

## **Science Teachers Identify Support Needed to Teach Environment and Ecology**

**Slippery Rock, PA – February 13, 2007** – A survey by the Pennsylvania Center for Environmental Education (PCEE) in Slippery Rock shows that teachers understand the importance of environmental education but would like more classroom activities and hands-on-materials for students to supplement their lessons.

The PCEE conducted its survey at the Pennsylvania Science Teachers Association's annual convention in Harrisburg. The group said 77 teachers who work with kindergarten through high school students completed the agency's survey. The PCEE is studying ways in which it can boost environmental curriculum.

The survey asked:

- Are you supposed to be teaching Environment & Ecology (E & E) in your classroom?
- With which E&E standards are you LEAST familiar?
- What type(s) of support would help you teach these topics?

The majority of the respondents (88%) indicated they were aware that they are supposed to be teaching E&E in their classrooms; while 5% said they were not aware they are supposed to be teaching E&E, and 6% said they were unsure.

When asked to select the E&E Standard with which they were "least familiar," most selected Integrated Pest Management (63%), Environmental Laws and Regulations (61%), and Agriculture and Society (58%). Almost one-quarter of the respondents indicated they were "least familiar with" four or more E&E Standards. (Selecting more than one E&E Standard was an option.)

When asked what types of support would help them teach E&E, 91% of the respondents chose "classroom activities to support lesson plans," and 82% opted for "hands-on materials to support lesson plans." Over half (58%) noted "more information about E&E topics" as important, while 43% would prefer to receive "training in methods for teaching environmental topics" and "funding for special environmental projects."

According to Kathleen Paul, PCEE Director, “Although this survey was not rigidly scientific in nature, it did give us an opportunity to identify areas in which PCEE can be of service to teachers throughout Pennsylvania. We hope that other providers of environmental education will find the information useful as well.”

The Environment & Ecology Academic Standards are already mandated in Pennsylvania schools, and are scheduled to be measured in the spring of 2008 as part of the Pennsylvania System of School Assessments (PSSA’s). PCEE provides links to a variety of environmental education resources, including curriculum resources, training and funding sources on their website at [www.pcee.org](http://www.pcee.org).

**About PCEE:** The Pennsylvania Center for Environmental Education (PCEE) was created by Executive Order of the Governor in 1997 to “provide an avenue for increased participation by educators, local officials, citizen and non-profit groups, business and industry as partners in the implementation of quality environmental education on a state-wide basis.” Administered by the PA State System of Higher Education, PCEE is housed at Slippery Rock University.

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