

# Osprey Wilds Environmental Learning Center

## Formative Environmental Education Performance Evaluation

### Overview

The Osprey Wilds Environmental Learning Center defines environmental education as the implementation of values and strategies that foster learning and create environmentally literate people who engage in creating healthy outcomes for individuals, communities, and the Earth. The overarching goal of environmental education is an environmentally literate population. The test of environmental literacy is the capacity of an individual to work individually and collectively toward sustaining a healthy natural environment. An individual's capacity is built through developing awareness, knowledge, skills, and attitudes in support of sustaining a healthy planet where all people live in balance with the Earth.



The Environmental Evaluation (EE) Performance Framework was derived through a review of Osprey Wilds' charter contract, Minnesota's plan for environmental education, as well as the "Awareness to Action Continuum," identified in the Tbilisi Declaration (1977) and outlined below. The five components identified below are critical to the development of environmental literacy, but they are not mutually exclusive or necessarily sequential.

No single indicator describes the full picture of a school's environmental focus or performance on its EE-related goals. The performance areas are to be used together to indicate the total picture of the school's EE efforts. This formative evaluation should provide guidance for the school on areas of improvement related to the five outcomes identified in Exhibit H of the charter contract, and reflect the school's progress toward these goals.

This evaluation is informed solely by data provided by the school. This underscores the importance of effectively implementing the school's environmental literacy plan (ELP), which includes ensuring teachers understand their role, collecting appropriate data, and reporting on students' progress toward the goal – not only activities. This evaluation does not include inputs observed by Osprey Wilds on site visits or reported by the school in the Annual Report or EE Survey.

Results of this formative evaluation become part of the body of information used to complete a summative evaluation of the school's environmental education program during the final year of the school's contract, and inform charter school renewal decisions made by the Osprey Wilds Board of Directors.

## Formative Environmental Education Performance Indicators

The Environmental Education Performance Framework includes five indicators, or general categories, used to evaluate a school's environmental education performance.

<b>Indicator 1: Awareness</b>	Students demonstrate an awareness of the relationship between the environment and human life and the diversity of life that shares the earth with humans.
<b>Indicator 2: Knowledge</b>	Students have knowledge of how natural systems function and how human systems interact with and depend on them.
<b>Indicator 3: Attitudes</b>	Students demonstrate respect and concern for the earth's health and the motivation to participate in environmental stewardship.
<b>Indicator 4: Skills</b>	Students possess the skills needed to identify and critically analyze environmental issues, and to contribute to resolving the root of environmental challenges.
<b>Indicator 5: Action</b>	Students have the capacity, or are increasing their capacity, to perceive and interpret the health of environmental and social systems and take appropriate action to maintain, restore, or improve the health of those systems.

### Ratings

Each measure will receive one of three ratings based on evaluation of the established indicators. Because it is formative in nature, this evaluation will indicate whether schools are on track to meet the rating described below. The measures are to be used together to indicate the total strength of the school's EE program and its success in creating environmentally literate students.

### OUTCOMES:

#### Meets Standard

The school met its contractual goal and provided evidence of increasing environmental literacy among its students.

#### Approaches Standard

The school nearly met its contractual goal and provided evidence of emergent environmental literacy among its students.

#### Does Not Meet Standard

The school did not meet its contractual goal or did not provide evidence to demonstrate an emergent level of environmental literacy among its students.

Crosslake Community School  
Formative Environmental Education Evaluation  
Contract Term FY23-25

Summary of Environmental Education Performance

<b>Data Results</b>					
<b>Goal</b>	<b>Indicator 1:</b>	<b>Indicator 2:</b>	<b>Indicator 3:</b>	<b>Indicator 4:</b>	<b>Indicator 5:</b>
<b>22-23</b>	Meets Standard	Meets Standard	Meets Standard	Meets Standard	Meets Standard
<b>23-24</b>					

**Summary**

Crosslake Community School’s (CCS) EE outcomes for this school year were successful, and the school was able to implement additional environmental learning activities above and beyond those included in the school’s Environmental Literacy Plan (ELP). According to the school’s responses to the Additional Questions in the EE survey, students reported enjoying the solarium, in-person field trips, Science Wednesdays, and there was wide-spread engagement with the school waste-reduction project for Indicator Areas 4 and 5.

As CCS enters the penultimate year (FY24) of its current contract (FY23-25), the school should note that this is the last year for which EE data will be reviewed in the summative renewal evaluation of student environmental literacy outcomes. Be proactive in communicating with Osprey Wilds staff with any questions, requested revisions, or additional EE data.

**Areas of Strength**

- The school has established interdisciplinary opportunities for students to develop environmental literacy through learning activities like the music project studying the materials used to make ukuleles and the MESS-E projects (Indicator 1), visual art through nature journaling (Indicator 2), interactive debates (Indicator 4 and 5), and the hands-on, multidisciplinary waste-reduction activity (Indicator 3, 4, and 5).
- CCS has articulated clear strategies and measures that align with the educational model and focus of the school.
- The school places an emphasis on students learning about environmental issues in a local context and has established expectations and values around environmental stewardship through action projects in the school and community.
- The seat based program has invested in providing opportunities for the relevant, hands-on application of environmental stewardship activities which has also included the wider school community ( e.g. planting vegetable seeds at the open house). The school has invested in and prioritized using the solarium, aquaponics system, and raised beds. The veggies that students grew were used in school lunches. Students also hatched chicken and duck eggs.

### **Areas for Improvement**

- **MESS-E projects:** In the 22-23 school year the online program launched MESS-E projects—interdisciplinary themed projects (math, science, social studies, and electives) with components in each subject area. The focus was clothing, pollution and recycling. Unfortunately, the implementation of the projects went differently than planned and several components of projects incorporated into the ELP were not implemented. In future years, the online program might consider ways to encourage and measure student-driven connections to the environment in projects that are completed, and/or establishing routine project elements that can be completed with fidelity.
- **Participation and Learning targets:** With support from OW, staff should consistently establish participation targets. In some past instances goals were framed as having a learning target 'of students who participated' which has resulted in activities being completed by 1 student. The intention of the Environmental Learning Plan is to ensure that all students are given the opportunity to complete environmental learning activities. If student engagement proves to be challenging, the school might consider beginning with looking for places in the educational program where students are consistently engaged and participating, then working to integrate an environmental component into the already established learning activity.
- **Capturing learning:** As the school has in the past, continue to record and share the environmental initiatives and activities that both programs implement above and beyond the ELP. Crosslake Community Schools has been able to invest resources, time, and materials into a wide range of EE activities. With the new spreadsheet format for the ELPs, OW will work with schools to ensure that there are clear opportunities to communicate all the efforts the school is undertaking for EE. In addition, clear communication about EE efforts supports the sustainable implementation of the EE program in the future and throughout staff turnover.