

**Joint Meeting of the New Jersey Commission on Environmental Education
And Interagency Work Group – AGENDA (Revised)
Tuesday, March 6, 2007
NJDEP Headquarters, Trenton
9:30 a.m. – 12:00 noon, Public Hearing Room**

- 9:00 a.m. COFFEE AND TEA**
- 9:30 Opening Remarks** **Joni Elliott, *Chair***
 - Welcome and introductions
- 9:35 Business Meeting** **Joni Elliott**
 - January meeting notes
 - Membership and budget update
 - NJCEE/IWG Web site report
 - Draft NJCEE/IWG bylaws**Tanya Oznowich**
Marc Rogoff
Marc Rogoff
- 10:00 NJ High School Redesign Committee** **Mike Heinz,**
State Science
Coordinator,
NJ Dept. of Ed.
 - Status of committee’s proposed efforts
 - Science education updates, general
 - Q/A and group discussion
- 10:40 BREAK**
- COMMITTEE UPDATES**
- 10:50 *Plan of Action Revision Process*** **Tanya Oznowich**
 - Summary of activity to date
 - Outline for table of contents
 - Group discussion on “success stories” to be featured
- 11:10 *NJ Environmental Primer Update*** **Tanya Oznowich**
 - Status of Spanish & English versions for spring
- 11:15 NJ EE Week/Earth Day 2007** **Tanya Oznowich**
 - National theme
 - DEP Earth Day Efforts/Nat. EE Week
 - Earth Day NJ Web site contents
 - National EE Week sponsorship and survey**Marc Rogoff**
- 11:45 New Business and Closing Remarks** **Joni Elliott**
 - EE announcements and updates from group
 - New business items
 - Closing remarks
 - Meeting highlights & logistics for next meeting
 - Departure

**Joint Meeting of the New Jersey Commission on Environmental Education
And Interagency Work Group
MEETING NOTES
March 6, 2007**

NJCEE Attendees: Mike Heinz, Barry Schlegal, Rich Belcher, Joni Elliott, Iris Duffield, Corky Johnson, John Lysko, Sule Oyger, Tanya Oznowich, Janice Reese-Berardo

IWG Attendees: Marc Rogoff, Elizabeth Faircloth, Kyra Hoffmann, Glenda Rivera (For Marianne Evanko)

Guests: Mike Skelly, Pat Skelly, Jereme Johnson

OPENING ACTIVITY

- **Introductions**
- **Update on ANJEE Conference** (Elizabeth) Successful conference. Announcement of ANJEE Retreat this coming weekend. (Janice) Just over 200 attendees.

GENERAL DISCUSSION/ BUSINESS ITEMS

- *Meeting notes- Janice (Iris-2nd) motion carries*
- *Motion to accept agenda: Rich (Janice -2nd) motion carries*
- **Membership:** Tanya – no new news Thanks made to Dr. Kirk at ANJEE banquet. Anne got lifetime award. Karen Wintress stepped down. Package of nominees being drafted. Openings will be sent to Govs office. Nominations committee will be reviewing prospective members resumes prior to May meeting. Corky wishes to join the committee, Joni as well. Sule too. Ken Fieler submitted resume to Govs office – would fit environmental health opening. (He will continue to attend meetings as a guest)
- **NJ HS Redesign Committee presentation:** Mike Heinz
Mike gave a brief history of the committee. Original proposal: All kids should be required to take biology, chemistry and physics. Proposal has since changed! Right now DOE is defining what a high school biology class should be. 4th year science requirement suggested - perhaps Earth Science. Handouts reviewed. Still in edit mode – will be posted by Friday at DOE website. Public comment to be sent to: biology@doe.state.nj.us. This is high on radar screen at Gov's office. Commissioner of DOE is looking into math and science reform – a cabinet level position may be established to work on this. Environmental and Earth science are to be integrated at a rigorous level, not “rocks for jocks”. Document is set to provide a basic, minimum list of things that all kids need to know. Not to be text book oriented. End of course science test (Biology) will be set to replace HSPA – still to be approved. (NCLB is to possibly be supplanted by these tests.) Field tests next spring!
Teacher quality is to be reviewed – based on student achievement on the assessments. (This may lead to a “revolving door” for teachers in poorer districts.)
Comments made by Commission members and Mr. Heinz:
 - Many science teacher groups are just saying; “Tell us what you want us to teach and how you want us to teach it?”
 - Federal requirements are hard to juggle with local level needs.
 - We need to work with what we have, and we have to move forward!
 - Accountability requirements are extremely stringent.
 - Autonomy is being done away with – teachers have less freedom in the classroom.
 - Everything is well intentioned, but requires a tremendous amount of funding – a major struggle for the districts.
 - Professional development providers are available to help bring the two worlds together – how can this get into the hands of the teachers and students?

- How does this apply to the Abbott districts? - DOE has dissolved the division that was devoted to those districts.
- Teacher training is critical, especially in math and science for elementary teachers.
- Students were “tracked” from an early age – expectation influence how teachers and students interact in the class. Students who are expected to achieve, will, and vice-versa. The HS Redesign Committee hopes to raise the standards and expect the students to achieve – “set the bar higher”. “We need to work smarter – focus on what is important”.
- NCLB has shown what has been done educationally to the disadvantaged. It has been beneficial – put the spotlight on education.
- Performance assessments will be part of the end of course biology exam – 3 tier system which will be providing assessment throughout the year. (New employee at DOE just for this process.) Performance assessment is expensive and logistically difficult.
- The commission feels that the DOE has been hugely supportive of local school districts in dealing with all the requirements set down by the federal government!
- One recent study found that students do better over time if they have been taught in a student-centered way. (Over teacher-centered instruction.)
- Are pre-service college instructors prepared for all these changes? “No. They should be learning science the way we want them to teach it”.
- NAAEE is finalizing NCATE standards for Environmental Education. Will this have an effect on certifying teachers in New Jersey for EE? (Separate track – may not meet in New Jersey.)
- How can the EE community respond to the committee to achieve our objectives? Review the document handed out and make comments on what is included in “What the students should know”.
- Standards clarification project – if you know of any good examples of how to teach these subjects that really “nails it down for a kid” send it to me, (Mike) or examples of a really bad way to teach it so that teachers can see the differences.
- This document is high school oriented – DOE is also working on the requirements for middle school and elementary school standards.
- How should our Plan of Action be oriented to assist/cooperate with the redesign? Making sure that what we feel needs to be in the biology course is included. There should be no conflicts.
- Requirements for the other sciences will be forthcoming in the future.
- Theoretically, over the next 5-10 years, earth science will look at how systems interact, mathematics will be lessened in the sciences and environmental science will be integrated into biology and earth/space science – it will not be a stand-alone course.
- How to we convey the interconnectedness of systems? Real world data will be used to make it real for the students in lesson plans across the curriculum. We are creating student-centered scenarios that require students to think. (Students can’t learn to swim by reading it in a book.)
- Complete document will be emailed to Tanya, which will be distributed to commission members for review. Please send comments to Mike.

BREAK

- **Web site:** Numbers have been consistent. This month surprisingly high after only 6 days. Still would like some pictures contributed by members. Envirothon images can be used.
- **By-Laws:** Historically a need for by laws has come up. Basically for new members. For May meeting. “Research and Duplicate”

COMMITTEE UPDATES

- **Plan of Action:** Tanya
Committee to meet in early April. Wrapping up “theme” sections. Success stories will be included. (Please provide your examples.) It is more than half completed. Rational and data are being worked on now. Plan is to have it released in final form by end of year (Thanksgiving).
Success story format to be sent to members.
- **Environmental Primer** – We are out of the English version. Multiple copies of Spanish version available. Many request for English version for Earth Day/Week are coming in now! Can we approach Jim for another printing at this time? Or NJSELA? Can it be distributed on CD? We have not considered this. There are new terms that will be added in future editions. Group approved of printing of current version for Earth Day 2007.
- **Earth Day/Week** – Right around corner. National theme for EW is Energy. Gov will take advantage of heightened interest - climate change and energy will be a hot topic with the Gov and the press. Survey will be posted on the website with responses to Marc. Mailing to go out soon.
Website: Marc projected the current web-site on the big screen and gave an overview of the site. Comments were solicited. Sule suggested dates be added above and below the banners. Marc indicated it would be done prior to the end of the day. Members were encouraged to contribute their own events/activities to the site and to help solicit others.

NEW BUSINESS

- Request for speakers for future meeting.
- Ag poster contest – national level – NJ took 1st place in 4 categories. See NACD web page.
- **Next meeting** – Wednesday, May 16, 2007, same location.
- **Motion to adjourn** – *Rich (Iris-2nd) Motion carries*
- Departure