Kentucky Association for Environmental Education

2019 - 2021 Strategic Plan


kaee.org
KAEE Strategic Plan
2019 - 2021

Mission
Increase environmental knowledge and community engagement in Kentucky through the power of environmental education.

Vision
A sustainable world where environmental and social responsibility drive individual and institutional choices.

Environmental Education
Environmental education (EE) provides the skills necessary for people of all ages to make intelligent, informed decisions about the environment and how they can take care of it. EE builds human capacity, influences attitudes, and can lead to action. Most importantly, it can help people make informed decisions about the environment that lead to lifelong stewardship and a more sustainable society.

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From the Director

Embarking on a new strategic plan has come at an opportune time for KAEE. Throughout the past few years, we have made great strides to strengthen the organization and move toward becoming a thriving, resilient nonprofit. With this significant growth has come the chance to reflect and focus on ways we can better meet the needs of our education community and succeed in achieving our mission. This entire plan has focused on one overarching question: “What would it take for us to truly achieve our vision?”

The following goals and strategies emerged from the feedback we received at last year’s stakeholder meetings, as well as from conversations we have had with key partners such as NAAEE and other state affiliates; current research; an in-depth systems-thinking analysis we conducted; and several more focused strategic working groups around various aspects of our work. We entered this process with open minds, recognizing that we need to follow the research and concentrate on areas where we will have the greatest mission-impact. The following goals and strategies demonstrate a widening of our focus beyond our current emphasis on professional development to also take into account our role in cultivating collective impact and building public support for and investment in the field of environmental education.

Taking a systems-thinking approach to this work has helped us understand that our role can be much broader than our current focus and that we have a huge opportunity to increase our impact. We recognize that a significant part of our role is to support the “boots on the ground”: the educators who do this work every day. Our new plan emphasizes the important role we play as a “backbone organization,” supporting and enhancing that community-level work where real change is happening. We truly believe that this is how we will achieve an environmentally knowledgeable society.

This is meant to be a living document that meets the needs of educators and citizens across the Commonwealth. We appreciate all the feedback and hardwork that has been invaluable in helping us to create and implement the best plan possible for the future of environmental education in Kentucky.

Ashley Hoffman
Executive Director
Strategic Goals

Goal 1. Advancing Environmental Literacy

*Driving excellence in environmental education by promoting professional development and best practices.*

**Desired Outcomes**

- Nonformal and formal educators and KAEE facilitators have the support and resources they need to provide high-quality environmental education to their audiences.
- Kentucky environmental educators have access to ongoing professional development opportunities both in-person and online that allows for continuous learning and improvement in the field.
- Environmental education organizations and providers have shared goals and a common standard for excellence to work toward.
- Early childhood centers have access to resources to develop greener, more sustainable schools and to educate young children on the importance of environmental literacy and sustainability.

**Strategies**

- Provide support and resources for nonformal educators that increase their skills and ability to understand and meet the needs of formal educators.
- Establish a micro-credential program to provide ongoing, self-paced professional development opportunities for environmental educators around identified needs and current trends.
- Establish a state-level Guidelines for Excellence “Adopt the Guidelines” program for organizations.
- Develop an Early Childhood Green Schools program.
Strategic Goals

Goal 2. Building Our Audience

Increasing public support for and investment in the field of environmental education.

Desired Outcomes

- KAEE communications will reach broader audiences and better tell the story of KAEE and why environmental education is so critical to the future of Kentucky.
- Kentuckians will receive training, support, and resources to increase advocacy around legislation that impacts the field of environmental education.
- Our network of individual and organizational members will expand in order to create a more cohesive field that regularly collaborates, communicates, and advocates for EE in Kentucky.

Strategies

- Establish an increased social media presence, along with a bi-monthly blog and website updates and press releases to increase recognition of our work and the work of our members.
- Develop a robust media database and key relationships with media contacts across the state.
- Foster and support advocates and policies for environmental education in Kentucky and beyond.
- Develop resources and support mechanisms that encourage individuals and organizations providing environmental education in Kentucky to become members of KAEE.
Strategic Goals

Goal 3. Cultivating Collective Impact

*Bringing people together to create a stronger and more inclusive movement.*

Desired Outcomes

- KAEE will be a more diverse and inclusive organization with increased cultural competency levels for the board and staff, and more inclusive policies and practices.
- Increased cultural diversity and cultural competency levels of KAEE individual and organizational members.
- Organizations with an interest in the advancement of environmental education in Kentucky will have the four conditions necessary for collective impact to happen: a common agenda for change, open and continuous communications, shared measurements for data and results, and mutually reinforcing activities.

Strategies

- Increase the cultural competency levels of our board and staff by offering ongoing professional learning opportunities around equity and inclusivity made available to our board, staff, and membership.
- Target programming to build relationships and reach the communities that represent underserved audiences in Kentucky.
- Coordinate implementation of a collective impact model for organizations with an interest in the advancement of environmental education in Kentucky.
- Building stronger relationships and partnerships with those organizations representing audiences and sectors not currently engaged with KAEE.
Strategic Goals

Goal 4. Financial Resiliency

*Increase and sustain the financial health of the organization.*

Desired Outcomes

- Funders will have access to a strong and compelling case for why they should fund the work of KAEE.
- KAEE’s donor retention rate will increase from its current 47% to 75% in three years (approximately 15% per year).
- KAEE will build and maintain a quasi-endowment Legacy Fund of $100,000 to ensure the sustainability of the organization during gap years when grant or other funding sources are low.
- KAEE will maintain diverse funding sources that eliminate our dependency on any one funding source for more than 50% of our revenue.
- KAEE revenue sources will include a variety of earned income and interest, state and federal grants or contracts, corporate sponsorships, foundation and private grants, individual one-time gifts, recurring gifts, and planned gifts.

Strategies

- Develop and publish a strong case statement for funders on KAEE and each of its core programs.
- Increase donor retention through the implementation of a robust donor cultivation plan.
- Pursue new funding sources through new grants, corporate partnerships or founda-
tional support.
- Establish a quasi-endowment Legacy Fund through increased individual donations and planned or major gifts.
Strategic Goals

Goal 5. Organizational Effectiveness

Creating a thriving organization with the people, capacity, and resources necessary to succeed.

Desired Outcomes

- Board members feel equipped, energized and confident in their ability to assist the organization in meeting the three core duties of a nonprofit board: the duties of care, loyalty and obedience.
- Staff members and volunteers have the capacity, skills, passion, values, and knowledge necessary to fully implement this plan and the day to day operations of the organization.
- KAEE achieves the deliverables set forth in the strategic plan in a timely, efficient, and effective manner.

Strategies

- Provide ongoing training and resources for board members that equip them to more effectively fulfill their role on the board.
- Develop and implement a structure for action teams and board reporting that ensures strategic plan priorities are met and achieved.
- Implement a volunteer program that creates a “ladder of engagement”, allowing volunteers, members and donors to have increasing levels of engagement with KAEE and allowing past board members to remain engaged in meaningful ways.
- Increase communication and transparency of KAEE with the membership and general public through more regular updates and opportunities for engagement.