



NSTA Position Statement

Environmental Education

Introduction

NSTA strongly supports environmental education as a way to instill environmental literacy in our nation's pre-K–16 students. It should be a part of the school curriculum because student knowledge of environmental concepts establishes a foundation for their future understandings and actions as citizens. Central to environmental literacy is the ability of students to master critical-thinking skills that will prepare them to evaluate issues and make informed decisions regarding stewardship of the planet. The environment also offers a relevant context for the learning and integration of core content knowledge, making it an essential component of a comprehensive science education program.

Declarations

- Environmental education programs should foster observation, investigation, experimentation, and innovation. Programs should be developed with grade-appropriate materials and should use a range of hands-on, minds-on instructional strategies that encourage active learning.
- Environmental education programs and curricula should address student outcomes as specified in the National Science Education Standards, be grounded in sound research, and reflect the most current information and understandings in the field.
- All learners are expected to achieve environmental literacy and an appreciation for and knowledge of a range of environmental issues, perspectives, and positions.
- All learners should be taught *how* to think through an issue using critical-thinking skills, while avoiding instructor or media bias regarding *what* to think about the issue.
- Environmental education should provide interdisciplinary, multicultural, and multi-perspective viewpoints to promote awareness and understanding of global environmental issues, potential solutions, and ways to prevent emerging environmental crises.
- Developers of environmental education programs should strive to present a balance of environmental, economic, and social perspectives.

- Appropriate technologies should be used to enhance environmental education learning experiences and investigations.
- Environmental education programs and activities should be fostered through both formal and informal learning experiences.
- Collaborations among schools, museums, zoos, aquaria, nature centers, government agencies, associations, foundations, and private industry should be encouraged to broaden the availability of educational resources, engage the community, provide diverse points of view about the management of natural resources, and offer a variety of learning experiences and career education opportunities.

*Adopted by the
NSTA Board of Directors
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References

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