

The Structure of SAGEE

Accepted by membership 9-21-2005

This document outlines the structure for the Secretary's Advisory Group on Environmental Education (SAGEE); a structure that encourages networking and growth for participants and maintains a climate of openness without impacting the Group's efficiency. The Structure document is a work in progress which will be reviewed periodically as needed.

The accompanying SAGEE Working Document details the implementation of this structure. The Chair(s) shall review and update the Working Document prior to the start of each annual cycle, which begins on the day of the first full SAGEE meeting of the year.

Purpose of SAGEE

The purpose of SAGEE is to foster environmental literacy within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in order to enhance and sustain a high quality of life and to encourage voluntary compliance with sound environmental practices; to advise the Secretary of the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEA) and the Commissioner of the Department of Education (DOE) of opportunities for synergy between these arms of government; to support the initiatives of the Secretary of EOEA and the Commissioner of DOE; and to serve as a coordinating forum among agencies and organizations concerned with the environment in the Commonwealth and between such agencies and organizations in the Commonwealth and those in other states and at the federal level.

To this end SAGEE assesses environmental education in the state, to determine key programs that are being offered and where there may be gaps. Where gaps are found, SAGEE promotes educational channels to fill these gaps; to stimulate professional development opportunities for educators and to identify opportunities for positive visibility for programs selected as focal points for the Secretariat (EOEA) and the Department (DOE)

Membership

There are two categories of membership: active members and associate members. SAGEE shall also maintain a mailing list of 'Friends' including individuals who may be considering membership. The actual number of SAGEE members is flexible.

Groups and organizations involved with environmental education – governmental agencies, non-profits, elementary and secondary schools, higher education, museums, business and industry – should be represented on SAGEE and are encouraged to participate in order to build a diverse membership. One person from each organization is designated as an active member. Additional individuals from the same organization may be associate members. Members must meet the additional requirements below.

Visitors are encouraged to attend.

Becoming a Member

Any individual or any representative of an agency or organization wishing to become a member of SAGEE must submit a letter requesting such membership and a resume. The application shall be reviewed by the Steering Committee. If the Committee will review the application and take whatever action is appropriate adding the individual or group to the appropriate membership category.

The membership list will be forwarded to the Secretary of Executive Office of Environmental Affairs and to the Commissioner of the Department of Education as an attachment to the annual report.

Eligible organizations, for the purposes of SAGEE, include agencies of state, federal or municipal governments, natural subdivisions or chapters of larger units, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) or corporate entities with an interest in environmental enhancement.

Active Membership

Active membership shall involve service on at least one committee and attendance at three out of four quarterly meetings. Active members are eligible to chair committees and vote on SAGEE business, including recommendations from SAGEE to the Secretary's and Commissioner's offices. In exceptional circumstances the Steering Committee shall have flexibility to grant active membership to individuals unable to meet the requirements. For example, a classroom teacher may have difficulty attending daytime meetings but may be an active contributor and should therefore be considered for placement on the active list.

Active members should make sure to network with associate members of SAGEE who are involved from their own organization and may designate an associate member to stand in for them at the SAGEE meetings. Anyone so designated must notify the Chair at the outset of the meeting.

Associate Membership

Associate membership is open to any group or individual having a strong interest in environmental education willing to work on one or more specific committees but who cannot commit to broader involvement in the overall tasks of active membership or who represents an organization that already holds an active membership. Associate membership involves participation in at least one working committee. For the purposes of decision-making and voting, associate member may not hold office or vote. An associate member may, however, stand in for the active representative of an organization, if the active member so designates.

Mailing List

A list shall be maintained of persons/groups who wish to be notified of upcoming quarterly meetings and who are considering membership or who assist SAGEE by publicizing or distributing SAGEE information and materials. Updates on the mailing list shall be conducted prior to the September meeting. Names will be deleted if there has been no activity from the member/group during the previous year. SAGEE members should refer to the published membership list to confirm that they are appropriately represented as 'active', 'associate' or 'mailing list only'.

Ex Officio Members

The EOEA and the DOE provide liaisons to SAGEE to represent the Secretariat/Department.

These liaisons serve on the Steering Committee in an ex officio capacity; participating in all aspects of the committee's activities except that they do not vote and they are not eligible to hold an office.

Executive Office of Environmental Affairs Liaison (via the Director of EE)

The EOEA liaison (ideally the Director of EE) is critical for maintaining a strong and healthy connection to the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs. The EOEA liaison will serve as an ex-officio member of SAGEE and of the Steering Committee. He/she will also coordinate the confirmation process for the Chair(s) by the Secretary of Environmental Affairs and may arrange for a planning and review meeting between the Secretary and the Chair(s) during the first quarter of the calendar year if so desired. Other meetings will be arranged as needed.

The EOEA liaison will communicate EOEA's agenda for environmental education and updates within the agency to the SAGEE membership. The EOEA liaison will convey to the Secretary of EOEA the state of EE in the field as reported by the membership and illustrated by the work of SAGEE. He/she will keep in touch with the chairs of the committees and shall report to the Secretary on their progress.

Department of Education Liaison

The DOE liaison is critical for maintaining a strong and healthy connection to the Department of Education. The DOE liaison will serve as an ex-officio member of SAGEE and of the Steering Committee. He/she will also coordinate the confirmation process for the Chair(s) by the Secretary of Environmental Affairs and may arrange for a planning and review meeting between the Commissioner and the Chair(s) during the first quarter of the calendar year if so desired. Other meetings will be arranged as needed.

The DOE liaison will communicate DOE's agenda for environmental education and updates within the agency to the SAGEE membership. The DOE liaison will convey to the Commissioner the state of EE in the field as reported by the membership and illustrated by the work of SAGEE. He/she will keep in touch with the chairs of the committees and shall report to the Commissioner on their progress.

SAGEE Business

Business concerning the projects and needs of SAGEE will be conducted during and between full SAGEE meetings and committee meetings. Issues needing the attention of the entire membership will be presented to the membership for discussion at full SAGEE meetings or in some other viable format.

Full SAGEE Meetings

SAGEE meetings shall be held quarterly. At the March meeting committees, membership, and direction for the year shall be set and members will sign-up to participate on the various committees

Voting

Decisions affecting the direction of SAGEE, such as election of steering committee members, changes in structure, adoption of new initiatives, and recommendations to be made to EOEA or DOE, shall be voted upon by the active membership. Issues will be introduced, discussed and voted on at the following meeting. The issue to be voted will be sent to the active members electronically so that those who cannot attend the meeting may vote *in absentia*. The Steering Committee member in charge of procedure shall accept votes up to 48 hours prior to the meeting and shall, at the meeting, confirm that no duplicate votes have been cast.

Committees

Task-oriented committees and standing committees shall be established to address particular SAGEE needs. SAGEE members will discuss the focus of the committees and will sign up to serve on committees at the March meeting. The list of committees and their members will be distributed to

SAGEE members together with the March meeting minutes. Additional committees may be added ad hoc when needed to address a particular task.

Committees shall meet as often as required to accomplish their task for that annual cycle. One person will serve as chair to call meetings and a Steering Committee member shall serve as liaison to the committee. Committees should meet within eight weeks after each full SAGEE meeting. Committees should provide a brief report (in a one-page summary with action items noted) to the SAGEE Chair(s) or other Steering Committee member as designated for distribution to the Steering Committee.

Once a task-oriented committee has completed its task, it shall be dissolved. Standing committees shall be reviewed periodically to determine their efficacy and, with the exception of the Steering Committee (which must remain), be dissolved if no longer needed.

Steering Committee

There shall be a Steering Committee consisting of five elected active members, two ex-officio members and it may include one or more members-at-large as determined by the Chairman. Membership on the Steering Committee is based on the calendar year and shall rotate among members elected from the active membership list, one per year, for a five-year term. Once a member has served for five years, he/she shall not be eligible to serve on the Steering Committee for a two-year period.

The EOEa liaison (Director of EE) and the DOE liaison shall be ex-officio members of the Steering Committee and attend both Steering Committee and full SAGEE meetings.

The Steering Committee shall be charged with planning the yearly tasks, planning and conducting quarterly meetings, and drafting an annual report to the Secretary of EOEa and the Commissioner of DOE at the conclusion of the year.

- The Steering Committee is also charged with overseeing various administrative tasks critical to SAGEE's functioning. These tasks will be documented in the Working Document, and may be assigned to a particular committee member (such as the Clerk or Liaison) or to another active SAGEE member.

For example the Steering Committee will:

- send out notices of meetings, minutes of previous meeting and a draft agenda for each of the quarterly meetings. (Perhaps this should be done through EOEa)
- develop and maintain an archive of SAGEE minutes and materials to serve as a resource. The committee may also choose to designate one or more centers in other parts of the state to store copies of the records and archive materials.
- maintain an up-to-date membership list and the SAGEE mailing lists, including both an address list and email list.
- One member of the Steering Committee shall serve on the standing committee for long-range planning and will serve as liaison between the long range planning committee and the Steering Committee.

The Steering Committee will meet in November, February, May and August to review committee reports, consider agenda items for the upcoming full SAGEE meeting, act as required and to forward reports, as necessary, to all SAGEE membership. Additional meetings may be held as necessary.

Steering Committee Positions

Elected committee members will rotate through five positions based on the length of time remaining in their term. The following guideline describes the positions. The committee may elect to reassign roles based on members' skills. For consistency and balance, it is recommended that no more than three EOEAs or DOE employees serve on the committee at any one time, and that their positions alternate. Current positions and assignments are detailed in the Working Document.

First position: The committee member who has five years remaining in his/her term. This member will act as an observer and take on responsibilities as required to support the group.

Second position: The committee member who has four years left in his/her term shall serve as Clerk. Responsibilities include recording minutes for the quarterly meetings and transmitting them to the membership. Minutes should be transmitted within ten days after the meeting with action items noted for the committees.

Third Position: The committee member with three years left in his/her term shall serve as the Administrator. This person will be responsible for voting, elections, and other procedural matters (except the nomination process) of the committee. He/she will maintain the membership lists.

Fourth Position: The SAGEE Chair shall be the person who has two years left in his/her term. This person will Chair both the Steering Committee and regular SAGEE meetings. Co-Chairmanship is strongly recommended for continuity and balance on the committee and in SAGEE.

Fifth position: The person in the last year of his/her term may serve as Co-Chair, although acting as past-Chair to assist the current Chair in administering the job is an option. This person shall also chair the nominating committee to select candidates for the upcoming vacancy on the Steering Committee

EOEA Liaison: The EOEAs Liaison serves as an ex-officio member on the steering committee, as noted in the description above and may, in an ex-officio capacity, participate in the work of any committee. The EOEAs liaison will report back to the Secretary of the EOEAs on a regular basis. His/her term is based on his/her role in the agency and is not time dependent.

DOE Liaison: The DOE Liaison serves as an ex-officio member of the steering committee, as noted in the description above and may, in an ex officio capacity, participate in the work of any committee. The DOE liaison will report back to the Commissioner of DOE on a regular basis. His/her term is based on his/her role in the agency and is not time dependent.

Nomination Process

An announcement of vacancies on the Steering Committee shall be made at the June meeting with notice of vacancies sent out with the June minutes.

Any member wishing to serve may place his/her name or that of any other active member in nomination. The nominee must have been an active member of SAGEE for at least one year prior to selection. Nominations will be finalized at the September meeting.

The Steering Committee shall contact all nominees to ascertain their willingness to serve and will send out a list of nominees to all active members by November 1. Voting will take place at the December meeting (or by electronic absentee ballots up to 48 hours in advance – see Section on Voting) Following the vote, newly elected members will begin their term at the beginning of the calendar year and officers will shift to their new positions at that time.

Addressing Vacancies

Steering committee members are elected to a five-year term; however sometimes vacancies occur for unforeseen reasons. In the event a member steps down, the member who has been on the committee for the next shorter amount of time shall take the open position for the rest of the cycle. Each of the resultant vacancies shall be filled in the same manner until just the first position remains vacant. The remaining vacancy shall be filled following a special nomination process described below.

Announcement of the vacancy will be sent to all SAGEE members. Any member wishing to do so may place his/her name or that of any other active member in nomination. The nominee must have been an active member of SAGEE for at least one year prior to selection. The Steering Committee shall contact all nominees to ascertain their willingness to serve. The deadline for this special nomination is one week prior to the next full SAGEE meeting, where nominations shall be presented to the full body and a vote will be taken.

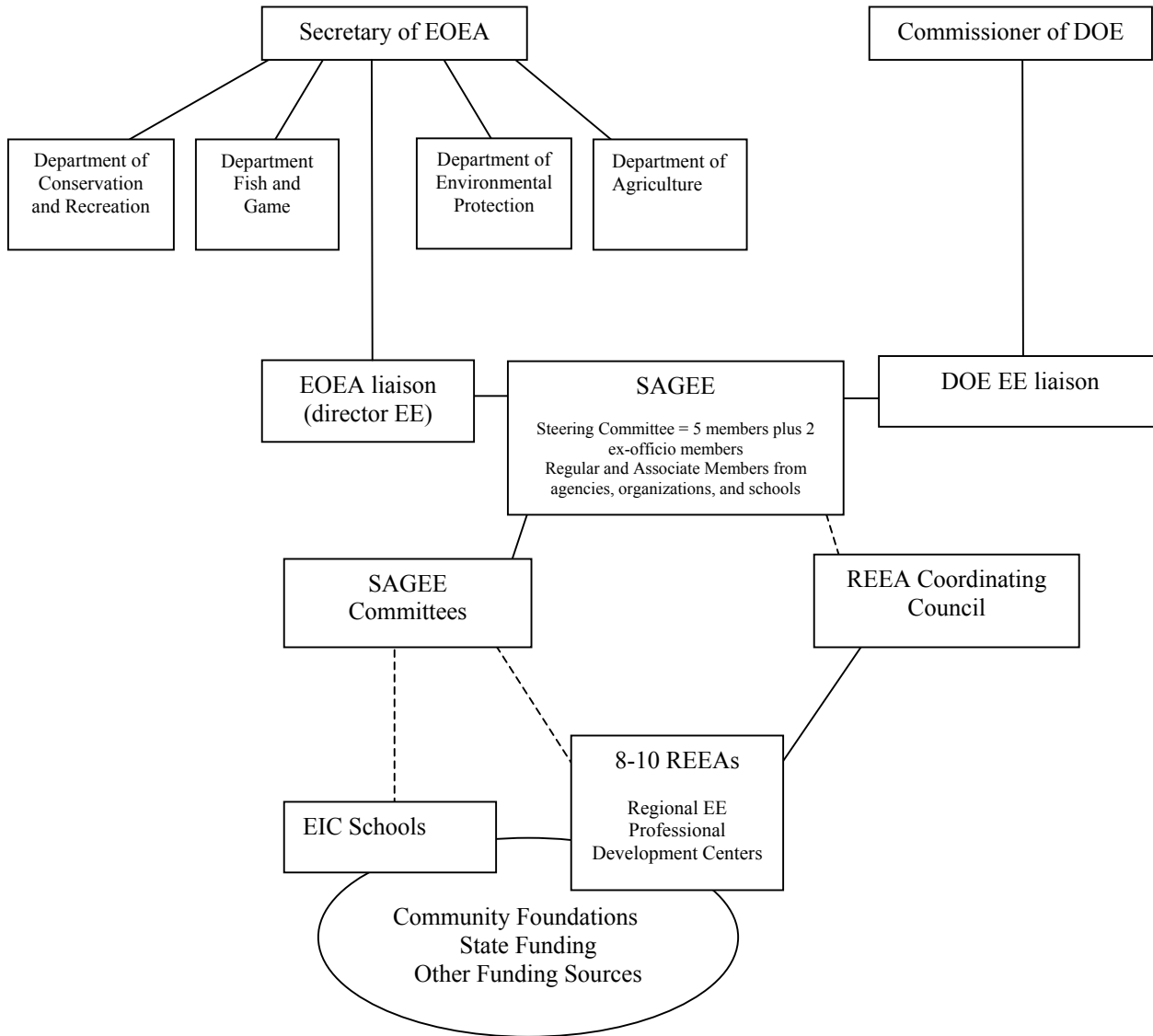
If there is more than one nominee for the position(s) to be filled, the vote shall also be presented to the active members electronically at or immediately after the meeting. The Steering Committee member in charge of procedure shall accept votes up to 48 hours prior to the meeting and will confirm that no duplicate votes are cast.

The term of this new committee member is five years plus the rest of the calendar year.

Appointment Process

The Chair(s) will be confirmed by the Secretary of Environmental Affairs and the Commissioner of Education on an annual basis. This process will be coordinated by the EOE and DOE liaisons.

Flow Chart of Structure



History of Revisions

This document is based on an initial structure document dated 12/96 on DFW letterhead) with updates from 2/13/01 Steering Committee Meeting, Alan Lee Hankin Memo 9/14/98, letter to membership from Melissa Griffiths 8/9/01, comments compiled by Ellie Horwitz 11/05/01 and Steering Committee discussion 11/27/01. At the 12/19/01 SAGEE meeting this document was approved by a vote with changes. The changes are now included as per approval 1/28/02 (Transcribed by Gregg Swanzey). Amended 6/18/05 based on comments from Sandi Ryack Bell, Jim Lafley and Steering committee discussion. This document was accepted as amended (included) at the 9/21/05 SAGEE meeting.