

School:

Date:

Overview

The Audubon Center of the North Woods (ACNW), as part of the charter contracts with each school we authorize, evaluates each school's progress towards its environmental education (EE) related goals. This evaluation is informed by data from state assessments, data provided by the school, ACNW site visits to the school, interviews, and other information available to ACNW. Its purpose is to determine the strength and level of the school's overall environmental focus, as well as progress on contractual goals in the charter contract. Results of this evaluation become part of the body of information used to inform charter school renewal decisions made by the ACNW Board of Directors.

The Environmental Evaluation (EE) Performance Framework was derived through a review of ACNW's mission match guidelines, charter contract, and Minnesota's plan for environmental education. No single performance area describes the full picture of a school's environmental focus or performance on its EE-related goals. The performance areas are to be used together to indicate the total picture of the school's EE efforts. As appropriate, this evaluation should provide guidance for the school on areas of improvement.

The Audubon Center of the North Woods defines environmental education as the implementation of values and strategies that foster learning and create environmentally literate citizens who engage in creating healthy outcomes for individuals, communities, and the Earth. Each school is required, as a condition of its contract, to provide opportunities to instill a connection and commitment to the environment through experiential learning. While environmental education is a pervasive educational strategy intended to permeate all curricular components, it is particularly useful in science learning and as a component of other curricula through hands-on, place-based learning activities.

ACNW's approach to measuring a school's commitment to and performance of environmental education is evolving. This evaluation framework reflects ACNW's current established guidelines for determining mission match; however, as the expectations and processes become more defined, the evaluation metrics will reflect that definition. ACNW will work closely with schools during their contract renewal period to clarify the expectations, goals, and reporting procedures.

Indicators

This Environmental Education Performance Evaluation includes eight indicators, or general categories, used to evaluate a school's operations performance.

Indicator 1: EE-based curriculum components	Does the school integrate environmental education into existing traditional and nontraditional discipline areas?
Indicator 2: Field trips to natural areas	Does the school engage in nature-related outdoor experiences at least twice per year?
Indicator 3: Promote environmental stewardship (pass it forward)	Do students and faculty engage in activities that promote environmental stewardship at home and in their community?
Indicator 4: Elective EE Trend Areas	Does the school participate in at least two activities in at least two trend areas?
Indicator 5: Ongoing EE Trend Areas	(For schools in successive contract periods) Does the school participate in at least two activities in at least two additional trend areas?
Indicator 6: Commitment	Does the school have resources in place to carry out EE mission match activities?
Indicator 7: Science Proficiency	Are all students achieving proficiency in science?
Indicator 8: Environmental Literacy	Are students knowledgeable about the environment and have the capacity and commitment to engage in inquiry, problem solving, decision-making, and action to foster environmental sustainability?

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Ratings

Each measure will receive one of two ratings based on evaluation of the established indicators: Exceeds Standard, Meets Standard, Approaches Standard, or Does Not Meet Standard. Again, no one measure identifies the full picture of a school's operational standing. The measures are to be used together to indicate the total strength of the school's EE program.

Exceeds Standard

The school met its contractual goal (if applicable) and provided evidence of fully established EE programs and increasing environmental literacy among its students, faculty, and staff.

Meets Standard

The school met its contractual goal (if applicable) and provided evidence of increasing environmental literacy among its students, faculty, and staff.

Approaches Standard

The school nearly met its contractual goal (if applicable) and provided evidence of emergent environmental literacy among its students, faculty, and staff.

Does Not Meet Standard

The school did not meet its contractual goal (if applicable) and provided evidence that did not demonstrate an emergent level of environmental literacy among its students, faculty, and staff.

Insufficient Data

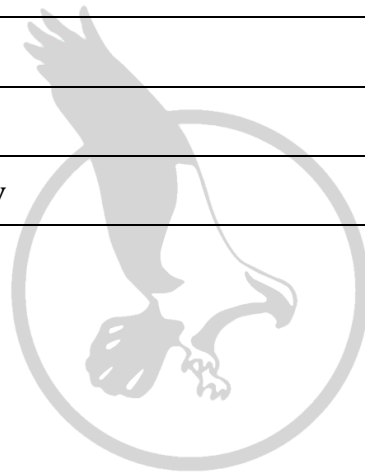
Not enough data was received for an evaluation.



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Summary of [School Name] Environmental Education Performance

Indicator	Status
Indicator 1: EE-based curriculum components	
Indicator 2: Field trips to natural areas	
Indicator 3: Promote environmental stewardship (pass it forward)	
Indicator 4: Elective EE Trend Areas	
Indicator 5: Ongoing EE Trend Areas	
Indicator 6: Commitment	
Indicator 7: Science Proficiency	
Indicator 8: Environmental Literacy	



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EE Performance Indicator 1: EE-based Curriculum Components

Does the school integrate environmental education into existing traditional and nontraditional discipline areas?

Standard:

There is evidence that the school employs EE as a strategy to teach about the environment (concepts related directly to the natural environment), with the environment (hands-on or interdisciplinary methods using real-life materials, objects, or situations), or in the environment (place-based and/or experiential learning opportunities outside the classroom).

Example Evidence:

- Teachers implement EE concepts or activities in lesson plans;
- Classrooms display EE-related student accomplishments;
- Teacher-led class projects are in process;
- Schools offer one or more EE-related unit/class/seminar;
- Students demonstrate initiative in undertaking environmental monitoring/testing;
- In interviews, students and teachers articulate EE learning strategies or concepts;
- Students participate in Envirothon;
- Environmental education is present in disciplines other than science.

School Goal:

Rating:

Exceeds Standard

The school met its contractual goal, and employs environmental education as a strategy for teaching and learning across the majority of disciplines, and ample cross-curricular collaborations are evident.

Meets Standard

The school met its contractual goal, and employs environmental education as a strategy for teaching and learning within its science curriculum and at least one other discipline (e.g. language arts or physical education); some cross-curricular collaboration is evident.

Approaches Standard

The school nearly met its contractual goal, and employs environmental education as a strategy for teaching and learning within its science curriculum. Its application is not evident in other disciplines.

Does Not Meet Standard

The school did not meet its contractual goal, and does not employ environmental education as a strategy for teaching and learning. Required field trips and activities are not contextualized within students' classroom learning.

Insufficient Data

Analysis:

EE Performance Indicator 2: Field Trips to Natural Areas

Does the school engage in nature-related outdoor experiences at least twice per school year?

Standard:

Students visit outdoor areas for learning about the natural environment at least twice per school year. These field trips should provide a learning experience about the environment in which the trip takes place (rather than merely a recreational activity), and should supplement, rather than supplant, in-classroom learning activities.

Example Evidence:

- Student and teacher interviews disclose field trip experiences;
- School newsletter, website, or other communication tools demonstrate field trip participation;
- School calendar reflects scheduled field trips.

School Goal:

Rating:

Exceeds Standard

The school met its contractual goal, and students visit more than two outdoor areas for nature-related experiences. Field trips to natural areas are organized within the context of students' classroom learning.

Meets Standard

The school met its contractual goal. Students visit two outdoor areas for learning about the natural environment. Field trips may or may not relate directly to what students are learning in one or more curricular area.

Approaches Standard

The school nearly met its contractual goal. Students visit two outdoor areas, but do not visit specifically to engage in nature-related outdoor experiences.

Does Not Meet Standard

The school did not meet its contractual goal. Students visit fewer than two outdoor areas.

Insufficient Data

Analysis:

EE Performance Indicator 3: Promote Environmental Stewardship

Do students and faculty engage in activities that promote environmental stewardship at home and in their community or neighborhood?

Standard:

The school provides EE learning opportunities to a larger, school-related community at least twice per year. Students and faculty model sustainable practices, share knowledge of environmental education, and experience environmentally focused activities with the larger school community or neighborhood. The school provides opportunities for students to pass forward to their families the ideas and skills they've learned.

Example Evidence:

- Students assist with community efforts to improve or preserve the natural environment (e.g. Adopt a Highway or Adopt a River programs, tree planting, community recycling, etc.);
- School newsletter with environmental stewardship or awareness item;
- Host or sponsor community events or celebrations (e.g. Earth Day);
- Serve as a host site for recycling (e.g. ink cartridges, sneakers, cell phones, etc.);
- Sell school-raised produce in a community market;
- Produce and disseminate a video on environmental awareness;
- Provide volunteer labor at a local sustainable farm;
- Test and monitor a local natural resource and share the results with the community;
- Develop an exhibit to raise awareness about environmental issues within the community;
- Participate in community art projects using upcycled or found objects.

School Goal:

Rating:

Exceeds Standard

The school met its contractual goal, and the school and students engage in more than two activities that promote environmental stewardship at home or in their community.

Meets Standard

The school met its contractual goal. The school and students engage in at least two activities that promote environmental stewardship at home or in their community.

Approaches Standard

The school nearly met its contractual goal. The school and students engage in more at least one activity that promote environmental stewardship at home or in their community.

Does Not Meet Standard

The school did not meet its contractual goal. The school and students do not engage in activities that promote environmental stewardship at home or in their community.

Insufficient Data

Analysis:

EE Performance Indicator 4: Elective EE Trend Areas

Does the school participate in at least two activities in at least two trend areas?

Standard:

The school participates in a minimum of two activities in two elective trend areas. The activity must be unique to the indicated trend area and may not be used as evidence in another trend area or under the required elements. The school must demonstrate that its students, faculty, leadership, and/or staff participated in a minimum of four activities each school year.

Example Evidence:

EE-trained teachers or experts

- Teachers, staff, and/or leadership participate in environmentally focused professional development
- Experts or guest speakers visit the school to help students learn about environmental stewardship
- School faculty includes educators experienced in environmental learning

Energy efficiency

- School implements practices that result in decreased energy usage onsite
- Students explore sources of alternate energy

Food program

- School purchases locally produced foods to minimize transit costs and fuel use
- Lunches are mindfully sourced (e.g. organic, local, and/or bulk) with energy and resource efficient production processes
- Waste stream is considered in food preparation (e.g. canned vs. fresh produce)

Natural vegetation/wildlife use

- Students actively engage with plants and animals outside the classroom
- Activities may include a vegetable or flower garden; tree, rain garden, or native planting; raising chickens, toads, or fish; building bird or bat houses; monitoring butterfly houses, etc.

Outdoor recreation

- Teacher-led activities outside the classroom that are designed specifically to interact with nature (e.g. cross-country skiing to observe animal tracks in the winter vs. baseball)
- These activities should be different than the two field trips required annually.

Operations & Finance

- Purchasing choices reflect a commitment to EE
- School applies for and/or receives grant monies in support of EE-focused activities
- Allocation of resources (both human and fiscal capital) to support EE learning

Waste reduction

- Programs or activities in place to reduce waste (e.g. waste-free lunch program, ort monitoring, etc.)
- Waste diversion programs (e.g. recycling, composting, etc.)

School Goal:

Trend Area(s):

- EE-trained teachers or experts
- Energy efficiency
- Food program
- Natural vegetation/wildlife use
- Outdoor recreation
- Operations & Finance
- Waste reduction

Rating:

Exceeds Standard

The school met its contractual goal, and students participated in more than two activities in one or both of the school's elective trend areas.

Meets Standard

The school met its contractual goal. Students participated in two activities in both of the school's elective trend areas

Approaches Standard

The school nearly met its contractual goal. Students participated in at least one activity in both of the school's elective trend areas.

Does Not Meet Standard

The school did not meet its contractual goal. Students participated in only one activity in one of the school's elective trend areas, or participated in no activities related to the school's elective trend areas.

Insufficient Data

Analysis:



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EE Performance Indicator 5: Ongoing EE Trend Areas

Does the school participate in at least two activities in at least two additional trend areas?

Standard:

The school participates in a minimum of two activities in two additional elective trend areas. During the school's first contract period, participation in only two trend areas is required. In each successive contract period, the school must participate in at least two additional trend areas with a minimum of two activities in each of the selected trend areas. The activities must be unique to the indicated trend area and may not be used as evidence in another trend area or under the required elements. The school must demonstrate that its students, faculty, leadership, and/or staff participated in a minimum of four activities each school year.

Example Evidence:

EE-trained teachers or experts

- Teachers, staff, and/or leadership participate in environmentally focused professional development
- Experts or guest speakers visit the school to help students learn about environmental stewardship
- School faculty includes educators experienced in environmental learning

Energy efficiency

- School implements practices that result in decreased energy usage onsite
- Students explore sources of alternate energy

Food program

- School purchases locally produced foods to minimize transit costs and fuel use
- Lunches are mindfully sourced (e.g. organic, local, and/or bulk) with energy and resource efficient production processes
- Waste stream is considered in food preparation (e.g. canned vs. fresh produce)

Natural vegetation/wildlife use

- Students actively engage with plants and animals outside the classroom
- Activities may include a vegetable or flower garden; tree, rain garden, or native planting; raising chickens, toads, or fish; building bird or bat houses; monitoring butterfly houses, etc.

Outdoor recreation

- Teacher-led activities outside the classroom that are designed specifically to interact with nature (e.g. cross-country skiing to observe animal tracks in the winter vs. baseball)
- These activities should be different than the two field trips required annually.

Operations & Finance

- Purchasing choices reflect a commitment to EE
- School applies for and/or receives grant monies in support of EE-focused activities
- Allocation of resources (both human and fiscal capital) to support EE learning

Waste reduction

- Programs or activities in place to reduce waste (e.g. waste-free lunch program, ort monitoring, etc.)
- Waste diversion programs (e.g. recycling, composting, etc.)

School Goal:

Trend Area(s):

- EE-trained teachers or experts
- Energy efficiency
- Food program
- Natural vegetation/wildlife use
- Outdoor recreation
- Operations & Finance
- Waste reduction

Rating:

Exceeds Standard

The school met its contractual goal, and students participated in more than two activities in one or both of the school's ongoing EE trend areas.

Meets Standard

The school met its contractual goal. Students participated in two activities in both of the school's ongoing EE trend areas

Approaches Standard

The school nearly met its contractual goal. Students participated in at least one activity in both of the school's ongoing EE trend areas.

Does Not Meet Standard

The school did not meet its contractual goal. Students participated in only one activity in one of the school's elective trend areas, or participated in no activities related to the school's ongoing EE trend areas.

Insufficient Data

Analysis:



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EE Performance Indicator 6: Commitment

Does the school have resources in place to carry out EE mission match activities?

Standard:

The school has clearly stated EE contract goals, and makes use of resources available (from both the Audubon Center of the North Woods and other environmental learning organizations) to further develop their EE efforts. The school implements a systems approach to environmental education to make it relevant to all learners and their needs.

Example Evidence:

- Attachment Seven of the charter school contract has stated, current S.M.A.R.T. goals;
- School allocates sufficient financial resources to achieve stated objectives;
- School shares photos, articles, etc. of students participating in EE activities;
- School has an EE contact that is engaged with Audubon Center staff;
- School reports on activities towards its environmental literacy goals;
- The school partners with EE-focused organizations for guest speakers, field trips, and other EE learning opportunities.

School Goal:

Rating:

Exceeds Standard

The school met its contractual goal(s), and two or more of the following:

- The school's EE-contact attends and engages in the annual Charter School Leaders Retreat or other ACNW workshops;
- The school applies for and uses EE mission match funds from ACNW to implement a required or elective activity or event;
- An established faculty or student committee spearheads school's EE efforts;
- School's mission statement indicates a strong commitment to EE principles or practices;
- The school administers the ACNW-developed EE assessment tool to students in one or more grade levels.

Meets Standard

The school met its goal(s).

Approaches Standard

The school nearly met its goal(s), or met at least one of the criteria listed above.

Does Not Meet Standard

The school clearly did not meet its goal(s), and met none of the criteria listed above.

Insufficient Data

Analysis:

EE Performance Indicator 7: Science Proficiency

Are all students achieving proficiency in science?

Standard:

Data provides compelling evidence that an increasing percentage of students meet or exceed the grade level standard in science proficiency. This indicator is also used on the Academic Performance Evaluation. It is included as part of this evaluation because of the established connection between science proficiency and environmental literacy.

Evidence:

Students are measured to show grade level competency in science. MCA series assessment data is evaluated (if applicable). Schools may also provide additional data from norm referenced assessment data showing grade level equivalencies and curriculum based assessment data.

School Goal:

Rating:

Exceeds Standard

The school met its goal (if applicable), and two or more of the following:

- The school's MCA proficiency percentage is high relative to state/local district/comparable schools and/or improving significantly.
- Proficiency data from other standardized or norm-referenced tests (for instance, NWEA-MAP provides grade level equivalencies) shows high percentages of students reaching grade level competency.
- Data from curriculum-based measures shows high percentages of students reaching grade level competency.
- Data on students that have been continuously enrolled for two, three, or more years shows increasing percentages of students reaching grade level competency.

Meets Standard

The school met its goal (if applicable) and met at least one of the criteria listed above.

Approaches Standard

The school nearly met its goal (if applicable), and met at least one of the criteria listed above.

Does Not Meet Standard

The school clearly did not meet its goal (if applicable), and met none of the criteria listed above.

Insufficient Data

Analysis:

EE Performance Indicator 8: Environmental Literacy

Are students knowledgeable about the environment, and have the capacity and commitment to engage in inquiry, problem solving, decision-making, and action to foster environmental sustainability?

Standard:

Students demonstrate the knowledge, skills, attitudes, motivation, and commitment to work individually and collectively toward sustaining a healthy natural and social environment. Students have the capacity, or are increasing their capacity, to perceive and interpret the health of environmental and social systems and take appropriate action to maintain, restore, or improve the health of those systems.

Example Evidence:

- Through observation and analysis, students identify the status of local community neighborhoods and possible triggers for improvement or degradation;
- Students take active roles in community environmental efforts;
- Students identify and partake in grade-appropriate activities to improve or support an environmental situation (e.g. neighborhood garden, degraded trails, school air quality, etc.);
- Students develop, offer, and conduct energy or waste audits of their school, local businesses or their homes;
- Students develop, implement, and assess an action plan related to a local environmental concern.
- Students review and evaluate various ecosystem changes (e.g. construction, dredging, mosquito control, etc.) for their impacts on the land, water, and community.
- Students interpret and synthesize information about environmental issues and are able to develop and communicate explanations.
- Students research an environmental topic of local interest to find the most up-to-date, relevant information about the factors concerning this issue.
- The school administers the ACNW-developed EE assessment tool to students in one or more grade level.
- Data from the EE assessment tool reflects increasing average grade level scores.
- The school uses results from the EE assessment tool to shape its ongoing environmental education activities, practices, and curriculum.

School Goal:

Rating:

Exceeds Standard

The school met its contractual goal (if applicable) and provided strong evidence of established and increasing environmental literacy among its students, faculty, and staff.

Meets Standard

The school met its contractual goal (if applicable) and provided evidence of increasing environmental literacy among its students, faculty, and staff.

Approaches Standard

The school nearly met its contractual goal (if applicable) and provided some evidence of environmental literacy among its students, faculty, and staff.

Does Not Meet Standard

The school did not meet its contractual goal (if applicable) and provided insufficient evidence of environmental literacy among its students, faculty, and staff.

Insufficient Data

Analysis:



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