalliance.org.

Superintendents' EE Collaborative Timeline for 2016–2017

- Launch Superintendents' EE Collaborative, Fall 2016
- Conference call with superintendents, Congressman John Sarbanes of Maryland, United States Department of Education, Fall 2016
- The Schools Superintendents Association Conference session and expedition, March 2–4, 2017
- Provide guidance to school systems on applying for funding, Spring 2017
- Facilitate the dialogue between superintendents to further strengthen their programs by adopting best practices, Fall 2017
- Develop a tool kit for school systems to access ESSA funding, Fall 2017
- Webinar with superintendents on accessing funding, Winter 2017

####

The San Mateo County Office of Education is committed to ensuring excellence and equity in education by inspiring students, investing in teachers, invigorating leaders, and involving communities.