



## Environmental Education Association of New Mexico (EEANM) Whole Systems Thinking Organizational Redevelopment

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### Intro (Problem Statement):

EEANM believes that every New Mexican should have access to high-quality, engaging, and meaningful environmental education opportunities. A year-long, whole-system analysis of EEANM centered around the vision that there must be systems in place to include Environmental Education into daily learning for New Mexico's 300,000+ K-12 students. With roughly half of New Mexico lands comprising public lands, there are endless opportunities for New Mexicans to explore the beautiful landscapes and rich cultures of our state.

### Summary:

Through a community dialogue on the "Economics of Environmental Education" in June 2018, EEANM sought to explore the value and assets of education, the contribution of environmental education to college and career readiness, the role of public lands in getting people outdoors, the impact of outdoor education on the outdoor recreation industry, the interconnectedness of healthy land and water to local food in our communities, and how to address equity and access for students and families across our state.

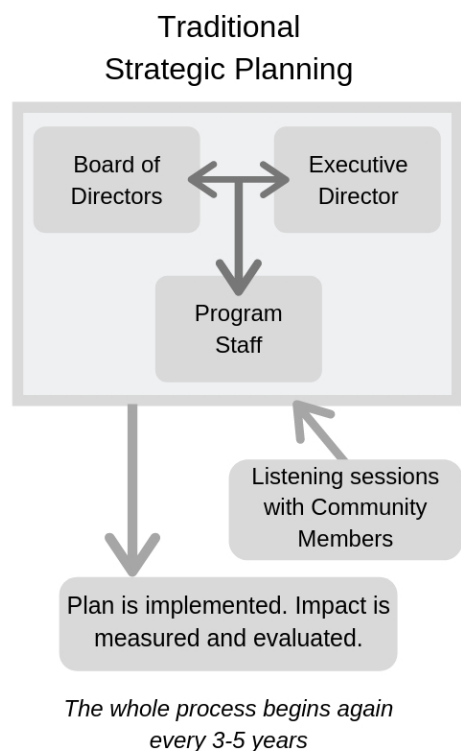
### Using EE to Support the Whole Student



The second community dialogue held in August 2018 was on "Using EE to Support the Whole Student." This dialogue explored student needs that can be met through environmental education, making environmental education more multidisciplinary, creating socially and emotionally safe spaces for students, and making environmental education more responsive to the unique backgrounds, perspectives, and experiences of students. This process was an emergent one, where the information and input from one dialogue helps shape the dialogue of the next, thereby building a conversation and helping shape the direction of the organization to meet its goals for reorganization.



The two community dialogues included over 70 educators, teachers, and community members. EEANM also opened a virtual comment period for four weeks in August and September 2018 for statewide input on additional ideas and thoughts from our first two community dialogues. In addition, EEANM hosted its annual Environmental Literacy Summit with a focus on developing leadership from within its membership. At this Summit, EEANM’s Executive Director presented an overview of the results of the two community dialogues and the new focus areas and direction EEANM plans to head. There were opportunities for the 40+ participants to provide additional feedback on the topics explored to contribute to the new vision and direction. The results were well received; however, the opportunity to develop leadership within its membership fell flat. Through a facilitated afternoon session, it became obvious that EEANM’s members view themselves as the end user of the organization and its programming, rather than seeing students as the beneficiaries of their membership in the organization. Through this lens, members have a limited view of how to engage in the organization and participate fully to better serve students. Through facilitated dialogues directly with EEANM Executive Director, it became imperative that a new and strong focus around cultivating leadership and shifting the messaging of the organization become the top priority.



After this process, the Board and Executive Director met in early 2019 to synthesize and reflect on the process. The Board of Directors was instrumental in strategizing an actionable vision and direction. The outcomes of this strategy resulted in a solidified Theory of Change as well as five focus areas to shift EEANM’s impact on the larger education system.

*As an organization, EEANM valued taking a community-centered approach for strategic planning to reflect a diversity of interests, perspectives, and experiences. This process became as valuable as the product itself.*

**Vision:**

We believe that every New Mexican should have access to high-quality, engaging, and meaningful environmental education opportunities. This will lead to a thriving future for all, where environmental and social responsibility drive individual and institutional choices.

**Mission:**

Through implementing an advocacy-focused movement as well as advancing collaboration and leadership, EEANM will ensure every NM child has equitable access to environmental and outdoor learning.

**Focus Areas:**

Leadership/Collaboration | Messaging/Marketing | Advocacy/Policy | Professional Development | Organizational Management

Shift from passive language to active language. Instead of what should be, what is possible?

**Goals:**

1. *Movement building: Thought leaders in NM EE*
2. *Membership: Shift to broader lens and impact-focused members*
3. *Recruitment: Fellowship*

**Recommendations:**

1. Establish a Fellowship with a focus on advocacy/policy - weaving EE into all of New Mexico's Public Schools.
  - o Diversity of experience and expertise  
Example: five, three-person teams for the 15 person fellowship. Team A = early ed. grad, mid-career principal, senior state ed. professional. Collective focus on Advocacy & Movement building. Individual professional goals. Younger fellow dedicates part-time hours for admin support for hands-on learning.
2. Cultivate working groups through membership to take ownership of various aspects of the organization.
3. Distribute Administrative responsibilities:
  - o Internships | communications & administration
  - o Early-career Fellow as part-time employee(s)
  - o Board takes more ownership of development & membership cultivation
4. Work with Communications consultant to develop Communications Strategy that reflects new EEANM vision.

**Problem Statement**

**Solution Statement**

<i>Proposed reorientation is a huge undertaking with potentially profound impact, but accomplishing it will require long-term, unwavering commitment from already busy people.</i>	<i>Reorientation is an opportunity to have significant impact on EE at the state-level. Increased workload will be addressed through redistributing responsibilities through membership, Board, and a cohesive Fellowship program with multi-sector representation.</i>
<i>The focus on movement building will almost certainly result in less energy available for existing “member services”, which can reduce interest and participation.</i>	<i>Effective and impact-driven programming will increase the number of eyes on the organization. New members will be active and motivated to participate in reorganization.</i>
<i>I lack the time to hone skills that will be crucial to the proposed reorientation, though I think I may have some skills that may be useful.</i>	<i>Use membership, Fellowship and Board strategically. What skills do I have that are vital and effective? Where can I lighten the load with the supporting team/membership/fellowship/board? What am I willing to let go of to let the organization grow? What am I willing to let go of to be a better leader for the organization?</i>

<b>Current Membership Benefits</b>	<b>Future Membership Benefits</b>
<i>Ability to come together as a community</i>	<i>Increased membership engagement through consistent ongoing programming as opportunities to network, engage and learn.</i>
<i>Connection to others/peers</i>	<i>Supported and connected by a similar vision. Connected and activated by fellow members.</i>
<i>Informed on current trends</i>	<i>Leading the conversation in EE.</i>
<i>Potential for collaboration</i>	<i>Ongoing active participation between members, Fellows, staff and Board.</i>
<i>Continued learning/education</i>	<i>Strong curriculum for a diverse set of EE professional stakeholders.</i>

## Theory of Change for EEANM’s Transformation

**Our Vision:**

We believe that every New Mexican should have access to high-quality, engaging, and meaningful environmental education opportunities. This will lead to a thriving future for all, where environmental and social responsibility drive individual and institutional choices.

**Mission:**

Through implementing an advocacy-focused movement as well as advancing collaboration and leadership, EEANM will ensure every NM child has equitable access to environmental and outdoor learning.

**Population Served:**

By investing in leaders and collaborators that represent a variety of educational experiences and perspectives, the ultimate recipients of our work will be the heart of New Mexico, our students from preK-12<sup>th</sup> grade.

### Focus Areas

<b>Leadership/ Collaboration</b>	<b>Messaging/ Marketing</b>	<b>Advocacy/ Policy</b>	<b>Professional Development</b>
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### Example Programs

Fellowship Program that serves as a Community of Practice with a focus on creating and advocating for statewide policy	A 12-month campaign for illustrating the variety of EE programming and highlighting the value and benefits of EE	A statewide policy that weaves EE into student’s daily experiences at multiple grade levels	Continued investment in teacher/educator workshops and EE Certification 2.0 to reach a broader audience
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### Outcomes

Aligned programs that support environmental literacy at all grade levels; individuals and organizations actively collaborate with one another	Educators and decision makers understand what EE is and the value it can bring to students, teachers, and communities	Systemic-level impacts are seen for increasing students’ environmental awareness, leading to increased civic and community engagement	Teachers and educators have the confidence and skills to effectively work with classes out-of-doors and support student-centered learning of our environment
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