

Texas Environmental Education Partnership, Inc.

Program Summary

The Texas Environmental Education Partnership (TEEP) is a coalition focused on building and supporting a framework for environmental education (EE) for Texas. Recognizing the diversity of Texas citizens, a broad-based steering committee was created to guide the effort. The Partnership includes representatives from business and industry, the environmental community, academia, governmental agencies, school teachers and administrators, and parents. The committee has developed a vision, mission, and goals that provide the overall direction for the effort:

Texas Environmental Education Partnership Vision

Our vision for Texas: an environmental education (EE) leader with citizens who are individually and collectively knowledgeable environmental stewards.

Texas Environmental Education Partnership Mission

To provide statewide leadership that builds consensus on goals and priorities for EE, coordinates cooperative initiatives, and orchestrates development of a broad-based Texas EE system.

Texas Environmental Education Partnership Goals

In order to have an environmentally literate citizenry, Texas Environmental Education Partnership will:

- Improve EE quality**
- Identify and increase resources for EE in Texas**
- Build a voluntary statewide structure for existing and expanded EE resources**
- Develop and recommend EE policies for Texas**

The Texas Environmental Education Partnership was developed to be inclusive and gain diverse perspectives from individuals across the state. In addition to the TEEP steering committee, the following subcommittees are working to achieve the program's goals. These subcommittees are open to everyone interested in participating.

The Research and Development Subcommittee fosters improvement of EE training and materials and increases their use in the formal and informal education arenas. Envisioning a Texas community fully versed in environmental concepts and integrating those concepts in their teaching, the Research and Development Subcommittee members engage in capacity-building activities that include creating a professional designation system for environmental educators and serving as a conduit for information about EE resources and program opportunities.

The Guidelines Subcommittee coordinates, trains and disseminates statewide EE voluntary guidelines in a participatory process that involves all interested Texas citizens.

The Communications Subcommittee develops and implements a communications plan for TEEP, including surveys needed to establish a baseline for measuring environmental literacy in Texas. The subcommittee also is looking for environmental education success stories.

The Leadership Development Subcommittee recruits members from a wide variety of stakeholder groups with an emphasis on inclusiveness that represents all of Texas, develops mechanisms for membership retention, nominates officers when needed, builds an inventory of nominees for the Steering Committee, and plans for future leadership in the organization.

Following is the three-year plan with associated budgets for FY2004, 2005 and 2006

Research & Development Subcommittee

Goal 1

Maintain a strategic plan to be used as a proposal for obtaining resources to achieve the subcommittee's other goals, acknowledging that the plan is to be amended as needed to achieve the stated goals and to add others as opportunities arise.

Ongoing for next 3 years

Goal 2

Help educators find EE materials, both in hard-copy format and through electronic searches on the Internet that can be readily used to meet Texas curriculum requirements.

Year 1, Objective: Identify sources to research and house information on EE materials and their locations, and maintain regular updates of information.

Task: Compile list and promote to EE providers.

Year 2, Objective: Assist EE providers with listing existing materials and their locations, databases, web sites, software programs, libraries and environmental centers that contain EE materials.

Tasks: Encourage EE providers to include their materials in already existing on-line databases.

Year 3, Objective: Publicize the locations of EE materials and electronic search information to educators through the environment and education media, conferences, and educator training programs.

Task: Create a promotional flyer for dissemination at conferences and through other venues listed above.

Goal 3

Support informal educators by coordinating professional development efforts and recognition, and updating informal education providers on current trends in the Texas education system.

Year 1, Objective 1: Train informal educators on various aspects of the formal education system, such as pedagogy, state required educational testing measures, science, social studies, health and economics content.

Tasks: Continue to keep informal educators informed of local professional development opportunities through TEEP's email alerts, notices sent to Informal Science Education Association (ISEA) and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Roundtable participants, and facilitators of state EE programs like Project Learning Tree, Project WILD, and Food, Land & People.

Year 1, Objective 2: Support a network of informal educator providers.

TEEP and ISEA have shared databases to ensure that more educators know about the two efforts. Email notices pass freely between the two groups and the EPA EE Roundtable.

Tasks: Continue sharing information with existing EE providers networks. Pursue ways to create new collaborations between Texas organizations.

Year 1, Objective 3: Establish a professional designation system for informal environmental educators in Texas and promote it as a model for the nation.

Tasks: TEEP Steering Committee members will pilot application process, revisions will be made and certification promoted to EE providers in 2004.

Year 2, Objective 1: Encourage member-based organizations to make professional development they offer more accessible to members of other organizations.

Tasks: Set up a calendar of events on TEEP website to promote professional development opportunities available.

Year 2, Objective 2: Maintain a professional designation system for informal environmental educators in Texas and promote it as a model for the nation.

Tasks: Contract with an administrative partner to manage the program.

Year 3, Objective 1: Continue to maintain the professional designation system for informal environmental educators in Texas and promote it as a model for the nation.

Tasks: Review progress, make adjustments to process and work with national leaders to ensure that Texas providers can benefit from national certification program.

Goal 4

Maximize the opportunities for inservice and preservice teachers to obtain training in environmental education concepts to achieve environmental literacy.

Year 3, Objective 1: Encourage appropriate school district personnel to use lists of State Board of Education Certification (SBEC)-approved continuing professional education providers, particularly those that provide environmentally related workshops and courses.

Task: This process will be initiated with a request to ee providers.

Year 3, Objective 2: Increase the number of coursework hours and Continuing Professional Education hours and content devoted to science relating to the environment in education degree requirements.

Tasks: Support national efforts to work with the National Certification Association for Teacher Education (NCATE). Support work of EE providers who work with Texas Colleges of Education.

TEEP Guidelines Subcommittee

Objective

The TEEP Guideline Subcommittee's mission is:

To develop accurate, balanced Texas guidelines to be used by educators, families, and communities as they evaluate student and teacher competencies and materials.

The Guidelines Subcommittee has reviewed existing guidelines from other states and a variety of organizations. After a thorough examination of what a good set of guidelines should contain, the subcommittee determined that the "Environmental Education Materials: Guidelines for Excellence" and "Excellence in Environmental Education - Guidelines for Learning (K-12), published by the NAAEE, were well prepared by a reputable national organization and met the mission of both the Guidelines Subcommittee and TEEP.

Guidelines Subcommittee goals:

- 1) Promote the use of the NAAEE Guidelines in Texas.**
- 2) Establish at least one participating NAAEE trainer in each of the fourteen regional areas of Texas (listed below)**
- 3) Promote a voluntary statewide structure for existing and expanded environmental education resources.**

Justification

The Guidelines Subcommittee believes that once educators, families, and communities are satisfied with the quality of environmental education materials, they will be more likely to use them to educate Texas citizens. Through cooperative initiatives, the Guidelines Subcommittee will provide training in the use of the North

American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE) Guidelines thereby equipping educators, families, and communities to evaluate a wide array of available environmental education materials. Those who are trained will be able to decide which materials will teach and incorporate critical thinking skills while presenting balanced, scientifically based information. This project will assist TEEP to achieve the development of a broad-based Texas environmental education system as put forward in their Mission Statement.

Project Work Plan

Goal 1

The Guidelines Subcommittee will promote the use of the NAAEE Guidelines by completing at least one training session per year during which we will train educators to use the NAAEE Guidelines and train interested persons to be trainers. A label reading “Endorsed by Texas Environmental Education Partnership” will be affixed to every copy of the NAAEE Guidelines booklets. The label will also list TEEP’s website address.

Goal 2

The subcommittee will establish at least one participating NAAEE trainer in designated regional areas of Texas. The subcommittee has identified fourteen cities or regions of the state important in achieving the project goals. They are: Austin, Abilene, Amarillo, Brownsville/Kingsville, Corpus Christi, Dallas, Fort Worth, El Paso, Houston, Lubbock, Midland/Odessa, San Antonio, Tyler and Waco. The subcommittee will continue to build a voluntary statewide structure for existing and expanded resources by reassessing the network after establishing at least one participating trainer in each region.

Goal 3

Consideration for additional training sessions will be based on the demand for NAAEE Guidelines training in that region.

The subcommittee plans to recruit additional trainers in the following areas: Abilene, Amarillo, Brownsville/Kingsville, El Paso, Midland/Odessa, and Tyler. The list of participants will self-perpetuate as those who are trained return to their regions and train others.

NAAEE has agreed to a partnership in which the Guidelines Subcommittee promotes the NAAEE Guidelines as “Endorsed by Texas Environmental Education Partnership” and a discount was given on the copies purchased by the subcommittee.

Project Evaluation & Results

The subcommittee plans to survey existing participants to acquire feedback on the project, and then take necessary steps for improvement. A survey will also be administered at each training hosted by regional trainers to assess the effectiveness of the training. In addition, the subcommittee will review the following:

- 1) Did we promote the use of the NAAEE Guidelines by completing at least one training session this year?
- 2) Did we establish at least one participating NAAEE trainer in each regional area of Texas?
- 3) Did a trainer in each region host a training?
- 4) Did we build a voluntary statewide structure for existing and expanded resources? How many participating trainers do we have?
- 5) How many educators were trained throughout the state on the NAAEE Guidelines for Learning and Guidelines for Materials in a year?

TEEP COMMUNICATION SUBCOMMITTEE

Purpose of Plan:

Provide Texas Environmental Education Partnership (TEEP) with internal and external communication strategy to meet communication objectives.

Need for Communication:

TEEP needs to achieve stake holder support of EE.

Goals:

- 1) **Define EE as it relates to Texas.**
- 2) **Cultivate active educator participation in the TEEP consensus-building process.**
- 3) **Develop an internal communication system that provides current EE information to the Texas EE Partnership.**
- 4) **Develop TEEP's organizational credibility among influentials/decision makers and elected/appointed officials.**
- 5) **Reach out to the Texas public to achieve statewide consensus on EE goals.**

Task: Develop a website for TEEP.

Measurement/Assessment Tools for Communication Objectives:

November 3, 2003

- 1) **Define EE by creation of a document that contains an EE definition adopted by consensus.**
- 2) **Measure active educator participation in TEEP by:**
 - a) **participation in meetings and other TEEP-sponsored events by K-12 teachers, PTA/PTO members, parents, nonformal educators, and university educators.**
 - b) **organizational support through articles in publications, resolutions, conference presentation invitations, and other acknowledgements.**
- 3) **Measure development of an internal communication system.**
 - a) **documentation of the process**
 - b) **testing of the system by evaluating it's effectiveness**
- 4) **Measure credibility by:**
 - a) **survey results**
 - b) **number of media calls received**
 - c) **speaking engagements completed**
- 5) **Measure Texas public consensus by responses to attitude surveys.**

Budget:

At this time the Communication Subcommittee is gathering preliminary figures to implement all phases of the communication plan.

TEEP LEADERSHIP SUBCOMMITTEE

The Leadership Development Subcommittee recruits members from a wide variety of stakeholder groups with an emphasis on inclusiveness that represents all of Texas, develops mechanisms for membership retention, nominates officers when needed, builds an inventory of nominees for the Steering Committee, and plans for future leadership in the organization.

November 3, 2003

Toward that end, the Subcommittee maintains a list of all Steering Committee and Subcommittee members. At the present time there are no associated costs for the work of this committee.