

The goal of the PALS program is to create and sustain partnerships between non-formal and formal educators that will engage New Jersey K-5 students in authentic learning (“learning by doing”) and increase the sustainability of our communities. By bringing together formal educators and non-formal educators, each partner can gain knowledge and skills from the other, creating more robust environmental education.

There are four components to consider when putting together a proposal for a PALS grant: the NJ Core Curriculum Content Standards, authentic learning, authentic assessment, and sustainability.

### **New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards**

The NJ CCCS provide guidelines for what students should be learning to ensure they have the skills needed for post-secondary success. There are CCCS in each of the content areas:

- Visual and Performing Arts
- Comprehensive Health and Physical Education
- Language Arts Literacy
- Mathematics
- Science
- Social Studies
- World Languages
- Technology
- 21st-Century Life and Careers
- ESL/Bilingual: WIDA PreK-12 Standards

Benchmarks detail what students should know at different grades (preK, 4th, 8th, and 12th) to reach that goal. In the spirit of authentic learning, PALS projects should address CCCS in more than science – they may also address standards in any of the other content areas.

The NJ Core Curriculum Content Standards can be found here:

<http://www.state.nj.us/education/cccs/>

## Environmental Education

ANJEE is an affiliate organization of the North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE). As such, we recognize environmental education as described by the Tbilisi Declaration of 1977.

According to the Tbilisi Declaration,

The **goals** of environmental education are:

- to foster clear awareness of, and concern about, economic, social, political, and ecological interdependence in urban and rural areas;
- to provide every person with opportunities to acquire the knowledge, values, attitudes, commitment, and skills needed to protect and improve the environment;
- to create new patterns of behavior of individuals, groups, and society as a whole towards the environment.

The **categories** of environmental education objectives are:

- **Awareness**—to help social groups and individuals acquire an awareness and sensitivity to the total environment and its allied problems.
- **Knowledge**—to help social groups and individuals gain a variety of experience in, and acquire a basic understanding of, the environment and its associated problems.
- **Attitudes**—to help social groups and individuals acquire a set of values and feelings of concern for the environment and the motivation for actively participating in environmental improvement and protection.
- **Skills**—to help social groups and individuals acquire the skills for identifying and solving environmental problems.
- **Participation**—to provide social groups and individuals with an opportunity to be actively involved at all levels in working toward resolution of environmental problems.

Full text of the Tbilisi Declaration

<http://www.gdrc.org/uem/ee/tbilisi.html>

As an affiliate of NAAEE, programming developed and supported by ANJEE should follow the *Guidelines for Excellence*, a series of documents that describe the qualities of excellent EE.

The Guidelines are available to download free

NAAEE Guidelines for Excellence

<http://eelinked.naaee.net/n/guidelines/posts/Download-Your-Copy-of-the-Guidelines>

## **Authentic Learning**

Authentic learning involves students in real-world issues or problems, helping them develop necessary knowledge and skills in a meaningful way. Learning is student-centered, with teachers acting as a guide and one of many resources available to the students. It is usually interdisciplinary and often results in a product or artifact at the end of the experience. For more information, visit:

Authentic Learning: A Practical Introduction & Guide for Implementation

[http://www.ncsu.edu/meridian/win2003/authentic\\_learning/](http://www.ncsu.edu/meridian/win2003/authentic_learning/)

What do we mean by authentic learning?

<http://plpnetwork.com/2011/04/21/what-do-we-mean-by-authentic-learning/>

## **Authentic Assessment**

As one would guess from the description of authentic learning, a traditional assessment, such as a short answer or multiple choice test may not demonstrate the extent of student learning. Authentic assessment uses the students' learning process and products to inform the teacher. Portfolios and rubrics are common forms of authentic assessment, but it can take many forms.

For an overview of authentic assessment, visit

[http://tccl.rit.albany.edu/knilt/index.php/Creating\\_Authentic\\_Assessment](http://tccl.rit.albany.edu/knilt/index.php/Creating_Authentic_Assessment)

## **Program Evaluation**

*"My Environmental Education Evaluation Resource Assistant" (MEERA)* is an online "evaluation consultant" created to assist you with your evaluation needs. It will point you to resources that will be helpful in evaluating your environmental education program.

<http://meera.snre.umich.edu/>