

Every Kid Every Day Every Way: Core Messaging to Support Outdoor and Environmental Learning Initiatives



With the generous support from the [Pisces Foundation](#), [McCune Charitable Foundation](#), and [Lineberry Foundation](#), over the last three years, [Environmental Education of New Mexico](#) (EENM) has had two fellowship cohorts who have embarked on an incredible journey that would lead them deep into systems change work to create new ways to increase outdoor and environmental learning across the state by implementing equitable daily access to the outdoors for every student K-12th grade. This transformative work looked at the root of the problem and addressed it through the needs and voices of the communities across New Mexico. By using this approach, the first cohort of fellows took the work that had already started in 2017 with over 200 individuals and 90 organizations to delve into the opportunities to grow accessibility and access to the outdoors. In 2021, 17 additional fellows joined the first group and began their transformational leadership journey. The fellows continued to explore the language needed to develop tailored messaging to support the five policy recommendations in [Every Kid Every Day Every Way](#) through hosting and leading monthly community gatherings while diving deep into systems change.

The fellows then reviewed the [North American Association for Environmental Education](#) (NAAEE) Communications Toolkit. This communication toolkit was completed after a lot of heavy lifting, input, and thousands of conversations from formal and informal educators, funders, administrators, and policymakers from all over the United States.

The Five Policies and Messages:

Policy Recommendation 1: Resource an Office of Outdoor and Environmental Education at the state level to support teachers and school staff. Embed Outdoor Ambassadors in every school district and ultimately at every school.

Core Messages:

The implementation of Outdoor Ambassadors at every school in NM will appeal to all types of learners to succeed academically and be well prepared for the future, which is well supported by research on environmental and outdoor learning.

Outdoor Ambassadors will energize students, directly support teachers, and invigorate the community, ultimately enhancing health, appeal, and resiliency.

Ways we can work together to grow the message:

- ❖ Effective schooling requires environmental education, and student proficiency and depends on environmental education experiences

- ❖ Outdoor ambassadors will add quality jobs statewide with connections in local schools and communities across the state
- ❖ Builds community and school health, environmental health, the attractiveness of areas to bring in more people to live and work, and provides ideas and pathways for students to pursue

Policy Recommendation 2: Develop a network of outdoor gear “plus” libraries to support kids, families, and community members.

Core Messages:

It is more than just gear!

Outdoor Gear Libraries promote self-determination and independence, help students with self-awareness, and create ongoing support that students need including food, shelter, health, transportation, and recreation.

How we can work together to grow the message:

- ❖ Addressing the needs and voices of the community of environmental education and support networks to create and grow gear libraries

Policy Recommendation 3: Incorporate accessible outdoor spaces to facilitate hands-on, standards-aligned learning in school as well as schoolyard design and improvement projects.

Core Message:

Being outdoors is safe, promotes learning, builds connections, improves general well-being, and supports lifelong learning inside and outside of school.

Ways we can work together to grow the message:

- ❖ Construct and maintain community-appropriate outdoor learning space/s
- ❖ Incorporate Professional Development and teaching specialists to utilize spaces sustainably
- ❖ Incorporate play as learning
- ❖ Promote ongoing community outreach and support
- ❖ Improve schoolyard air quality (indoor and outdoor)

Policy Recommendation 4: Invest in the development of standards-aligned curricula in climate change, environmental justice, and place-based cultural learning by bringing together educators and content experts. Indigenous knowledge and history and exploring other cultures and land connections can be centered on place-based learning.

Core Messages:

Investing in the standards-aligned curriculum in climate change, environmental justice, and place-based cultural learning will provide more opportunities for resources for students and teachers to engage in authentic, collaborative learning and teaching.

These investments will create more opportunities to provide resources for equity in education.

Ways we can work together to grow the message:

- ❖ The relationship with resources and environment is the ultimate value
- ❖ Communicate clearly the needs of the students
- ❖ Build relationships with organizations, schools, and community members
- ❖ Providing EE resources as an easy and accessible option for all content areas

Policy Recommendation 5: Restructure requirements and resources for pre-service and in-service teachers to include an "Introduction to Outdoor Learning" class. Resource and support teachers for ongoing Professional Development annually.

Core Messages:

Outdoor Classrooms and learning are valuable.

Unconventional standards and measurements will drive student success.

Working with EENM and other environmental education partners to leverage resources and standards will increase opportunities for land-based education in schools, professional development for pre-service and all teachers, and will drive the creation of outdoor learning spaces at NM schools with a cross-content curriculum to align with the needs for all learners.

How we can work together to grow the message:

- ❖ Have on-site visits and conversations to put funding into professional development and outdoor spaces and increase the transparency of financing spent

Ways to deliver the messages

Do you know how to get the messages out there, but are unsure where to start the conversations? Here are some ideas the fellows generated to have to help get the conversations started! (These will all be included in our outdoor learning toolkit coming in March of 2023!)

Create Social Media and Blog Posts	Use School Bulletin Board, Flyers, Emails
Meetings, and Collaborative efforts	Presentations, Workshops, and Webinars
Canvassing: Going to people directly	Family and Community Events
Creating or finding outdoor spaces to talk about different issues	Creating working groups

Creating Call to Actions to increase the momentum for the messages

The messaging is there, but sometimes it is hard to know where to start. When thinking about how to start, it is important to take risks, try something new, and collaborate and engage all students, teachers, and the community.

Here are some examples of **Calls to Action** that the fellows suggested to help get the conversations and actions started:

Get Involved: Be part of the opportunities with the NM Public Education Department or other local organizations and community members	Address Yazzie/Martinez Action Plan
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Form Students and Teacher Unions	Construct and maintain appropriate outdoor learning spaces to elevate understanding of all subjects
Create community surveys of needs and wants	Project collaborations with other teachers and/or organizations to support the effort
Create local outdoor gear drives	Develop digital/paper surveys and on-going donations



Acknowledgments

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