

A. Project Title: “Planning for Assessing the Environmental Literacy of Wisconsin’s Students”

Applicant Name: MeasureMe

B. Statement of Need

1. **Target Audience:** Wisconsin’s K-12 students and Wisconsin educational staff and policy makers.

2. **Need:** The Wisconsin Environmental Education Act of 1990 requires the Department of Public Instruction to periodically assess the environmental literacy of Wisconsin students. Determining the environmental literacy of Wisconsin K-12 students is important to planning, development, and implementation of quality environmental education programs.

3. **Goal Addressed:** Goal III.5 “Promote recognition of excellence in EE within PreK-12 schools.”

4. **Evidence of Need:** A continuous state-wide monitoring program for environmental literacy does not currently exist. In 2001, the Wisconsin Environmental Education Board’s Assessment Committee reviewed the tests used in the Wisconsin Student Assessment System at grades four, eight, and ten. They concluded, “Overall, the WSAS/Knowledge and Skills tests at the fourth, eighth, and tenth grades provide a very incomplete picture of the environmental literacy of Wisconsin students.” On August 27, 2009 Superintendent Evers announced the Department of Public Instruction would be phasing out the Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Examinations (WKCE). Incorporating environmental literacy into the new assessment protocol would provide numerous efficiencies.

5. **Previous Efforts:** Between 1993 and 1997 the Wisconsin Center for Environmental Education (WCEE) with support and guidance from the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) conducted a series of environmental literacy assessment of 3,500 fifth grade and high school students. Additionally over 900 teachers, and 1,100 school administrators were surveyed to determine the degree to which they support environmental education and to learn what they felt were the most pressing needs related to the development of EE in Wisconsin schools.

The DPI’s Next Generation Assessment Task Force was convened in Fall 2008 to examine balanced assessment systems and to make recommendations on the components of an assessment system essential to increasing student achievement. Their report concludes all assessment strategies—formative, benchmark, and summative are essential. The complete report is available at: <http://dpi.wi.gov/oea/ngatf.html>

The project director has served on the Wisconsin No Child Left Inside Coalition. It is anticipated Superintendent Evers will officially appoint the project director as one of the members of the Coalition when appointments are made and the group is officially tasked (likely to occur in October or November 2009).

C. **Goal:** To establish a mechanism for continuous monitoring of the environmental literacy of select cohorts of Wisconsin’s K-12 students.

Objective 1: In cooperation with the WEEB Research and Education Committees, Wisconsin No Child Left Inside Coalition, Department of Public Instruction, and the Wisconsin Center for Environmental Education, review research, the State statutes, and current protocols being utilized in K-12 settings regarding environmental literacy assessment.

Activity 1.1: Review “Are We Walking the Talk?” (Wisconsin), William McBeth’s environmental literacy assessment (national) and work currently being conducted in other states (especially work done in conjunction with No Child Left Inside. (July-August 2010)

Activity 1.2: Review assessment protocols currently being used at environmentally focused charter schools and K-12 public and private schools to determine what, if any, aspects may be duplicated on a state-wide level. (Sept-Oct 2010)

Activity 1.3: Research alternative forms of assessment (i.e., authentic and/or performance based assessment; computer based, etc.) and their application to environmental literacy assessment. (July-November 2010)

Objective 2: In cooperation with partners, determine the need for and possible mechanism to achieve continuous comprehensive K-12 environmental literacy assessment.

Activity 2.1: Coordinate with the Department of Public Instruction, the EE Consultant, and the DPI committee formed to follow up on the work of the Next Generation Assessment Task Force, to incorporate environmental literacy assessment into new assessment protocols or to develop alternative environmental literacy assessment mechanism(s). (July 2010-December 2011)

Activity 2.2: Based on conclusions drawn from work associated with activity 1 and with the WEEB Board’s input, one (or more) of the following activities may be pursued (December 2010-December 2011):

1. write an independent environmental education assessment to be piloted at select schools
2. duplicate and/or retool (reemploy) the “Are We Walking the Talk” assessment
3. incorporate environmental literacy assessment into the new Statewide assessment protocol

D. Dissemination: Integrate information into the Wisconsin No Child Left Inside environmental literacy plan and the Wisconsin Environmental Education Board’s *Green Print* strategic planning documents which will be distributed statewide.

E. Project Evaluation: An operational plan to implement at least one mechanism for continuous statewide environmental literacy assessment will be written and adopted by the Department of Public Instruction.

F. Staff Qualifications: Theo Count currently serves on the Wisconsin No Child Left Inside Coalition. He has a PhD in Educational Psychology with an emphasis in assessment.

G. Continuation: If selected via the anticipated competitive bid process, MeasureMe will provide direct on-going support to the Department of Public Instruction for environmental literacy assessment data collection and evaluation. If another firm’s bid is accepted, MeasureMe will provide consulting services as requested by the Department of Public Instruction and/or the WEEB, WCEE, WAEE or other group.