

Environmental Portal: Refining Our Focus for 2004-2005

October 26, 2004

Recognizing that:

- There are a variety of ways that community partners can enhance learning – providing resources, professional development opportunities, job shadows etc. – each of which requires a certain amount of preparation work (much of this was captured in prior meetings)
- Community partners want more access and often depend on teachers to provide connection to students
- Teachers are often too overwhelmed to do the preparation work needed to facilitate meaningful community-based learning experiences
- The perceived value must appeal to both teachers and students

It was proposed that Environmental Portal will focus on helping students develop meaningful projects to fulfill their service-learning and culminating project requirements.

Key things that need to be done:

- Identify target audience and understand their needs and interests
 - Will likely work with the lead teachers of the ESA and HEAL Academies in order to ensure students will be there
- Identify other events / organizations that have similar objectives and determine if/what partnerships would be beneficial and how they can be established
- Determine logistics: Where the event/workshop will be, what it will entail, how it will be structured etc.
 - Involve a few students in the planning process

(perhaps one from each school can help with the organization and leadership of the event)

The support for / concerns with proceeding down this path...

Support for	Concerns
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Coordinated assistance serves a definite need as service-learning and culminating projects are graduation requirements ▪ Both requirements have flexibility and can be tailored to students' interests and could incorporate an environmental theme/focus ▪ Provides a mechanism to connection students with community partners and out-of-classroom learning opportunities ▪ Opportunity to expand student thinking beyond meeting the requirement to taking advantage of and creating learning opportunities ▪ Does not require teachers to do coordination or a significant amount of student preparation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Not wanting to waste time planning an event that will not be well attend or will not have perceived value ▪ Must articulate how this work aligns with our Portal objectives and help Portal partners understand how they can fit into this equation <p>Note: Given that the lead teachers of the ESA and HEAL Academy have expressed great interest coupled with the reasons of support, the Portal will continue to move down this path (though other connection opportunities will still be pursued).</p>

It is our collective resources, expertise, and connections that will contribute to the richness of this event. Your feedback, suggestions, and potential contacts, resources, ideas etc. for pursuing this strategy are welcomed. Please contact Emily with specific ways on how and to what degree you think you and/or your organization can contribute to this work. (As we refine the work, the “ask”/needs will become more specific).