

Green Amendments For the Generations
American Impact Capital Foundation ~ Delaware Riverkeeper Network
Berks Gas Truth ~ Better Path Coalition

July 6, 2021

Karen Molchanow
State Board of Education
333 Market Street, Harrisburg, PA 17126
ra-stateboardofed@pa.gov

Dear Karen Molchanow,

While we applaud the State Board of Education's commitment to ensuring that academic requirements and standards in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania will ensure a quality, inclusive and accessible education for all students, we, the undersigned, find significant gaps in the current proposed rulemaking.

The proposed Integrated Standards for Science, Environment and Ecology at the secondary education level (i.e. grades 6 through 12) do not explicitly include performance expectations for Environment and Ecology. According to an extensive analysis of peer-reviewed literature published by The Journal of Environmental Education, studies have demonstrated that environmental education results in improved academic performance, enhanced critical thinking skills, increased civic engagement, positive environmental behaviors, and greater personal growth and life-building skills including confidence, autonomy, and leadership. Previously, teachers were explicitly required to cover these areas of learning in order to meet independent state standards, but they have been significantly lost in the newly proposed integrated standards.

The proposed integrated standards should be amended to include a separate fifth domain dedicated to Environment and Ecology. Watersheds, wetlands, and the interrelationships between all aspects of the environment, including as affected by climate, should be addressed through individual performance expectations.

In addition, just as the study of history and social studies includes a focus on relevant and appropriate aspects of constitutional recognition, law and protection, so too should the study of science, environment and ecology include an analysis of Pennsylvania's constitutional Green Amendment - the environmental rights recognized and protected by Article 1 Section 27 of the Pennsylvania constitution.

Respectfully,

Maya van Rossum, Founder, Green Amendments For the Generations
Peter McCrea, President, American Impact Capital Foundation

Tracy Carluccio, Deputy Director, Delaware Riverkeeper Network
Karen Feridun, Founder, Berks Gas Truth
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